



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Learning Tree Early Childcare Centre
Unsworth Heights, Auckland**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Learning Tree Early Childcare Centre Unsworth Heights, Auckland 22 March 2019

1 Evaluation of Learning Tree Early Childcare Centre

How well placed is Learning Tree Early Childcare Centre to promote positive learning outcomes for children?

Not well placed	Requires further development	Well placed	Very well placed
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ERO's findings that support this overall judgement are summarised below.

Background

Learning Tree Early Childcare Centre is licensed for 148 children, including 50 up to the age of two years. Small numbers of Māori children attend the service. The centre operates from a purpose-built facility located in the Unsworth Heights business area. It is organised into three age-related areas, with two rooms for each area. The area for the youngest group of children has its own outdoor space. The other two areas share a large outdoor environment that provides opportunities for mixed-age play for children over two years of age.

The centre philosophy advocates respect for children's capabilities and the importance of positive parent, caregiver and whānau partnerships with teachers. It upholds the provision of high quality early childhood education practice, and the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand. The centre's curriculum is influenced and guided by Pikler, Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) and Reggio Emilia philosophies, and reflects *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood education curriculum, principles and strands.

The centre director oversees five family owned and operated centres. The experienced centre management team works closely with the centre director and other centre managers in the organisation to develop policies, and implement procedures that are personalised to Learning Tree Childcare Centre.

The Review Findings

The Learning Tree Childcare Centre provides high quality care and education for children. Children are supported to be capable and independent learners. They settle quickly on arrival and are warmly welcomed by teachers. They lead the direction of their play and choose play areas based on their interests. Children have easy access to high quality resources, and move freely between indoor and outdoor areas. The environment is thoughtfully designed to affirm and celebrate children's interests, and extend their learning experiences. Natural resources are highly valued and are used creatively throughout the centre.

Teachers actively encourage children to share their ideas and discoveries. They engage children in ways that help them develop their understanding and explore deeper meanings in their learning.

Children are well supported to transition into the centre, between the centre's age related areas, and from the centre to school. Children with additional needs are very well catered for.

Interactions between teachers and children are sensitive and supportive of children's learning. Teachers use highly effective practices that enhance each child's sense of themselves as successful learners. Children under the age of two years experience nurturing, calm interactions with teachers who know them well, in an environment that promotes exploration and supports their development.

Teachers plan skilfully for children's learning. They offer a high quality curriculum that is well designed and responsive to individual children's interests, strengths and abilities. Children's learning in core curriculum areas, such as literacy, mathematics and science, is enriched through meaningful ways that engage children. Children are encouraged to problem solve, learn collaboratively, and lead their own learning.

Tikanga Māori concepts and te reo Māori are reflected in the programme and environment. Partnerships with parents and whānau provide opportunities for them to contribute as valued partners in their children's learning. Teachers know children and their families well and promote a strong sense of belonging. Children's culture and identity is celebrated and affirmed.

Centre leadership is highly effective. The centre director, managers and teachers have a shared understanding of the centre's philosophy and vision. They share a commitment to professional learning and ongoing improvement. Centre leaders focus on building leadership capacity and capability. Teachers have opportunities to participate in professional learning that promotes positive outcomes for children. Leaders promote a collaborative and inclusive culture that supports high levels of trust and professionalism amongst staff.

The centre is well governed. The business and centre directors make employment and resourcing decisions based on what is best for all children. Centre managers and teachers are well supported to work positively to meet the needs of children, parents, whānau and community.

Internal evaluation is well understood and is used effectively to inform ongoing improvement. The centre has a relevant policy framework and systems that guide its overall operation.

Key Next Steps

Leaders and teachers use internal evaluation well to identify appropriate next steps for sustaining and building on highly effective practices. This includes continuing to strengthen learning partnerships with parents and whānau.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Learning Tree Early Childcare Centre completed an *ERO Centre Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's systems for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's wellbeing:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; hygiene; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (including qualification levels; police vetting; teacher registration; ratios)
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.



Steve Tanner
Director Review and Improvement Services Northern
Northern Region

22 March 2019

The Purpose of ERO Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department that, as part of its work, reviews early childhood services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. ERO's reports provide information for parents and communities about each service's strengths and next steps for development. ERO's bicultural evaluation framework Ngā Pou Here is described in [SECTION 3](#) of this report. Early childhood services are partners in the review process and are expected to make use of the review findings to enhance children's wellbeing and learning.

2 Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Unsworth Heights, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	10236		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	148 children, including up to 50 aged under 2		
Service roll	147		
Gender composition	Boys 60% Girls 40%		
Ethnic composition	Māori	5%	
	Pākehā	37%	
	Chinese	33%	
	South African	8%	
	Indian	3%	
	other Asian	5%	
	other ethnic groups	9%	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:4	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:8	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	February 2019		
Date of this report	22 March 2019		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2015	
These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review	September 2012	
	Education Review	August 2009	

3 General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

ERO's Evaluation Framework

ERO's overarching question for an early childhood education review is 'How well placed is this service to promote positive learning outcomes for children?' ERO focuses on the following factors as described in the bicultural framework [Ngā Pou Here](#):

Pou Whakahaere – how the service determines its vision, philosophy and direction to ensure positive outcomes for children

Pou Ārahi – how leadership is enacted to enhance positive outcomes for children

Mātauranga – whose knowledge is valued and how the curriculum is designed to achieve positive outcomes for children

Tikanga whakaako – how approaches to teaching and learning respond to diversity and support positive outcomes for children.

Within these areas ERO considers the effectiveness of *arotake* – self review and of *whanaungatanga* – partnerships with parents and whānau.

ERO evaluates how well placed a service is to sustain good practice and make ongoing improvements for the benefit of all children at the service.

A focus for the government is that all children, especially priority learners, have an opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education. ERO will report on how well each service promotes positive outcomes for all children, with a focus on children who are Māori, Pacific, have diverse needs, and are up to the age of two.

For more information about the framework and Ngā Pou Here refer to [ERO's Approach to Review in Early Childhood Services](#).

ERO's Overall Judgement

The overall judgement that ERO makes will depend on how well the service promotes positive learning outcomes for children. The categories are:

- Very well placed
- Well placed
- Requires further development
- Not well placed

ERO has developed criteria for each category. These are available on [ERO's website](#).

Review Coverage

ERO reviews are tailored to each service's context and performance, within the overarching review framework. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to the service.