



100%

DON'T SHORT-CHANGE THE CHILDREN...

NZEI · TE RĪU ROA
NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

Fact Sheet: Qualified Teacher Targets

What has happened?

In a major policy shift, the government has abolished its target of a fully-qualified early childhood teaching workforce by 2012. The government has also announced that the 2010 target of 80% qualified and registered teachers is being deferred until 2012.

The targets are part of the Strategic Plan timeline from Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki and have been a commitment since 2002.

The targets apply to teacher-led centre-based early childhood education. They do not apply to home-based services or sessional kindergartens.

The current requirements for teacher-led centres are that 50% of the staff needed to meet regulated adult:child ratios must be qualified and registered teachers.

What the Government said

On October 29 the government announced that it had deferred the 2010 target of 80% qualified and registered teachers until 2012.

The government stated that the deferral was because of a shortage of qualified and registered teachers. Ministry of Education projections indicate that 37% of teacher-led services (1077) are at risk of not meeting the 80% teacher registration target by 2010. This equates to a projected shortage of up to 1,100 registered ECE teachers next year.

What the Government did not say

While the deferral of the 80% target was not a surprise because of the qualified teacher shortage, the dropping of the goal of a 100% qualified registered teaching workforce was a major policy shift, and signals a move away from quality in the sector.

In fact, the Ministry's own predictions (presented at the Teacher Supply Symposium in June and available at www.nzei.org.nz) say that despite a struggle to meet the 2010 target of 80%, the sector was on track to reach the 100% target by 2012.

The government has not provided any rationale about why it has abandoned the 100% target.

NZEI Te Riu Roa, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA, NZKI; and the Labour opposition have all released statements critical of the government on this issue.

Why this issue is important to you

Children benefit most from participating in quality ECE. This means having teachers who are responsive to children from all backgrounds and cultures, teachers who have high-quality interactions with children and families, and teachers who are committed to quality practices in teaching and learning. Research both in New Zealand and overseas shows a strong link between qualified teachers and quality services.

NZEI members who work in early childhood have always known their sector was as important as the school sector, and the children in their care deserve the very best. For this reason, members have spent years working towards policy changes that would professionalise the sector and recognise the importance of the early years. This happened through the 1996 NZEI document Future Directions, which fed into the strategic plan, Ngā Huarahi Arataki, which led to the targets. This policy change jeopardises that vision.

What you can do

- Make sure that all the teachers and support staff that you know are aware of this backwards step for quality education.
- Send an NZEI postcard to the Minister of Education calling for the government to recommit to the 100% target.
- Explain what has happened to parents and community organisations you have contact with. They should know about government policy changes which put quality at risk.
- Invite parents and people from community organisations to fill out the postcards to express their opposition.
- Make an appointment to meet with your local MP to discuss this issue. If you would like support from the NZEI lobby network contact fran.renton@nzei.org.nz or call us on 0800 693 443.
- Write a letter to the editor calling for the 100% goal to be reinstated.
- Join www.ecetogether.org.nz and post a comment about this issue.

Enquiries

For further enquiries contact 0800 NZEI HELP (0800 693 443) or email: fran.renton@nzei.org.nz or jenny.davies@nzei.org.nz

