



The facts

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Key messages and facts

Use these key messages and facts to make sure you are well-informed and can answer questions

- Early childhood education took one of the biggest hits in the 2010 Budget.
- The cuts target centres employing 80-100% qualified teachers and will affect funding for over 2000 services and 93,000 children.
- Research evidence shows that qualified teachers are a key factor in the provision of quality early childhood education that provides the most benefit for children.
- Teachers and employers were committed to working towards a target of 100% teachers in every early childhood service. Now the government has declared that having 80% qualified staff is a “good enough” standard. What sort of message is that? You wouldn't accept 80% trained primary teachers or doctors and it isn't “good enough” for our youngest children either.
- ECE is a great investment and cutting it makes no sense. Research shows for every \$1 spent in high quality ECE there is up to a \$17 return because children are more likely to stay at school longer, be successful at school, move into employment and be productive citizens.
- Government says cuts are essential as spending on early childhood education has trebled in five years. But New Zealand has come from a low spending base on ECE and there has been a huge jump in participation (50% increase in enrolments between 1990-2009).
- New Zealand spends considerably less than the OECD average on young children
- Centres and services are being put in a difficult position of having to raise their fees, radically cut costs or in some circumstances lay off qualified staff.
- Families and children will be the losers – whether it is through reductions in quality, increased fees or the burden of having to fundraise to make up budget shortfalls. Many services which are affected the most by the cuts are in lower socio-economic areas or specifically cater for Maori or Pasifika children.
- If fees rise participation will actually drop.
- More money is being put into projects to encourage participation in lower socio- economic areas and by Maori and Pasifika children, but any good being done by targeted schemes will be more than cancelled out by the Government's cuts.
- The Government is removing quality for the vast majority of children who are already participating
- Mixed messages – the Government is introducing National Standards in schools saying it is concerned with raising student achievement. However the cuts to ECE go against clear evidence that children who receive quality ECE have improved outcomes at school.