

# HANDS UP FOR LEARNING!

KIA MAU KI TE WHAKAAKO

NZEI TE RIU ROA  
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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD CUTS MAKE MOCKERY OF GOVERNMENT'S OWN PRIORITIES FOR MAORI CHILDREN**

The Annual Report on Maori Education shows that Budget cuts to early childhood education are completely out of step with the government's own priorities, according to the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

The Government has just released Ngā Haeata Mātauranga – the Annual Report on Māori Education for 2008/09, which outlines progress for Maori students.

One of its key priorities is to ensure that “every child has the opportunity to participate in high quality early childhood education” and “improve the quality of early childhood experiences and education services attended by Maori children”.

“Those priorities are commendable but the government's direct attack on quality early childhood education in the Budget makes a complete mockery of them,” says NZEI Vice President Judith Nowotarski.

The government is slashing hundreds of millions of dollars out of the early childhood budget by removing subsidies to centres or services employing 80-100% fully qualified teachers. The move comes despite research that having fully qualified and registered teachers is a key indicator of quality early childhood education.

Figures show that Maori participation in early childhood education is steadily increasing with 91.4% of Maori children now taking part.

“The government is putting more money into participation projects for Maori children in target areas which is a positive step, but it's removing quality for the vast majority who are already participating. Where's the logic in that?” asks Mrs Nowotarski.

“This report underlines the importance of providing quality early childhood education. The government should read it carefully and commit to its own priorities”.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
NZEI VICE PRESIDENT: Judith Nowotarski  
MEDIA CONTACT: Liz Brown