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KIA MAU KI TE WHAKAAKO

NZEI · TE RIU ROA
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GOVERNMENT ECE POLICY DEFIES LOGIC

The government's approach to early childhood education defies logic, says the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

The government has announced that Waitakere and Northland will be the first two areas to benefit from a funding package to increase participation in lower socio-economic communities.

"There is no doubt that these sort of targeted projects are worthwhile but coming in the context of the Government's wholesale cuts to early childhood education, the big picture just doesn't add up," says NZEI Vice President Judith Nowotarski.

The government is slashing \$400 million dollars out of early childhood education funding, affecting 92,000 children around the country. It means many early childhood services will have to make up funding shortfalls of tens of thousands of dollars and will have to put up fees.

"The sad irony of the government's policy is that many children in low socio economic areas who are already participating in early childhood education may have to be removed or have their hours cut because their parents can no longer afford it. Any moves to increase participation could simply be cancelled out," says Mrs Nowotarski.

The government argues that spending on early childhood education has trebled in the past five years but participation has only gone up by less than 1%. However Ministry of Education figures show that from 2004-9 the number of children participating rose by 3.4% which equates to 17,825 children.

Judith Nowotarski says that underlines the fact that the government's policy doesn't add up and its claim that it is committed to early childhood education has a very hollow ring.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Participation figures:

http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/data_cubes/student_participation/early_childhood_education/3704