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KIA MAU KI TE WHAKAAKO

NZEI TE RIU ROA
NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE



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GOVERNMENT OUT OF STEP WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa says it is ironic that a new early childhood degree is being offered around the country, at a time when the government is undermining the value of qualified early childhood teachers.

Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association is launching a new Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) in 14 regions from Kaitaia to Dunedin. The three year course will allow students to study for a degree while working at a centre.

NZEI is welcoming the move as it will open up opportunities, particularly for people living and working in smaller communities who have not been able to access degree training.

“It will meet both the need for more qualified early childhood teachers around the country and the demand from people who want to qualify and complete a specialist early childhood teaching degree,” says NZEI Vice President Judith Nowotarski.

The degree course also recognises the growing professionalism of early childhood education in New Zealand. One of the strongest indicators of quality early childhood education is having fully qualified and registered staff.

“The sector is committed to upskilling and providing quality early childhood education for our youngest children. It’s unfortunate the government doesn’t share that view and is taking away millions of dollars from centres and services which have more than 80% qualified staff,” says Mrs Nowotarski.

Just last week the Education Minister told kindergarten teachers that they should not raise fees to parents to deal with the cuts, but instead employ fewer qualified staff.

Judith Nowotarski says “it just goes to show that the government is completely out of step with the sector and with what parents and children deserve. People do not accept John Key’s assertion that having 80% qualified teachers is ‘good enough’.”

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