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KIA MAU KI TE WHAKAAKO

NZEI · TE RIU ROA
NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE



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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DESERVES INVESTMENT NOT CUTS

Spending on early childhood education should be seen as an investment not a means of balancing the government's books, according to the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

The Finance Minister is signalling the government will move to contain the cost of early childhood education in this year's Budget.

NZEI which represents early childhood teachers says the education of our youngest children should be a priority. New Zealand spends less than the OECD average on early childhood education and research shows that money spent on early childhood delivers significant investment returns.

NZEI Vice President Judith Nowotarski says "what the government doesn't seem to recognise is that the money spent on early childhood education over recent years has gone into raising quality, and making it more accessible for families. That is a worthwhile investment."

NZEI believes the government is slowly chipping away at quality early childhood education. Last year it did a u-turn on agreed qualification targets and abandoned a commitment to having a 100% qualified and registered teaching workforce by 2012.

Any change to the funding of the 20 Hours Free early childhood policy would also have serious implications for the community in terms of participation rates in early childhood education and for parents who would face extra costs.

Judith Nowotarski says "reduction of early childhood funding will ring alarm bells for the sector and for parents. It would represent a huge step backwards and put the brakes on the enormous progress which has been made. Early childhood funding should be about investing in quality education and our children's future."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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