



December 2019 Newsletter

Kia ora te whanau

We are pleased to send out this Christmas newsletter and use this to catch up on happenings that have affected us all over the past 6 months.

It has been an interesting time as the Early Learning Strategic Plan *He taonga te tamaiti – Every child a taonga: Early learning action plan 2019-2029* has been released. We were concerned re the lack of acknowledgement of the heavily gendered nature of the Early Childhood Sector in the draft and to some degree this has been replicated in the full document. Of particular interest to us (and where we concentrated our submission efforts) was

Objective 3: Teaching staff and leaders are well qualified, diverse, culturally competent and valued.

We believe that serious work needs to be undertaken in this area in an effort to achieve the objective of diversity and so far are yet to be convinced that this will happen. We totally support the need to attract teachers of diverse genders and cultures and for our teachers to properly reflect the communities that they teach in, but the lack of detail of how this will be achieved is worrying. Certainly there is a lot

of sense to link action to the sector wide Workforce Strategy that is being developed, but this also brings trepidation that the Early Childhood bias in genders will be overlooked or omitted. Let's hope they will act on this as the employment of more males was an issue raised both in the consultation hui of teachers and in focus group discussions with whānau. These concerns need to be acted on with sincerity and clarity and we will be watching with interest as the plans develop.

As a side issue there was clear bias against male teachers identified by some Chinese parents in the Auckland focus group due to knowledge of issues back in China regarding male teachers. The fact that this was reported openly in public document raises some red flags about the challenges our men have and asks the question what will be done about it? If the brief was to report to the Ministry of Education of parental views of the early childhood environment and clear bias against a group of teachers was evident, surely as guardians of the education system you would expect some action would be taken to help change this. Would it not be in the interests of Objective 3 above for the Ministry of Education and perhaps the Teachers Council to work with those in the Chinese community who hold such a bias or again will it be left in the too hard basket? WE will watch with interest.

The rest of the plan will, we believe, help make teaching in ece a more inviting prospect for men in areas such as restoring 100% funding, restoring parity and looking at ways of ensuring that the sector salary pool remains consistent across groups. Helping to raise the status with greater professionalism and supporting professional development will also help raising the bar re standards. The problem like most have identified is the elongated time frame and the lack of cross party support which could result in much of it being rescinded should labour fail to win the election next year. Let us hope it hasn't been a pointless exercise.

Part of our mandate has always been to seek an increase of numbers of Male teachers within the Early Childhood Sector. The latest 2019 figures on our employment of teachers show that those that identify as being Males make up only 2.7% of the total numbers of teachers employed. Early Education and Care centres equate to 2.7 % male teachers and Kindergarten only slightly faring better with 2.8% male teachers. Of 32270 teachers we have only 858 men teaching in early childhood centres within Aotearoa according to the 2019 statistics found on the Education Counts website. This I believe is a drop in real percentage of workforce numbers but a small increase in total numbers but certainly nothing significant. This is why we believe so much more needs to be done buy our education leaders and we cant understand why there has been so little interest in this issue from the Ministry of Education.

Teaching Staff	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Casual Education & Care	110	133	76	54	54	59	52	48	46
Female	109	129	75	52	53	59	51	45	44
Male	1	4	1	2	1		1	3	2
Correspondence	16	16	16	16	15	15	9	9	8
Female	16	16	16	16	15	15	9	9	8
Education & Care	17357	17997	18620	20833	23490	24599	25755	26357	27199
Female	17035	17619	18200	20424	23002	24013	25051	25612	26406
Male	322	378	420	407	483	575	689	729	738
Unknown				2	5	11	15	16	55
Home-based		609	628	714	782	762	736	803	793
Female		603	623	710	778	760	735	801	790
Male		6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3
Unknown					1				
Hospital-based	22	26	49	52	51	56	60	64	76
Female	21	25	49	52	51	56	57	60	71
Male	1	1					3	4	5
Kindergarten	2612	2696	2806	3615	3838	4018	4062	4137	3943
Female	2561	2646	2746	3534	3744	3927	3960	4042	3833
Male	51	50	60	81	94	91	101	94	110
Unknown							1	1	
Grand Total	20117	21477	22195	25284	28230	29509	30674	31418	32065

A wero was laid down at our last summit in Whanganui to look at changing the Name of EC- Menz to “ECEquality”. One of the main thrusts for change was to make our group more inclusive as most research on Men In Early Childhood state that without the support of our female colleagues, change will not happen and will certainly not be sustained. It is thought then that by making a change to the name it will signal to all early Childhood Teachers that all are welcome to our events and that our advocacy is part of a wider issue of ensuring equality and fairness within Early Childhood Environments. In January 2020 we will be circulating a document to explain the pros and potential cons of such action and will be seeking wide feedback on this approach. So keep a look out for this.

Included with this newsletter is the report from the 2019 summit and the agm minutes which will also be posted on our website ecmenz.org.

In 2020 due to the commitments of the committee we will not host a Summit but some work will continue with the annual wellington hooey dooey and behind the scenes meetings and correspondence with key educational personnel. We will be following up on the bias expressed by the Chinese focus group members and hopefully will be able to work with these communities to address some of their concerns. We will also be awaiting the report from the Education Workforce Group to see how they plan to build a modern and diverse workforce that truly reflects the communities that our schools and centres work in

So we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year and look forward to seeing what the 2020's will bring.