

# Early Childhood Care & Education

## YOUR FAMILY – YOUR CHOICE

National trusts families and we trust parents.

Responsible parents play an absolutely critical role in the development of their children. They know what's best for their families and they know what their pre-schoolers need to get the best start in life.

National will support parents by improving the choice and quality of early childhood care and education.

We will keep 20 Hours and maintain existing subsidies and fee controls. Thousands of parents are now using the scheme and we do not want to cause them financial uncertainty.

We will, however, make the scheme more flexible and improve its availability. We will also remove the misleading word 'free' from its title and will instead call it "20 Hours ECE".

We will also:

- Tackle the early childhood teacher shortage.
- Reduce adult/child ratios in early childhood centres.
- Reduce bureaucracy for early childhood centres.
- Boost participation in early childhood care and education.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

- Valuing families.
- Higher standards in education.
- Building opportunity for all.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**SEE** › Our web page on [Education](#).

## NATIONAL'S PLAN

### 1. Enhancing "20 Hours ECE"

- Keep existing subsidies and fee controls.
- Remove the 6-hours-a-day limit.
- Include playcentres and kohanga reo.
- Include 5-year-olds (along with 3- and 4-year-olds in the present scheme).
- Investigate more frequent payment periods.

### 2. Tackling Teacher Shortages

Enhance the early childhood teaching degree with a series of modules that will:

- Promote working while training.
- Allow qualified English-speaking foreign teachers to qualify after an intensive six-week programme.
- Allow Montessori, Steiner, and Playcentre qualifications to count towards the degree.

### 3. Reducing Staff Ratios

- Increase the adult/child ratio for children under two from 1:5 to 1:4.
- Ensure that, after 2012, sessions for the under-tuos in teacher-led early childhood centres are staffed by at least 50% qualified teachers.

### 4. Reducing Bureaucracy & Regulations

Remove unnecessary regulations over time. For example, we will drop the requirement for early childhood centres with more than 50 children to have more than one licence.

### 5. Boosting Participation

Work with community groups, private centres, home-based providers, and local government to develop local solutions that best meet the early childhood needs of our communities.