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#### Disclaimer

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

## The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

Little Einsteins Educare - Tui Room is an education and care service located in a rural community close to Cambridge. It is one of three licences on the same site and caters for children from two to three years of age. At the time of this review the centre had been operating for one year and the roll was 46, of whom three identified as Māori. This is the first Education Review for the centre.

The centre directors and manager provide high quality, effective leadership and management for the service. This leadership promotes a centre philosophy that is based on the child-centred approach and provides high quality education and care.

The centre provides unique opportunities through the extensive, spacious and rich learning environments for children. The well-planned, purpose-built facility provides a wide range of essential learning areas and access to rural experiences such as horticulture, exposure to and care of farm animals, recycling and natural sciences. The facilities provide children with challenge and the opportunity to take risks in stimulating and safe environments.

The team focus over the last year has been on developing and establishing reciprocal and respectful relationships with each other, parents and children. A shared care arrangement allows all teachers to get to know children well and assists them to meet the needs of this age group. Children are helped to communicate feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Teachers work hard to establish and maintain supportive relationships with parents as they move into and from the centre.

Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies that provide opportunities for children to increase and share their ideas and knowledge about their world. Interactions are based around care routines and focus on the physical and oral development of toddlers, who are developing trust in the adults.

Teachers and management have developed a useful framework for and approach to assessment, planning and evaluation. This assessment process enables teachers to effectively notice, recognise and respond to children's learning pathways. The programme includes the integration of te reo me onā tikanga Māori, and inclusion of meaningful literacy and numeracy experiences in this area. ERO and management agree that the centre team will continue to consolidate, review and refine aspects of assessment practice and the impact of routines and structures on the quality of learning and interactions during the day.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

# Review Priorities

## The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Little Einsteins Educare - Tui was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the centre to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the management and staff. This discussion focused on existing information held by the centre (including self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to positive outcomes for children at Little Einsteins Educare - Tui.

All ERO education reviews in early childhood focus on the quality of education. For ERO this includes the quality of:

- the programme provided for children;

- the learning environment; and
- the interactions between children and adults.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

## The Quality of Education

### Background

Little Einsteins Educare Tui room is an area which is attached to a new centre providing care and education for children aged two and three. Its stated philosophy focuses on a child-centred approach, individualised learning and an environment that supports children's play and exploration. This is the first review for the service and evaluates the centre's progress towards their philosophy.

### Areas of good performance

**Governance and management:** The centre directors and manager provide high quality, effective and inclusive leadership and management for the service. The successful establishment and strategic direction of the centre has been facilitated through:

- the development and implementation of clear policies and procedures;
- a focus on employing knowledgeable, qualified and experienced staff;
- ongoing strategic development and maintenance of the complex; and
- the expertise and guidance of the centre manager.

This committed, visionary leadership promotes a philosophy that provides high quality education and care for children and families that is based on sound understanding of current theory and best practice.

**Programme:** Teachers effectively implement a programme of learning that is underpinned by key principles derived from a sound philosophy. Key features of the programme are:

- the child-centred approach to teaching and learning;
- integration of te reo me onā tikanga Māori practices through implementation of a developing bicultural plan;
- careful attention and procedures that ensure the smooth transition between rooms; and
- inclusion of meaningful and appropriate literacy and numeracy experiences throughout the centre.

Children benefit from a programme that is consistent, well planned and balanced to extend their learning journey.

Learning environment: The centre provides unique opportunities through the extensive, spacious and rich learning environments for children. Features of these environments include:

- a well-planned, purpose-built facility that provides a wide range of essential learning areas;
- access to rural experiences such as horticulture, exposure to and care of farm animals, recycling and natural sciences;
- provision of high quality equipment and resources that children are able to access through the day for sustained periods of play and exploration; and
- effective use of indoor and outdoor areas to allow children to work with equipment and make decisions about how and where they use resources and material.

The well-developed facilities provide children with challenge and the opportunity to take risks in stimulating and safe environments.

Relationships: Close and caring relationships are evident amongst teachers, parents and children. Teachers promote children's independence, confidence and self management skills through positive guidance strategies. A shared care arrangement allows all teachers to get to know children well and assists them to meet the needs of this age group. Children are helped to communicate feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Teachers work hard to establish and maintain supportive relationships with parents as they move into and from the centre. Children are developing the skills and confidence to establish and nurture positive relationships with each other and the adults who care for them.

Interactions: Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies that provide opportunities for children to increase and share their ideas and knowledge about their world. They work hard to ensure that children's interests, strengths and abilities will be recognised and built on through conversations, activities and their engagement with children. Through these interactions children are increasingly focused, motivated and empowered as learners.

Assessment, planning and evaluation: Since the opening of the centre, teachers and management have developed a useful framework and approach to assessment, planning and evaluation. This has happened through:

- professional development that has assisted teachers to improve their knowledge and refine and use effective assessment practice;
- using children's and parents' contribution to the programme as an important part of the process for identifying children's knowledge, ideas and interests to promote their learning and include this in their programme; and
- using information and communication technologies (ICT) effectively in the process of children's learning and the documentation of observations.

This assessment process enables teachers to effectively notice recognise and respond to children's learning pathways.

Self review: The centre has a well developed and strategic approach to self review. It includes both planned and impromptu review about aspects of centre operation and the programme. The process is clear, understood and effectively documented, providing a foundation for ongoing development and centre growth. The centre directors and manager have involved stakeholders in many opportunities to have input into self-review processes. This information is collated and used to inform, reflect on and implement changes to programme and teaching practice where appropriate. The centre is using self review as a tool to monitor its progress, effectiveness and maintain and develop its high quality education and care.

### Area for development and review

Ongoing centre development: While the centre has made significant progress in the twelve months it has been opened ERO and management agree that the centre team will continue to consolidate, review and refine:

- · assessment and planning practice to strengthen the links between individual and group stories, resulting in more consistent use of this information to inform planning;
- · evaluation processes to more consistently inform the next planning; and
- · how routines and structured times influence and impact on the quality of learning and interactions throughout the day.

Attention to these aspects of the centre programme is likely to enhance the quality of education and care that children receive.

## National Evaluation Topics

### Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole through its national reports. This information will be used as the basis for long term and systemic educational improvement.

### Literacy Teaching and Learning

When children understand, enjoy, engage with, and use language and symbols they are better able to express their individual identity and become active participants in a literate society. As part of this review ERO looked at literacy practices, particularly the opportunities provided for children to develop strong literacy learning foundations.

In this service children's literacy learning opportunities included:

- · print-rich environment including displays;
- · a wide range of literacy opportunities and resources including books, puzzles and games;
- · group times where teachers model language through singing, movement, dance and games; and
- · teachers modelling language, both written and verbal, through ongoing conversations with very young children.

## Management Assurance On Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of completed an ERO Centre Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- · administration;
- · health, safety and welfare;
- · personnel management; and
- · financial and property management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on outcomes for children:

- · emotional safety (including behaviour management, prevention of bullying and abuse);
- · physical safety (including behaviour management, sleeping and supervision practices; accidents and medication; hygiene and routines; travel and excursion policies and procedures);
- · staff qualifications and organisation; and
- · evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

ERO's investigation did not identify any areas of non-compliance.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

Richard Thornton

## National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

## About The Centre

Location	Near Cambridge
Ministry of Education profile number	30344
Type	Education and Care
Number licensed for	50 children two years and over
Roll number	46
Gender composition	Girls 29 Boys 17
Ethnic composition	New Zealand/Pākehā 38 New Zealand Māori 3 Others 5
Review team on site	March 2010
Date of this report	18 May 2010
Previous ERO reports	First ERO Review

## Community Page

To the Parents and Community of Little Einsteins Educare - Tui

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Little Einsteins Educare - Tui.

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When ERO has reviewed an early childhood centre we encourage management to inform their community of any follow up action they plan to take. You should talk to the management or contact person if you have any questions about this evaluation, the full ERO report or their future intentions.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the centre or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Richard Thornton

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

### About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

### About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve quality of education for children in early childhood centres; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on outcomes for children and build on each centre's self review.

### Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on four review strands.

- Quality of Education - including the quality of the programme provided for children, the quality of the learning environment and the quality of the interactions between staff and children and how these impact on outcomes for children.
- Additional Review Priorities - other aspects of the operation of a centre, may be included in the review. ERO will not include this strand in all reviews.
- National Evaluation Topics - This strand contribute to the development of education policies and their effective implementation. The information from this strand is aggregated by ERO for its national evaluation reports. Topics for investigation are changed regularly to provide up-to-date information.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this centre has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

### Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of centre performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to this centre.

## Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this centre.