

## Junior Junction Education Review

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

## About The Centre

Location	Whitiora, Hamilton
Ministry of Education profile number	30316
Type	Education and Care Service
Number licensed for	50 children, including up to 12 aged under 2
Roll number	49
Gender composition	Boys 27 Girls 22
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 34, New Zealand Māori 9, Chinese 4, Other 2
Review team on site	January 2010
Date of this report	23 March 2010
Previous ERO reports	First Report of the Centre

## The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Junior Junction is a new centre that opened in February 2008 and is located in Whitiara, a central Hamilton suburb. This purpose-built centre has three age-group areas, designated for babies (up to two years of age), toddlers (two to three year olds) and preschool (three year olds and up to school age). The centre is licensed for fifty children, with a maximum of twelve children under two years of age. The current roll is forty-nine, with twelve children under two. This is the first Education Review of the centre.

The centre aims to provide 'quality education and care for children in a setting that reflects the dual heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.' The intention is to develop children as 'independent thinkers and learners through a play-based programme where they are free to explore, socialise, communicate and investigate.'

Positive and affirming relationships are evident among staff and children. Routines are effective and well-established in all areas. Teachers know children and their families well, and babies have a primary caregiver designated to support their learning and welfare. Teachers take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for children so that their wellbeing and care needs are met.

Learning programmes are based on children's interests, needs and ideas. This curriculum naturally integrates literacy and numeracy concepts through oral language, reading, counting and writing. Te reo Māori is strongly evident at mat times and teachers are progressively introducing simple phrases and words throughout the day.

Children's individual portfolios provide an attractive and valuable assessment record of their time at the centre. Parents are encouraged to contribute and value the opportunity to share these records with their children and families.

Children benefit from a stimulating and well-resourced learning environment. They have ready access to an appropriate range of resources to challenge and stimulate their interests.

Management and staff work well as a team focusing on the best interests of children. The service provider and office manager have worked hard since the centre opened to provide a stable staff and well-resourced facility. Teachers work collaboratively and meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss daily events and children's learning and development needs.

Management and teachers are progressively developing self-review systems and practices to guide centre improvement. Parents are encouraged to contribute their ideas and aspirations

for centre development. However, there is a need to strengthen the process by gathering more in-depth information that has a stronger focus on improving teaching and learning.

### Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

## Review Priorities

### The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Junior Junction 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 Junior Junction.

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

Junior Junction is a new centre based in Hamilton that opened in February 2008. This purpose-built centre has three age-group areas, designated for babies (up to two years of age), toddlers (two to three year olds) and preschool (three year olds and up to school age). This is the first Education Review of the centre.

The centre aims to provide 'quality education and care for children in a setting that reflects the dual heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.' The intention is to develop children as 'independent thinkers and learners through a play-based programme where they are free to explore, socialise, communicate and investigate.'

#### Areas of good performance

**Relationships:** Positive and affirming relationships are evident among staff and children. Teachers know children and their families well, and babies have a primary caregiver designated to support their learning and welfare. Strong bonds of care and respect are

developed by teachers with children. Children's wellbeing and care needs are met as they develop a strong sense of belonging to the centre whānau.

**Routines:** Routines are effective and well established in all areas. Children respond positively to daily routines and activities. They benefit from the flexibility of moving freely between the age-group areas. Transition processes between each centre area are sensitively handled and involve the child and parents working alongside teachers. Teachers positively guide children to manage their own behaviour and that of others by promoting useful resolution strategies. Tikanga Māori practices are evident in daily routines and general operations. Children learn and play in a settled and harmonious learning environment.

**Learning environment:** Management has purposefully designed and resourced an attractive and vibrant centre that caters for three different age groups. There is easy access and good lines of visual flow for supervision between indoor and outdoor areas. Teachers introduce and rotate activities to engage and foster children's interests and ideas. Children's work is well displayed for revisiting and valued as recognition of prior learning. They have ready access to an appropriate range of resources, particularly to introduce early literacy and numeracy concepts, many of which reflect a bicultural perspective. Children benefit from a stimulating and well-resourced learning environment.

**Programme:** Learning programmes are based on children's interests, needs and ideas. An emergent curriculum naturally integrates literacy and numeracy concepts through oral language, reading, counting and writing. Teachers seek opportunities to plan frequent visits and trips for children within the local environment. Te reo Māori is strongly evident at mat times and teachers are progressively introducing simple phrases and words throughout the day. Children are experiencing meaningful opportunities to play and learn within relevant contexts.

**Portfolios:** Children's individual portfolios provide an attractive and valuable assessment record of their time at the centre. They include narratives, learning stories, photos and work samples about children's activities and learning experiences. Individual learning plans and links made to ongoing development skills and attributes give teachers and parents helpful information to support children. Parents are encouraged to contribute and value the opportunity to share these records with their children and families. Toddlers and preschoolers regularly look at their portfolios to revisit and reflect on prior learning and experiences.

**Management and teamwork:** Management and staff work well as a team focusing on the best interests of children. The service provider and office manager have worked hard since the centre opened to provide a stable staff and well-resourced facility. Teachers work collaboratively and meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss daily events and children's learning and development needs. A strong team culture ensures that all staff are

working together to support one another, centre development and to meet the aims of the centre and its philosophy.

Reflective practice: Management and teachers are progressively developing self-review systems and practices to guide centre improvement. A variety of informal and formal reflective practices, including a review timeline, ensure documentation such as policies and procedures remain relevant and up to date. Valuable strategic and annual plans, with associated goals, guide centre development and review. Regular evaluation is undertaken of operations and the programme, and this keeps staff and management well informed. Parents are encouraged to contribute their ideas and aspirations for centre development. These reflective practices have the potential to assist in improving and sustaining future operations and development.

### Areas for improvement

Self review: While self review is a frequent part of centre practice, there is a need to strengthen the process by gathering more in-depth information that has a stronger focus on improving teaching and learning. This strengthened process should include:

- being clear about what is being looked at and why;
- drawing on a range of information sources, including observations, to ensure sound evidence is gathered to make judgements about current practice;
- deciding what to do as a result of what is learned about that practice; and
- analysing and using the information to improve practices and identify possible outcomes.

Attention to these aspects of the process should enhance the quality of self review supporting a culture of continuous improvement and development in centre operations.

Assessment, planning and evaluation: The quality of assessment practice varies among the babies, toddlers and preschool areas of the centre. A more consistent and agreed approach to assessing children's learning, documenting outcomes in profile books, and to the planning and evaluation of the programme would be likely to benefit children's learning and support teaching practice.

Interactions: The consistent use of quality interactions by teachers to promote sustained conversations and add complexity to children's learning and play requires further attention. Teachers regularly engage children in a range of conversations. The opportunities taken to extend children's ideas and interests and challenge them could be enhanced. Increasing the consistent use of a range of strategies, such as open questions to scaffolding learning, should further develop children's problem solving abilities and independence in learning.



## Area Of National Interest

### 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:

- oral language development within the context of play and visits to places of interest in the local environment;
- teachers modelling oral and written language, and sharing of stories at mat times and incidentally during the day;
- the availability of a range of appropriate literacy resources, displays of children's work, prior learning experiences, and integration of music and prompts to promote early literacy concepts;
- opportunities for older children to extend their knowledge of print, name recognition and retelling of favourite stories;
- social conversations and interactions with peers, and teachers' modelling of the use of appropriate language in building relationships and understanding; and
- a whānau wall displaying children's names and whakapapa and the use of te reo Māori language and karakia in daily routines.

## Management Assurance On Compliance Areas

### Overview

Before the review, the licensee and staff of Junior Junction completed an ERO Centre Management Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have attested that they had 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.

In order to improve current practice the management should:

- ensure staff follow the centre's policy for nappy changing procedures;
- review serving of food practices in the babies' area; and
- ensure that all staff are appraised in a timely manner on an annual basis.

## Recommendations

ERO and the centre management agreed that:

6.1 management take a more in-depth approach to self review to assist ongoing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning; and

6.2 management and staff work together to develop teachers' knowledge and skill in learning strategies to further improve the quality of interactions with children.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

Richard Thornton

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

23 March 2010

23 March 2010

To the Parents and Community of Junior Junction

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Junior Junction.

## Community Page

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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 licensee 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.
- Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in early childhood centres.
- 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.