



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Stepping Stones Learning Environment

Profile Number: 45015

Location: Rotorua

1 ERO's Judgements

[Akarangi | Quality Evaluation](#) evaluates the extent to which this early childhood service has the learning and organisational conditions to support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama- indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most \(PDF 3.01MB\)](#) are the basis for making judgements about the effectiveness of the service in achieving equity and excellence for all learners. [The Akarangi Quality Evaluation Judgement Rubric \(PDF 91.30KB\)](#) derived from the indicators, is used to inform the ERO's judgements about this service's performance in promoting equity and excellence.

ERO's judgements for Stepping Stones Learning Environment are as follows:

Outcome Indicators	ERO's judgement
What the service knows about outcomes for learners	Whāngai Establishing

Ngā Akatoro Domains	ERO's judgement
He Whāriki Motuhake The learner and their learning	Whakaū Embedding
Whakangungu Ngaio Collaborative professional learning builds knowledge and capability	Whāngai Establishing
Ngā Aronga Whai Hua Evaluation for improvement	Whāngai Establishing
Kaihautū Leaders foster collaboration and improvement	Whāngai Establishing
Te Whakaruruhau Stewardship through effective governance and management	Whāngai Establishing

2 Context of the Service

Stepping Stones Learning Environment is a privately owned centre catering for children from infants to school-age in mixed age setting. A leadership team supports teachers, the majority of whom are fully qualified in early childhood education. This is the centre's first Quality Evaluation since the change of ownership. The centre was previously known as ABC Rotorua East..

3 Summary of findings

Children experience a calm, slow paced environment. Teachers demonstrate that care is an integral part of the curriculum. They work collaboratively to provide a responsive and inclusive environment intended to support children to lead their own learning. Tuakana-teina relationships, established through play, encourage infant and toddler involvement in the programme. The philosophy in practice enhances children's identity as successful learners.

Children experience a well-resourced learning environment. Resources for older children are extensive and support emerging literacy and mathematical concepts. Children with additional needs are planned for and supported by teachers and leaders, providing equitable learning opportunities. Children are empowered to be confident and competent learners.

Teachers have begun to explore children's learning and progress in relation to the intended outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, the New Zealand Early Childhood curriculum. Parents have some informal opportunities to participate in and contribute to curriculum design and planning. The service is becoming more consistent in documenting and intentionally responding to whānau aspirations.

Māori children experience some aspects of a bicultural curriculum. The centre has identified that this is an area to strengthen through sharing some of the teachers' stronger knowledge of te ao Māori. Elements of te reo and tikanga Māori are visible in the environment, and supported by resources that contribute to children's learning. Strong relationships with families and whānau support children's sense of belonging.

Leaders have established relational trust. Operational conditions have been established. Internal evaluation has been implemented and requires strengthening. Policies and procedures guide centre operations promoting positive learning outcomes for children and their families.

4 Improvement actions

Stepping Stones Learning Environment will include the following actions in its Quality Improvement Planning:

- strengthen documented assessment by prioritising the analysis of learning and intentionally design the curriculum to respond to children's individual learning needs
- strengthen internal evaluation practices to better understand how children are progressing in terms of the valued outcomes in *Te Whāriki* and the philosophy
- continue to strengthen leaders and teachers' capability to deliver a rich curriculum responsive to children's identity, language, and culture.

5 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

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

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's systems for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's wellbeing:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; hygiene; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (including qualification levels; police vetting; teacher registration; ratios)
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.



Shelley Booyesen
Acting Director Review and Improvement Services (Central)
Central Region | Te Tai Pūtahi Nui

3 August 2021

6 About the Early Childhood Service

Service type	Education and care service
Number licensed for	36 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Service roll	35
Ethnic composition	Māori 16, NZ European/Pākehā 16, Other ethnic groups 3
Review team on site	June 2021
Date of this report	3 August 2021
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review, October 2017 as ABC Rotorua East, Education Review, May 2014 as ABC Rotorua East.