



Te Tāhuhu o
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Ministry of Education



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Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa

Starting an early childhood service

A guide for people starting a centre-based service



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Contents

Introduction	1
Designing and building your new service premises	3
Choosing a site	4
Resource consent.....	4
Common resource management issues.....	5
Building code	6
Centres not at ground level	7
Complying with premises and facilities licensing criteria – indoors	9
Bathrooms, nappy change and body wash facilities	10
Kitchens, dining areas and laundries	13
Indoor activity areas	16
Sleep rooms, rest areas and sick rooms	18
Staff spaces	21
Storage space.....	22
Lighting, ventilation, heating and acoustics.....	24
Electrical sockets, first aid kits and telephones	26
Complying with premises and facilities licensing criteria – outdoors.....	29
Fences, gates, windows and handrails	30
Playgrounds.....	32
Equipment for early childhood services.....	37
Choosing your equipment.....	38
Principles and strands of Te Whāriki.....	38
Equipment lists	40
Choosing equipment – step-by-step.....	51
Roles and responsibilities in a centre-based service	53
Roles defined in the regulations	54
Management group	55
Governing group or board	56
Preparing for staff employment	61
Person responsible qualifications and registration	62
Minimum adult to child ratios	62
Number of qualified people your service needs	62
Number of first aid qualified people required.....	63
Job descriptions.....	63
Code of conduct	64
Staffing schedules	64
Pay equity and pay parity	66
Evidence of staffing when you apply	67

Help with employment issues	67
Preparing policies and procedures	69
What are policies and procedures?	70
Why have policies and procedures?	70
Policies and procedures and the law	70
Copying policies from other services	70
Writing policies	70
Regular review of policies	71
Child protection policy	71
Personnel processes	71
Health and safety policies and procedures	73
Curriculum	78
Communication	79
Complaints procedure	79
Finances	79
Annual plan and budget	80
Administration records	83
ECE funding handbook	84
Record retention	84
Enrolment records	84
Fees record	85
Attendance record, sign in and out book, and roll	85
Injury, incident or illness record	86
Medicine record	86
Food record	87
Health and safety documentation	87
Information for parents	88
Reporting	89
Required assessments, approvals and registrations	91
Health assessment report	92
Fire evacuation scheme approval	93
Food provision	94

Introduction

This guide is to help prospective services providers of centre-based early childhood services understand what is required to start a service. It has information from choosing a site to required assessments, approvals and registrations, with links to relevant licensing criteria.

If you are not sure what type of service you want to start, our companion document, Introduction to early childhood services, has information about what types of early childhood services there are. It also has information about how services are regulated, how services are funded and what to consider when deciding the type of service you want to start.

You can find this, along with other guides and factsheets, on our website.

[Guide and factsheets – Ministry of Education](#)



Designing and building your new service premises

There are many things to consider when building or renovating the premises for your new centre-based early childhood education and care service.

This section will help you understand what is required and help you ensure your premises comply with the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and centre-based education and care service licensing criteria.

Choosing a site

The regulations require your premises to be:

- on a single site
- for the exclusive use of the education and care service.

Land and buildings that are part of the service must be next to each other and connected so children can safely access them.

The use of the premises as a centre must comply with the Resource Management Act 1991.

Noise, air quality, traffic, surrounding use of properties and soil contamination are some of the important elements to think about.

Checklist for choosing your premises

Use our checklist for choosing your premises as a starting point to help you identify these elements. It has details about:

- what to look for in indoor and outdoor spaces
- District plans and the Resource Management Act
- Noise and health risks/issues
- areas that work well together
- added complexities with high-rise buildings.

[Guide and factsheets – Ministry of Education](#)

Licensing criteria

Check out the licensing criteria for premises and facilities to help inform your decision making.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[Premises and facilities - Ministry of Education](#)

LIM report

When you're thinking about buying land or buildings, it's worth asking the local city or district council for a land information memorandum (LIM). This report will give you council information about that piece of land, including what the district plan allows the land to be used for.

Resource consent

Resource consent allows a person or group to operate a licensed centre on a premises. The environmental effects of having an early childhood service in the neighbourhood will be considered before resource consent is granted. Sometimes resource consent has to be publicly notified. Consents can be declined or have conditions attached (for example, a higher fence or off-street parking may be required).

Find out about resource consent first

Before deciding the location and designing your service, find out about resource consent. If conditions attached to your resource consent limit the full operation of your early childhood service, for example, a

condition that puts limitations on the times that the outdoor area can be used, your service may not meet licensing requirements.

Resource consent process

Talk to your council about the resource consent process in your area. Council officials can:

- help you work out whether you will need a resource consent
- explain how to go about talking with people who might be affected by your project
- explain how to prepare an assessment of environmental effects – they might also tell you to visit your regional council
- process your consent.

See advice from the Ministry for the Environment about the resource consent process.

[Getting involved in the resource consent process – Ministry for the Environment](#)

[Applying for a resource consent - Ministry for the Environment](#)

Resource consent processing time

The time for councils to process resource consent applications is set by the Resource Management Act 1991.

- Non-notified consent (no hearing) – 20 working days
- Non-notified consent (with hearing) – 50 working days
- Non-notified fast track consent (District land-use consent with controlled activity status) – 10 working days
- Limited notified consent (with hearing) – 100 working days
- Limited notified consent (no hearing) 60 working days
- Publicly notified consent (with hearing) 130 working days
- Publicly notified consent (no hearing) 60 working days.

These are indicative and will vary if councils need to request further information or approvals.

Cost to get a resource consent

The cost of resource consent varies depending on your location and the amount of work your particular circumstances will require. Check with your council.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF102 Building Act compliance – Ministry of Education](#)

Common resource management issues

Noise and your neighbours

Your outdoor play space might create noise that affects nearby neighbours. Because of this, you may need a special environmental noise assessment as part of your resource consent.

If you do need a special environmental noise assessment, ask the assessor to look at both:

- how the play space might affect your neighbours, and
- how the surrounding environment might affect the play space – this is especially important if your site is near a busy road, railway lines, wind turbines, or in an airport noise corridor.

Off-street parking

Some local governments require there to be 1 car park for each staff member and 1 for every 10 children. Requirements may depend on the availability of parking in the general area.

Drop off and pick up

It is a good idea to have parking space for parents to drop off and pick up children at the front of the centre and put a gate (like a swimming pool gate) between the car park and the centre. If parking is required, disabled parking will need to be designated.

Building code

Building consent

Anyone building a new centre or carrying out alterations must get a building consent before work starts. Plans are reviewed by building consent authorities (BCA), usually your local council, to ensure building work will comply with the building code. When the BCA is satisfied, it will issue a building consent for building work to proceed.

Code compliance certificate

A code compliance certificate, issued after a BCA inspection, confirms that the building work that has been carried out complies with the building consent.

Code compliance ensures that the centre complies with the Building Act 2004.

[Building Act 2004 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

A code compliance certificate needs to be submitted with your licence application as evidence your building complies with the Building Act 2004.

[Council websites and maps - LGNZ](#)

Compliance schedule

A building (except a single residential building) with any fire safety systems (for example, alarms) or other specified systems such as lifts must have a Compliance Schedule and annual Warrant of Fitness (Building Act 2004).

A Compliance Schedule sets out the required inspection, maintenance and reporting systems for the equipment.

A copy of the compliance schedule (issued by your local council) must be submitted with your early childhood service licence application. If one is not required, the Ministry of Education will need confirmation of this.

Building warrant of fitness

If your premises requires an annual building warrant of fitness (issued under section 108 of the Building Act 2004) it must be on public display in the building.

[Section 108 of the Building Act 2004 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

A warrant of fitness will be issued every 12 months.

You do not need to send in a copy of this document with your licence application – it will be sighted during the licensing assessment visit.

Who is responsible for the compliance schedule and annual warrant of fitness?

The building owner is responsible for obtaining the compliance schedule and annual warrant of fitness and ensuring all necessary inspections, maintenance and reporting are done.

Disabled persons' access

New buildings used by the public must have suitable access and facilities for disabled people (Building Act 2004). The Building Act specifically includes:

- childcare centres and kindergartens
- day-care centres and facilities.

If significant alterations to existing buildings are being made, access and facilities for disabled people must be included.

The Building Performance website has information about designing buildings for access and usability.

[Designing for access and usability - Building Performance](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF102 Building Act compliance – Ministry of Education](#)

Centres not at ground level

Centres not at ground level face extra challenges to meet regulations and licensing criteria.

- Outdoor space must be directly connected to the indoor activity space and can be easily and safely accessed by children.
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand, your local National Public Health Service and the Ministry of Education should be consulted in the early stages of planning so that issues relating to access to outdoor play areas, evacuation plans, and other safety and quality considerations can be discussed – and solutions identified – before renovation or building begins.
- You should consider higher fencing where major hazards exist (like a fall from a building). Consider building fencing at least 1.8 metres high. Solid fencing will reduce noise. Windows in solid fences can be built to create interest for children and let in light.
- You need to take particular care in developing evacuation procedures for centres above ground level.
[Evacuation Schemes – Fire and Emergency New Zealand](#)
- Read the *Guidance for service providers, evacuation plans for ECE services in high rise buildings* on our HS105 Emergency plan and supplies licensing criterion web page (under tools to help you comply)
[HS105 Emergency plan and supplies – Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant legislation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF112 Outdoor activity space - Ministry of Education](#)

[HS104 Fire evacuation scheme - Ministry of Education](#)

[HS105 Emergency plan and supplies – Ministry of Education](#)



Complying with premises and facilities licensing criteria – indoors

When you are planning, designing and building your centre-based education and care service, not only do you have to comply with the Resource Management Act 1991, Building Act 2004 and any other relevant laws and regulations, you will need to ensure your premises meet the Education Regulations and centre-based service licensing criteria.

If you need clarification on the interpretation of specific requirements, contact your regional Ministry of Education office.

[Regional offices – Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulations:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licencing criteria:

[Premises and facilities licensing criteria for centre-based services – Ministry of Education](#)

Bathrooms, nappy change and body wash facilities

Bathrooms – general

Bathrooms do not need to be institutional. Aim to create a home-like setting. Ideas include using:

- warm colours
- attractively framed mirrors above the sink(s)
- framed children's artwork displayed sparingly (without 'over doing' visual stimulation)
- posters and signs (used thoughtfully).

Privacy toilet

When designing your bathroom area, talk to your local territorial authority and local National Public Health Service about requirements. For example, the Building Code requires privacy in toilets and licensing criterion PF117 requires at least 1 toilet for use by children is designed to provide them with some sense of privacy. There are different ways that this can be achieved.

Some communities prefer to have toilet doors, while others would rather not.

Some things to consider:

- Balance children's privacy with appropriate supervision and hygiene. Views on this will differ, so consider your community's values, the children's ages, and safety needs.
- If you choose not to install full toilet doors, it's a good idea to ensure at least one toilet has a full door that can be latched back during sessions.
- Partitions can provide children with a sense of privacy, if toilets are positioned side on rather than facing the entrance.
- Half height doors or walls offer privacy while still allowing visibility.
- Be mindful that half doors at bathroom entrances can cause problems if they are too tall.

Toilets

You must have at least 1 toilet for every 15 people – calculated on the maximum number of children aged 2 and older that the service is licensed for, and the number of adults needed to meet the minimum adult-to-child ratio requirements.

- Toilets and handwashing facilities need to be designed and located to let children capable of independent toileting to access them safely without adult help.
- Child-sized toilets are preferable, but adult toilets are acceptable if a step is provided. You will need to consider if using steps will become a hazard to children.
- Wall hung toilets can make cleaning the floor underneath much easier because there is no join between the toilet and the floor surface.
- Adequate supervision is important. Depending on the layout of the service, an adult-high viewing window into the bathroom area will ensure privacy and allow for discreet supervision.
- A 1.2 metre wall divider between children's toilets gives some privacy, as does positioning toilets side on to the main door.

Relevant licencing criteria:
[PF117 Toilets – Ministry of Education](#)

Hand basins

There must be at least 1 tap for every 15 people – calculated on the number of children attending the service and adults needed to meet the minimum adult-to-child ratio requirements.

- Handwashing and drying used with toilets need to be:
 - separated from play and food preparation areas
 - easily accessible (without adult help) to children who use the toilet independently.
- Water that children access can't be hotter than 40°C.
 - If water is stored in a hot water cylinder, the cylinder's thermostat must be set to at least 60°C, to prevent legionella bacteria from growing in the pipes.
 - An anti-scald, or tempering, valve can be used to manage the temperature of water at taps accessible to children unless an infinity gas system is available.
(An anti-scald valve is a thermostatically controlled device to keep water at the required temperature, regardless of incoming water temperatures. Once it has been adjusted to a warm temperature, it can be locked to prevent accidental or unauthorised re-adjustment)
- Long stainless-steel troughs that have 3 or 4 warm water taps can be easier for 3 or 4 children to use, easier to clean and easier to manage than 3 or 4 individual sinks.
- Hand basins/troughs should be at a height easily reached by the children who will be using them:
 - Older children – between 550mm and 600mm high
 - Younger children – 450mm to 500mm high.
- If hand basins are not child-sized, you may need to provide steps so children can reach the basin safely – although steps can create clutter and become a hazard.
- There are taps available that turn themselves off, with a lever that is easy for children to operate. They prevent water from being left on and are available from most plumbing outlets.
- If you prefer to have taps that turn, it's a good idea to ask the plumber to limit the amount of turn to 180 degrees. This will ensure that children don't keep turning a tap the wrong way when trying to turn it off – and eventually giving up.
- Liquid soap reduces the spread of infection. Make sure it is easy for children washing their hands to reach.

Extra handwashing facilities

Although not required by the regulations, it can be very helpful to have extra handwash facilities in main play areas. If children can easily wash hands after messy play or before mealtimes, supervision is easier and congestion in the bathroom reduced. Whether this is a good idea will depend on the service's overall layout, arrangement of groups and children's age ranges.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Hand drying

Use hand drying options that help minimise the spread of infection. Consider options like:

- paper hand towels – because they are single use and disposable. You can purchase child-sized paper hand towels to limit wastage
- individual cloth flannels – these should only be used once before washing
- air or fan dryers – may be noisy and not suitable for some children.

Ask your local National Public Health Service for information about recent research and new products. Products in this area are always changing and evolving.

Dispensers

Some companies provide the paper hand towel and liquid soap dispensers free of charge if you use their products.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF118 Handwashing and drying facilities - Ministry of Education](#)

Toilets and handwashing for adults

You must have separate toilets for adults.

- They must have walls that provide complete privacy and be accessible for all adults to use.
- Handwashing and drying facilities used with toilets must be clearly separated from play and food preparation areas.
- A disabled person's toilet may 'double' as the adult toilet. Disabled access toilets must meet size and facilities specifications. For example, seat height, grab rails and lever-style controls.

Relevant licencing criteria:

[PF119 Adult toilet, handwashing and drying facilities - Ministry of Education](#)

Nappy changing area

You must have a designated nappy changing area that is near to handwashing facilities and are adequately separated from areas of the service used for play or food preparation. The design and construction of the facilities should be safe, easy to clean, and suitable for the number, age and weight of the children using it.

- You will need to position the nappy change facility to support privacy for the child, in an area that has some visibility from another area of the centre. This should help keep children safe and enable support for adults where needed – a viewing window or open doorway can provide visibility without compromising children's privacy.
- The nappy changing facilities must have smooth, waterproof, easy-to-clean and sanitise surfaces. There must be disposable change mats, or non-porous change mats that can be cleaned between each use.
- You may wish to purchase a unit that has steps, a non-porous, soft surface on top, and storage below. Steps allow children to climb up to the table independently and help to prevent adult back injuries.
- A solid unit can be made soft on top by using a small mattress/nappy change pad that is covered in a non-porous material.
- Nappy changing tables designed for domestic use can be unstable and not suitable for use in early childhood service environments.
- Some commercially available nappy disposal systems contain the smell of used nappies very effectively. Alternatively, have a small 'door' (for example, 0.5 x 0.5 metres) with a chute to an outside rubbish bin by the changing table. The rubbish bin must be in an area not used by children.
- Shelving should give staff easy access to children's nappies etc. Any cleaning products (for example, bleach solutions) must be inaccessible to children.

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF120 Nappy change facilities – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS103 Nappy changing procedure - Ministry of Education](#)

Body washing facilities

You must have facilities where soiled children can be washed safely and effectively. We recommend having a body washing facility near your nappy changing facility.

Consider having something like a small tub (shub), large sink or bath with a handheld shower hose suitable that is easy to access and is suitable for washing a very soiled child.

For infants and toddlers

- If your service only caters for infants or toddlers, a shub at bench height (approximately 800mm from the floor) could be a good idea. Incorporating the shub into a large nappy changing bench allows for safe and easy movement between the bench and shub.
- A pull-out spray sink mixer, with an extendable hose, makes it easy to clean around a sink or shub, or to wash a baby. This facility can double as the areas for adults to wash their hands in after nappy changing.

For older children

- Washing facilities at floor level can work well for older children, for example, a floor-level shub with a handheld shower hose, or have a sloping, textured floor with a drain – like disabled shower areas.

Challenges

- Fixed showers (like domestic showers) make it difficult to help wash children without getting wet yourself.
- A bath may not be as safe for very young children because adults cannot hold infants securely unless they get in with them. Trying to hold babies in baths can also create back problems for adults.

See the hand basins section for information about water temperature. [Hand basins](#)

Designing the space so it can be seen from other areas of the service helps keep children safe.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF121 Body wash facilities – Ministry of Education](#)

Kitchens, dining areas and laundries

Kitchen design

In your kitchen, you must be able to:

- keep perishable food at or below 5°C
- keep all foods protected from pests
- cook and/or heat food to safe temperatures
- hygienically wash dishes.

Your kitchen must have:

- a sink connected to a hot water supply
- adequate and suitable storage for food, utensils, and equipment, and
- food preparation surfaces that are easily maintained in a hygienic condition.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF115 Kitchen facilities – Ministry of Education](#)

The Food Act 2014

If you provide food at your service, your kitchen needs to comply with the Food Act 2014 and its regulations.

Design, construction and location

The design and construction of the kitchen must enable food to be safe and suitable by ensuring:

- there is adequate space for the food activities being carried out
- the movement of staff, visitors and food flow in a way that prevents or manages the risk of contamination of food or food-related accessories
- dirt, fumes and other contaminants are excluded, and pests are prevented from entering and remaining in the kitchen
- easy access for cleaning and maintenance
- materials used for construction and surfaces cannot contaminate the food.

Air quality and ventilation

There is adequate ventilation (either natural or mechanical) to:

- minimise airborne contamination of food
- remove fumes, smoke, steam and vapours
- control condensation or humidity.

Relevant regulation:

[Food Regulations 2015, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

[Food Regulations 2015, Regulation 57 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Large centres

If you are designing a large centre with separate areas for infants and toddlers, it is a good idea to have a kitchenette in the infant area for storing bottles and heating food. Make sure you manage any hazards created.

Kitchen safety

Kitchen and cooking facilities or appliances are designed, located or fitted with safety devices to ensure that children cannot access them without adult assistance or supervision.

There are several ways you can do this:

- create a separate space
- close kitchen or cooking facilities off with a full or half door that can be child locked
- fit all appliances with safety devices.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF116 Kitchen safety – Ministry of Education](#)

Dining areas

You must have clean and safe places for children to sit while eating. This could be a separate room or in the activity space.

When choosing dining spaces, think about how many children you have, the layout of your service and any cultural needs.

Relevant licensing criterion:
[PF114 Dining facilities - Ministry of Education](#)

Laundries

Many items at early childhood services need prompt, regular washing. For example:

- kitchen laundry
- Bibs
- dress-up clothes
- baby toys
- towels
- cloths used for art and messy play.

Having a washing machine and drying facilities on site has benefits. Linen can be cleaned promptly. This is very useful if children are sick, wet a bed, etc.

It is a good idea to have a door leading directly from the laundry to the outside area so staff can access the washing line without walking through the centre.

If the laundry facilities are not separate from the kitchen, they must be designed so that laundry activities and products do not contaminate food.

Relevant regulation:
[Food Regulations 2015, Regulation 61 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:
[HS102 Laundering – Ministry of Education](#)

Indoor activity areas

A well-designed early childhood service needs space for different types of indoor play, including individual and group activities, messy play, dramatic play, quiet space, eating, sleeping and so on.

Because the interests of children of different ages differ, much of the equipment that supports key areas of play will also differ. For example, older babies are often interested in taking things apart and learning to crawl up and over things, while older children can be more focused on building things and putting things together (such as complicated block play or puzzles).

When designing areas of play, consider ways to provide enough space to ensure children can explore their interests without disturbing each other's 'work'.

Indoor activity area – floor space

While more space is desirable, you must at least meet the regulated minimum requirements for indoor activity space.

The minimum indoor activity space is 2.5 square metres per child. This space is calculated clear of all furniture, fittings, fixed equipment and stored goods, and excluding:

- passageways
- toilet facilities
- staff rooms
- specific sleeping areas for children under 2
- other areas not available for play.

Measurements will be made by the Ministry of Education during your probationary licensing visit.

If a centre is catering to a large age range, more space may be needed to support a range of learning opportunities and adequate quiet space.

Infants and toddlers

If you have infants and toddlers, they need enough space to ensure there are safe floor surfaces to lie on, crawl on and practice walking.

Consider having separate infant and toddler areas to provide space, equipment and resources that best support their learning and so they can have at least part of their day in a part of a relatively small group – research has found that having separate spaces for young children is very important for their development.

To create separate spaces for infants and toddlers to explore, you could use:

- barriers
- risers
- shelf units
- other furniture.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Schedule 4 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF101 Design, layout and supervision of premises – Ministry of Education](#)

[PF113 Infant toddler safe space – Ministry of Education](#)

Floor surfaces

Choose floor surfaces that are safe, durable, and easy to clean to suit the range of activities in your service. Consider how much time children spend on the floor when choosing a floor type.

It is a good rule of thumb to have about two-thirds hard surface and one-third carpet in the children's indoor play area. This is because a lot of messy play – such as paint, clay and water – is transported to other areas.

Different types of flooring

Well maintained wooden, particle, cork or vinyl floors are most suitable in an area used for messy play, and in dining areas.

Vinyl

Vinyl that extends a little way up the wall is easier to clean and is more hygienic over long periods of time – it eliminates joins at the edge of the floor.

Ensure you comply with the Building Code – you may be required to have vinyl in the toilet and kitchen areas that extends 75mm up the wall.

Carpet and mats

Carpet is better in a book or block area.

Mats are useful because they can be removed for cleaning and can be moved to reorganise the learning environment from time to time. (There are some very effective semi-permanent tapes that attach a mat to the floor so it doesn't become a trip hazard.)

Infants and toddlers

If you have infants and toddlers at your centre it is good for them to have the opportunity to explore a range of texture. A range of mixed flooring types may be one way to provide this.

You may want to consider under-floor heating.

Relevant licensing criterion:
[PF105 Flooring – Ministry of Education](#)

Sleep rooms, rest areas and sick rooms

Furniture and items intended for children to sleep on (such as cots, beds, stretchers, or mattresses) must be:

- a size that allows children using them to lie flat, and
- a design to ensure children's safety.

If they are to be used for more than 1 child over time, they need to be securely covered with or made of a non-porous material (material that does not allow liquid to pass through it) so they are protected from becoming soiled, are easily cleaned and are not a suffocation hazard to children.

Sleep areas for very young children (under the age of 2)

Children must be able to have undisturbed rest or sleep when they need it. Creating safe, calm, and well supervised sleep environments is essential for infants' and toddlers' wellbeing. If you have young children under the age of 2 at your service, you must have a designated sleep space for them.

Location

If a sleep room is positioned close to the infant and toddler play space(s), it's easier for teachers to regularly check children. A viewing window between a sleep room and a main play area (or other area where adults will be) can also make supervision easier, as long as it is not treated as a substitute for regular, physical checks that are required.

If sleep rooms are located near quiet parts of the play area, it will be easier for children to go to sleep and stay asleep.

Consider having more than 1 room for cots /sleep facilities. Children need undisturbed rest and this is very difficult to provide if other children are unsettled.

Furniture and layout

For all-day services – you need at least 1 cot/sleep furniture item to every 2 children.

For sessional services – you need at least 1 cot/sleeping furniture item to every 5 children.

The right number of cots/sleeping furniture will depend on how long children attend and their ages. Allow plenty of space so that more cots can be added if needed.

Child-sized stretchers may be suitable for older toddlers.

Space between cots

The space between cots needs to allow adults to easily check on children, ensure they are not too hot or cold, and check their breathing.

Allowing plenty of space between sleeping children will enable good air flow, which limits cross infection and children disturbing others.

Remember to allow space within the sleep rooms for door opening, storage and adult supervision (for example, an armchair for an adult) when you are estimating the space you will need.

It may be useful to work out the size of a cot (or similar) using the scale of your floor plan. Ensure that the plan shows doors and windows, then 'map it out' to see how the cots could be organised, and if more space is needed.

Types of cots

Cots should be sturdy, easily wipeable and allow good air flow. For example, wooden, well painted cots are easy to wipe clean, sturdy and allow air flow. All cots need to meet New Zealand Safety Standards. (Cots that are very low to the floor can create back problems for adults.)

Multi-level cots

Multi-level cots may only be used if specific conditions are met.

- Each cot must be well ventilated to prevent the build-up of carbon dioxide, moisture, and heat.
- Your local National Public Health Service must have no concerns about airflow, and Fire and Emergency NZ must have no concerns about their use.
- Cots must be securely fixed to the wall and easily accessible to staff, with sufficient separation to prevent cross-infection.
- Cots must only be opened from the outside by an adult.
- They must have no gaps, protrusions, or sharp edges, and the sides must prevent climbing.
- Mattresses must fit firmly and not be too soft.
- Children who can sit or stand must not be placed in the upper level.
- Children who can sit must be able to do so safely in the lower level.
- Once children are too large or mobile, they must be moved to a single-level cot, stretcher, mattress or bed.
- You can find additional guidance for multilevel cots in licensing criterion PF124.

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF124 Design of sleep provisions – Ministry of Education](#)

[PF128 Sessional services only: under 2 sleep space – Ministry of Education](#)

[PF129 All-day services: under 2 cot:child ratio - Ministry of Education](#)

Sleep areas for older children (over the age of 2)

All-day services

Older children who need to sleep or rest during the day will need a quiet space away from other children.

- Sleep areas can be a separate room or a quiet part of the play space. If this area is part of the activity space, alternative activity spaces for children who are not sleeping or resting will also be needed.
- Having a separate space is the best way to allow children to rest, without affecting other children's ability to take part in other activities.
- Vinyl covered mattresses, stretchers, sleeping mats or child-sized beds work well for older children.
- There must be space down the length of the mattress/cot to allow for adult access.
- As with the younger children, it is also important to allow space between sleeping children to prevent cross infection.

If children are using marae-style sleeping arrangements, remember to:

- still use individual linen for each child
- ensure that there is adequate space between children to minimise cross-infection and disturbance.

Sessional services

Have a safe and comfortable place for older children to sleep or rest if necessary.

Consider:

- a bed permanently set up in a convenient place like the office, or
- a stretcher or mattress that can be pulled out and set up as required.

Remember: Any sleeping child must be monitored as required by licensing criterion HS107 Sleep monitoring.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF124 Design of sleep provisions – Ministry of Education](#)

[PF126 Sessional services only: over 2 sleep space – Ministry of Education](#)

[PF127 All-day services only: over 2 sleep space – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS107 Sleep monitoring - Ministry of Education](#)

Linen and bedding

- Clean bedding (such as blankets, sheets, sleeping bags and pillowslips) must be provided for sleeping or resting children that is sufficient to keep them warm.
- Linen can be washed after every use or stored separately with the child's name on it and washed as required. Some services make cloth bags or use blankets with name tags to store each child's linen. This prevents cross infection.
- Locating stored mattresses and bedding near the sleep area will make it quicker and easier for teachers and children to get ready for sleep and rest times.
- Never store bedding on mattresses.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF125 Mattress coverings and bedding – Ministry of Education](#)

Sleep supervision

Any sleeping child must be monitored as required by licensing criterion HS107 Sleep monitoring.

Create a space that helps with monitoring.

- Depending on the layout of the service, a viewing window into the sleep area may help supervision. Large viewing windows that are about 700mm above the floor allow adults to easily supervise sleeping children and allow adults to be seen.
- Looking through the window should not be a substitute for proper monitoring procedures.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS107 Sleep monitoring - Ministry of Education](#)

Sick (isolation) area

All education and care services need an area (away from where food is stored, prepared, or eaten, and a safe distance from other children) for sick children to rest.

The area needs to:

- be a safe distance away from other children
- be away from where food is store, prepared or eaten

Have somewhere for sick children to lie down comfortably and be supervised – separate linen, and a vinyl sheet that can cover a 2-seater couch in a staff area or quiet corner, may be suitable.

The isolation area cannot be the under 2-year-old sleep room because this room needs to remain available for the children needing sleep or rest.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF122 Isolation area - Ministry of Education](#)

Staff spaces

Have staff spaces that allow teachers to take breaks, heat food, make hot drinks, store professional development material and children's records, and carry out non-contact duties with children not present.

Consider:

- making some staff areas out of sight of the children to help teachers using the staff area on non-contact time, or for lunch breaks to take a restful break.
- having a separate office space for those involved in centre administration.
- positioning the office near the entrance to the centre – parents/visitors can make enquiries when they enter and before their child has seen them. This can make it easier for parents and teachers to focus on important (and sometimes confidential) conversations.
- having somewhere to meet separately with parents – this might be a shared office space.

If you also use this space for storage have some good storage and shelving solutions.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF108 Adult workspace – Ministry of Education](#)

Storage space

Children's lockers

Allow plenty of space for children's belongings.

Consider how you can provide children with access to their belongings that allows them to take some responsibility for their things, including choosing what to wear throughout the day.

It is important to remove anything that may be harmful to children, for example medicines.

Infant's lockers

Think about places for storage of infants' things. Infants' lockers are often placed near the nappy changing area so that spare clothes are close by.

Nappies and other items could be put in individual baskets or shelves right next to the nappy change area. This makes it easier when changing nappies and also means that anything inappropriate for young children is removed from the bag (for example, nappy cream).

Storage and cleaning of play equipment and material

Storage

When planning storage, for safety:

- arrange storage so it's easy to access, reduces congestion, and keeps everyone safe
- avoid stacking items on high shelves or over stacking the inside of cupboards to prevent the risk of items falling when accessing them
- consider the earthquake proofing of stored items.

Teachers use different resources to support children's changing interests over time, so you'll need space to store a lot of equipment and resources. Some will be on display for children's use and self-selection.

Consider storage for large numbers of:

- equipment for subjects like:
 - art
 - dramatic play
 - science
 - music
- books and puzzles.

Good storage is important so that equipment won't fall in an earthquake and so that the environment is aesthetically attractive to adults and children. Stacked clutter does not represent a well-planned, effective learning environment.

Also consider storage space for:

- beds and bedding
- linen
- highchairs
- prams, buggies and car seats – avoid a cluttered reception foyer.

As a general rule of thumb – you can never have too much storage space.

Storage will work best if you have shelving, hooks and boxes, and so on, for equipment.

Cleaning equipment

Teachers also need space to clean art materials, like paint, etc. It usually works well if this area is close to where art materials are stored.

Have a large bench and sink at adult height, similar to a very large kitchen sink, for cleaning art materials – this should be separate from food preparation areas and the cleaner's sink, for hygiene reasons.

If you infants and toddlers, sterilise play equipment regularly – everything goes in little children's mouths.

Consider:

- having space that allows for equipment to be soaked in an antibacterial solution and then drained
- installing an industrial dishwasher to clean and sterilise equipment.

Refer to the bathrooms section and the kitchen and laundries section for more details on sinks, taps and water temperatures.

[Bathrooms, nappy change and body wash facilities](#)

[Kitchens and laundries](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF107 Storage - Ministry of Education](#)

[PF109 Art preparation and clean up facilities - Ministry of Education](#)

Storage for cleaning products and equipment

It is important to keep cleaning products and equipment well out of the children's reach.

- Lockable cupboards in kitchen and laundry areas are good places to keep hazardous materials.
- A locked cleaner's cupboard that has a sink as well as chemicals means less likelihood of contamination.

For services subject to the Food Act 2014 and Food Regulations 2015:

- there must be places for storing cleaning products and equipment, so they don't contaminate food or surfaces used to prepare or store food
- cleaning products must be appropriately labelled, so they are not used in food.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS108 Hazard and risk management - Ministry of Education](#)

Lighting, ventilation, heating and acoustics

You need to make sure areas used by children are well-lit and properly ventilated. You also need to be able to maintain a comfortable room temperature and keep noise levels to an acceptable level.

Lighting

Lighting must be appropriate to the activities offered or purpose of each room. For example, brighter lighting in activity areas and softer lighting in sleep rooms.

- Check the lighting requirements in the Building Code.
- Consider if additional windows or skylights are required.

Ventilation

All areas used by children must have adequate circulation of fresh air to maintain good air quality.

Ventilation can be:

- natural – e.g. opening windows and doors to achieve cross-ventilation
- mechanical – must be on during all licensed hours and appropriate for the size and purpose of the room.

For specific appliances and areas:

- Clothes dryers should be vented to the outdoors.
- Bathrooms, nappy change areas and laundries need to be well ventilated – If they are internal rooms, mechanical ventilation is required – check with your local National Public Health Service or building authority.
- Sleep areas must be well ventilated to allow air to circulate so that old air can exit and fresh air can enter. At least 2 openings are usually needed to achieve this – check with your local National Public Health Service.

[Building Code compliance – Building Performance](#)

Maintaining a comfortable temperature

A safe and effective system to heat and cool rooms must be in place to maintain a comfortable temperature (minimum of 18 degrees) while children are present. This includes sleep areas and bathrooms. The system or systems you choose should be able to work effectively in response to the climate in your area.

- Ceiling heaters or wall-mounted fan heaters placed above floor level (that is, higher on the wall) are safe and appropriate for education and care services because they are out of the children's way. Also, if they are not at ground level, they don't use up space that could be used for equipment display, couches, etc.
- Infrared heaters are good for heating large spaces.
- Heat pumps are very efficient and cheap to run. They can also provide air conditioning in the summer. Extra fan heaters can be helpful to heat a room quickly.
- Oil-filled column heaters are good in sleep rooms, if space allows, but must be guarded and secured for earthquake safety. They should also have a thermostat to prevent overheating. Ensure the plug is out of reach or permanently wired in.
- Underfloor heating can be a good for infants and toddlers who spend so much of their time on the floor.
- Ceiling fans help circulate heat and work well when combined with fan heaters or under-floor heating.
- Water-filled radiators need guards around them to protect children. They usually have only limited temperature control.
- Night stores can be a useful additional heat source. They should also be guarded.

- Electric bar heaters and heaters with fuel reservoirs like kerosene/gas bottles are dangerous in centres.
- Any thermometers fixed on walls need to be positioned out of children's reach and no higher than 1500mm above the floor.

Think about capturing natural heat from the sun, for example, double glazing and window positions. These decisions can save money as well as be aesthetically pleasing.

[Temperature at work – WorkSafe](#)

Acoustics

High noise levels and noise reverberation can make it hard to communicate and negatively affect children's learning or wellbeing.

When you are building or undertaking renovations consider the acoustic properties of the spaces in your premises. For example, large open play spaces with high ceilings and unbroken hard surfaces will be noisy and have a high reverberation time.

Consider using different methods to absorb or diffuse sound waves.

- Install acoustic materials/tiles on ceilings and upper walls.
- Configure furniture to minimise sound reflection between hard, parallel surfaces. For example, place open shelves or cubby holes on walls opposite each other.
- Have carpeted areas.
- Use soft furnishing like curtains, big cushions and upholstered furniture like couches and chairs.
- Hang complex shapes like mobiles, wall and ceiling hangings to break up spaces.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF111 Lighting, ventilation, temperature control and acoustic materials - Ministry of Education](#)

[HS118 Room temperature – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS111 Noise levels – Ministry of Education](#)

Electrical sockets, first aid kits and telephones

Electrical sockets

Equipment, premises and facilities must be regularly checked for hazards to children. This includes electrical sockets. They should be:

- out of reach of children
- adequately shielded
- of a suitable design to limit danger to children – 'safety' electrical sockets are safe even if unguarded.

Because children may not have 'safety' sockets at home, it may be best to shield all sockets, to prevent confusion that could create dangers for children at home. Discuss with your local Ministry of Education office.

Ideally, some sockets should be installed high up (about 1.4 metres above the floor), so electrical items can sit on shelves without the cords causing clutter.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS108 Hazard and risk management - Ministry of Education](#)

First aid kits

You must have at least one first aid kit for your service. The number of kits you have will depend on the layout of the service and the number and age of children. At least one medium or large first aid kit should be available for every 50 children.

First aid kits need to be:

- clearly labelled as a first aid kit, to make them easy to identify.
- easily accessed by adults, but inaccessible to children – many companies sell large cabinets that have safety latches and can be attached to the wall out of children's reach.

Having at least 1 fixed cabinet will ensure first aid equipment stays in a predictable place.

First aid kit contents

The kit(s) should have a broad range of supplies that help adults treat children, as needed.

For example:

- disposable gloves
- sterile saline solution (or some other means of cleansing wounds)
- safety pins, bandage clips or tape (or some other means of holding dressings in place)
- sterile wound dressings, including sticking plasters
- rolls of stretchable bandage
- triangular bandage (or some other means of immobilising an upper limb injury)
- scissors
- tweezers
- cold pack
- first aid manual
- National Poisons Centre phone number – 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766
- Healthline phone number – 0800 611 116.

Have a clear system in place to show that your first aid kit(s) are well stocked, with items promptly replenished and replaced.

It is a good idea to also have a 'grab bag' or backpack that contains essential first aid equipment to take to the accident site if necessary. Some centres also use this type of bag for taking on excursions or outings. Remember to ensure that it is inaccessible to children when not in use.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF123 First aid kit - Ministry of Education](#)

Telephone

Your service must have a telephone that allows quick contact with emergency services, easy two-way communication with parents, and lets adults make necessary calls for the service. This could be:

- a cellular device
- landline
- cordless phone
- a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

Cell phones are useful for outings, providing an alternative emergency number for parents and are useful if the centre needs to be evacuated. In an emergency, it may be helpful if families' contact numbers are saved into the mobile phone.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF110 Telephone – Ministry of Education](#)



Complying with premises and facilities licensing criteria – outdoors

You should make sure that your outdoor activity space is connected to the indoor area so children can access it safely and easily. It should be safe and well drained, with surfaces suitable for the variety of activities you provide.

Your service must not be unduly restricted by resource consent conditions that impact on children's outdoor experiences.

Fences, gates, windows and handrails

Fences

Outdoor activity space needs to be enclosed by structures and/or fences and gates designed to ensure that children are not able to leave the premises without the knowledge of adults providing education and care.

Height and aesthetics

Fences of less than 1.2 metres high are unlikely to be high enough to prevent children from climbing over them. A safer height is 1.5 metres, and 1.8 metres may be desirable if older children attend. When deciding on the fence height, consider:

- how many adults will be able to be outside with the children at any time
- whether the layout of the outdoor space creates any barriers to supervision
- how equipment is likely to be placed and whether moveable equipment could create hazards in the future (for example, if children shift equipment closer to a fence)
- the surrounding environments – paddocks, a busy road or bodies of water offer different ‘attractions’ and hazards for children
- fencing that allows the children to see out to the world around them – swimming pool fencing is 1 way to provide this opportunity, and windows can be inserted in solid fences to allow children to look out and community members to see in and interact with children (discuss your situation with staff from your regional Ministry of Education office and local National Public Health Service)
- resource consent issues that may dictate the height and construction of the fence – solid fencing reduces noise transfer from the centre to any neighbours
- adding windows, framed mirrors and areas suitable for painting (for example, a large piece of light-coloured Formica) that can create interest, make spaces feel larger and utilise space effectively
- having a small gap of 5 mm between each paling that allows wind to flow through rather than build up and come over the top of a solid fence.

General tips

- If horizontal supports are on the outside, children won't be able to use them to climb over the fence. If the fence is already built, a fillet on the horizontal rail or covering the area between the rails may prevent children from climbing.
- If using a hurricane pipe and wire fence, consider using the wire that is 25mm across the diamond. This is a smaller size than normal, but children can easily climb the 60mm size. The pipe needs to be secure at the top and bottom.

Gates and doors

Think about how people will come in and out of your premises and how you will get equipment and larger items into the outside play area.

- If people come into the building first, rather than through the playground, it may be easier for staff to monitor arrivals and departures.
- Having a gate between the car park and the entrance door contains children in a safe area if a door is left open by mistake. It also ensures that strangers are not provided direct access to the play area.
- Install a gate wide enough to give trailer and large equipment, e.g. ride-on lawn mower, access to the outside play area.

Types of gates

- Swimming pool gates with high safety locks and springs that close the gate automatically are well designed to meet the needs of early childhood services. A swimming pool gate also allows staff to see who is coming into the centre.
- A large wooden gate with high locks makes it hard to see if someone is trying to get in. For example, someone in a wheelchair. If you need a solid gate to block noise or pollution outside the gate, putting a window in the gate may be a solution.

Emergency exits

Fire and Emergency New Zealand usually recommends that there are at least 2 outward opening doors from the inside of a centre to the outside. This allows people to get out easily in case of fire.

You need to also consider how children will get out of the playground to a safer space in the event of a fire.

Seek advice from your local fire service or visit the Fire and Emergency New Zealand website.

[Evacuation Schemes – Fire and Emergency New Zealand](#)

Windows

Windows or other areas of glass accessible to children need to be:

- made of safety glass
- covered by an adhesive film designed to hold the glass in place in the event of it being broken, or
- effectively guarded by barriers that prevent a child striking or falling against the glass.

If your service is in a new building, you are already likely to meet this requirement – the Building Act requires the use of safety glass in windows and doors located in high-risk areas of all new buildings.

When assessing which glass areas in your service are accessible to children, consider:

- height from the floor, glass below 800mm is typically within reach of young children
- nearby furniture or climbable objects can make higher glass reachable.

Children should be able to see outside through most windows. If windows are placed 500mm to 600mm above the floor, older children will be able to see out and display units can still be positioned up against the wall. Consider setting some non-opening windows at a very low height to create interest for infants and toddlers.

Sliding windows are a good idea for opening onto a deck or ramp. The protruding edge of windows that open outwards can create a hazard.

Safety catches

Windows should have safety catches where they are a potential hazard to children.

Types of window that slide up and down (sash windows) should have a bolt that holds the window when it is open at approximately 200mm – so they do not accidentally drop down on a child, causing injury.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 45 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[PF106 Glass safety - Ministry of Education](#)

[PF112 Outdoor activity space - Ministry of Education](#)

Handrails

The Building Code does not require decks or steps under 1 metre to have handrails. But for young children's use, it is advisable to have balustrades surrounding decks – or you could have very wide steps (platforms) surrounding a deck. If wide enough, these will prevent children from falling far.

- Where balustrades are installed make sure they will not trap body parts and are high enough so that children are not able to sit or climb on them. The space between balustrades should not be more than 100mm.
- Consider providing handrails at child height.
- Platforms that are 'deep' (350mm to 700mm) and 'low' (100mm to 110mm) are appropriate for infants and toddlers who tend to crawl or climb down steps. Such platforms may not require handrails. Take advice from your local building authority.

Playgrounds

The Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 require early childhood education and care centres to have premises and facilities that support safe and healthy practices.

The licensing criteria for education and care services aim to keep children safe by ensuring that all items, equipment, furniture, materials and surfacing used in the service is of a standard that is considered safe.

Standard for playground equipment and surfacing

The New Zealand standard for playground equipment and surfacing is **NZS5828:2015 Playground equipment and surfacing**.

Copies of the standard are available for purchase from Standards New Zealand. This standard is aimed primarily at manufacturers and installers of playground equipment and is written in technical language.

[NZS5828:2015 – Standards New Zealand](#)

Purchasing and installing playground equipment and surfacing

Before purchasing new equipment or safety surfacing, you should ensure that:

- the product has been tested against **New Zealand Standard NZS5828:2015**
- the manufacturer can supply a certificate of compliance for that product.

Newly installed playground equipment or safety surfacing must have:

- a certificate of compliance to show that it is installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Remember to provide sufficient storage for moveable outdoor equipment. In a large storage shed, finding things can be made much easier with a Clearlite roof – especially if electricity is not available.

Demonstrated compliance

Service providers must demonstrate that playground structures, equipment and surfacing are safe, have been installed according to manufacturer's instructions and meet relevant licensing criteria.

Ministry of Education licensing staff complete an inspection of each service's playground equipment and surfacing as part of the licensing assessment process.

- If there are concerns, you may be asked for additional evidence, like a certificate of compliance, that shows the equipment and/or surfacing comply with the New Zealand standard for playground equipment and surfacing, **NZS5828:2015**.
- In some cases, you may be required to have a comprehensive inspection of your premises and facilities completed. This would need to be completed by an appropriately qualified expert such as an engineer or qualified playground safety inspector.

People offering an inspection or assessment service (especially for detailed inspections or compliance checks) should be able to produce evidence of relevant qualifications and training in inspecting against **NZS5828:2015**.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF104 Safe and suitable items, surfaces, furniture, materials and equipment - Ministry of Education](#)

Constructing a sand area

Drainage, edging and the 'look'

- The area dug out for the sand should be up to 600mm deep.
- It is a good idea to create an edge, to clearly separate the sand from the surrounding soil. Tanalised posts can work well or line the sides with marine ply.
- Consider how you want children to access the sand area, particularly children with disabilities or very small children. Also consider how natural you want it to look.
- You can create edging up to 200mm above the ground to contain the sand without obstructing most children's access. However, you may decide to design the sandpit without a raised edging so that children can crawl into it.
- Tussocks and large rocks provide an attractive natural barrier between the sand area and other activities. If rocks are used, ensure that the area on their other side is not close to climbing equipment or activities where children are prone to fall – such as bike tracks.
- Line the bottom of the pit with 300mm of scoria if there is no stormwater drain. If a drain is available, scoria is needed to contain it.
- Cover the scoria with a layer of filter cloth, mud matting or shade cloth. Water can drain through but the children cannot dig up the scoria.
- Add approximately 500mm of sand. Dune sand is a fine grain sand good for making sandcastles. East Coast sand is also a good option because it is not too light and won't fly about in the wind. It is a white grain of sand.

Covers

The Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46, and licensing criterion HS108 require that equipment, premises, and facilities are regularly checked for hazards to children. Hazards can include dangerous objects and foreign materials.

- Sand areas should be covered after the last session each day, or
- raked and inspected for animal droppings and dangerous objects before children arrive each morning.

Covers should:

- be easy to remove
- allow the sand to 'breathe'
- allow rain in to clean the sand.

It is a good idea to talk with other early childhood services about covers that they have found useful.

Seating

- Consider building a seat around part of the sand area. Any corners should be rounded off.

Shade

- A suitable sunshade should be provided.
- Consider natural shade options like trees.

It is a good idea to talk with other early childhood services about the pros and cons of various sunshade solutions.

Size and position

- The sand area is a very important area of play and will be well used. Consideration of size and position should be well thought through. A warm position that is easily supervised is recommended.
- In terms of sand pits, bigger is generally better.

Storage and other considerations

- Provide a storage area close to the sand for equipment. If possible, children should be able to select their own equipment. Good storage will help this process and save teachers' time.
- Think about having a tap close by so water can be added to sand.
- Consider having a decking platform for extended play such as the water trough, water spouting or dramatic play near the sandpit.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS108 Hazard and risk management - Ministry of Education](#)



Equipment for early childhood services

Providing children with a variety of equipment and resources gives them the opportunity to make choices, plan and problem solve as they play.

Choosing your equipment

When choosing equipment for children consider the 3 broad age groups described in Te Whāriki:

- Infants – birth to 18 months.
- Toddlers – 1 to 3 years.
- Young children – from 2 years 6 months to school entry age.

[Te Whāriki – Tāhūrangi](#)

Consider safety, size and durability when choosing material, equipment and resources. Ask the following questions:

- How long will it last with daily use by 20 or more children?
- Is it non-toxic? What type of paint has been used on it?
- Does it have rounded edges to prevent cuts etc?
- Is it safe for babies? Could a baby swallow it?
- Is the size appropriate for a child?
- Is it easy to clean?

Principles and strands of Te Whāriki

When providing an enriched environment for children, we must ensure that the principles and strands of Te Whāriki are at the centre of our planning decisions.

[Te Whāriki – Tāhūrangi](#)

Principles

- Empowerment | Whakamana – The early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow.
- Holistic development | Kotahitanga – The early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow.
- Family and community | Whānau tangata – The wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum.
- Relationships | Ngā hononga – Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things.

Strands

- Wellbeing | Mana atua – The health and wellbeing of the child are protected and nurtured.
- Belonging | Mana whenua – Children and their families feel a sense of belonging.
 - Equipment and resources should reflect Māori tikanga and language.
 - Equipment and resources reflect the cultures in the local community.
- Contribution | Mana tangata – Opportunities for learning are equitable, and each child's contribution is valued.
 - Resources should reflect differing attitudes and feelings that will help children to accept other people who are different from themselves.
 - Equipment should encourage children to solve conflicts in a peaceful way and will develop positive and constructive attitudes to competition.
- Communication | Mana reo – The languages and symbols of children's own and other cultures are promoted and protected.

- Books, language, talking, storytelling, puppets, listening and Māori resources.
- Papatūānuku | natural materials stones, bark, shells and so on.
- Written language – te reo Māori visually seen, numbers, waiata and so on.
- Equipment and resources to support creative expression in areas such as art, music, dance, construction.
- Greeting each person in their language.
- Visual resources.
- Music and instruments from other countries.
- Fantasy play – dress-up clothes, eating utensils and so on.
- Puzzles and books.
- Resources from support agencies for families to access.
- Opportunities for emerging literacy.
- Equipment, furniture and layout to support conversations, for example cushions, sofas, mat/carpet.
- Exploration | Mana aotūroa – The child learns through active exploration of the environment.
 - Books and storytelling props.
 - Puzzles and manipulative equipment.
 - Blocks.
 - Materials that foster creativity.
 - Dough and clay.
 - Dramatic play resources.
 - Sand.
 - Water.
 - Natural materials (for example, stones, bark, shells), animals, science resources (for example, magnifying glasses, magnets, microscope, experiment books) and so on.
 - Carpentry equipment and resources that promote physically active play resources (for example, cardboard, blankets, wood) that enable large constructions such as huts, boats and so on.
 - Paper, pens, rulers and so on.
 - Papatūānuku | natural materials.
 - ICT equipment.

Equipment lists

The following lists provide some ideas of equipment that you may include in your 'resources library'. Diversity in equipment is encouraged, and these lists can be adapted and extended to accommodate an individual focus or philosophy. Many other items of equipment could be added to the lists.

Suggested equipment for children over 2 years old

This is a suggested list only. Your resources and equipment will grow according to the interests and passions of your children and community.

Books and storytelling	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display units should be low so that children can see and select their own books. Shelves could be sloping with a lip to allow books to stand up. • Provide cushions and/or a soft sofa. 	<p>A selection of at least 30 books, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional stories • New Zealand stories • cultural stories • nursery rhymes • poetry and songs • make-believe • stories of people in real life situations • gender roles, such as boys caring or girls having adventures • large books for shared group stories. <p>Props for storytelling including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puppets • magnetic stories and boards • story CDs.

Manipulative	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suitable display unit for puzzles or similar, preferably with sloping shelves with a lip so that children can see the puzzles and choose them. • Cardboard puzzles won't last long, they cannot be cleaned effectively and should not be considered permanent equipment. Puzzles should reflect biculturalism and gender equity and be of varying degrees of difficulty. 	<p>Equipment should include a range of resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knob puzzles • picture puzzles • shapes • geometrics • posting box • threading • peg boards • 3-dimensional • maths games, including natural materials such as shells and stones.

Creativity	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large table and seating. • Storage unit. 	<p>A wide range of resources that could be used for creating should be provided. This is likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • glue pots • glue brushes of assorted sizes • variety of glue – PVA, Polycell • children's scissors • left-handed scissors • adult scissors • staplers, large roll of sticky tape/masking tape and dispenser ball of string • felt pens • crayons • pastels • children's thick pencils • rulers • non-toxic colouring in a range of colours • glitter and containers • hole-punch • collage materials: material scraps and natural materials (leaves and seeds).

Painting	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easels. • Drying rack. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aprons. • Non-spill paint pots. • Assorted paint brushes. • Different coloured non-toxic paint. • Paint palette. • Rollers. • Newsprint/large and small sheets of paper.

Music	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storage unit – consider shelves, hooks, baskets or boxes. 	<p>Sound can be made from almost anything. Consider the use of natural materials in this area too, for example, stones to bang together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CD player/stereo or streaming device Variety of CDs/music albums, for example children's, Māori, classical, contemporary. Music and song books. Variety of musical instruments. Coloured scarves and ribbons. Sandpaper blocks. Poi. Tititorea sticks.

Dramatic play	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit for storing dress-up clothes. Stove. Child size bed/suitable sleeping unit. Room dividers/screens. Sink unit. Small table with 2 chairs. Mirror. 	<p>Props to allow the dramatic play area to become a shop, a garage, a wharenuui or any other environment the children are interested in exploring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's dress-ups covering both genders, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occupational animal cultural fantasy. Tea set and pots and pans. Cooking utensils – for example, a variety of spoons, bowls, whisks, chopsticks. Dolls – male, female, ethnic. Dolls' clothes. Dolls' pram or stroller. Dolls' bed. Telephone. Iron and ironing board. Clothesline. Bed linen. Variety of medical play equipment.

Dough	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 table and seating. • Stove. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutters. • Rolling pins. • Pounders. • Knives and forks. • Garlic crushers. • A variety of cooking equipment – for example, pots, pans, patty pans and so on.

Clay	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 table and seating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hessian or canvas. • Nylon string for cutting clay. • Water container. • Sponges. • A variety of clay tools. • A variety of natural materials.

Blocks	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large storage unit. • Large carpet square or carpet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full set of multiple blocks. • A variety of small, coloured blocks. • Set of interlocking blocks. • Plastic or wooden vehicles. • People. • Vehicle station. • Animal set. • Large truck. <p>Extra items like dolls and blankets added to this area can change the play in many ways.</p>

Carpentry	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large carpentry table. • Storage trolley or containers. 	<p>Use a range of real equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screwdrivers. • Hammers. • Vice. • G clamps. • Children's sized saws. • Pliers. • Carpentry pencil. • Tape measure. • Containers for PVA and brushes. • Hand drill. • A variety of soft wood (untreated timber). • A variety of nails - flat top are best. • A variety of collage equipment – for example, leather, sheepskin, bottle tops, string and sandpaper. • A variety of screws.

Note: An adult should always supervise this equipment.

Nature and science/exploratory	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display table. • Storage unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference books. • Magnifying glasses. • Insect viewers. • Assorted magnets (for example bars, u-shaped, strips). • Range of items to use with magnets. • Mirror (non-breakable). • Scales. • Plants. • Variety of living things (fish/animal/insect/bird). • Variety of natural materials Papatūānuku, for example shells, seeds. • Variety of gardening equipment (including spades, trowels, potting mix, plant pots and so on).

Sand	
Sand area	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large well-drained sand area. • Shade provided. • Water available. <p>For more information, check out constructing a sand area.</p> <p>Constructing a sand area</p>	<p>Enough equipment for the number of children attending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spades (graded sizes). • Buckets. • Scoops. • Rakes. • Set of scales. • Sieves. • Sand shapes. • Sand digger. • Vehicles. • Polythene. • Variety of natural materials.

Water play	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large water trough and other smaller containers for different activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pouring items – for example, buckets, jugs, bottles, and watering cans. • Water wheels. • Hoses – various sizes and lengths. • Funnels. • Aprons. • Water pump. • A variety of pipes and plastic guttering. • A variety of items for floating and sinking.

Active play	
Fixed equipment	Moveable equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladders • Planks • Tyres • Cable reels • Swings • Slides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladders. • Planks. • Wooden boxes, variety of sizes and heights. • Tyres (not steel belted). • Balls. • Hessian – large sheets. • Ropes – several. • Wheeled vehicles – for example, trikes, trolleys, ride-ons, large trucks, wheelbarrow and so on. • Hula hoops.

Moveable equipment provides greater flexibility and offers greater opportunities for children to be independent and creative. It must have safety surfacing underneath if it's over 600mm in height.

Adult education

- Range of parenting books.
- Activity idea books.
- Health information.
- Māori dictionary.
- Notice board.

Information and communication technologies

- Digital camera.
- Video camera.
- Computers: laptop, desktop, software.

Suggested equipment for children who are under 2 years old

This is a suggested list which is by no means exhaustive. Your resources and equipment will grow according to the interests and passions of your children and community.

General	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One 2-seater soft-sided couch. <p>Depending on the number of infants in the centre you may need to consider providing more seating for adults to use when breast or bottle feeding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tri-pillow. Crawling mat/squabs and cushions. Platforms, ramps and risers. Rattles. Sets of stacking toys. Activity sets. Push- and pull-along toys. Interactive/open-ended items and objects that can be put together, taken apart and safely explored in the mouth. <p>Avoid providing only 1 type of material (for example, plastic). Provide a large variety of weights, sizes, shapes and textures. Everyday objects can be used.</p>

If the under 2-year-olds are in a separate area, the equipment and resources below could also be included.

Books and storytelling	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display unit, as in the over 2 list. Soft sofa or cushions. 	<p>Books that cover the list below and are suitable for the age group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard covered. Traditional stories. New Zealand stories. Cultural stories. Nursery rhymes. Poetry and songs. Make-believe. Stories of people in real life situations. Puppets.

Manipulative

Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A suitable display unit for puzzles or similar, preferably with sloping shelves with a lip so that children can see the puzzles and choose them.• Cardboard puzzles won't last long, they cannot be cleaned effectively and should not be considered permanent equipment. Puzzles should reflect biculturalism and gender equity and be of varying degrees of difficulty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knob puzzles.• Easy puzzles: 2 to 8 pieces.• Manipulative equipment – for example, posting box, pegboards, and stacking equipment.

Collage

Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large table and seating.• Storage unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glue pots and brushes.• Children's scissors suitable for the age group.• Adult scissors.• Large roll of sticky tape/masking tape and dispenser.• Crayons.• Non-toxic colouring, range of colours.• Glitter and containers.• A variety of paper.• A variety of junk and natural materials.

Painting

Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easels – double-sided• Drying rack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aprons.• Non-spill paint pots.• Assorted paint brushes.• Different coloured non-toxic paint.• Rollers.• Large roll of newsprint/paper in a variety of sizes.

Music

Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music instrument stand/storage unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CD player/stereo or streaming device.• Music and song books.• Range of instruments.• Coloured ribbons and scarves.• Sound toys.

Dramatic play	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit for storing dress-up clothes. • Stove. • Child size bed/suitable sleeping unit. • Sink unit. • Small table with 2 chairs. • Mirror. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's dress-ups suitable for age range. • Tea set. • Pots and pans. • Dolls – male, female and ethnic. • Dolls' clothes. • Dolls' pram and stroller. • Telephone. • Full length unbreakable mirror.

Dough	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 table with at least 4 chairs. • Stove. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dough cutters. • Rolling pins. • Pounders. • Plastic knives and forks. • Garlic crushers. • A variety of cooking equipment, for example pots, pans, patty pans and so on.

Blocks	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large storage unit. • Large carpet square or carpet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple blocks. • A variety of small, coloured blocks. • A variety of interlocking blocks. • Plastic or wooden vehicles. • Vehicle station. • People. • Animal sets.

Nature and science/exploratory	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display table. • Storage unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment for animals, fish, insects, birds. • Tactile display – items to smell, touch, see. • Insect-viewing glasses. • A variety of natural materials Papatūānuku – shells, seeds. • Plants.

Sand	
Sand area	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large well-drained sand area. • Shade provided. <p>For more information, check out the section on constructing a sand area.</p> <p>Constructing a sand area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spades. • Buckets. • Scoops. • Rakes. • Sieves. • Vehicles. • Variety of natural materials.

Water play	
Furniture	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 water trough or paddling pool. • Water available (supervised). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pouring items – for example, buckets and jugs, bottles and watering cans. • Water wheels. • Water pump. • Hoses – various sizes and lengths. • Funnels. • Aprons. • A variety of items for floating and sinking.

Active play	
Fixed equipment	Moveable equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide. • Swings. • Planks. • Ladders. • Tyres. <p>Must have safety surfacing underneath.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balls. • Wheeled vehicles, for example, trikes, trolleys, ride-ons, push-alongs, wheelbarrow. • Various sized planks and ladders. • Various small boxes, variety of sizes and heights.

Adult education

Equipment

- Range of parenting and activity idea books.
- Health information.
- Māori dictionary.
- Notice board.

Information and communication technologies

Equipment

- Digital/video camera.
- Digital microscope.
- Computers: laptop, desktop, software, Skype.

Choosing equipment – step-by-step

1. Consider what will be the appropriate learning and teaching equipment and resources for:
 - the range of children who will attend
 - your community
 - actively acknowledging the unique place of tangata whenua in the programme.
2. Visit other early childhood services and discuss with teachers the choices available for particular equipment.
3. Make a list of equipment you plan to get. Many suppliers have catalogues and price lists available.
4. Make sure you are meeting licensing criteria.
5. Ensure your choices reflect the principles and strands of the curriculum.

[Te Whāriki – Tāhūrangi](#)

6. Ensure that play equipment complies with New Zealand Safety Standards, for example the NZS 5828:2015 - Playground equipment and surfacing (Standards NZ).

[NZS5828:2015 – Standards New Zealand](#)

7. Order all indoor and outdoor equipment (including tables, beds, display units and so on).
8. Allow enough time for delivery and set up so that your service will be ready for your health assessment visit. Your service must be 'ready for children' before your local National Public Health Service comes to assess your service. This includes outdoor playgrounds being ready for use.

You need to submit the health report with you licence application.

[Health assessment report](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[PF103 Quantity and range of equipment – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS101 Premises and contents are safe and hygienic – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS108 Hazard and risk management - Ministry of Education](#)



Roles and responsibilities in a centre-based service

Look at the options for the structure of your service. Consider the governance and management structure, the number of people in your governance and management groups and how to appoint or elect the right people to these groups. Make sure you have the right roles to meet requirements in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008.

Roles defined in the regulations

The Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 define 3 distinct positions of responsibility in a centre-based education and care service:

- service provider
- contact person
- person responsible.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Service provider

A service provider is a body, agency, or person operating the early childhood service.

- The service provider is the holder of the licence and is legally responsible for meeting regulatory requirements.
- An application for a licence made on behalf of a service provider must be made by a fit and proper person to be involved in the management of the service as described in the regulations.

Contact person

The contact person is a person nominated by the service provider to represent its management, and this person's name is displayed on the Certificate of Licence. The contact person must:

- be able to respond to the Ministry of Education as soon as practicable on any issue relating to licensing
- have authority to act on behalf of the service provider and
- reside locally.

A person will generally be considered to 'reside locally' if they live within the geographical boundaries serviced by the regional Ministry of Education office. Contact your regional Ministry of Education office if you are unsure whether the contact person would meet this requirement.

Person responsible

The person responsible:

- is 1 or more persons nominated for the purpose by the service provider
- is directly involved in, and primarily responsible for, the day-to-day education, care, comfort, health and safety of the children
- must supervise the children, and the adults providing education and care, at all times while children attend the service
- must hold an early childhood education or primary teaching qualification recognised by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand for registration purposes, and
- must hold a current practising certificate.

There must be 1 person responsible for every 50 children.

Management group

If a management group has been elected, the members need to be people with an interest in the service who will be able to:

- attend meetings regularly
- assist with decision making
- help manage the service.

The management group is formed at the annual general meeting and includes:

- a representative from the teaching team who has the most responsibility for the day-to-day running of the service – usually the ‘person responsible’ (electing a teacher to the management group is not advisable because of the conflict of interest)
- the contact person
- parents/whānau and community representatives who are elected at the annual general meeting.

Depending on the size of your service, your management group will have between 5 and 8 members.

Managing your service

Managing is doing the day-to-day things at the service, so your long-term plan is achieved. For example, if you are buying some new books for the children, you are managing.

When you are managing, it is important to make sure you hear and respond to the views and concerns of the teachers. It is important the management group does not take over or interfere with the teachers’ responsibilities.

Every service is different. In some big services, there can be separate governance and management groups. In smaller services there is often 1 group that is responsible for both governing and managing.

Managing includes such things as:

- making sure the regulations are met on a daily basis
- preparing budgets and financial accounts
- implementing the goals and policies
- buying and looking after resources
- making sure families and the community are up to date with what is happening with the service.

The governance group is responsible for developing and reviewing the service’s policies. The management group will be responsible for developing and implementing procedures that bring the policies to life. It is important that the management group knows that it’s their responsibility to ensure the efficient administration of the service, accurate financial accountability, employment of staff and the funding received is used towards achieving the goals of the service.

Governing group or board

A governing board may be elected or appointed from:

- parents and whānau
- the community
- stakeholders
- the contact person.

Governance groups usually have 3 officers:

- Chairperson – leads the board
- Secretary – in charge of administration
- Treasurer – looks after the finances.

The size of your governing board is set out in your constitution or trust deed. The size that works best is between 5 and 8 people.

Chairperson

The chairperson is responsible for:

- leading strategic planning
- managing relationships
- ensuring risks to the organisation are managed
- ensuring that all governing body members can contribute to debate and decision-making
- managing governing body processes.

Secretary

The secretary is responsible for:

- taking minutes at meetings
- dealing with correspondence
- keeping files
- ensuring the roll is kept up to date.

Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for:

- keeping financial records up to date and accurate
- managing income and banking
- making payments
- keeping the cash book up to date
- reconciling bank statements
- issuing receipts
- balancing the cash book and bank reconciliations.

The treasurer organises the financial records to be audited.

Note: Police vets must be completed for anyone who, in the course of their work for the service provider, is not defined as a children's worker. This is set out in Schedule 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Relevant regulation:

[Schedule 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Responsibilities of governing

What governing is

Governing is the responsibility for the long-term health and prosperity of the service. It includes:

- creating a vision of what your service will be like in the future
- making sure your service will provide high quality early childhood education for children in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years and beyond
- long-term projects or issues rather than day-to-day matters.

A job description for governing

When you govern, you need to be always asking yourself, “Is what I am doing going to make the service better in the future?”

The job of governing includes:

- setting the direction for the service
- setting performance targets
- developing and following through on policies
- making sure the service has the capacity to do all the things you would like it to do, i.e. staff, equipment and money
- exercising control by measuring performance against the targets you have set
- understanding risks to the service and having a plan to minimise them
- regular reporting.

In your governing meetings, you must:

- exercise a ‘duty of care’ (this is defined as “the standard of care that an ordinary man might expect to take on his own behalf”)
- act honestly
- do not use your position for advantage (your responsibility is to the service, and you must not try and gain a personal benefit)
- comply with legislation
- comply with the Ministry of Education’s requirements
- act in the best interests of the service at all times.

What you're responsible for when you govern

Governing includes:

- making sure the service provides quality education for the children so that families will choose your service
- making sure your service meets the needs of families, both now and in the future, the community, staff, the Ministry, the Education Review Office and other interested parties
- meeting all your responsibilities on time and at all times
- defining the purpose, values/beliefs and aims of the service
- developing written policies and procedures
- reviewing progress and responsibilities as described in the long-term plan
- ensuring your service keeps families and the community informed and involved.

Terms of office

Usually, the members of the governance group will be elected at the annual general meeting. In some services established by an umbrella organisation they may be appointed.

Good practice is to elect each member of the governing group for a term of 2 years with a right to be elected for another term of 2 years. It is usual to elect half the number of the group 1 year and another half the following year. This provides continuity from year to year.

Who should attend governing meetings

Governing meetings are for the governing group to have a structured discussion about governance issues. Parents and whānau or other interested people may attend but do not automatically have speaking rights and are not entitled to vote.

Stakeholders

Those elected to govern are representing the parents/whānau and others who have an interest in the success of the service – the stakeholders.

The following is a sample list of stakeholders:

- parents and whānau
- the community which the service operates within
- Ministry of Education
- Education Review Office
- staff and contractors
- children
- suppliers to the service
- neighbours
- owners of the building from which the service operates
- Oranga Tamariki
- Inland Revenue Department
- other government agencies
- local/district/regional authority
- funders and sponsors
- the church or other 'umbrella' group.

It is important for the governing group to review its list of stakeholders each year to make sure it is up to date. The governing group should agree which stakeholders are the most important.

Meeting with stakeholders

The governing group should meet with stakeholders each year. The meeting might only take 20 to 30 minutes but can provide valuable information for the governing group about the future of the service.

The governing group might plan to meet with 1 of the important stakeholder groups every second or third governing meeting. The stakeholder group should be provided with the long-term plan prior to the meeting.

Communication with stakeholders

Good quality and frequent communication with stakeholders help to keep everyone involved and up to date.

Some stakeholders need frequent communication. Some not so often.

He ātaahua te waiata

Horou ō ringaringa

Purua ō ringaringa

Handwritten text on a white sheet of paper.

Handwritten text on a white sheet of paper.



Rāho
Rāta



Preparing for staff employment

Before you apply for a licence you must have staff ready to start working at your early childhood service. Ensure you have the right number of staff, with the right qualifications, to look after the number of children you plan to have at your services.

Person responsible qualifications and registration

Staff in the position of 'Person responsible' are required to be appropriately qualified. They must:

- be a registered teacher
- have a current practising certificate.
- have a first aid qualification.

We have more information about the person responsible role on our website.

[Qualification requirements and the person responsible role - Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Schedule 1 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Minimum adult to child ratios

Schedule 2 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 sets out how many children can attend with certain numbers of adults (adult to child ratio). The ratio varies depending on the age of the children in your care and the type of service you are.

The adult to child ratio must be maintained at all times.

More information about adult to child ratios can be found on our website.

[Adult-to-child ratios in early learning services - Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant legislation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Schedule 2 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Number of qualified people your service needs

Having a certain number of qualified staff helps you provide a quality service.

Schedule 1 of the Education (Registration of Early Childhood Services Teachers) Regulations 2004 requires at least 50 percent of the required staff to have a recognised early learning teaching qualification.

Newly graduated provisionally certificated teachers must be supervised and supported through an advice and guidance programme once they begin teaching in an early childhood service.

[People and employment in early childhood services - Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulations:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Schedule 1 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Section 44 Qualifications, ratios, and service-size standard: general – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Number of first aid qualified people required

There must be at least 1 staff member for every 25 children at the centre who:

- holds a current first aid certificate
- is a registered medical practitioner, nurse or midwife with a current practising certificate, or
- is a qualified ambulance officer or paramedic.

In an emergency

When an adult who hold a first aid qualification needs to take a child to a medical professional or accompany the child in an ambulance, you can relax the first aid ratio from 1:25 to 1:50 until the adult has had a reasonable amount of time to return to the service.

Relevant criterion:

[HS119 First aid qualifications - Ministry of Education](#)

Job descriptions

Job descriptions are written to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of a specific job.

They help to:

- clarify the role and expectations of employees
- decide how work is allocated or delegated
- develop appraisal processes and procedures
- set goals
- identify professional development needs and guide career developments.

The best job descriptions enable employees to use their experience, grow their skills and develop their ability to contribute within their organisation.

A job description should include:

- position title
- introduction to the organisation
- introduction to the role
- primary responsibilities, including intended outcomes of key tasks
- duties/key tasks
- qualifications and experience required for the position
- personal professional qualities and skills
- who the person in the role reports to and relationships with other staff
- the date that the job description was prepared and a review date
- names and signatures of the key people involved in its preparation.

A staffing and appointments policy and process should document how to develop and change a job description.

Resources

How to hire – Guide for employers: This is a resource designed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to provide employers with information on good practice when recruiting and hiring employees, including information on job descriptions.

[The hiring process – Employment New Zealand](#)

CommunityNet Aotearoa provides practical 'hands on' resources to help organisations to get started and develop good practice in the voluntary sector environment.

[CommunityNet Aotearoa](#)

Relevant legislation:

[Human Rights Act 1993 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Code of conduct

Developing a Code of Conduct can be useful to outline your expectation for staff behaviour – for example you could include expected behaviour in relations to:

- alcohol and other substances
- use of digital technology – like cell phone use
- babysitting out of hours.

Staffing schedules

Staffing schedules support the smooth operation of an early childhood service.

They ensure that it is clear when staff are responsible for children and when they can take lunch breaks or 'non-contact' planning time, etc. Draft schedules should be developed by services to work out:

- how many staff will be needed overall to ensure compliance with Schedule 1 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008
- what hours each shift will need to cover
- which shifts will need to be filled by registered teachers to ensure you comply with the regulations.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Schedule 1 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Staff records

The Ministry of Education's ECE funding handbook requires records to be kept showing actual staffing levels and child attendance (as opposed to planned staffing levels). Your staffing schedule could be designed so that it can also be used as a staffing record for the purposes of funding. You can find an example in Appendix 2 of the funding handbook. Some software providers have packages available to assist services.

ECE Funding Handbook references:

[ECE funding handbook - Ministry of Education](#)

[Appendix 2: Resources and examples - Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Schedule 1 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Developing a schedule

Developing schedules can be quite tricky and you may need to try lots of versions before you find one that suits your service.

Use the example schedule below as a guide and carry out the following steps.

Number of staff needed

- Fill in the number of children (over 2 or under 2) that you have planned will be at the service every half hour (right hand column). Note that, at the start and end of the day, there are often fewer children attending. If this is the case, fewer adults may be needed at these times.
- Work out how many adults you will be required to employ for the number of children (every half hour) and write this number in the planned staff column.
- Alternatively, write in the number of adults your service will need if you want fewer children per adult than is required by the regulation (You can have more adults working with children than required, but not fewer adults working with children than required).
- Shade the boxes to show when each adult will actually be working with the children.
- Count across the columns to ensure there are at least as many adults working as the number planned.
- Check that at least 1 'person responsible' is on the premises supervising the adults and children at all times.

Hours for each staff member

Check each adult:

- has adequate breaks (for example, lunch)
- is not working for too long each day and
- has time to plan for children's learning and curriculum delivery.

[Example staff record](#) DOC | 978KB

Pay equity and pay parity

As an employer, you must pay men and women the same for doing:

- the same work (equal pay)
- different work of equal value (pay equity).

Relevant legislation:

[Equal Pay Act 1972 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Pay equity

Information about your obligations under the Equal Pay Act is available on the Employment New Zealand website.

[Meeting your pay equity obligations – Employment New Zealand](#)

Pay parity in Early Childhood Education

The pay parity opt-in scheme helps address the disparity in pay between certificated kaiako | teachers working in Education and Care and Hospital-Based services and equivalent kaiako | teachers in kindergartens.

[Pay parity opt-in scheme for education and care services - Ministry of Education](#)

The scheme provides higher funding rates to education and care and hospital-based services who pay all employed certificated kaiako | teachers at least the salary amounts described in the ECE funding handbook.

[ECE funding handbook – Funding rates](#)

Employing teachers for your service

1. Create a staffing schedule to help you decide how many teachers you will need, and for the hours you will need them. This should be based on your planned number of enrolments. This process will help you decide how many of these staff must be qualified teachers.
2. Decide what other staff will need to be employed (e.g. cleaner, administration staff, manager, cook).
3. Develop job descriptions. It may be useful to look at job descriptions from other early childhood services.
4. Decide what salary rates and conditions you will offer. (See [Pay equity and pay parity](#) and [Help with employment issues](#))
5. Every employee must have a written employment agreement. It can be an individual agreement or a collective agreement. Decide what the draft employment agreement between staff and the service will be.
6. Develop employment policies and procedures.
7. Advertise for staff – refer to advertisements in the Education Gazette to help you. [Vacancies – Education Gazette](#)
8. Shortlist and interview applicants.
9. Undertake safety checking process, reference checking and verify qualifications. [GMA106 Safety checking - Ministry of Education](#)
10. Formalise the employment agreement between staff and the service before employment.

Evidence of staffing when you apply

To demonstrate compliance, your EC1 application (Application to Become a Centre-based Early Learning Service) must be accompanied by evidence of staff being employed or engaged and ready to commence work when the licence is issued.

You will also need to provide copies of the completed safety checking records for all children's workers.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[GMA105 Human resource management - Ministry of Education](#)

[GMA106 Safety checking - Ministry of Education](#)

Help with employment issues

HR - Employment New Zealand has information to support human resource management. They have templates for letters to appoint staff, fact sheets, employment agreement guides and help calculating parental leave for your employed staff.

[Employment New Zealand](#)

Tax – Inland Revenue is a good starting point for finding out about obligations and entitlements concerning tax.

[Inland Revenue](#)

Teacher registration – The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand provides information about teacher registration and practising certificates.

[Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand](#)

Discrimination – Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | Human Rights Commission website provides information about equal opportunities, including a discrimination and complaints guide.

[Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | Human Rights Commission](#)

Unions – The New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) is a union that negotiates collective employment agreements on behalf of many early childhood education teachers. As a condition of receiving higher levels of government funding, teachers must be paid at a rate that is at least as high as the lowest step on their 'consenting parties' early childhood collective agreement'.

[New Zealand Educational Institute \(NZEI\) Te Riu Roa](#)

Oranga Tamariki – The Oranga Tamariki Action Plan website helps you in identifying, supporting and protecting vulnerable children.

[Oranga Tamariki Action Plan – Oranga Tamariki](#)



Preparing policies and procedures

The Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and the licensing criteria require early childhood services to have a child protection policy and several procedures.

Read the regulations and licensing criteria to be clear on what is required and from there determine what procedures you will need.

The EC1 application form lists the policy and procedure documentation you need to submit with your probationary licence application. Our guide, *Applying for a licence*, also includes what you need to submit with your probationary licence application. Other procedures and processes will be looked at later when your service is visited by the Ministry of Education as part of the licensing process.

[Probationary licence and application form – Ministry of Education](#)

[Guide and factsheets – Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulations:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[Licensing criteria for centre-based ECE services - Ministry of Education](#)

What are policies and procedures?

A policy is a high-level rule that guides decisions and behaviours. It defines what is expected in your service and why.

A procedure is a step-by-step set of instructions describing how to carry out a task or comply with a policy.

Why have policies and procedures?

You must have a child protection policy and several procedures to meet licensing criteria requirements.

It can be helpful to have other policies and procedures to help you run your early childhood service.

Policies and procedures are developed to make sure:

- legislative requirements are met
- everyone at the service understands agreed processes and procedures – so they are carried out consistently, safely and appropriately
- everyone at the service can discuss policies and procedures, and suggest changes through regular review processes.

Policies and procedures and the law

Policies and procedures are not legally binding, but staff, parents and others in the service may agree to follow your service's policies and procedures (and any future additions or changes) when they are employed or when their child is enrolled.

Policies and procedures are required to be implemented.

Copying policies from other services

Policies from other early childhood services can give you good ideas to think about as you write your own. However, services and communities may have different structures, beliefs, values and expectations. It is important that your policies work for your service and reflect your philosophy, values and style of operation.

Writing policies

Develop policies before you need them and be prepared to introduce new policies and procedures when the need for this arises. Consultation with staff and parents will help to ensure your policies and procedures are robust and realistic for implementation.

Most policies include:

- **a rationale** – a reason for having the policy
- **objectives** – what you hope to achieve through the policy
- **procedures** – clearly describing the actual practices that will occur
- **implementation information** – how and when the policy will be implemented
- **who is responsible** – who will make sure the policy and procedures are implemented
- **review date** – when the policy is planned to be reviewed.

Regular review of policies

A regular review process where people in your service can discuss policy and suggest changes will ensure your policies and procedures are always relevant to your service.

If you don't like an existing policy, discuss it with staff, and families and change it (ensuring that you continue to meet regulations and licensing criteria). Your policies should work for you. The content of your policies belongs to your service.

Parents must also have an opportunity to be part of the development and review of your service's policies.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant criteria:

[GMA103 Parent involvement – Ministry of Education](#)

[GMA104 Operational review – Ministry of Education](#)

Child protection policy

Regulation 46(1)(a) of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 requires that services take all reasonable steps to promote the good health and safety of children enrolled in the service. The Children's Act 2014 and licensing criterion HS125 require your service to have a child protection policy.

The child protection policy and procedures must have how your service will:

- **identify and report** child abuse and neglect
- **keep children safe** from abuse and neglect
- **respond to concerns** about child abuse and neglect.

Relevant legislation:

[Children's Act 2014 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS125 Child protection – Ministry of Education](#)

Personnel processes

Employment/HR management

You must have human resource management processes that include:

- staff induction
- ongoing professional development
- a definition of serious misconduct, and
- discipline/dismissal procedures.

Employment New Zealand has information to support human resource management that service providers may find useful. This includes templates for letters to appoint staff, fact sheets, employment agreement guides and help calculating parental leave for your employed staff. There is also an 'ask a question' feature.

[Employment New Zealand](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA105 Human resource management - Ministry of Education](#)

Human rights

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | Human Rights Commission provides information about equal opportunities, including a discrimination and complaints guide.

[Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | Human Rights Commission](#)

Collective agreements

The New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) negotiates collective employment agreements on behalf of many early childhood teachers. As a condition of receiving government funding, you must pay teachers at a rate that is at least as high as the lowest step on NZEI's 'consenting parties' collective agreement'.

[New Zealand Educational Institute \(NZEI\) Te Riu Roa](#)

Safety checking procedure

You must have a documented procedure for safety checking all children's workers before they start working at your early childhood service. The procedures must meet the requirements in the Children's Act 2014.

If you engage a children's worker who has lived overseas, it is recommended that there is a process to obtain a copy of a police certificate from the person's country of citizenship and from any country they have lived in for a year or more within the last ten years. This is in addition to the New Zealand Police vet part of the safety check.

Relevant legislation:

[Children's Act 2014, Part 3 Children's worker safety checking – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA106 Safety checking – Ministry of Education](#)

Police vet and risk assessment procedure

You must have a procedure to obtain a Police vet and conduct a risk assessment of the information in the vet for:

- non-teaching and unregistered employees before they begin work at your service, and
- contractors and their employees before they have, or are likely to have, unsupervised access to children.

Relevant legislation:

[Education and Training Act 2020, Schedule 4 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Health and safety policies and procedures

All early childhood education service providers must comply with the health and safety requirements in Regulation 46 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations.

You need to:

- promote the good health and safety of the children enrolled in the service
- prevent accidents and the spread of infection
- keep the premises, facilities and equipment in good repair, maintained regularly, and safe and free from hazards
- have procedures to deal with fire, earthquakes and other emergencies.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant criteria:

[Health and safety criteria HS101 to HS128 – Ministry of Education](#)

Wash down procedure*

You must have a procedure to wash children when they become dirty, soiled or wet. It might be necessary to wash a child:

- at nappy change time – sometimes wipes are not enough
- if a child has vomited over themselves or another person
- if a child has a toileting accident
- if children become wet or dirty during play.

The procedure should focus on the privacy and personal dignity of the child, and protecting their health and safety, and that of other children and staff.

The wash down procedure should cover:

- instructions to use the wash down facilities
- how to effectively clean up the wash down area
- instructions on cleaning and storing soiled clothing
- the staff's use of protective clothing.

The procedure must be on display in a visible place by the wash down area.

Nappy changing procedure*

You must have a clear procedure for changing nappies and for disposing of them when needed.

It needs to ensure:

- safe and hygienic practices
- children are treated with dignity and respect.

The procedure should be displayed near the nappy changing area and followed by everyone.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS103 Nappy changing procedure – Ministry of Education](#)

Infectious disease exclusion*

You must take steps to minimise the children's contact with anyone who has an infectious disease.

Have a process that will keep children who become unwell at a safe distance from other children and follows the infectious illness guidance in Schedule 1 of the licensing criteria.

Relevant licensing criteria:

[HS120 Response to infectious illnesses – Ministry of Education](#)

[Schedule 1: Infectious diseases – Ministry of Education](#)

[PF122 Isolation area – Ministry of Education](#)

*Part of the requirements of a health assessment

These procedures and process will be reviewed in the health assessment you need to get before you open your early childhood service.

See the health assessment report section for more information.

[Health assessment report](#)

The National Public Health Service has useful information in early childhood service guidelines for:

- health assessments
- cleaning and sanitising
- wash down
- illness.

[Guidelines for early childhood services – HealthEd](#)

Monitoring children's sleep

You must have a sleep monitoring procedure. It must be on display and include steps that ensure children:

- do not have access to food or liquids while in bed
- are checked for warmth, breathing, and general wellbeing at least every 5 to 10 minutes, or more frequently according to individual needs.

Document how you will record the time each child sleeps and the checks made by adults during that time.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS107 Sleep monitoring – Ministry of Education](#)

Identifying and managing hazards

Equipment, premises and facilities must be checked for hazards every day. The WorkSafe website has a range of health and safety resources including tools like self-assessment sheets for health and safety matters and forms you can use, through to information about managing hazards for small businesses. Look under 'The Toolshed', then 'Tools'.

[WorkSafe](#)

Look up specific legislation on the New Zealand Legislation website.

[New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS108 Hazard and risk management – Ministry of Education](#)

Planning and preparing for an emergency

Your building must have:

- an approved evacuation scheme
- an emergency management plan.

Evacuation scheme

Find out about fire evacuation schemes in the Fire evacuation scheme approval section.

[Fire evacuation scheme approval](#)

Emergency management plan

An emergency management plan is a requirement under the Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016 and licensing criterion HS105 Emergency plan and supplies.

The emergency management plan must have:

- an evacuation procedure specific to the premises and relevant to its location, which apply in different emergency situations and are consistent with the building's fire evacuation scheme
- designated assembly areas outside the building that keep children safe from further risk
- a list of safety and emergency supplies and resources sufficient for the age and number of children and adults at the service and details of how these will be maintained and accessed in an emergency
- details of the roles and responsibilities that will apply during an emergency
- a communication plan for families and support services
- evidence of reviewing the plan annually and implementation of improved practices as required.

The plan needs to be maintained and kept up to date. It needs to be shared with parents, whānau and caregivers.

Evacuation procedure

In addition to having an approved fire evacuation scheme, you must have a documented evacuation procedure specifically for your premises that covers emergency situations like fire, earthquake, tsunami, flood, etc.

This procedure has a broader scope than just fire evacuation and must be consistent with the overarching Fire and Emergency NZ approved fire evacuation scheme. The evacuation procedure is the responsibility of the service provider.

Supplies

Have an emergency supply of water and food. Ensure there is enough water and food for the size of your service.

If your service includes children under 2 years old, your emergency supplies must have enough items for their age and number. This includes infant formula, clean bottles, and nappies.

Ensure you have access to required medication, for example, inhalers, epi-pens.

Planning and preparing for emergencies guidance

For practical guidance and information to help you prepare for emergencies we have a resource called Planning and Preparing for Emergencies and an emergency planning template. You can get them on our website.

[Prepare for an emergency or traumatic incident in early learning – Ministry of Education](#)

Your emergency management plan needs to be submitted with your probationary licence application.

Relevant regulation:

[Health and Safety at Work \(General Risk and Workplace Management\) Regulations 2016 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS105 Emergency plan and supplies – Ministry of Education](#)

Laundry procedure

It can be useful to have a documented procedure for the hygienic laundering of linen used by the children or adults

Linen includes:

- bedding
- kitchen laundry (dish cloths, tea towels, hand towels, oven mitts, and so on)
- bibs
- dress-up clothes
- fabric play items
- towels
- furniture coverings
- art and messy play cloths
- cloth nappies (if used).

For information about laundry procedures go to licensing criterion HS102 Laundering.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS102 Laundering – Ministry of Education](#)

Cleaning procedures

Make sure everything is cleaned regularly using the right products.

It is useful to detail how to clean and sanitise different items and areas at your service, including:

- nappy changing areas
- food preparation areas
- sinks, toilets and other hard bathroom surfaces
- floors
- cots and stretchers
- carpets and soft furnishings
- toys, dress up clothes and comforters
- sand and sandpits.

Health New Zealand encourages all centres to have a documented cleaning schedule.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS101 Premises and contents are safe and hygienic – Ministry of Education](#)

Animal procedures

Follow safe and hygienic practices regarding any animals at your service.

It can be useful to develop a policy or procedure for having animals in your service. Your policy could include:

- hygiene practices like hand washing after handling animals
- animal restraint and safety procedures.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS112 Animals – Ministry of Education](#)

Nutrition policy and food menus

When providing food for children, you must make sure it is safe and offers sufficient variety, quantity, and quality to meet each child's nutritional and developmental needs.

It can be useful to develop a policy to describe how you will make sure:

- food is safe to eat
- the food you serve offers sufficient variety, quantity and quality
- you record the type of food provided
- records are kept for 3 months.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS115 Food, drink and nutrition – Ministry of Education](#)

Sun protection

It can be useful to develop a sun protection policy and practices to keep children safe and comfortable when they are outside.

Your sun protection policy could include the use of:

- shade
- clothing
- sun hats
- sunscreen.

Smoke and vape free

Under the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990:

- smoking and vaping are not allowed anywhere on the premises of early childhood centres (this includes inside and outside)
- you must have no smoking or vaping signage immediately inside every entrance to the premises.

It can be useful to develop a policy that includes where people can't smoke or vape, for example:

- buildings
- grounds
- vehicles
- in uniform
- in sight of children coming and going from your service.

Include what signage you have and where you have them displayed.

Relevant legislation:

[Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Curriculum

Your service must comply with the curriculum standard: general. It requires you to:

- plan, implement and evaluate a curriculum that provides learning experiences consistent with Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum
- collaborate with parents, family and whānau about the learning and development of their children
- get information and guidance from agencies with the appropriate expertise to support:
 - the learning and development of children
 - working effectively with parents, family and whānau.

You must meet curriculum criteria documentation requirements.

[Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum – Tāhūrangi](#)

[Kei Tua o te Pae – Tāhūrangi](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 43 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[Curriculum criteria C101 to C113 – Ministry of Education](#)

[Curriculum criteria documentation required – Ministry of Education](#)

Positive guidance

As part of the curriculum, you must support the learning and development of children attending your service in a positive learning environment. Your service must support the development of social competence and understanding appropriate behaviour.

The He Māpuna te Tamaiti publication may be useful.

[He Māpuna te Tamaiti – Tāhūrangi Te Whāriki Online](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 43 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[C110 Developing social competence – Ministry of Education](#)

Settling and transition

Transitions to, within and from a service can be stressful times for children and their families. To make these transitions positive and successful experiences, it is recommended that you have procedures that are based on knowledge of children, and current educational theory and practice.

These resources and further reading may assist with development of the procedure.

Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa – early childhood education curriculum (especially strands 1 and 2).

[Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum – Tāhūrangi](#)

[Strand 1: Mana atua | Wellbeing – Tāhūrangi](#)

[Strand 2: Mana Whenua | Belonging – Tāhūrangi](#)

Kei Tua o te Pae: Assessment for Learning – early childhood exemplars.

[Kei Tua o te Pae – Tāhūrangi](#)

Communication

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47, and the Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services, GMA101, GMA102 and GMA103, set out the minimum standard of communication with parents and how they can access information about your service and their child.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[GMA101 Display of information – Ministry of Education](#)

[GMA102 Information provided to parents – Ministry of Education](#)

[GMA103 Involvement in reviews – Ministry of Education](#)

Complaints procedure

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, regulation 47, and the licensing criterion GMA102, require services to inform parents of the procedure to follow if they want to complain about non-compliance with the regulations or licensing criteria.

We have guidance and a template to help you develop a complaints procedure on our GMA102 licensing criterion webpage (under Tools to help you comply)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA102 Information provided to parents – Ministry of Education](#)

Finances

It's good financial practice to have a policy to outline how you will manage the finances of your service. Include things like:

- how your service is funded
- how you will manage funding and reporting obligations
- how financial decisions will be made
- how income and expenditure will be managed

- how you will meet your tax obligations.

Inland Revenue is a good starting point for finding out about obligations and entitlements concerning tax. You can also download tax forms that staff will need to complete.

[Inland Revenue](#)

Business.govt.nz provides information about its free national business information and referral service for small and medium businesses.

[Business.govt.nz](#)

CommunityNet Aotearoa is a practical resource to help organisations get started and to develop good practice in the voluntary sector environment.

[CommunityNet Aotearoa](#)

The Working for Families websites have information about assistance families can get with childcare costs. Assistance is provided to families through Work and Income and Inland Revenue.

[Working for Families – Work and Income](#)

[Working for Families – Inland Revenue](#)

Fees and funding

20 Hours ECE affects the way a service receives funding for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds and the fees that can be charged for some children.

[20 Hours ECE](#)

You cannot charge an extra fee for an enrolled child who is receiving 20 Hours ECE. Fees can be charged for additional hours of enrolment outside of 20 Hours ECE.

Usual enrolment fees or waiting list fees can be charged for children who will be using 20 Hours ECE at your ECE service. These fees must apply to all children, not just those receiving 20 Hours ECE. You must also ensure that these fees do not prevent children from accessing 20 Hours ECE.

Parents can be asked to pay optional charges for hours claimed as 20 Hours ECE. Donations may also be requested.

There are different kinds of early childhood administration software available to assist with the management of fees, subsidies and so on. These can be purchased from private companies.

Annual plan and budget

An annual plan and budget to cover your first year of running your service are required for your probationary licence application if:

- you are applying for a probationary licence and do not currently run a fully licensed service elsewhere
- you are a new service provider and have not held a licence before.

You need to submit your annual plan with your application and provide access to your annual budget at the probationary licence assessment visit.

Annual plan

An annual plan guides your service's operations. It outlines key tasks and when they will happen over the next 12 months to keep your service running smoothly.

It should clearly state:

- what each task is
- when it is scheduled
- who is responsible.

For some one-off projects you will need to develop much more detailed timelines identifying 'who, what and when'.

An annual plan helps you track progress of your regular key tasks and one-off projects and can help with reporting and reviews.

Annual plan example

This example is not an exhaustive plan and the headings may or may not suit your service. Change the example to suit your needs or create your own format. It is designed to give you some ideas only.

[Example of an annual management plan](#) DOC | 49KB

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA107 Annual plan – Ministry of Education](#)

Annual budget

It's good financial management to operate an annual budget. This will help you understand if your service is financially sound and identify any areas of risk.

It needs to include at least:

- staffing costs, including leave entitlements
- professional development costs
- equipment and material costs for the ongoing purchase of new equipment and consumable materials
- provision for operational costs (such as electricity, telephone, food purchases and other day-to-day items) and maintenance of your premises as appropriate.

It should also include the expected revenue from your funding sources.

ECE Funding Handbook references:

[ECE funding handbook](#)

[12-2 Types of financial reports](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[GMA102 Information provided to parents – Ministry of Education](#)

[GMA108 Annual budget – Ministry of Education](#)



Administration records

All businesses keep records of tax, finances, management decisions and so on. The following list of administration records will help you to meet the records requirements in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and ECE Funding Handbook.

The content that is only required by the ECE funding handbook only applies if you claim government funding.

The title of each record in this section is a guide only. You could set out the required content under different titles or group them differently.

Relevant regulations:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

[Health \(Infectious and Notifiable Diseases\) Regulations 2016 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

You also need to keep other records to meet your legal obligations as a business and an employer. Seek advice from the other relevant organisations, for example:

[Record keeping – Employment New Zealand](#)

[Record keeping – Inland Revenue](#)

ECE funding handbook

Read the ECE funding handbook as you develop your records, to ensure they comply with funding requirements.

Where possible, we have links to the requirements of the ECE funding system.

If in any doubt about requirements, check the actual wording in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2008 and ECE funding handbook.

ECE Funding Handbook reference:

[ECE funding handbook – Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[Licensing criteria for centre-based ECE services – Ministry of Education](#)

Record retention

Services are required to keep enrolment and attendance records for at least 7 years. It is a good idea to keep records of other things like injuries, illnesses and excursions for Education Review Office audits.

ECE Funding Handbook reference:

[ECE funding handbook, 11-1 Record keeping requirements - Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA109 Enrolment and attendance records – Ministry of Education](#)

Enrolment records

Your enrolment records must meet the requirements in the ECE funding handbook. The ECE funding handbook has templates to help you meet these requirements.

These records must be held for 7 years before disposal.

ECE Funding Handbook references:

[Chapter 6: Recording enrolment, attendance and absence – Ministry of Education](#)

[Chapter 11: Record keeping – Ministry of Education](#)

[Appendix 2: Resources and examples – Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA109 Enrolment and attendance records – Ministry of Education](#)

Fees record

This includes:

- the level of fees and other charges to be paid and the conditions of payment (available to parents)
- the name of the child for whom fees and other charges is paid, the amount paid and the period of attendance covered.

Publish the fees to be charged for attendance at the service (as actual fees, a range of fees, or a maximum fee) so that families are adequately informed. Services are also required to provide written information letting parents know about the amount and details of the expenditure of any Ministry of Education funding received.

Providing written information to parents about fees can be done in a variety of ways, including as part of a parent induction pack, newsletters, a website, a fees schedule or annual reports.

Many services develop regular reporting processes including providing an annual report. Often monthly financial reports are made available. This is a good way to provide information to parents on a regular basis.

ECE Funding Handbook reference:

[Chapter 6: Recording enrolment, attendance and absence – Ministry of Education](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[GMA102 Information provided to parents – Ministry of Education](#)

[GMA109 Enrolment and attendance records – Ministry of Education](#)

Attendance record, sign in and out book, and roll

The attendance record shows:

- separate sections or columns for children aged under 2 and for children aged 2 and over.
- the first and last names of each child, clearly identified.
- days and times of actual attendance for each child.
- a record of any absence, with an 'a' when a child does not attend at a time for which they are enrolled.
- notes and explanations about attendance, such as when a child is away sick or has attended for more/less hours than they were enrolled.
- attendance registers that have been marked by staff on a twice-daily basis (or once a day for services that operate only 1 session).

Services must keep evidence (for example, a signed attendance register) that a parent/guardian of each child has regularly examined and confirmed the attendance record. This needs to be completed once a week for all-day teacher-led centre-based services or once a month for sessional teacher-led and parent/whānau-led services.

ECE Funding Handbook reference:

[ECE Funding Handbook - 6-3 Attendance records – Ministry of Education](#)

Injury, incident or illness record

You must keep a record of all incidents, injuries and illnesses that happen at the service, even if a parent or visitor tells you about it later.

Your records must include:

- the child's name
- the date, time and description of the injury, incident or illness
- actions taken and by whom
- evidence that parents have been informed
- copies of notifications to the Ministry of Education
- summary of any notification/reports sent to WorkSafe, Oranga Tamariki or New Zealand Police.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS121 Medical assistance and incident management – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS128 Notification to the Ministry of Education – Ministry of Education](#)

Medicine record

You should have:

- a record of authorisation from parents for the administration of medicine, and acknowledgement medication has been administered based on the category of medication outlined in Schedule 2 of the licensing criteria.
- a record of all medicine (prescription and non-prescription) given to the children attending the service.

Records include:

- the child's full name
- the name and amount of medicine given
- dates and times medicine was administered and by whom.

Adults who administer medication need training or information relevant to the task. A record of this information or training needs to be kept.

Medicine is not given to a child unless it is given:

- by a doctor or ambulance personnel in an emergency
- by the parent of the child, or
- with the written authority of a parent/guardian.

Relevant licensing criteria:

[HS122 Medicine administration – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS123 Medicine training – Ministry of Education](#)

[Schedule 2: Categories of medicine and written authority required from parents for criterion HS122 – Ministry of Education](#)

Food record

A record of all food served to children while they are participating in the service (other than that provided by parents for their own children). This needs to record the type of food provided. The record must be kept and be available for inspection for at least 3 months.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 46 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS115 Food, drink and nutrition – Ministry of Education](#)

Health and safety documentation

Service providers must keep records for:

- emergency drills
 - when the drills were carried out
 - evidence of how they informed the annual review of your service's emergency plan
- sleep monitoring
 - when each child sleeps
 - when checks are made by adults when a child is sleeping
- excursions
 - who is involved
 - the time and date
 - adult:child ratio
 - location and method of travel
 - a documented risk assessment and management process (RAMS)
 - evidence of parental permission and approval of adult:child ratios, location and method of travel
 - Person Responsible approval
 - evidence of parental permission for any travel by motor vehicle
- food
 - all food served to children while they are participating in the service (other than that provided by parents for their own children)
 - see the food record section
 - [Food record](#)
- medicine records and training/information provided to adults who administer medicine to children
 - see the Medicine record section
 - [Medicine record](#)
- a hazard identification and management system that includes consideration of all hazards to children and to adults.
 - See the Identifying and managing hazards section
 - [Identifying and managing hazards](#)
- first aid qualifications
 - Keep copies of current first aid (or medical practising) certificates for adults counting towards this requirement
- all injuries, incidents and illnesses that occur.

- See the Injury, incident or illness record section
[Injury, incident and illness record](#)

Relevant licensing criteria:

[HS106 Emergency drills – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS107 Sleep monitoring – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS108 Hazard and risk management – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS113 Excursions – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS114 Travel by motor vehicle – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS115 Food, drink and nutrition – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS119 First aid qualifications – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS121 Medical assistance and incident management – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS122 Medicine administration – Ministry of Education](#)

[HS128 Notification to the Ministry of Education – Ministry of Education](#)

Information for parents

You must advise parents how to access:

- the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and licensing criteria
- information about any changes to the service's licence status
- the most recent Education Review Office report regarding your service
- the full names and qualifications of each person counting towards regulated qualification requirements
- information concerning their child
- information about any fees charged by your service
- how they can be involved in your service
- the service's operational documents
- any planned reviews and consultation
- the amount and details of the expenditure of any Ministry of Education funding received by the service
- your service's procedure for them to follow if they wish to make a complaint about the service. The procedure should include details on who to contact and the contact information for the local Ministry of Education office.

It is recommended that you make your policies, management plans and meeting dates easily accessible to parents and whānau/families.

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 47 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant licensing criterion:

[GMA102 Information provided to parents – Ministry of Education](#)

Reporting

The Early Learning Information (ELI) System

We use the ELI system to collect enrolment and participation information from early learning services. Eligible services must connect to it.

Read about the ELI System on our website.

[Early Learning Information \(ELI\) System – Ministry of Education](#)



Required assessments, approvals and registrations

Here are some of the required assessments, approvals and registrations that are administered by other organisations.

Health Assessment report – National Public Health Service

Fire Evacuation Scheme – Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Food Provision – Ministry for Primary Industries

Health assessment report

Health assessments are carried out by the National Public Health Service to ensure your service meets relevant regulations and licensing criteria.

The health assessment report needs to be submitted with your probationary licence application.

The main aspects of a health assessment are:

- illness policies and methods of controlling the spread of disease
- nappy changing procedures and bathroom hygiene
- general cleaning schedules and upkeep of the service
- checking that ventilation is up to standard
- checking that noise levels are safe.

Contact the National Public Health Service in your region to organise a time for a health assessment visit.

[National Public Health Service – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

Preparing for the health assessment

The building code compliance and your policies, procedures and processes need to be completed before the assessment so the National Public Health Service can complete their checks.

For building code compliance information go to the building code section.

[Building code](#)

To get information about developing policies, procedures and processes go to the section on preparing policies.

[Preparing policies and procedures](#)

The assessment visit must be carried out when the centre is 'ready for children', that is when all resources, furniture and equipment are set up for both indoor and outdoor play.

For more information about health assessment reports visit the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora website. They have helpful information for early childhood services, including:

- health assessment guidelines
- cleaning and sanitising guidelines
- wash down guidelines
- illness guidelines
- infectious illnesses poster.

[Early learning service health assessments – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

Relevant regulation:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, Regulation 9\(2\) – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Fire evacuation scheme approval

An evacuation scheme is a plan that, in the event of a fire or fire alarm, enables evacuation of your premises in a reasonable time.

A building that needs a fire evacuation scheme is called a relevant building. Buildings or part buildings used for early childhood education and care centres (other than household units) are relevant buildings, so need to have a fire evacuation scheme approval.

Who is responsible for providing and maintaining an evacuation scheme?

It is the building owner's responsibility to provide and maintain an evacuation scheme. The obligation to maintain an evacuation scheme is ongoing and making changes to the building may require the building owner to review the evacuation procedures and apply for approval of a new evacuation scheme.

If your service is in a building with other tenants, the fire evacuation scheme approved by the Fire and Emergency New Zealand applies to the whole building and all tenants. It does not just apply to your service.

When to make an application for approval

Under the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Regulations 2018, a building owner must make an application to Fire and Emergency New Zealand for approval of an evacuation scheme:

- in the case of a new building, before (but not earlier than 30 working days before) the date on which the relevant building is first lawfully occupied; or
- in the case of an existing building, before (but not more than 30 working days before) the date on which the building or part of the building becomes a relevant building.

[Regulations for evacuation schemes – Fire and Emergency New Zealand](#)

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand website includes a guide to completing applications, and an example of a completed application for approval of a scheme for a childcare facility.

[Evacuation Schemes – Fire and Emergency New Zealand](#)

If you have questions before you make your application, you can call the Fire and Emergency NZ Fire Information Unit on 0800 347 346 or email them.

fireinfo@fireandemergency.nz.

Time to process an application

Assessments are completed within 20 working days, and once approved, you'll receive an email and guidance on maintaining your approved evacuation scheme.

If the assessment has anything missing, you will receive an email advising that your application is incomplete or not approved with your assessment letter attached. The assessment letter will reference which questions have missing information or require clarification and will provide guidance to help you complete the application. This will extend the time to assess your application.

To get more information about the application process visit the Fire and Emergency NZ website.

[Apply for an evacuation scheme approval - Fire and Emergency New Zealand](#)

Premises above the ground floor

In the event of a fire, it may be more difficult to evacuate children from centres that are not at ground level. Your fire evacuation scheme will need to identify ways to mitigate this. We recommend you read our guidance, [Guidance for Service Providers – Evacuation Plans for ECE Services in High Rise Buildings](#).

[Guidance for Service Providers, Evacuation Plans for ECE Services in High Rise Buildings](#) PDF | 1.08 MB

Early childhood services buildings must have an approved evacuation scheme before we can grant a probationary licence. The approved evacuation scheme needs to be submitted with your probationary licence application.

Relevant licensing criterion:

[HS104 Fire evacuation scheme – Ministry of Education](#)

Food provision

Under the Food Act 2014 and Food Regulations 2015, if you provide food at your early childhood service or kōhanga reo it must be safe and suitable. The Food Act applies to anyone who provides food as part of their business.

MPI's national food safety programme

Working with a National Programme is the way that lower- and medium-risk food businesses operate under the Food Act.

There are 3 levels of national programmes, which are based on the food safety risk of the activities a business does.

All National Programmes require:

- record keeping showing that you're selling safe food
- registration of business details with your local council
- one or more visits from a verifier recognised by MPI.

Who needs to register with the National Programme?

Depending on what type of food you provide, you may need to register and operate under a Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) National Programme.

Early childhood education services or kōhanga reo that cook meals or prepare food – like sandwiches or salads – need to register under National Programme 2.

The Ministry for Primary Industries website has information about the National Programme and who needs to register.

[Early childhood educators and kōhanga reo - MPI](#)

They have an online tool, my food rules, to help you identify the requirements for your business to follow.

[My food rules - MPI](#)

Exempt services

Services that are not required to operate under the National Programme include:

- home-based early childhood education services
- centre-based early childhood education services and kōhanga reo who undertake minimal food handling only, for example provide cut fruit, crackers and spreads, packet biscuits
- where food preparation is part of the curriculum, such as baking and cooking done with children
- where food is donated or brought by families to share
- where children bring a lunchbox.

If your service is exempt from National Programme, you still need to ensure that any food at your service is safe and suitable. MPI have resources available on food safety.

[Food Act 2014 requirements – Ministry for Primary Industries](#)

National Programme 2

If your early childhood service or kōhanga reo is subject to National Programme 2, you must register with your local council.

You need to register once you have received your early childhood service probationary licence.

Steps to follow are outlined on the MPI website. It has details about:

- how to register
- finding a verifier
- how to keep food safety records
- getting checked.

[Steps to register - MPI](#)

If you run several early childhood centres, then you can complete a multi-site registration with MPI. If you intend to do this, contact MPI at [0800 00 83 83](tel:0800008383) or email info@mpi.govt.nz to discuss your circumstances.

Once you have registered your early childhood centre(s) and have been operating for approximately one month, your chosen verifier will arrange a time to visit. There will be a charge for this initial verification visit.

Relevant legislation:

[Food Act 2014 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Relevant regulations:

[Food Regulations 2015 – New Zealand Legislation](#)



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education



**New Zealand
Government**
Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga
kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

We shape an education system that delivers
equitable and excellent outcomes.

