

**Wellington Community Childcare Association  
Te whanau manaaki tamariki ki Poneke**

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# **Members Update**

## **March 27<sup>th</sup> 2007**

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**Ministry of Education Training Incentive Grants – next closing date for applications – 5<sup>th</sup> April**

The purpose of the Incentive Grants is to assist ECE services to meet the qualification requirements for licensing. Grants are intended to contribute to the costs ECE services face when assisting staff to gain a NZ Teachers' Council approved early childhood teaching qualification. For further information contact Kelly Walker on (04) 463 8223 or email: [Kelly.walker@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:Kelly.walker@minedu.govt.nz)

**MoE Discretionary Grants Scheme – next closing date for applications - 27 April**

Applications for the first round of the Discretionary Grants Scheme for 2007 close on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> of April. Capital assistance to not-for-profit groups is available through this pool for projects that will increase participation in ECE, to assist with retention of existing places that are in danger of being lost, or to address specific significant health and safety issues.

Information and application forms are available on the Ministry of Education's website at [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/dgs](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/dgs)

**Work and Income Childcare Subsidy – April 2007**

New rates and thresholds are expected to apply from 1 April 2007. Contact Work and Income for details.

**New Licensing Criteria**

The feedback from consultation last year has now been analysed, and a report on the results has been prepared by Research New Zealand. The report outlines who responded, and how they answered the questions on the feedback forms. It also presents the results of the self-trial of the draft criteria that services completed. The full report and information about the process from hereon can be downloaded from [www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ece](http://www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ece)

The criteria are now being redrafted for the second round of consultation which will take place during the second half of this year. The new regulatory system is planned to be implemented from 2008 onwards.

**Ministry of Education Symposium to Review Progress on the Early Childhood Strategic Plan 2 and 3 May 2007**

The Ministry of Education is holding a symposium on the 2 and 3 May 2007 in Wellington to review the progress of the ECE 10-year strategic plan as we have reached the halfway point, and identify ways to implement the rest of the plan. Approximately, 70 sector representatives around New Zealand will be invited to be part of this important event.

**Playground Safety Standard**

The most important message for centres to be aware of is that Playground equipment and safety surfacing must have a Certificate of Compliance against the new Standard. It is this Certificate of Compliance that the Ministry will need to see as part of licensing checks.

The Ministry of Education is currently drawing up a list of 'approved' manufacturers which will be available on the Ministry website in a month. In the meantime it is recommended that all services contact their local Ministry of Education office if they are looking to purchase or install playground equipment or surfacing.

Centres should note that **bark** is one of a number of acceptable safety surfacings and is widely used in ECE centres. As bark is often bought from garden centres and landscaping retailers it may not come with a Certificate of Compliance. The Ministry recognises this and where a Certificate of Compliance is not available the bark must be placed and maintained to a minimum depth of 300mm (30cm).

### **Mandating Te Whariki**

Over the last few weeks consultation meetings have been held to discuss the mandating of the ECE curriculum framework. The Ministry of Education says that so far, there seems to be general support for mandating the principles and strands of Te Whariki. That is, that all licensed ECE services and certificated playgroups would be required by law to comply with these. Other feedback supported the mandating of the principles only. The deadline for written feedback was the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, but you can contact [ece.cf@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:ece.cf@minedu.govt.nz) if you have any queries or comments you would still like to make.

### **Well Child Review – 'Transition to school' checks being proposed**

The Well Child Framework is currently under review. The Government is keen to ensure that the final Well Child check will ensure that children are adequately prepared for school. Work is underway looking at how, when and where this final Well Child check might best be delivered, by whom and what this should include. One of the suggestions on the table at this stage is that District Health Boards will be funded for these checks and that nurses will be employed to complete them in a variety of venues including EC centres.

The proposed outcomes for the 'Transition to school' check are:

- **For the child** – the ability to access the school curriculum, enhanced resilience and confidence, any disabilities identified and managed, and abilities enhanced.
- **For the family** – easier access to available resources, healthy parent child relationships and enhanced relationships with professionals.
- **For Professionals** - an enhanced relationship with parents, greater awareness of the child's needs and increased support to deliver quality care.
- **For the school** – readiness for the child and awareness of any issues or special circumstances

The Transition to school check is likely to include aspects of health, development, education, social, personal and environmental issues. It is likely that vision, hearing, growth and development will be part of the service as well as assessment of personal and social issues. The child's ability to learn and communicate will also be included.

There are some concerns being expressed from within the early childhood education sector about what exactly will be tested, how this information will be used, and what part teachers will have in any checks carried out in early childhood services. For further information and keeping up with how the review is progressing go to: [www.moh.govt.nz/wellchild](http://www.moh.govt.nz/wellchild)

### **Ministry of Education Equity Index Reassessment**

Equity funding provides additional targeted funding to some early childhood education services. This funding pool is targeted at chartered, community-based, early childhood education services:

- in low socio-economic communities;
- that may have significant numbers of children with special education needs or from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- in isolated areas;
- that are based on a language and culture other than English (including sign language).

Eligibility for the Low Socio-Economic and Special Needs components is based on the early childhood **Equity Index (EQI)**. This index measures the extent to which an early childhood service draws children from low socio-economic communities. In 2001 all services were assessed and given an Equity Index rating, using information from the 2001 census. The EQI is updated 5 yearly in line with the New Zealand Census cycle. All not-for-profit EC services are currently being reassessed so that the EQI can be updated in line with information from the 2006 census. In July this year all not-for-profit services will be sent a survey to fill in, with addresses of families enrolled at the service. Early in 2008 every service will be notified of their Equity Index rating. The first payment under the updated index will be July 2008.