



# Transitions and transience

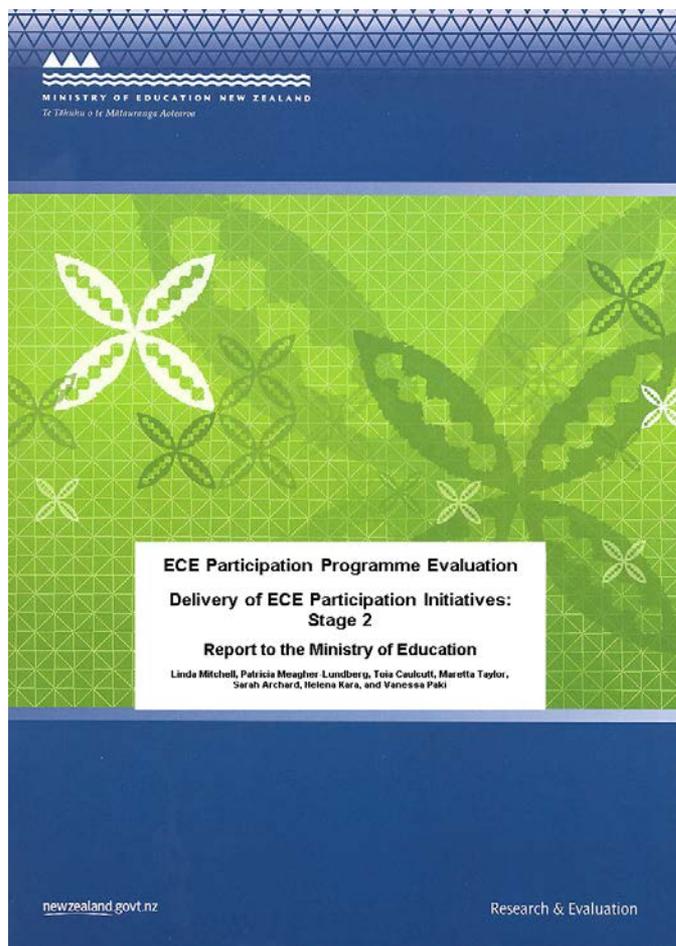
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# Structure of this presentation

- National evaluation of New Zealand's ECE Participation Programme – the study
- Findings: Experiences of “transient” priority children in transitioning to school
- What needs to be prioritised?

# The study



- Evaluation of New Zealand programme of ECE participation initiatives
- ‘Priority’ children - Māori and Pasifika children and children from low socio-economic communities who are not participating in ECE
- Engaging Priority Families (EPF) – a coordinator works as a ‘broker’ between families and ECE and supports learning at home and transition to school



# Theoretical frame and research questions

## An ecological theoretical frame

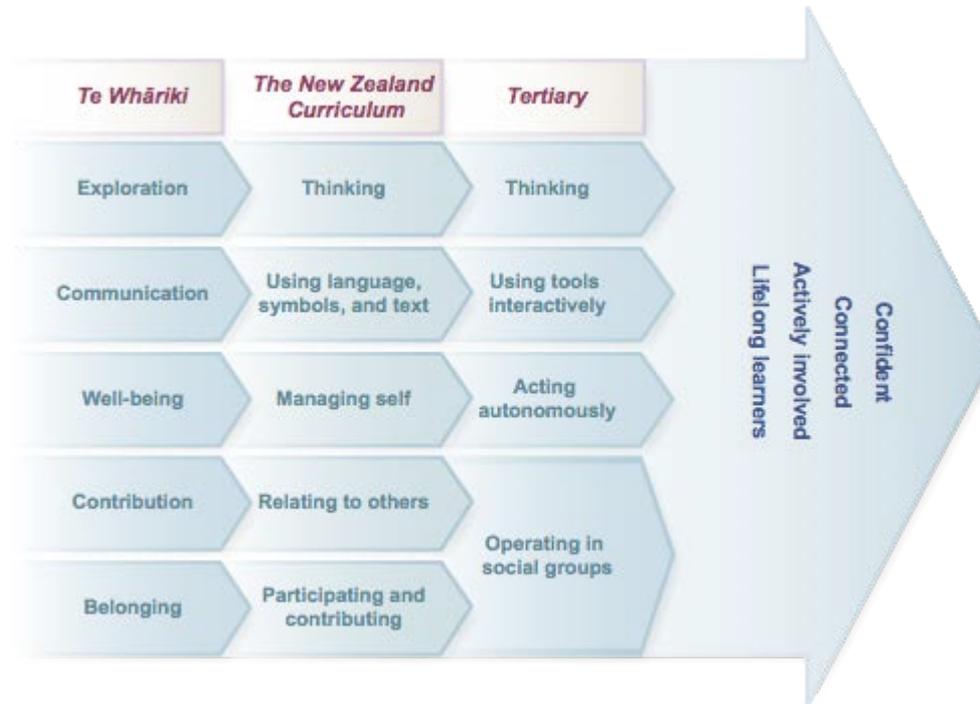
- What did the children's participation in ECE look like?
- What learning foundations did the children develop during the time they participated in ECE and EPF?
- How did the children experience transition to school?



# Methodology

- Study took place over six months
- Observations of 18 case study children at ECE centre
- Analysis of assessment documentation of the 18 children against strands of Te Whāriki (ECE curriculum)
- Interviews with parents, EPF coordinators, ECE head teacher/supervisor, new entrant teacher
- Mapping of transition against NZC (school curriculum) key competencies
- Informed consent

# ECE and School curriculum alignment





# A range of transition experiences (n=18)

- Four children very positive experience – in way they settled and classroom work
- Six children settled well and had challenges in classroom work
- Three children did not settle quickly, challenging behaviour and challenges in classroom work
- Four children left to another city, one stayed in ECE

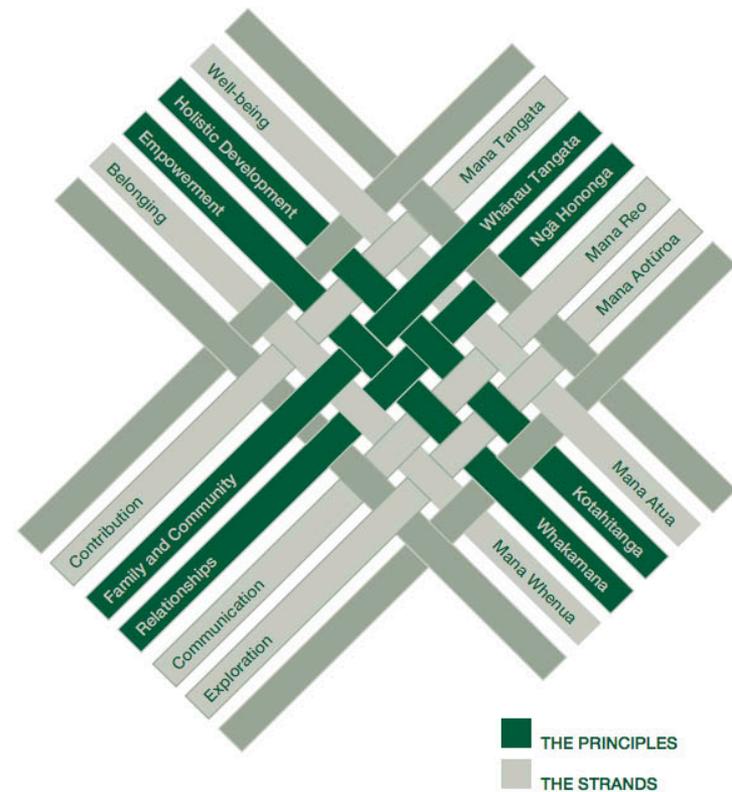


# Variable preparation for transition to school (n=13)

- Pre-visits to local schools (9)
- Health and Before School checks organised by ECE (8) and Plunket (2)
- ECE assessment information passed on to school (5)

# What supported positive transition

- Strong learning foundations in ECE setting across strands of Te Whāriki
- New entrant teachers noticed, recognised and responded to children's strengths
- Cultural bridges to support transition
- Continuity of support from ECE, EPF coordinator, parent





# A positive transition: Roimata

- Strong foundations on indicators of belonging, wellbeing, contribution and communication
- Mum helped at Roimata's playgroup
- New entrant teacher had taught sibling and knew family, but no school visit
- Love of books encouraged at home and by EPF coordinator who provided resources
- Family expectations around academic progress and behaviour

## **A key factor: familiarity with using language and text**

Roimata loves to read even though she doesn't know how to read. She spends her time and she looks at books . . . She tells her story about the pictures. (Mum)

Academically I can tell she has been in the preschool because of the language. Although English is not her first language, she was talking very well, very clearly and she could do it confidently. (New entrant teacher)

# Factors contributing to challenging transitions

- Family transience
- Changes in school
- Poor quality ECE
- Undiagnosed health issues
- Competencies not recognised by new entrant teacher

# A challenging transition: An undiagnosed health issue:

## ECE supervisor

- “Not ready with words and numbers” and “has poor listening skills” and “lacks focus”
- Did not know whether Before School Check had been done

## School nurse and new entrant teacher

- Diagnosed by school nurse as having hearing and vision problems
- New entrant teacher observed “He can be right near me, like within a metre and I say his name and he doesn’t even turn his head”. “One of our challenging behaviour children, you know like with hitting kinds of things”.



# A challenging transition: Caleb

- Remained in ECE a month after turning 5
- Enrolled by EPF coordinator and mum
- School visits with ECE teacher
- But placed in new classroom, new teacher who had no information
- Caleb's attendance disrupted by a month's absence
- Pre-testing at school – did not recognise competencies developed at ECE

He had almost toddler-like tantrums, where as soon as he's been directed or being guided he gets upset with that; he wants to do what he wants to do when he wants to do it and if he can't he will lie [down] and cry ... those first few days he would scream and tell me he couldn't do something.



# Complex transitions

- 4 children moved cities or did not stay at the school they initially transitioned to or were prepared to transition to
- Families' living situations unpredictable
- Beneficial learning foundations in ECE
- Difficult collaborations
- Not much room for shared understandings
- Disrupted any transitioning relationships that were happening.



# Family unpredictability and transience

Children who left the study:

- Anahera's mother is a student – moved cities
- Aiden's family moved to another city
- Blake moved to another country
- Mark had health issues and couldn't go to school

Children's transitions may become secondary to family realities...



# Conclusion

- High quality ECE
- Sharing of assessment information and pedagogical approaches between ECE and new entrant teachers
- Connecting with funds of knowledge the child brings
- Major players in children's lives working together with shared aims around transition
- Transition is a process

# References

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