

## Submission to Auckland draft Plan

Getting children through school gates begins at a young age and starts with access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) and support for parenting. A significant proportion of those who miss out are Māori, Pasifika or of multi-cultural descent. Education helps reduce inequality, and it is often not formal education, but often network and community-driven groups combining to offer support to these groups.

There are areas of west Auckland very close to affluent areas, but not able to use the resources provided due to distance or cost. It is Auckland council's opportunity to empower greater community involvement in all areas of life by linking together government, business and society, which would benefit education for Auckland's general education.

The five areas we advocate for continued and some new needs of support:

### Toddler Day Out

Continued support for this key education event for the ECE sector in Waitakere – 'Toddler Day Out, the Great Parenting Fair' aims to reach parents & families who have not necessarily formed education choices. The event is a free day, focusing on community and holding cultural events as well as providing information on services available to help with parenting and education.

### Community learning centre in West Harbour/Royal Heights

A new need is outlined in recent Cognition research has outlined the need for a community hub for education purposes to reach an area of west Auckland where education is suffering due to poverty, a transient community which has a lack of access to resources via transport. There is a need for resources within "stroller distance". There are other areas like this existing in West Auckland that are not covered in the current Auckland Draft Plan that focuses primarily on the southern areas for ECE needs. We readily campaign for those in need of ECE services in South Auckland, but would like to see west Auckland areas equally as in 'need' for similar access to ECE services.

### Homeplay/Playdays

We are recommending the continuation of the Councils current "ground level" education pilot reaching the target market as outlined recent Cognition research. Precisely reaching parents via informal learning 'Playdays' who have so far, not benefited from any other services. The 'Playdays are a pathway to more formal ECE. Massey East, West Harbour & Royal Heights are some of these areas in need in West Auckland. Ensuring all homes especially in low socio-economic areas have an ECE within 750 metres, ie "stroller distance", so families who don't have transport can still get to some kind of education services. Alternatively ECE could come to these areas via 'Playdays' or as the COMET (City of Manukau Education Trust) ECE Taskforce suggests "fitting out a bus as a mobile playgroup, to reach the pockets of very low provision, [for] the families who are not willing to come to ECE until they see the value of it."

### Multi-cultural centre

The Waitakere area of Auckland is home for an increasing number of ethnic groups and cultural diversity, many in small and sometimes isolated pockets. There is a need for support in terms of parenting and culture-specific institutions as they have an impact on Early Childhood Education. Wellington and other Australian cities have seen the need for multicultural services whereas within Auckland, there is relatively little acknowledgement of the way in which migration – both internal and international – has remade the city in the last 3-4 decades and what impact that is creating. We advocate for a multicultural centre in Auckland, which would include resources for language and cultural maintenance for multi-lingual families and whānau and ultimately increasing involvement from members of diverse communities.

## ECE Waitakere network

The Waitakere Early Childhood Education (ECE) Call to Action is a network of agencies and people passionate about the importance of the early childhood years and the significance of early childhood education and learning as a critical foundation for future development. The ECE Call to Action arose out of a community Summit convened by the former Waitakere City Council in 2002 when the inter-sectoral Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project was established. Several priority areas were identified for Calls to Action including Early Childhood Education (ECE) with the objective 'Every child has access to a quality early childhood education'.

What we do:

- Promote early childhood learning and development
- Advocacy and policy representation for our unique West Auckland community
- Advice, information and support to users and providers
- Integrating early years child education services
- Encouraging good practice, providing resources and PR tools

We would like to advocate for the continuation of the ECE Waitakere network group and the website [ECE-Express.co.nz](http://ECE-Express.co.nz) and for collaboration with a regional strategic ECE group which would include representatives from the South, North, Tamaki, MOE, Council, COMET, MSD, MoH/DHB.