

# Pathways to the future: Nga Huarahi Arataki <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

The Government's vision is for all New Zealand children to have the opportunity to participate in quality early childhood education, no matter their circumstances.

If we are to build a strong future for this country, I believe we must firmly establish early childhood education as the cornerstone of our education system. We cannot leave to chance the quality and accessibility of early childhood education.

This Government is committed to ensuring all families have access to quality education services that are responsive to their needs and those of their children. Our commitment is reflected in this plan.

The Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education represents a shared sector vision for the next decade. The plan provides us all with a road map for strengthening a diverse early childhood education sector where Te Whāriki is provided effectively.

This needs:

- early childhood teachers who meet and maintain the same professional standards as school teachers
- better support for parents and whānau providing early childhood education in licensed and chartered centres, home-based services and licence-exempt services
- better access for parents, families and whānau in both urban and rural New Zealand to quality early childhood education services that meet their needs
- more and stronger collaborative relationships between services and programmes for young families.

The Government has worked alongside the sector, academics and parents in developing the plan. The Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education working group, which included 31 representatives from across the early childhood education sector, undertook 15 months' consultation involving numerous meetings. This included several hui with Māori, meetings in rural and urban areas, and several fono with Pasifika peoples. The working group's focus was on increasing participation, improving quality and promoting collaborative relationships. Over 1300 submissions contributed to the group's final report, which now forms the backbone of this plan and therefore the future direction of early childhood education.

With the direction now set and the path clearly charted, the work remains. As with the development of the plan, successful implementation very much depends on the Government working closely with the early childhood education sector. We all have a role to play in seeing the sector as a whole progressing towards the goal of providing every child the opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education.

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[3]</sup>

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