

Through their lens: An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the report:

The Children's Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to be an independent advocate for children and to investigate matters affecting them. The infant and toddler age group currently has the fastest growing number of enrolments in formal non-parental early childhood services (ECS) in New Zealand. These increasing numbers warranted an inquiry into the impact on their well-being. The overall objective of this inquiry was to provide robust evidence-based information about the provision of formal ECS for under-2s, to analyse it from a child interest perspective, and to make recommendations on how it might be delivered in the best interests of infants and toddlers.

The child's perspective underpins this report. Guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), and in particular, Article 3 (best interests of the child should be a primary consideration) and Article 18 (parents and the State have joint primary responsibility for raising the child), issues relating to formal education and care were examined through the lens of the best interests of infants and toddlers.

The specific aims of the inquiry were:

- To set out what is known of current patterns in the use of formal education and care services for infants and toddlers
- To provide information about the known impacts, benefits, and risks on the physical, cognitive, social, emotional health and well-being of infants who spend time in formal childcare settings
- To identify regulatory aspects of the early childhood sector that may have an impact on infants and toddlers
- To report on the quality and accessibility of information available to parents who are choosing when and how to use formal care services for their infants and toddlers
- To identify the key policy and practice issues that arise from the findings
- To make recommendations to Ministers, government departments and sector organisations.

The report primarily draws on current knowledge from existing sources of data and literature and the perceptions of the respondents who participated in the consultation process. Although the findings are not generalisable beyond the specific participants, a variety of perspectives was sought to capture the diversity of New Zealand's early childhood services and the discourses on it.

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The key policy implications of the findings are in support of:

- Policies that support parental care in the first 12 months of life
- Policy settings that allow for flexible use of formal ECS for under-2s
- Policy and regulatory settings that support quality provisions
- Policies that support provisions of early childhood education and care services by a knowledgeable and skilled workforce

The key practice implications are supportive of:

- Quality education and care
- Practices that enhance responsive relationships
- Education and professional learning that increase knowledge about and skilled work with infants and toddlers
- Better management of the health-related interests of infants and toddlers

Related link:

CRRU publication: "How should we care for babies and toddlers? An analysis of practice in out-of-home care for children under three" ^[3]

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/05/through-their-lens-inquiry-non-parental-education-and-care>

Links

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