

# Pre-schoolers 'need quality education, not just quantity'<sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

Today's announcement of increased enrolments in early childhood education is good news, but teachers are frustrated that quality is taking a backseat to participation and the Education Minister is saying one thing and doing another.

In a recent Cabinet paper on the review of the Teachers Council, Minister of Education Hekia Parata said qualified teachers were a key factor in providing quality ECE that has a positive impact on learner outcomes.-

However, in 2010 the government dropped the target of reaching 100% qualified and registered teachers for ECE by 2012, and removed funding for services with between 81-100% qualified staff. Services are still only required to have 50% of their staff qualified. The Budget this year removed services' funding to support newly qualified teachers.

NZEI Te Riu Roa Early Childhood Representative Virginia Stark said there was an astounding disparity between the government's rhetoric and its actions around the education of our young children.

"The Minister apparently thinks that having just 50 per cent of qualified teachers in a centre is enough, but at the same time she says qualified teachers are a key factor in ECE learner outcomes," said Ms Stark.

"Early childhood teaching graduates are struggling to find jobs as centres are cutting their numbers of qualified staff. Meanwhile, kindergartens which educate 28,000 children are under massive financial stress for refusing to replace their 100% qualified teachers with cheaper untrained workers since their funding was cut."

"We applaud the government's goal of 98 per cent participation in ECE, but trumpeting a 'further investment' of \$53.8 million in ECE over four years just to cover increased participation is not something to get excited about. All we want is funding to match the rhetoric so that our kids get the best possible start to their education."

-reprinted from Voxy

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand<sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** quality<sup>[3]</sup>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/11/pre-schoolers-need-quality-education-not-just-quantity> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality>