



## Candidate statements | 2025 elections

### Early Childhood Education teachers sector

#### Fathima Niyaza FAHMY

No Photo  
Supplied

**Location:** Auckland

**Academic qualifications**

Graduate Diploma in Teaching (ECE)

**Current position**

Teacher

**Active teaching experience**

Teacher at MARC early learning centre, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025

**Governance experience**

Been head teacher at Talented Tots, Mt Albert, Auckland

Playcentre educator and Auckland Playcentres' Librarian in 2002-2005

**Personal interests**

Love bringing my interest in languages and cultures. I try hard to promote te reo and Pasifika cultures. Love mat time, making mat times filled with knowledge, making tamariki wanting for more!

I seek a sense of fairness and justice and stand up for myself and colleagues. I strive to impart my knowledge to ECE students, as I want the best for everyone.

Personally, love travelling to beautiful destinations locally and internationally.

**Profile statement**

Teaching to inspire others

#### Annie Japneet KAUR



**Location:** Auckland

Academic qualifications: ECE Level 7 Post Graduate Diploma in Management level 8

**Current position**

Team Leader / Acting Centre Manager

**Active teaching experience**

5 years

**Governance experience**

3 years

**Personal interests**

I am innovative person and keeping my high hope in sustainability. Always make sure our environment and resources will be well looked after.

**Profile statement**

I am independent and self motivated person. My philosophy in life is that each individual brings his/her strengths to the world it's only our perspective how we identify and appreciate those strengths in our journey of life.

## Virginia Margaret OAKLY



**Location:** I live in Wakefield in the Tasman region and work in Whakatu/Nelson

### Academic qualifications

I graduated in 2003 with a Bachelor of Teaching and Learning.

### Current position

Currently I work for Nelson Tasman Kindergartens as Head Teacher of Relievers. I have been in this role for 9.5 years and have responsibility for leadership and employment of our relievers across 22 kindergartens. Within this, I have a team of Contract relievers - they are relievers who have a contract with us to work and have all the rights and responsibilities of teachers in kindergartens including planning and assessment, Internal Evaluations, Annual Plans and Professional Growth Conversations. I lead this team as their Head Teacher ensuring this work is done.

I work closely with the Head Teachers in our association and liaise with them around relievers and support them with reliever needs or concerns. We have a licensed play space in the Pediatric ward at Nelson Hospital and I do some relieving cover there. I am also a mentor for one a teacher as well and have also done this in the past.

### Active teaching experience

- 2015 - current - Head Teacher - Nelson Tasman Kindergartens
- 2010 - 2015 - Teacher at Victory Square Kindergarten
- 2009 - 2010 - Fulltime, permanent reliever for Nelson Tasman Kindergartens
- 2007 - 2009 - Centre Manager at Wakefield Preschool
- 2005 - 2007 - U2's teacher at Healthkids Preschool
- 2004 - 2005 - Teacher at Tahunanui Kindergarten
- 1995- 2001 - Brightwater Playcentre- Assistant Supervisor

### Governance experience

My most recent experience of governance has been with NZEI Te Riu Roa where I have been a part of the National Executive governance group. I have been a part of this group for 12 years (Jan 2013- Dec 2024) and am just coming to the end of my time on this group. Within this group I have been involved in a number of sub-groups such as the Chair of Leading the Profession and CTU groups, a member of the governance group, system change group and Kindergarten career framework group. I am a member of the ECE touchstone group, the kindergarten touchstone group and the Mana Taurite oversight group. I have been involved in Kindergarten bargaining, ECECA bargaining and NZEI staff bargaining.

### Personal interests

In my private life, I have a number of interests and hobbies. My partner and I have a small lifestyle block with chickens, sheep, a dog and a cat. We also enjoy travelling, especially around Aotearoa. I enjoy tramping and swimming. At home, I like to do puzzles, read and do crosswords.

In addition to this, I am also a member of the Nelson Soroptimist group - a women's service group that fundraises and campaigns to stand up for and support women and children's rights.

### Profile statement

I currently work in the kindergarten sector as a Head Teacher and have also worked in Education and Care services both private and community-based and prior to gaining my qualification, I worked in Playcentre for 5 years. This has allowed me to gain a breadth of knowledge and experience of the diverse ECE sector.

I am committed to doing my part to bring about change for the betterment of the whole of the sector for the tamariki we work with every day.

As Head Teacher of Relievers, I bring an awareness of and sensitivity to casual and fixed-term employees and their needs including the challenges with renewing their practicing certificates.

I have a strong sense of justice and fairness that I bring to my work. I want to see teachers/kaiako kept front and centre in any decision-making that impacts us.

## Leanne STEWART



**Location:** Christchurch, Canterbury

### **Academic qualifications**

I am currently completing a master's degree in specialist teaching which will be endorsed in Early Intervention and will be completed in June 2025. I have a Post Graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching which has been endorsed in Early Intervention, a Diploma in Early Childhood Education, and a National Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

### **Current position**

I am an Early Intervention Teacher at The Champion Centre in Christchurch and have been involved with the centre for over four and a half years. The Champion Centre is a multi-disciplinary service where I am fortunate to work alongside other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Music Specialists, Social Workers, Child Psychologists and Early Childhood Educators. My role is to support and teach young children who have complex needs and/or disabilities, fostering their learning and development together with their parents,

families and whānau.

### **Active teaching experience**

I have been involved in early childhood education since 2002, studying and working at ECE centre's within Christchurch, before having my own children in 2010. I was fortunate to attend Playcentre with my children, returning to ECE employment as a Playcentre Coordinator in 2017 alongside completing the Post Graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching.

In 2018, I became involved at the Champion Centre, firstly as a student, and when qualified at the end of 2018, I became an Early Intervention Teacher, transition to school coordinator, and most recently, a programme team leader. Over the last two years I have also had part-time learning support and relief teaching roles at various special character schools and the Southern Health School. This experience has further enhanced my specialist teaching practice.

I have almost completed a master's degree in Specialist Teaching, while continuing to work as an Early Intervention Teacher at the Champion Centre.

### **Governance experience**

Ellesmere District Kāhui Ako ECE Lead Representative – Term 1, 2018 – Term 3, 2019.

### **Personal interests**

I live in rural Canterbury with my husband and two children. I love to spend time with my family and friends, especially outdoors, exploring all that creation and Canterbury have to offer. As a family we enjoy hiking and walking in mountains, hills or along the coast. I have a love for learning and am always looking at ways to grow both personally and professionally, whether that is through formal study, or setting a personal goal or challenge!

### **Profile statement**

I am a skilled and experienced Early Intervention Teacher and Early Childhood Teacher. I have over 20 years' combined experience as both a professional and parent in the sector, with specialist education expertise in a range of areas. I am incredibly passionate about advocating for children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, and standing in the gap alongside their parents, family and whānau to ensure that all children have access to an education where they can thrive and experience a sense of belonging.

I believe that teachers across sectors within New Zealand deserve to be better supported and equipped in understanding how to teach our diverse learners, and given the tools to partner with parents, families and whānau as soon as their tamariki enter our education system. I would love the opportunity to be on the Governing Council, advocating and being a voice for both the ECE and Special Education sectors.