



REVIEW OF HOME-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Submission from the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Teaching Council

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (the Council) is the independent professional body for teachers from early childhood education through to primary and secondary schooling in English and Māori medium schools and centres.

There are currently more than 131,000 registered teachers in New Zealand.

The statutory purpose of the Council set out in section 377 of the Education Act 1989 (the Act) is “to ensure safe and high-quality leadership, teaching and learning ... through raising the status of the profession.”

We act in the interests of teachers to:

- enable and support leadership to teachers and direction for the education profession, including teacher education and continued professional and leadership development;
- establish and maintain criteria for teacher registration, standards for ongoing practice and criteria for the issue of practising certificates;
- monitor and maintain the requirements relating to teacher conduct, competence and impairment;
- establish and maintain the Code of Professional Responsibility for teachers.

Why we are responding to this consultation

We agree with the aim of this review to better support quality in home-based early childhood education (ECE). A growing number of New Zealand’s children participate in home-based ECE. We firmly believe that every child, their family and whānau is entitled to safe, high-quality care.

We have a direct interest in quality. Our statutory purpose is to ensure safe, high-quality leadership, teaching and learning across the system. The profession, with our support, has developed the Code of Professional Responsibility and the Standards for the Teaching Profession. The Code sets out high standards for safe, ethical behaviour. Through the Code, all teachers recognise their trusted position, the influence they have on learners and on the future wellbeing of our society. The Standards describe quality teaching practice. Once a teacher has registered and has received their practising certificate they agree to work to our Code and Standards. We provide direct support for teachers to identify and develop high-quality teaching as described in the standards. We deliver tailored Code and Standards workshops for teachers in all parts of the education sector, including ECE, and provide resources including webinars and videos of quality practice.

We have a direct interest in quality. Our statutory purpose is to ensure safe, high-quality leadership, teaching and learning across the system.

We have a central role in supporting and maintaining quality through our registration and Initial Teacher



Education (ITE) responsibilities. We have significant work underway to lift and shift quality through these functions. There is the potential for these changes to support the Ministry's work to achieve greater quality in home-based ECE.

Registering teachers and issuing and renewing practising certificates is essential to our role to preserve the reputation of the teaching profession, support workforce capability and keep learners safe. To renew a practising certificate the applicant must have had satisfactory recent teaching experience, a satisfactory Police vet within the past 3 years, satisfactory professional development during the past 3 years, and meet the standards and criteria required by the Education Act. We are currently renewing our registration policy, and we are seeking to strengthen quality in the profession through requirements such as signalling a commitment to te reo me ngā tikanga Māori for every teacher. Alongside a focus on quality, we are seeking to support greater flexibility in teacher registration and certification, for example less focus on time-bound restrictions in favour of a greater emphasis on appraisal against the Standards.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is critical to building the capability of the teaching profession. As the professional body for registered teachers, we establish and maintain the standards for qualifications that lead to teacher registration, and conduct approvals of teacher education programmes. We are currently renewing our programme requirements to lift and strengthen the quality of our ITE system. We are developing new programme approval requirements that represent a substantial shift to an outcomes and evidence-based model. They are being designed to ensure that programmes develop graduates who can meet the Standards for the Teaching Profession with support. We will also provide greater flexibility for providers to develop programmes that prepare teachers to respond to changing workforce and employer needs, including more flexible pathways into teaching.

We have a central role in supporting and maintaining quality through our registration and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) responsibilities. We have significant work underway to lift and shift quality through these functions. There is the potential for these changes to support the Ministry's work to achieve greater quality in home-based ECE.

Responses to specific proposals

Qualifications for home-based educators

We support the intention of the proposal to introduce a minimum qualification for educators as a mechanism to improve quality in home-based ECE. Our preference is for NZQF level 5 qualifications to be the minimum. This is because level 5 provides a better pathway into ITE and offers the opportunity to staircase candidates into full ITE qualifications. This in turn would support greater quality.

Despite our support for a minimum qualification level, we see some risk with this proposal due to the impact such a dramatic increase in student numbers could have on the capacity of the ITE sector to deliver qualifications for registered teachers. A significant proportion of current ECE teaching qualifications are delivered by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics sector, which is currently undergoing some structural change. The Council proposes that before any decisions are made on the timing of the introduction of compulsory qualifications, a more detailed plan is formulated with providers, TEC and the Council.

Visiting teachers and home-based educators

We support moves to strengthen quality through the coordinator/visiting teacher role. In particular we believe there is an opportunity to support greater quality through continual embedding of the Code and Standards. We require home-based ECE coordinators to hold a full practising certificate and through this,



be appraised against the Code and Standards. There is an opportunity to embed good practice in using and appraising against the Code and Standards and in doing so lift quality in home-based ECE. There are examples of excellent practice in this area and we would be happy to work with you further on this.

We are aware that some home-based educators hold teacher registration and a practising certificate. Their registration will not expire however after five years in the educator role their practising certificate cannot be renewed. One reason for this is that educators are not expected to meet the Code and Standards for the Teaching Profession and they are not appraised against them. We are open to exploring this issue as part of our work on identifying opportunities to strengthen home-based ECE through the Code and Standards.

The Ministry to keep a register of educators

The Council has significant experience in establishing and maintaining a professional register. It is not clear what purpose the register is intended to have, and therefore we are unsure the problem that a register is intended to solve. We advise that the following are critical considerations that need to be fully canvassed before the decision to keep a register is made:

- The mandate for keeping a register
- Whether or not any standards have to be met and maintained to be on the register
- How vetting will be conducted and how it will inform registration
- Structures to support competency and disciplinary action

There is an opportunity to embed good practice in using and appraising against the Code and Standards and in doing so lift quality in home-based ECE. There are examples of excellent practice in this area and we would be happy to work with you further on this.

