

ECE Funding Review – Make your submission now!

1. Tips for making your submission

- **Your own words and point of view are enough.** Your submission can be as long or short as you like.
- **Express a positive vision for the early childhood sector.** Reflect on the values which brought you to the sector, e.g. ECE as a public good, a child's right to a high-quality education, etc.
- **Re-frame the issues.** Focus your narrative on quality and the importance of early childhood education as a public good for all tamariki – rather than a profit-driven business. One of the purposes of submissions is to keep the MAG/Government honest about the role of profit in ECE!
- **Present an alternative vision for ECE.** What would the ideal ECE sector look like? The recommendations in the NZEI Te Riu Roa [Kōriporipo report](#) or the [Greens Aotearoa ECE Policy](#) are good examples.
- **Focus on what we know creates quality education.** Pay parity, upholding Te Tiriti, good ratios of teachers to children, qualified teachers, learning support for tamariki in need, and low-fee or public provision of ECE.

2. What are the risks of the review?

- **Pay parity scheme for ECE teachers scrapped.** This [already been identified as a way of cutting costs to government](#) – the funding review could be used as the mechanism to achieve this. It would potentially unwind decades of progress for ECE as a profession and public good for private gain.
- **Qualified teachers and adult to child ratios are up for debate.** Material from the MAG states that higher costs are partly driven by quality factors – particularly better adult-to-child ratios and higher teacher pay. If the cost is too high, it restricts access to ECE and parents'/caregivers' participation in the labour market.
- **Additional kindergarten funding scrapped.** Kindergarten funding has already been mentioned as 'unfair' by the Minister and at least one MAG member. Funding that's used to ensure fair teacher pay and good conditions in the Kindergarten Teacher Collective Agreement could be reduced/redistributed as a result of the review's recommendations.

- **Removal of funding bands that incentivise higher proportions of qualified teachers.** The MAG group has been told that it may need to make decisions that trade-offs between quality education and costs. This could be one of them.
- **Still no financial accountability for private providers.** Currently, community-based centres and kindergartens have to provide full financial reports of their spending, whereas private providers do not. This needs to change!
- **The right to quality early childhood education under attack.** The purpose of ECE in the Education and Training Act has recently been changed to focus on the ability of parents/caregivers to participate in the workforce, rather than the goal of solely delivering high-quality education for children.
- **Profit for providers is prioritised, rather than kaiako, tamariki and their whānau.** This Government has shown itself time and again to be on the side of business and profit making. Listen to the way Associate Minister for Education David Seymour discusses reform in the sector – “cutting the red tape” and “reducing the regulatory burden for providers”. He doesn’t talk about the impact on tamariki, whānau, kaiako and kaimahi.

3. How to make your submission

- Go to the Ministry of Education’s form here to make your submission: [ECE Funding Review](#)
- For more information about the ECE Funding System Review, click [here](#).
- There is currently no public closing date for submissions to the MAG Funding Review. However, the consultation phase finishes in December, so we encourage you to make your submission as soon as possible.

4. Evidence to support your submission:

- Your knowledge and experience!
- [NZEI Te Riu Roa - Kōriporipo](#) – our workforce survey with evidence and recommendations about what educators need.
- Lots of great academics have written about ECE. Linda Mitchell has quite a few [good articles](#) on the value of high-quality ECE, as well as a recent one on the value of [ECE as a public good](#) and many others you will know do too!

Extra for experts

Here's a submission template, as well as additional background information that may be useful in thinking about the review and its purpose.

5. Sample submission structure

- **Start your submission**

✓ Tell the MAG who you are, and why the funding review is important to you.

For example:

“I am a [early childhood teacher/ professional leader/ centre manager...”

“I am parent of a child/ren attending an early childhood service....”

“I am writing this submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) for the Early Childhood Education Funding Review to share my vision for the sector and outline key outcomes I expect to see in the report and recommendations of the MAG.”

- **Make your recommendation(s)**

✓ You can start by saying who you are, what you do.

For example:

“I am a parent... I am a teacher...”

✓ What is important to you as a parent/grandparent/whānau member/kaiako/kaimahi?

For example:

Reduced ratios, pay parity, time to teach, FamilyBoost to be turned into a universal entitlement for 2-year-olds to have access to ECE, financial transparency for all ECE providers so it's clear what taxpayer funds are being utilised for.

✓ Tell the MAG what your vision for ECE is.

For example:

High-quality ECE for all tamariki, respect and recognition for teachers as teachers (pay parity with other teachers to reflect this), ratios which enable learning, universal entitlements for parents who access ECE, a cap on costs for parents, learning support and early intervention for all tamariki who need it, culturally appropriate environments which enable all tamariki to thrive. Talk about what teachers and parents want – quality, qualified teachers, safety, maximum allowable fees.

- **Explain further (optional)**

- ✓ Draw on your own experience as a parent/grandparent/whānau member/kaiako/kaimahi.

For example:

“Funding for Kindergarten is incredibly important. Without kindergarten and not-for-profit services, many children would miss out on a good start to education/life.”

“Equity funding is really important and needs to be expanded, including rural equity funding.”

“Engaging priority families provides a targeted initiative that meets a proven need in our communities.”

“Pay parity is incredibly important and shows respect/value for teachers’ mahi. We need to keep it, but the funding needs to keep up with costs.”

“The evidence shows...” (Use our [Kōriporipo report](#) about what kaiako/kaimahi say is important in ECE/what helps children to thrive/what reforms are needed)

There's no right or wrong way to structure your answer!

- **Conclude**

- ✓ Recommendations for changes you want the Select Committee to make

For example:

“I/we recommend”

“I/we recommend the following priorities for the review’s recommendations...”

“I recommend that the teachers’ salaries are paid centrally like teachers in Primary and Secondary schools”

6. **Bonus info which could help!**

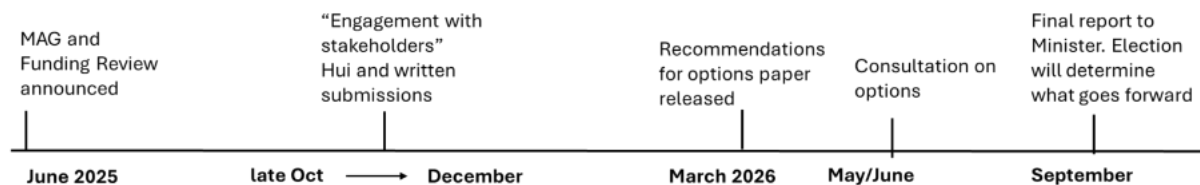
- **Our Kōriporipo Early Childhood Education Workforce Survey Report recommendations 3–6 are most relevant to funding.** [See P29 for more.](#)
- **[FamilyBoost](#) is incredibly unpopular and difficult for whānau to access. What else could it be used for?** For example: Create a universal entitlement for 2-year-olds. Contribute to paying for experienced teachers. Contribute to solving ratio problems by creating funding for improved ratios in centres/kindergartens within lower equity level areas that need it most. Fund wrap around funding to support early identification of issues and then meet those learning support needs.

- **Why not approach ECE funding the way schooling is funded?** For example: area-based funding with services tied to communities using census or population data to predict the need, and with funding amounts tied to the enrolled student numbers for the year. A centralised payroll for teachers, so centres aren't shouldered with this administrative burden.

7. What is the timeline for the review?

This round of consultation closes on Friday 12 December 2025.

The MAG timeline



**NZEI
TE RIU ROA**

8. Background to ECE funding

The current funding model and delivery for licensed early childhood services was designed in 1988. However, the landscape of the sector has changes considerably since then.

In 2007, the introduction of “20-hours free ECE” encouraged the proliferation of private, for-profit services.

A funding review was conducted between 2020–2023 when pay parity was introduced.

No one disagrees that another funding review is now needed; it's the motive of the government conducting it that's the issue.

9. Who is conducting the review?

A “Ministerial Advisory Group” (MAG) will carry out the review.

It consists of seven members who have been appointed by Minister Seymour.

None of the members are qualified or registered early childhood or kindergarten kaiako.

10. What does the MAG do?

The group will provide advice to the Associate Minister of Education David Seymour.

It needs to:

- Consider options that are at least fiscally neutral for the Crown (i.e. there is no more money for funding, they can only re-purpose what already exists).
- Provide a consensus-based report.
- Provide advice, which will be up to Ministers to decide whether and how to progress.

Note: The MAG is not to be considered a decision-making body or representative group, nor be responsible for final policy or implementation decisions. It also cannot be regarded as providing advice on behalf of the entire ECE sector.

11. What parts of ECE funding will the MAG provide advice on?

- How government funding for ECE could be structured to provide for better child participation, children’s educational outcomes and development, and parent / caregivers’ labour market participation.
- How funding could be allocated to improve the breadth and availability of service options for parents.
- How funding could be allocated to provide for equitable outcomes for children facing education and access barriers.
- The balance between quality and affordability for services and parents / caregivers is reflected in the funding system (including its contribution to an appropriate mix of minimum standards and quality inputs, e.g. adult-to-child ratios or proportions of qualified teachers).

- The balance between flexibility of funding use for service providers versus placing accountability requirements on spending.
- Options to gather information on financial data from services and parents / caregivers to inform the Government's understanding of value for money and accountability for the use of public funds.
- The use of mechanisms that enable a simpler and more transparent funding system for parents and providers.

12. What are the Government's main concerns?

- **Affordability and access.** If the cost is too high, it restricts access to ECE and also parents'/caregivers' participation in the labour market. Higher cost is partly driven by quality factors – particularly better adult-to-child ratios and higher teacher pay.
- **Balance between universal vs. targeted funding.** This means thinking about the balance between universal funding – i.e. a subsidy that all centres get, compared with targeted funding, i.e. centre specific funding such as equity funding for low socio-economic, rural, or isolated centres, and child-specific funding, such as the WINZ Childcare Subsidy or FamilyBoost.
- **Complexity of the funding system.** There are many different funding streams for ECE services. The MAG has been tasked with providing advice on how funding could be simplified.
- **Ensuring 'return on investment' in terms of ECE funding.** The Government wants to understand how ECE funding choices add to both child development and education outcomes and labour market participation.

13. MAG responses to members

In a recent hui, members of the ministerial advisory group asked questions around the pain points in the current funding system, any trade-offs they could foresee, and the sustainability of their work.

- Read the slide show here: [ECE Funding Review MAG Engagement Presentation - short form for website 30 October 2025.pdf](#)