# ECE NARRATIVES

## Introduction:

In this presentation from Aotearoa - New Zealand, available here, Sandra Collins speaks to *Ngā Ara Whai Hua –Quality Framework for Evaluation and Improvement in Early Childhood Services* and *Te Ara Poutama - Indicators of Quality for Early Childhood Education: What Matters Most*. Collins is the Manager of Methodology in the Education Review Office (ERO) - Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga in Wellington, New Zealand. The ERO is an independent arm of government set up in 1989, with a mandate to evaluate and publicly report on the quality and effectiveness of education provided in schools and early learning services.

## Context:

Given multiple changes in the early childhood sector in Aotearoa - New Zealand, over the past 10 years including: growth in the number of services; different ownership structures; new research and evaluation evidence; the updating of *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* in 2017; and media concerns, the ERO undertook an updating of their methodology. What they learned from the data was that some services, particularly new services, didn't continue to meet licencing requirements.

The ERO recently introduced *Ngā Ara Whai Hua – A Quality Framework for Evaluation and Improvement in Early Childhood Services*, and at its heart, *Te Ara Poutama - Indicators of Quality for Early Childhood Education: What Matters Most*.

## Overview of the Ngā Rāpupuku-Indicators:

The **outcome indicators** were developped as part of the 2017 update of *Te Whāriki*. These are well-being, belonging, contribution, communcation, and exploration.
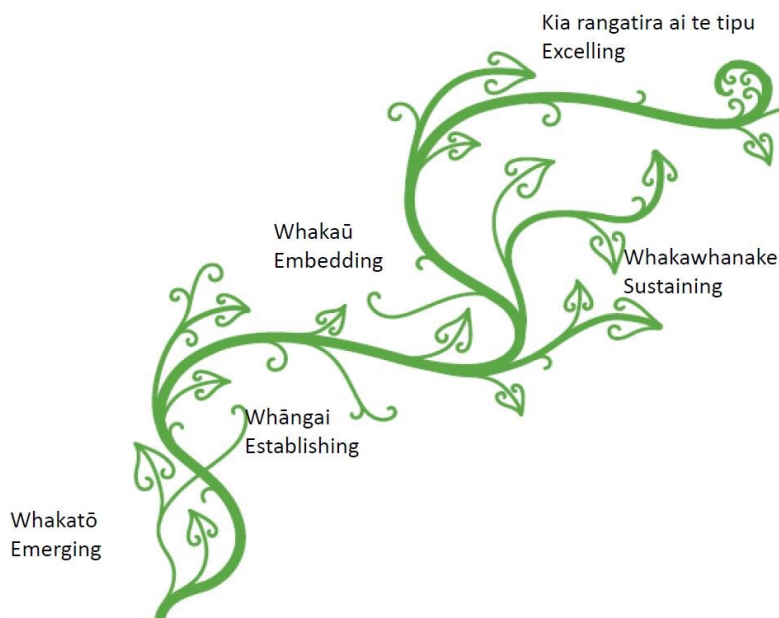
**Process indicators** are connected with two sets of conditions – **learning conditions** and **organizational conditions**.

**Learning conditions** relate both to children and their learning*, **and*** collaborative professional learning and the building of educators' and directors' knowledge and capability.

**Organizational conditions** refer to: how evaluation contributes to improvement; how leadership fosters collaboration and improvement; and, stewardship through effective governance and management.

Figure 1. Vine as a metaphor for collectively assessing quality & improvement

THE ERO external reports will be making one of five judgments for each of the domains



Kia rangatira ai te tipu
Excelling

Whakaū
Embedding

Whakawhanake
Sustaining

Whāngai
Establishing

Whakatō
Emerging

- Where does the service see itself and why – on the basis of what evidence?
- Where does ERO see the service and why – on the basis of what evidence?

## Ongoing process of change:

The principles of the *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum* and the government regulatory standards are foundational to the *Quality Framework* and the *Indicators Framework*.

The development of the indicators began in 2017 led by an ERO evaluator, an internal reference group, and an academic expert panel. Over a period of three years, a literature scan took place, five domains were identified, and five key academics wrote background papers.

A draft of the indicators and supporting material was sent out for feedback to centre-based Early Childhood Services. Feedback was analysed and a final document was produced, with more resources forthcoming to accompany what is envisioned as an ongoing process of learning with and from each other to better understand and improve learning conditions for young children and educators.

The poster outlining the indicators is available here.

## Access all references

## Inspirations for Pan-Canadian ECEC systems:

With a major policy shift in ECEC in Canada as we work towards a national child care system, the Aotearoa – New Zealand experience provides thoughtful ideas on how we might implement ongoing processes of change related to quality and evaluation, specifically around how learning and organizational conditions inform the deep implementation of the *Te Whāriki*; the idea of multiple pathways for quality; and evaluation as a collaborative, relational process.

We close with New Zealand's broad definitions of quality and evaluation.

*Quality* is about learning conditions and organizational conditions: what is happening for children, as well as what is happening between educators in terms of collaborative professional learning to develop and sustain a shared understanding of their curriculum framework *Te Whāriki* - one that honours the thinking of the Māori Peoples.

*Quality indicators* are the many shoots, sprouts, and leaves that indicate the healthy nature of the vine: The vine acts as a metaphor of growth. There are multiple pathways to quality and it does not look the same everywhere; there is no single recipe for quality.

*Evaluation* is about nourishing interconnected conditions for growth: Learning for children, and collaborative professional learning for educators depends on leadership, and governance structure.

*Evaluation* is about growth and improvement: A key factor is that parents and families understand what quality ECE looks like, and feels like, for their child. .

*Evaluation* is about equity: focusing upon conditions most likely to provide equitable opportunities for children to learn, and for educators to engage deeply in their work.

Possibilities for Canada to think upon include: the role of the proposed National Secretariat in coordinating a national quality evaluation campaign;  supporting processes and documents to broadly define quality and evaluation; and creating ECEC policy for children, families and communities that ensures the sustainability of local values, hopes and desires.

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