



Supporting Teaching and Learning in Home-Based Early Childhood Education



Introduction

Teaching and learning in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings occur through responsive interactions between EC educators and children. Professional learning and development is often offered outside this context, making the translation to practice challenging. In home-based ECEC in New Zealand, educators provide ECEC to a small number of children, typically in their own homes. Home-based services are organised into networks of educators, supported by qualified early childhood teachers, known as visiting teachers. We evaluated whether providing resources to support practice with children over time helped to consolidate professional learning, aid practice and benefit children.

What we did

- University researchers and visiting teachers partnered to provide three research-informed, professional learning modules to home-based educators (HBEs) within home-based networks.
- Each module was designed to provide professional learning around children's developing competencies associated with successful transitions from early childhood to school learning environments – how children approach learning and children's oral language competencies related to meaning and sound.
- Each module was introduced with a professional learning session, followed by a six-week period in which home-based educators were provided with weekly resources to support developmentally appropriate interactions to scaffold that area of learning.

What we are learning

Data collection after school entry is ongoing, and analysis is still underway, but initial impressions suggest that educators:

- Used resources as tools to tune in to and scaffold children's learning in areas covered in each module.
- Grew as reflective and intentional educators as they developed their professional kete over the course of participation.
- Continue to incorporate strategies learned in their practice, with examples of use with other children and other areas of learning.

Recommendations for practice

For providers of professional learning and development in home-based ECEC:

1. Include content about children's development within areas of learning and resources to support translation of professional learning into educators' practice with children.
2. Build on naturally-occurring formal and informal social structures of home-based ECEC networks as contexts for situating professional learning.
3. Provide, and support, professional learning and development over time.

For home-based educators:

1. Provide play experiences that give children opportunities to practise developing learning-related skills.
2. Encourage children to talk by engaging in conversations about their experiences and stories you share together.
3. Provide opportunities for children to actively play with language sounds through reading and other activities using language, including songs, nursery rhymes, and wordplay.

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