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Early Childhood Care and Education in New Zealand

The Role of Early Childhood Education Services in New Zealand

The first early childhood education services in this country had the **primary aim of providing for disadvantaged children**. The psychological and educational advantages of early childhood education services were soon seen to have benefits for all children and were increasingly recognised as providing support to families as well as education for their children.

Families and early childhood education services are now jointly involved in the socialisation, care, and learning of young children. Early childhood education services are committed to ensuring that learning opportunities are not restricted by gender, locality, or economic constraints.

There is a growing understanding of the links between culture, language, and learning, and an increasing commitment to addressing the issues faced by children growing up in a society with more than one cultural heritage. Ngā kōhanga reo now play an integral part in transmitting Māori culture and values to young Māori children and, in particular, supporting both the survival and revival of the Māori language. Pacific Islands communities have also seen early childhood services as a means of supporting families and keeping their languages and cultures alive and dynamic.

## A Rapidly Changing Society

New Zealand is part of a world revolution in communication**, technology**, work, and leisure. Change in these and other spheres is a feature of everyday life. **To cope with such changes, children need both the confidence to develop their own perspectives and the capacity to continue acquiring new knowledge and skills. The curriculum provides an educational foundation that supports the full range of skills that children will need as life-long learners.**