

8 April 2020

Consultation on the Draft Learning Support Coordinator Guidance

We are pleased to provide comment to the Ministry of Education on the Draft Learning Support Coordinator Guidance.

About Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand is a national organisation that promotes high-quality early childhood education (ECE) through initial teacher education, professional development, leadership programmes, advocacy and membership services.

As a membership organisation we represent early childhood education services and the teachers who provide education and care to thousands of infants, toddlers and young children. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based and privately-owned education and care services, home-based services and kindergartens.

Te Rito Maioha is also one of New Zealand's top providers of initial teacher education for ECE teachers and is recognised as a leader in bicultural teacher education. We deliver a suite of qualifications and teacher education and professional development programmes that are of interest to both domestic and international students.

We are committed to high-quality early childhood care and education for every New Zealand child. That has been our purpose for 55 years since our formation in 1963, originally as the New Zealand Association of Childcare Centres and later as Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa | NZ Childcare Association.

General Comments

We congratulate the Ministry on a job well done. Creating such informative guidance for a new role in a short time is no mean feat. It clarifies questions people may have about what LSCs are and what they do. We believe that this document will be useful not just for Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs), but also for those in the wider community working with them and parents and whānau of the tamariki they are supporting.

Positive observations

- The inclusion of the 'holistic, strengths-based approach' and promoting the inclusion of all students.
- The blue examples of LSC mahi is a great addition and adds realistic experiences for the LSC to consider.
- The green explanation boxes are useful.
- The point has been a number of times that the LSC does not diagnose children, rather they are the one that ensures resources are coordinated and that appropriate resources go to the right people.
- The in-text links to other webpages are useful.

- Relevant inclusion of diagrams.
- The inclusion of working across cluster for the LSC. The bigger picture information is really important.
- The Getting Started section is well considered and clearly outlines the first steps.

Areas that could be enhanced

Page 4 – Te Tiriti o Waitangi and culturally responsive practice

There is a mixture of bicultural and multicultural statements. These would be more appropriate if the multicultural statements came under a separate heading. The addition of references and links to both Tapasā and Tātaiako would be helpful here.

Related to this, we feel that the use of examples from a Kura and the need to make links with local iwi would add to the document.

Page 10 – The role of the learning support coordinator

As LSCs are teachers, they sit under 'Our Code Our Standards'. The document would be strengthened by including this link.

We are concerned that at this stage early learning services are portrayed as a feeder into the model. The danger with this is that when the LSC is agreeing with their school (as their employer) how they will carry out their role, connections with early learning services aren't considered until a child is about to start school. The LSC is potentially missing out on conversations with a service about early intervention requirements. If in the future the LSC role is more formally extended to reach into early learning, this may require a change to the job description and potentially the type of skills and experience a LSC would need.

Make submission to the Ministry of Education by 8 April 2020.

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