



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Stepping Stones Daycare Ltd**  
**Mount Eden, Auckland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Stepping Stones Daycare Ltd

## Mount Eden, Auckland

### 15 August 2019

## 1 Evaluation of Stepping Stones Daycare Ltd

How well placed is Stepping Stones Daycare Ltd to promote positive learning outcomes for children?

Not well placed	Requires further development	<b>Well placed</b>	Very well placed
-----------------	------------------------------	--------------------	------------------

ERO's findings that support this overall judgement are summarised below.

### Background

Stepping Stones Daycare Ltd in Mt Eden is licensed for 35 children, including eight up to the age of two years. The centre operates in a renovated purpose-built building and serves a culturally diverse local community.

Since the 2016 ERO review, the centre has new owners. Four of the five teachers in the long-serving teaching team are qualified teachers. The newly appointed supervisor oversees curriculum management and mentors teachers. The owner/director has a range of skills that support the service's strategic direction, whānau and various community groups. The director provides daily operational and management support.

The service is founded on a philosophy that promotes aroha and fostering children's love of learning. It has a commitment to building strong relationships with children, teachers and whānau, based on love and respect.

The centre has a history of positive ERO reports. The 2016 ERO report highlighted many positive practices and support for children's learning. The key next steps related to internal evaluation, recognising children's cultures and involving whānau. These have been addressed satisfactorily.

### The Review Findings

Teachers take the time to greet children and their whānau when they arrive. At this time whānau and teachers exchange information about the child's wellbeing and stories that link home and the centre programmes. As a result, children settle quickly into the centre. They are confident and competent and have a strong sense of belonging.

Children experience a programme and routines that reflect their individual preferences and interests. Teachers set up activities to encourage children to engage in play. Children choose what they want to play with, enjoy imaginative play and explore happily alongside each other. They often sustain their play for long periods with their peers, adults or by themselves. Literacy, maths, science, and technology concepts are intentionally woven into the play programme. Children's work is displayed attractively around the centre.

Infants and toddlers have a separate indoor play area. They benefit from good periods of uninterrupted play and choose independently from accessible resources. Teachers promote an inclusive environment. They follow children's cues and have a responsive care approach to teaching.

Some aspects of tikanga Māori are evident. Teachers are committed to extending their knowledge of te ao Māori. They should now increase their use of te reo Māori and strengthen bicultural practices in the programme.

Teachers' and children's cultures, home languages and life experiences enrich the programme. Teachers use children's first language in the context of their play. Whānau enjoy and contribute to cultural events and festivals celebrated in the centre.

It is timely for leaders and teachers to evaluate the quality of the resources and equipment in the centre. Increasing children's access to a greater variety of open-ended resources would more effectively support and enhance their learning and development. Teachers could also increase resources that reflect community diversity.

Teachers support children and their whānau well as they transition into and through the centre. They should now evaluate the effectiveness of the transition to school programme and the broader curriculum, to ensure they align well with the expectations of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

Teachers' respectful relationships with children and their whānau are a strength. Teachers are further developing ways that could build on more whānau engagement and contribution to the centre's programme.

Children's portfolios are a record of their participation in the programme, and their learning progress and development over time. These records include parents' contributions and focus on children's individual interests, strengths and abilities.

Leaders are developing an organisational culture that supports ongoing improvement. They are future focused and promote collaborative and distributive approaches to leadership. Leaders should strengthen strategic planning to support the service's new direction.

## **Key Next Steps**

Key next steps for managers and teachers include accessing external professional development to:

- extend teachers' professional knowledge, practices and skills to improve the quality of teaching and learning for infants and toddlers
- strengthen internal evaluation to ensure a strong focus on improving all aspects of centre operations and outcomes for children
- develop and implement an appraisal process that is aligned to Teaching Council requirements
- strengthen strategic planning by developing clear goals that link with an annual action plan.

## Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Stepping Stones Daycare Ltd completed an *ERO Centre Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's systems for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's wellbeing:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; hygiene; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (including qualification levels; police vetting; teacher registration; ratios)
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.



Steve Tanner  
Director Review and Improvement Services Northern  
Northern Region

15 August 2019

## The Purpose of ERO Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department that, as part of its work, reviews early childhood services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. ERO's reports provide information for parents and communities about each service's strengths and next steps for development. ERO's bicultural evaluation framework Ngā Pou Here is described in [SECTION 3](#) of this report. Early childhood services are partners in the review process and are expected to make use of the review findings to enhance children's wellbeing and learning.

## 2 Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Mount Eden, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	20466		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	35 children, including up to 8 aged under 2		
Service roll	45		
Gender composition	Girls 23 Boys 22		
Ethnic composition	Māori	2	
	NZ European/Pākehā	28	
	Chinese	7	
	Indian	4	
	other ethnic groups	4	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:3	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:7	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	June 2019		
Date of this report	15 August 2019		
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>	Education Review		February 2016
	Education Review		December 2012
	Education Review		November 2009

### 3 General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

#### ERO's Evaluation Framework

ERO's overarching question for an early childhood education review is 'How well placed is this service to promote positive learning outcomes for children?' ERO focuses on the following factors as described in the bicultural framework [Ngā Pou Here](#):

*Pou Whakahaere* – how the service determines its vision, philosophy and direction to ensure positive outcomes for children

*Pou Ārahi* – how leadership is enacted to enhance positive outcomes for children

*Mātauranga* – whose knowledge is valued and how the curriculum is designed to achieve positive outcomes for children

*Tikanga whakaako* – how approaches to teaching and learning respond to diversity and support positive outcomes for children.

Within these areas ERO considers the effectiveness of *arotake* – self review and of *whanaungatanga* – partnerships with parents and whānau.

ERO evaluates how well placed a service is to sustain good practice and make ongoing improvements for the benefit of all children at the service.

A focus for the government is that all children, especially priority learners, have an opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education. ERO will report on how well each service promotes positive outcomes for all children, with a focus on children who are Māori, Pacific, have diverse needs, and are up to the age of two.

For more information about the framework and Ngā Pou Here refer to [ERO's Approach to Review in Early Childhood Services](#).

#### ERO's Overall Judgement

The overall judgement that ERO makes will depend on how well the service promotes positive learning outcomes for children. The categories are:

- Very well placed
- Well placed
- Requires further development
- Not well placed

ERO has developed criteria for each category. These are available on [ERO's website](#).

#### Review Coverage

ERO reviews are tailored to each service's context and performance, within the overarching review framework. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to the service.