

## **NZCA members want teacher:child ratio improvements**

Tēnā koutou katoa,

In a statement released over the weekend the Minister of Education signalled the shelving of proposed teacher:child ratios along with other changes to the ECE regs (2008) and the 20 hours free policy.

Thank you to all of the members who responded with your views. Your views were consistent with the Association's position developed last year that ratio improvements are critical if we are to achieve high quality ECE.

Feedback from members shows that the majority of you are disappointed with the Minister's decision not to implement the planned ratios. New Zealand already lags behind the OECD's best practice ratios for the youngest children and the planned move to extend the 1-5 ratio for children up to two and a half years was an important, although small step in the right direction. However, the National party made a pre-election promise to reduce teacher ratios from 1:5 to 1:4 for under twos so we look forward to seeing the detail of their plans.

The Minister's statement also announced the renaming of '20 Hours Free ECE' to '20 hours ECE'. The change of name to '20 hours ECE' was expected given National's pre-election promises. Member opinion is mixed on this issue, but some members indicated they will keep the word 'free' as it signals that there is no cost to parents.

Member feedback supported the streamlining of systems for parents and centres, such as removing the need for a separate attestation form, but most also indicated that current systems are not causing them to 'drown in red tape'.

The National President and I will be meeting with Minister Anne Tolley in March and will take this opportunity to ask about the National-lead government's plans for teacher:child ratio improvements.

We'll report back to members after this meeting.

Noho ora mai,



Nancy Bell  
Chief Executive

Member comments follow;

“The attestation forms have to go, especially for our parents who have English as a second language,”

“I hope that the new Minister is going to be consultative with the changes that are being muted, as the sector has been used to having a consultative approach”

“I can not see how these changes will give better access to high quality ece”

“none of the new regs posed a problem to us”

“I would be interested to know how many centres are "drowning" in red tape. That is not the case here.”

“I don't know who they have been consulting with but clearly not any of the groups from NZEI or from any of our more respected researchers in the field!”

" Are they consulting with all ECE services or just the privately owned ones?"

“I would be interested in how the proposed changes to the attestation reduce workload. It seems to us that rather than an attestation for any changes we will now need to get a new enrolment.”

“we work at a better ratio than is required by ministry and I believe that if you want to provide Quality over Quantity then you need more teachers to less children.”

“We intend to continue calling it 20 free hours”

“What is meant by “drowned in red tape” we have not been told. We would really like to know what this supposed red tape is.”