

Media Release

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Call For Government Review of *20 Hours ECE Funding*

The New Zealand Home-based Education and Learning Organisation, HELO is calling for an urgent Government review into its *20 hours Early Childcare Education* policy.

HELO president Jenny Yule said inconsistent practices within the ECE sector, which had led to some families paying compulsory fees, showed the policy is not clear.

“HELO would like the Ministry to go back to the drawing board and to really think about what it wants to achieve by *20 Hours ECE*.”

“It is unclear whether the policy is to provide for a higher rate of subsidy to ECE services, or to provide families with free childcare and education for 3-4 year olds,” Ms Yule said.

HELO advocates that a higher rate of subsidy was more appropriate to encourage and promote accessibility and affordability and increase the ECE participation rates, particularly for at risk children.

“However, if it is truly meant to be free, then the Government needs to provide for that rather than expect Early Childhood services or families to pick up the shortfall” Ms Yule said.

She also called on the Ministry to be fairer in how it allocated funding.

Home-based early childcare and education services should receive the same level of funding as centre-based.

“The home based model can make the greatest impact across the board, by raising young children in loving supportive home environments, and in areas with the highest need such as rural areas, communities high in Māori and Pacific ethnicities and lower demographic areas.”

“It’s time to recognise and support the benefits that can naturally flow on through our education, health and welfare systems when we put our money back into creating safe homes, and invest in emotional growth and security for our children from birth,” she said.

HELO members encourage families to shop around, not only to consider what is affordable, but what is best for their child.

Ms Yule says the decision a parent makes on early childcare education is the one of the most important for providing their child with the strongest foundation to set them up for life.

“The relationships that a child builds with a primary carer to support the wiring up of the brain is critical to the development of social and emotional competence.”

“Home-based education and care relies on smaller child-adult ratios, than centres to provide the best foundation for healthy child and adolescent development.”

ENDS

For more information please contact:

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The Home Early Learning Organisation (HELO) comprises founding members PORSE, PAUA, Au Pair Link and Home Grown Kids; four of the largest home-based providers in the home-based ECE sector. HELO's members cater to more than 50% of the children enrolled in home-based services nationwide.