

Code of Ethical Conduct for Early Childhood Services

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<https://www.myece.org.nz/code-of-ethical-conduct>

Preamble

The standards of practice all early childhood services should uphold are outlined in this Code of Ethical Conduct. It is voluntarily embraced by early childhood services and provides a resource for responsible decision-making and action.

The Code acknowledges that New Zealand is party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Te Tiriti o Waitangi is acknowledged as New Zealand's founding document that defines the obligations and responsibilities of early childhood services in relationship with Māori.

Standards

1. An ethic of care

Early childhood services care for and care about children. The significance of caring and relationship both as an educational goal, and as a fundamental aspect of what the service does is recognised.

Guidelines

- a) Every child receives personal attention, care and affection.
- b) All adults protect children from harm and they act to keep children safe.
- c) Parents/ caregivers are recognised and supported as their child's primary educators.
- d) Parents/ caregivers are seen as experts on their child and as a key source of information.
- e) Early childhood service policies and practices do not conflict with what is in the best interests of children and their parents/caregivers.
- f) The right of children, caregivers/ parents and families to confidentiality and privacy of personal information is respected and upheld.
- g) A supportive, non-threatening and non-judgemental environment for children and parents/ caregivers is provided. Management and staff or contractors are conscious of their own biases and are careful not to let their views influence how they treat any child, parent, or group of children and families.
- h) No child is refused enrolment or restricted from participation in any aspect of the programme for reasons of parent/caregiver occupational status or income, national origin, political belief, family structure, or a child's gender, race, religion, disability or differences.

2. Compliance with the law and maintenance of social cohesion

Early childhood services observe standards consistent with the law and maintenance of social cohesion for the well-being of all its members.

Guidelines

- a) All laws are upheld including legal requirements pertaining to early childhood education, child protection, human rights, consumer, building and facilities, employment and copyright.
- b) All adults in the service role model respectful and inclusive behaviour.
- c) Any instances of hateful, hurtful or discriminatory behaviour (including bullying), attitudes, and language by any adult or child at the service are picked up promptly before escalation and addressed in a constructive and considerate way.

3. Professional approach

Early childhood services operate in strongly professional ways.

Guidelines

- a) Employee remuneration is commensurate with qualifications, experience, and responsibilities held. Volunteers are not used in the place of a paid staff role.
- b) All adults are provided with a safe working environment and measures are in place to identify and reduce stress, prevent injury, and support good health.
- c) All adults in teaching roles are provided with opportunities to develop and also to share their new learning, thinking, and activities with others within the service.
- d) The service is involved in a relevant professional organisation to be professionally connected, stay informed of best practices, and continue to grow its knowledge and understanding (for example, [ChildForum](#) and OMEP).
- e) Parent/ family critique and input is regularly invited and incorporated into ongoing quality improvement of the service (this may be done informally and formally, for example: using the [NZ ECE Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Experience](#)).
- f) Speaking out and taking action on behalf of children and parents/caregivers to protect their rights is viewed as an essential professional responsibility.
- g) Social and political advocacy of national and local initiatives and policies that promote the well-being of young children and their families is engaged in by the service as needed.

4. Accountability and transparency

Early childhood services accept they are accountable and maintain a climate of openness and transparency.

Guidelines

- a) An open-door policy enables parents/caregivers to observe the early childhood service in action and at any time.

- b) Parents/ caregivers questions are always answered respectfully, honestly and in a timely way.
- c) The service promises only what it can deliver and declares risks. This is so children, parents/caregivers, employees, government agencies, and others will see they can trust the service to do what it says it will do and give the benefits it says it can, while parents can make informed decisions about use and their child's participation.
- d) It is safe for any one at the service, including staff, [children](#) and [families](#), to raise concerns or make a report in good faith and there is no retaliation.
- e) The service owner/s or governing body accepts responsibility for any mistake, injury, death or harm caused (even if due to the actions of a volunteer, committee member, or educator working as an independent contractor). Mistakes and wrongful behaviour are acknowledged and put right where possible. The early childhood service acts with sensitivity and care toward those affected.

