

20 FEB 2017

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Dear Emma

The Minister of Education, Hon Hekia Parata, has asked me to reply to your request of 2 February 2017 for information about the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU).

The Early Childhood Development Board (ECDB) was established as a Crown Entity under Part V of the Education Act 1989, and disestablished through the Education Amendment Act 2004 along with its operational team, the ECDU. The ECDB's purpose was to promote the development and provision of high quality, accessible, and culturally appropriate educational and developmental facilities and services for the benefit of children not yet enrolled at primary school.

ECDU programmes, information and advice aimed to promote and develop parenting and early childhood education services. ECDU managed third party service provider contracts and provided information and advice to the Minister of Education.

There were three major strands to ECDU's activities. The first was to provide professional development to the informal sector, helping improve both the quality of their service and their capacity to cater to groups with lower participation rates. This sector included playgroups, Ngā Puna Kōhungahunga and Pacific Islands Groups.

The second strand was to support the formal sector with professional development for staff and management. This sector included licensed and chartered childcare centres, kōhanga reo, kindergartens and Playcentres.

The third strand was to provide parenting support programmes for parents of young children, and overcome barriers to early childhood education services.

The ECDU managed nationwide contracts that provided quality parenting advice services through Parents as First Teachers, and Family Start, a cross-sector initiative linking services across the Education, Health and Social Development ministries. Both initiatives used the Ahuru Mowai - Born to Learn curriculum, which included cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional development and physical growth milestones. Other initiatives included Awhina Mātua, Pacific Islands Early Childhood Groups and Ngā Puna Kōhungahunga.

We do not hold information about the ECDU's transfer from the Ministry of Social Development to the Ministry of Education. Archives New Zealand may have documents you find useful. You can search at <https://www.archway.archives.govt.nz/>.

In October 2003, Cabinet decided to integrate ECDU's functions into the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Education group, to provide for government support and services to advance Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki, the Government's ten year strategic plan for Early Childhood Education.

I trust this information is useful.

Yours sincerely



Susan Howan
Associate Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support