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ABSTRACT

This publication addresses frequently asked questions regarding several of New Zealand's early childhood education policies. Using a question-answer format, an explanation is provided for the licensing requirements of the Ministry of Education for early childhood staff and the criteria for "quality funding." New Zealand Qualifications Authority early childhood education credentials are described: (1) The Early Childhood Point System; (2) Grandparenting of Points for Alternative Qualifications; (3) Equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE); (4) Licensing Points; and (5) The Development of Future Options for People with Licensing Points. The National Qualifications Framework currently facilitates the development of national standards for qualifications in many industries, including early childhood. A general timeline for the development and implementation of the new early childhood qualification concludes the publication. (KDFB)

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Early Childhood Education Policies

Answers to Common Questions

May 1996

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INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has designed this newsletter to provide the answers to common questions about the following early childhood education policies:

Ministry of Education

- Licensing Requirements
- Quality Funding Criteria

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

- The Early Childhood Point System
- Grandparenting
- Equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)
- Licensing Points
- The development of future options for people with licensing points
- The National Qualifications Framework

It is acknowledged that the area of early childhood qualifications, licensing requirements and quality funding is at present very complex, therefore it is understandable if you have found these policies and the links between them confusing.

PLEASE TAKE TIME TO READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

Note: The information in this Newsletter has been endorsed by the Ministry of Education.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

What is the Ministry of Education's current licensing requirement for early childhood staff?

The Ministry of Education currently requires the "person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre, *and* home-based care co-ordinators to hold a minimum of 100 licensing points (*not* a specific qualification) as assessed by NZQA. This specific requirement came in to effect on 1 January 1995.

Note: The Ministry of Education has different licensing requirements for Playcentres operating under group supervision.

QUALITY FUNDING CRITERIA

What are the Ministry of Education's criteria for 'quality funding'?

Since 1 March 1996, early childhood services have had the *choice* of remaining on the basic Ministry of Education funding rate or moving to a *higher rate* by meeting the Ministry's "quality" criteria. These criteria relate specifically to *staff-child ratios and qualifications*.

The Ministry of Education has *two* different options based on staff-child ratios *and* qualification criteria for various early childhood services, that is:

- home-based services have a choice of meeting *one of the two* different options based on the staff-child ratio *and* qualification criteria; and
- different types of early childhood centres (ie childcare centres, Pacific Islands Early Childhood Centres, Playcentres and Kohanga Reo) have a choice of meeting *one of the two* different options based on the staff-child ratio *and* qualification criteria.

What criteria must 'childcare centres' meet to be eligible for the higher rate of funding?

A *childcare centre** is eligible for the higher rate of funding *only* if it fulfils the specific staff-child ratio criteria *and* it has at least *one* person present at all times that the centre is open for operation *or* at least *two* people present at all times that the centre is open for operation with *either*:

- A a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) awarded by a college of education or the School of Education, the University of Waikato; or
- B the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Diploma; or
- C equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) as assessed by NZQA under the Early Childhood Point System.

**Note: The Ministry of Education has different staff-child and qualification criteria and options for Pacific Islands Early Childhood Centres, Playcentres, Kohanga Reo, and home-based services.*

How do you find out if you fulfil the Ministry of Education's licensing requirements and/or higher funding criteria?

You should submit an application to NZQA for the assessment of your qualification(s) and experience under the Early Childhood Point System. The Ministry of Education requires a copy of NZQA's report to determine your (and your centre's) eligibility for licensing.

You should submit an EC11 application form to the Ministry of Education to determine your centre's eligibility for the higher rate of funding.

Note: Contact your local office of the Ministry of Education for a copy of the "Criteria for Funding Rate From 1 March 1996", an EC11 form, and for further clarification of its licensing requirements and quality funding criteria.

NZQA's EARLY CHILDHOOD POINT SYSTEM

When and why was the Early Childhood Point System originally developed?

- The Early Childhood Point System was originally developed in 1990 after the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Diploma was upgraded to the *new* benchmark early childhood qualification, a Diploma of Teaching (ECE).
- The Early Childhood Point System was primarily designed as a transition mechanism *only* for people who held a qualification(s) recognised by the Department of Education for the purposes of trained staff or supervisor grants.
- The Early Childhood Point System *was not* developed as a general alternative training route to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE).

Is NZQA's assessment report the same for all applicants?

No. Applications are assessed on an individual basis. However, if you have applied to NZQA for an assessment of your qualification(s) and experience under the Early Childhood Point System, you may fall into one of the following groups:

GROUP 1

- people who have been "grandparented to 100 licensing points"; or

GROUP 2

- people who have been granted equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE);
or

GROUP 3

- people who have completed an overseas qualification(s) which has been assessed as being "comparable to the educational level of a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)"; or

GROUP 4

- people who have been assessed as holding a number of licensing points.

What if you have been awarded a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Diploma?

If you have been awarded a *Diploma of Teaching (ECE)* (the current benchmark early childhood education qualification) *or the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Diploma* (which is deemed to be equivalent to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)):

- 1 you are recognised as a qualified early childhood teacher and can apply to be registered as a teacher with the Teacher Registration Board*; and
- 2 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's requirement for: the "person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre *and* home-based care co-ordinators (see Ministry of Education Section page 2); and
- 3 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's higher funding qualification criteria for *all* early childhood services (see Ministry of Education Section page 3).

It is *not* necessary for you to apply to NZQA if you have been awarded either of these qualifications.

**Note: Teacher registration is currently not compulsory. Contact the Teacher Registration Board, PO Box 5326, Wellington, for further information regarding teacher registration.*

GROUP 1 - GRANDPARENTING TO 100 LICENSING POINTS

What were the grandparenting provisions of the Early Childhood Point System?

You would have been "grandparented to 100 licensing points" by NZQA *only* if:

- 1 you held a qualification previously recognised for grandparenting (ie a qualification recognised by the Department of Education for the purposes of trained staff or supervisor grants prior to 1990); and

- 2 you completed at least 500 hours of experience in an early childhood centre between 1985 and 1990; and
- 3 your application was received by NZQA before 1 January 1995 (see page 8).

What does it mean if you have been "grandparented to 100 licensing points"?

If you have been "grandparented to 100 licensing points" by NZQA:

- 1 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's requirement for: the "person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre *and* home-based care co-ordinators (see Ministry of Education Section page 2); and
- 2 you *may* work towards equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) under the provisions of the Early Childhood Point System by completing additional requirements identified by NZQA (see Equivalence Section page 7).

Are there many "grandparented" people who have not completed all the requirements to reach equivalence?

YES, according to NZQA's statistics there are approximately 2,000 people in this group.

Is it too late for you to complete the requirements to reach equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) now?

NO. If you were "grandparented to 100 licensing points", you may continue to work towards equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) as long as the Early Childhood Point System is in operation.* However, courses recognised by NZQA as meeting equivalency requirements may not be readily available.

**Note: NZQA suggests that if you wish to take advantage of the opportunity to reach equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE), you should complete all requirements as soon as possible before the early childhood specific standards are registered on the National Qualifications Framework. (See National Qualifications Framework Section page 15.)*

GROUP 2 – EQUIVALENCE TO A DIPLOMA OF TEACHING (ECE)

What were the equivalence provisions of the Early Childhood Point System?

You would have been granted equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) by NZQA *only* if:

- 1 you *fulfilled* the grandparenting criteria (see the Grandparenting Section page 5) and completed the additional requirements identified by NZQA; or
- 2 you were awarded either:
 - i Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association Certificate in Childcare (before August 1992)*, or
 - ii the Playcentre National Certificate (before October 1992)*, or
 - ii the Kindercare Early Childhood Teacher's Certificate (from 1988 until July 1991 enrolments)*

and you completed the required experience and your application was received by NZQA before 1 January 1995.

** Note: These dates related to when Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, the Playcentre Federation and its Associations, and the Kindercare Early Childhood Teachers College went through NZQA's process for course approval and accreditation to have their qualifications recognised.*

These three qualifications awarded by these training providers, after those dates, are in effect 'new' courses and are recognised by NZQA for licensing points (see Licensing Points Section page 10).

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What does it mean if you have been granted equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)?

If you have been granted equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) by NZQA:

- 1 you are recognised as a qualified early childhood teacher and can apply to be registered as a teacher with the Teacher Registration Board; and
- 2 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's requirement for: the "person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre *and* home-based care co-ordinators (see Ministry of Education Section page 2); and
- 3 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's higher funding qualification criteria for *all* early childhood services (see Ministry of Education Section page 3).

Why were the grandparenting and equivalence provisions stopped after 31/12/94?

Grandparenting and equivalence were special "one-off" provisions relating to a defined group of people who met those criteria. These provisions *were not intended* to continue indefinitely and *did not include* "new qualifications", therefore they were only available to people whose application was received by NZQA before 1 January 1995.

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GROUP THREE - OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS

How does NZQA evaluate overseas early childhood qualifications?

NZQA has the legislative responsibility for assessing overseas qualifications in a fair, accurate and consistent manner while upholding New Zealand standards.

The process for the evaluation of overseas early childhood qualifications is the same as for any overseas qualification. The evaluation process includes a detailed analysis of the overseas qualification in comparison with the current New Zealand benchmark early childhood teaching qualification, a Diploma of Teaching (ECE). The status of the awarding institution, course content and length, and grades are all taken into consideration. An overseas early childhood qualification can only be regarded as comparable to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) if the above factors are satisfied.

What does it mean if your overseas qualification(s) has been assessed by NZQA as being "comparable to the educational level of a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)"?

It means that:

- 1 you are recognised as a qualified early childhood teacher in New Zealand and you can apply to be registered as a teacher with the Teacher Registration Board; and
- 2 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's requirement for: the "person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre *and* home-based care co-ordinators (see Ministry of Education Section page 2); and
- 3 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's higher funding qualification criteria for *all* early childhood services (see Ministry of Education Section page 3).

GROUP FOUR – LICENSING POINTS

Why are licensing points different from grandparenting and equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)?

The licensing points provisions of the Early Childhood Point System enable people (who *do not fulfil* the grandparenting or equivalence provisions) to meet the Ministry of Education's current requirement for: the "person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre *and* home-based care co-ordinators (i.e. a minimum of 100 licensing points).

What are the licensing points provisions of the Early Childhood Point System?

You were (or you will be) awarded licensing points by NZQA *only* if:

- 1 you have completed *a single qualification* worth at least 30 licensing points under the Early Childhood Point System; and
- 2 the training provider you enrolled with was *accredited* by NZQA (or the New Zealand Polytechnics Programmes Committee if the training provider was a polytechnic or institute of technology) *to offer* the course.

How do you find out how many licensing points a course has been allocated by NZQA?

You should contact NZQA and ask to be sent an up to date copy of the list of courses recognised for licensing points under the Early Childhood Point System. The most recent list is dated November 1995. (A revised list is due out in a few months.)

How do you find out if a training provider has been accredited to award a qualification recognised for licensing points?

You should ask the training provider. You can also contact NZQA or the New Zealand Polytechnics Programmes Committee* if you want confirmation.

**Note: The New Zealand Polytechnics Programmes Committee's address is
PO Box 10344, Wellington.*

Can you still be awarded licensing points for experience?

YES. However, you must first hold *a single qualification* worth at least 30 licensing points before licensing points will be awarded for your experience.

If you have 120 licensing points (or more), does that mean that you have a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or that you have reached equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE)?

NO. You *do not* have a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) *nor* have you reached equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE). *The points are for the Ministry of Education's licensing purposes only.*

It is important that you understand that:

- an accumulation of licensing points *does not* equate to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE);
- a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) *does not* carry a licensing points value; and
- equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) can *only* be gained by people who meet the grandparenting and/or equivalence criteria (see Equivalence Section page 7).

What does it mean if you have a total of at least 100 licensing points?

If you have been assessed as holding a total of *at least* 100 licensing points by NZQA:

- 1 you *fulfil* the Ministry of Education's requirement for: "the person responsible for licensing" in an early childhood centre *and* home-based care co-ordinators (see Ministry of Education Section page 2); and
- 2 you *may fulfil* the Ministry of Education's higher qualification funding criteria for Pacific Islands Early Childhood Centres, Playcentres, Kohanga Reo, and home-based services *depending* on the qualification and/or number of licensing points you hold. (Contact the Ministry of Education for further information).

How can you gain a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) if you have licensing points?

If you hold licensing points, the *current* option open to you is to enrol in a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) programme through an accredited training provider (see next question below). It would be a matter for that provider to decide whether or not to grant you any credit for your previous studies and/or experience.

Which training providers offer a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) programme?

Colleges of education and the School of Education, the University of Waikato are *currently the only* training providers who offer and can award a Diploma of Teaching (ECE). The delivery options available (e.g. full-time, part-time, and field-based programmes) differ from training provider to training provider.

Contact your local college of education or the University of Waikato for further information.

Note: NZQA has recently received applications for course approval and accreditation to offer and award a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) from a number of private training establishments. It may therefore be possible for you to complete a training programme leading to the award of a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) through a range of other training providers in the future.

FUTURE OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE HOLDING LICENSING POINTS TO GAIN THE BENCHMARK QUALIFICATION

Will there be other options for you in the future?

YES. You *will* be able to work towards the *new benchmark early childhood qualification(s)* when it is registered on the National Qualifications Framework (see National Qualifications Framework Section page 15).

What can you do now to meet the Ministry of Education's quality funding criteria if you have licensing points?

In response to the Ministry of Education's quality funding criteria, Hon John Luxton, the previous Associate Minister of Education, requested that NZQA develop *a new option(s) now* for people holding licensing points to reach a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or equivalence to a Diploma of Teaching (ECE).

This would be *an interim measure only* until the new benchmark early childhood qualification(s) is registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

What has NZQA done in response to the Minister's request?

In response to the Minister's request, NZQA has established a consultative/advisory panel as part of the process. This group has been selected for its specific technical expertise and is expected to meet on a regular basis until June 1996. The group includes Sarah Te One, Dr Anne Smith, Barbara Backshall, Dr Anne Meade, Professor Helen May, Jo Jenks, Di Dunkin, and observers from the Ministry of Education, Teacher Registration Board, NZEI/Te Riu Roa and the private early childhood employers sector.

NZQA will also consult other early childhood groups as part of the process e.g. the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Advisory Committee and early childhood training providers.

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What are the principles guiding this development?

The principles guiding this development are:

- the *current* benchmark early childhood qualification is a Diploma of Teaching (ECE);
- a commitment to upholding *quality standards* for early childhood education;
- grandparenting and equivalence options were designed for a specific purpose and are no longer available;
- a focus on *qualifications* rather than licensing points;
- any new option(s) *should be an interim measure only*;
- any new option(s) *should not pre-empt* any decisions to be made regarding the *new* benchmark early childhood qualification(s); and
- any new option(s) *should not pre-empt* any decisions to be made regarding applications for course approval and accreditation to offer and award a Diploma of Teaching (ECE).

This newsletter highlights just how *complex* this area is, therefore it is important to ensure that any new option(s) which enables more people to fulfil the Ministry of Education's quality funding criteria, do in fact promote quality.

How will you be advised of future developments?

NZQA will undertake to advise the early childhood community through another newsletter.

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NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

What is the National Qualifications Framework?

NZQA is currently facilitating the development of a series of *national standards* for qualifications in many 'industries', including the early childhood 'industry'. An Early Childhood Advisory Group is at present developing standards specific to early childhood education* which will become the basis for a *new national early childhood qualification(s)* which will be registered on the National Qualifications Framework. This Advisory Group is different from the NZQA Consultative/Advisory Panel mentioned above.

**Note: Standards are not courses. They are the "standards" you will be assessed against, by a training provider accredited by NZQA (or the New Zealand Polytechnics Programmes Committee) or an assessor recognised by the Advisory Group, to gain credit towards the new early childhood qualification(s).*

How will the National Qualifications Framework affect you?

The Early Childhood Point System will eventually be replaced by the National Qualifications Framework. The Advisory Group will consider *transitional issues* once the standards have been registered and will ensure that people are not disadvantaged by the change.

When will the new early childhood qualification(s) be registered on the National Qualifications Framework?

Unfortunately, it is *not* possible to give you a definite date when the new qualification(s) will be registered on the National Qualifications Framework. It is intended that the Advisory Group will meet in August/September 1996 to endorse the standards. Once the standards have been endorsed, the standards go through a process of registration which is *expected* to be completed by December 1996 at the latest. The Early Childhood Advisory Group will however begin the process for registration of the actual qualification(s) once the standards have been endorsed.

Note: Registration of standards and qualification(s) on the National Qualifications Framework should not be confused with registration as a teacher with the Teacher Registration Board.

What will happen to the Ministry of Education's licensing requirement and higher funding criteria when the new early childhood qualification(s) are registered on the National Qualifications Framework?

The Ministry of Education has indicated that it *will set new* requirements for licensing and higher funding criteria according to the National Qualifications Framework once all developments have been completed.

Footnote: NZQA would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Early Childhood Development Unit in the distribution of this Newsletter.



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