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AUTHOR May, Helen  
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## ABSTRACT

Early childhood institutions underwent a dramatic transformation in the twentieth century, with the perceptions of children not attending preschool reflecting shifts in political, educational, and social opinions regarding the best place for the rearing and education of young children. This lecture presents some historical "maps" of early childhood institutions with particular reference to New Zealand. The landscapes for the "maps" is multi-layered--a backdrop of the colonial values held by Europeans toward Maori people, the global connections of New Zealand, and the personal perspective of the author. The "maps" portray: (1) some views of Europeans toward the Maori; (2) constructions of childhood, constructed differently for the indigenous "minority" Maori child and the colonial "majority" Pakeha child; (3) political, pedagogical, and economic frames that have shaped the gaze of the state concerning early childhood institutions; (4) the interplay between dreams for social change by early childhood advocates, rationales for social order underlying political patronage, and occasional windows where change is possible; and (5) reflections on the contradictory dynamics of the politics of early childhood policy during the last decade. The paper concludes by asserting that unless early childhood advocates are active in the construction of the current "map" for early childhood, there is danger of early childhood becoming the site of experimentation with someone else's blueprint. Contains 21 references. (KB)

# Mapping some landscapes of colonial-global childhood

**ece@2000.antipodes.europe**

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Dr. Helen May, Professor of Early Childhood Studies  
Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Victoria University Wellington,  
PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand: [helen.may@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:helen.may@vuw.ac.nz)

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## Introduction

Early childhood institutions underwent a dramatic transformation in the twentieth century. By the 1950s in 'aotearoa.nz' those children not attending preschool came to be regarded as unfortunate; by the 1960s deprived or disadvantaged; by the 1970s-80s disenfranchised, and by the end of the century, 'at risk'! Such perceptions reflect shifts in political, educational and social opinion regarding the best place for the rearing and education of young children.

This presentation sketches some historical maps of early childhood institutions with particular reference to 'aotearoa.nz'. The landscape for these maps are multi-layered set against a backdrop of colonial values re: 'antipodes.europe' and 'maori.pakeha'; global connections of 'www.nz.pacific', and the personal perspectives of helen.may@vuw.ac.nz. The maps portray:

- Some views of the world 'down under' in relation to those from 'on top of the world'
- Some constructions of childhood; but differently constructed for the indigenous 'minority' Maori child and the colonial 'majority' Pakeha child;
- An overlay of political, pedagogical and economic frames that have shaped the 'gaze' of the state concerning the institutions of early childhood;
- An interplay between dreams for social change by early childhood advocates; rationales for social order underlying political patronage; and occasional 'windows' where change is possible.
- Some reflections on the contradictory dynamics of the politics of early childhood policy during the last decade.

Predicting the future is harder, but being active in charting the future landscape is important for early childhood activists, researchers and advocates. Debates underway on new agendas concerning the place of children and the institutions of childhood are the drafts for this map (Canella, 1997, Moss and Petrie, 1997). Mapping the past in this presentation is also about charting the future.

### MAP ONE: 'Opposite footers' and the 'extraordinary'

Connections between the Old World and the New World 'down under' began with perceptions of normal and abnormal, ordinary and extraordinary by two peoples. Anne Salmond's books *Two Worlds* (1991) and *Between Worlds* (1997) document the early encounters between the people of Europe and the Pacific archipelago of Aotearoa:

The two places were as far apart as one could physically get and still be in this world. The common folk in seventeenth-century Europe speculated about the 'antipodes' or 'opposite footers', people who lived on the opposite side of the globe and exhibited bizarre, anti-human

qualities – barking like dogs, wearing skins and walking upside down on the world (1991, p. 63).

This savage perception was reinforced when Dutchman Abel Tasman had his first encounter with the antipodeans of Aotearoa, later named after the Dutch province of Zealand. Cross-cultural misunderstandings of what was a challenge and what was a welcome, caused a skirmish and some of Tasman's sailors were killed. The Bay was named (until quite recently) Murderer's Bay. These early perceptions, despite generally harmonious encounters, fuelled the European psyche concerning the peoples of the Antipodes. For the inhabitants of Aotearoa the early exchanges caused the emergence of the word 'Maori' to distinguish between themselves and Europeans. These new arrivals were not 'Maori' or 'ordinary'. The 'extraordinary' white skinned and strange arrivals were called 'pakepakeha'.

The so-called Age of Enlightenment in Europe gave birth to colonial expansion around the globe, as well as new ideas regarding the care and/or education of very young children. The eighteenth century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau tried to recreate the 'natural world' in the early education he planned for his fictional child Emile. His portrayal of the 'noble savage' from the Pacific as more free than 'civilised' men fuelled many dreams. Rousseau argued that technological progress and private property had been the source of inequality and the cause of European ills. Not all agreed with this blueprint for 'progress'. The Age of Enlightenment also generated the beginnings of a conscience concerning the poor. Of 2,339 children received into London workhouses in five years after 1750, only 168 were still alive in 1775. European reformers saw that the antipodes might solve ills and realise dreams. A convict colony in Australia was the first step to solving the former, and the planned settlement of New Zealand was a blueprint for the latter.

### **MAP TWO: Old World – New World – Whose world?**

After two centuries of occasional explorers, sealers, whalers and missionaries the country became 'The Farthest Promised Land' (Arnold, 1981) in the New World, for prospective colonists from Britain. For over 100 years after my ancestors arrived in New Zealand, Britain was the 'home country' or the 'old country'. I was the first in my family to 'return' in 1970. Our fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers fought and died in wars that Britain waged in South Africa, Turkey, France, Greece, Crete, North Africa and Italy.

For an early childhood audience the story of Robert Pemberton is illustrative of the nineteenth century mapping of our Old World and New World connections. Pemberton was reared at the Coram Foundling Hospital and dreamed of emigration to New Zealand. In 1854 he wrote *The Happy Colony* and proposed a series of 'Infant Temples' for children from three months to

seven years. Pemberton was imbued with the ideas of Rousseau and Robert Owen, and corresponded with Owen. Education would solve the ills of England caused, he claimed, by the church and monarchy. His plan was to, 'transfer social control from the prince to the teacher, so that the schoolroom rather than a parliament would effectively rule the colony' (Pemberton, 1854). In 1857, still in London, Pemberton established a Euphonic Institution for Infants along the lines of Owen's infant school. He put an option on land in Taranaki New Zealand. There were many complications to frustrate Pemberton's dreams and this is a story that never happened. His daughter got to New Zealand but returned after losing two children in infancy. Pemberton's dream is illustrative of the mood for change through early childhood education, gathering momentum in the Old World during the first half of the nineteenth Century. Colonists like Pemberton brought their dreams for a better world to New Zealand, but the practical realities of the settler life left many unrealised. The ills of Britain also followed. New Zealand soon had urban slums, sweating shops, abandoned children, baby farmers, child criminals and a pauper class. This was the context for the beginnings of early childhood education in New Zealand.

A frustration to Pemberton's dream was that the Taranaki was already mapped and owned by Maori. The Taranaki wars between settlers and Maori of the 1860s carry grievances still in the court today. Maori had settled Aotearoa from the west earlier in the millennium. The dynamic therefore, was more than Old World values versus New World values, but also Maori in relation to Pakeha. The historical maps of childhood, from 'aotearoa.nz' are positioned around these dynamics. There are patterns in common with the European world, but there are distinctive patterns caused by colonialism. Firstly, between Britain and New Zealand and secondly between Pakeha and Maori, as white and brown children waved the Union Jack in the bush, although the dynamics were not that simple. An historical analysis of early childhood institutions in New Zealand shows both accommodation and resistance to 'European enlightenment' and/or 'Pakeha ways' of educating the young. In both contexts, ideas and institutions emerged that were uniquely Maori and/or uniquely New Zealand. By the end of the twentieth century the peoples of the 'farthest promised land' professed to self determination in the world of Asia-Pacific not Europe. For Maori there was the political quest for 'tino rangatiratanga' - self determination - in Aotearoa itself.

### **MAP THREE: personal space and place**

My quest to understand and map the history of early childhood began during the 1970s-80s, as a childcare parent and worker, and union leader when childcare was on the outside of the acceptable. Political activism had its highs but frequently stalled. It was at one such time that I wrote, *Mind That Child* (1985), which traced the hidden history and politics of childcare provision in New Zealand. The issues underlying the non-support of childcare were enmeshed in the contradictions

and conflicts in the lives of women in relation to men, children and work. This became the focus of doctoral research, later published as *Minding Children Managing Men* (1992).

Meanwhile, my career moved into academia and I was concerned to position the study of early childhood education in a political and sociological context. My academic background was anthropology not developmental psychology. It concerned me too that studies of the history of education were selective and sanitising of what was defined as early childhood education. A book co-authored with Sue Middleton *Teachers Talk Teaching 1915-1995* (1997) positioned the story of early childhood in New Zealand alongside the history of education as integral but distinctive, and the site of social and educational experiments, both fortunate and unfortunate. *Teachers Talk Teaching* repositioned the voice of teachers in the construction of education history. Interviews with teachers charted the tides and currents of educational thought and practice, to show how new ideas and were variously, invented, introduced, subverted or resisted by teachers.

*The Discovery of Early Childhood* (1997), detailed the emergence of early childhood institutions in New Zealand in relation to the export of 'enlightened' and later 'progressive' ideas of childrearing and education from Europe; and the transformation of this mix into new colonial endeavours. The sequel, *The Playground of Early Childhood* (in press) examines the postwar partnership with the state, to make sense of the 'seesaws swings and roundabouts' in the political 'playground' of early childhood in 'aotearoa.nz'.

#### **MAP FOUR: European – Pakeha childhood**

There is increasing interest in the study of European childhood as an historical and cultural construct. This assumes that within particular times and/or places societies' perceive the value, the role, and the rearing of children differently. There has been little mapping of the landscape of childhood in New Zealand. A still useful piece of work by Dugald McDonald (1978) identified four significant constructs which parallel patterns in other Western countries.

- Pre 1900s – the '*child as a chattel*' for whom the state had no interest or rights of intervention.
- Post 1900s - the '*child as social capital*' for whom state investment in health and education was intended to create a useful adult citizen and prevent social disorder.
- Post 1945 – the '*child as a psychological being*' whose mental health required support and understanding by parents and institutions. The outcome was to be a more sane society.
- Post 1970s – '*the child as a citizen*' who had rights derived from ideals of a fairer society.

Historian James Belich (1995), however, portrays nineteenth and early twentieth century Pakeha childhood as already distinctive from childhood in Europe. He questions the thesis of the 'chattel' child whose life later improved under the increasing intervention of the state. He

suggests instead a 'wild colonial child' whose independence was tamed and constrained by the imported European child institutions such as schools, kindergartens and clubs.

A post 1980s appraisal of childhood by Lesley Max (1990) portrays increasing numbers of New Zealand children as 'endangered' due to widening health, economic and educational gaps. This is a view supported by a new Labour Government (1999--) who successfully campaigned on policies for 'closing the gaps' - phrase borrowed from Britain! There has recently emerged too, the 'www.nz.child' whose academic abilities are measured against international benchmarks and charted alongside global share-market graphs. These measures are increasingly becoming the drivers of educational policy.

The twentieth century view of the child was dominated by the explanations of developmental psychology. These new understandings brought increasing scrutiny into the lives of children and their parents. Nikolas Rose (1990, p.121) writes of the 'gaze of the psychologist' and claims:

Childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal existence....The modern child has become the focus of innumerable projects that purport to safeguard it from physical, sexual and moral danger, to ensure its 'normal' development, to actively promote certain capacities of attributes such as intelligence, educability and emotional stability.

James, Jenks and Prout (1998, p.17) argue further, that:

Developmental psychology firmly colonised childhood in a pact with medicine, education and government agencies.

The developmental map constructed for the preschool child was the most intricate and vulnerable. This justified more intensive oversight. Early childhood institutions in both Europe and the Antipodes played a pivotal role in constructing particular views of children and how they should be reared. They were at the forefront of pioneering the new, as well as agents in regulating the accepted views of the time. The physical 'child@2000' child was still recognisable from the physical 'child@1900', although much improved in health and survival chances, but the political, pedagogical, economic contexts of childhood were greatly changed.

### **MAP FIVE: Colonising Maori childhood**

In 1900, with political colonisation complete, the lives of the indigenous Maori child and the colonial Pakeha child were far apart. I state in 'Discovery' (May, 1997, p. xiv):

Colonial society created both the need and the impetus for charitable and educational services for European children; but for Maori, it brought about the loss of population, land, mana, and language. These factors are at the crux of later early childhood services, as Maori families lost the resource and social structures which provided the traditional contexts for rearing the very young.

Amidst increasing physical, cultural and economic connection during the second half of the century, the new child measures of the colonisers became the required norm for both Maori and Pakeha childhood. During the postwar years Maori preschool aged children became the focus of educational intervention by both Pakeha and Maori. Colonisation caused Pakeha to construct views of Maori childhood which bore little resemblance to the realities for Maori children and/or Maori perceptions of childhood. In coming to understand the institutions of early childhood for both Maori and Pakeha it is important to deconstruct some Pakeha images of Maori childhood.<sup>1</sup>

- There are few images of children amongst early artistic etchings. European fascination focussed on the tattooed warrior and the decorative arts of women. The arrival of the musket and the ensuing wars decimated or enslaved many communities. The most prevalent images were etchings of Maori children attending missionary schools. Literacy and assimilation through education were the themes.
- Late nineteenth century photographers and artists provided two images of the young Maori child for the European world. Firstly, the anthropological child on his or her mother's back with both mother and child attired (possibly for the occasion) in traditional dress. A parallel image was the Maori mother and child attired in Victorian garb, portraying an ideal of successful colonisation.
- In the twentieth century the Maori child became a focus of commercial interest. Early postcards portrayed Maori children bathing in hot pools, jumping for pennies, and performing haka for tourists. There are few other images in the public domain. The children were photographed in the main as playful 'urchins', although sometimes corrupted by European vices.
- The fate of many Maori infants were only 'visible' as mortality statistics in Pakeha records. The parallel was the increasing interest in Pakeha infant survival and eugenics made prominent by the work of Truby King. Like King, the Maori leader, Maui Pomare also used the saying 'save the babies to save the nation'. Both cultures were beginning to address issues of survival of their race.
- The surviving Maori preschooler became visible to Pakeha attention when they arrived at school and speaking Maori. Rapid and sometimes harsh 'europeanisation' was the solution to the 'problem'. Images of young Maori children in 'native' schools emphasised order, regimentation and cleanliness. The images remain unchanged alongside those of Pakeha children whose early education was becoming increasingly playful amidst the paint, water and junk.

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<sup>1</sup> The images on screen have been collected from mainstream books, magazines and visual material widely available to Pakeha.



- During the 1950s the increasing physical proximity of Maori and Pakeha children brought common measures for success or failure, and a new focus on the Maori child as a problem. Thus brought the early years under scrutiny. Kindergartens provided statistics of ‘special home circumstances’. A typical list is revealing of the perceptions of normality of the time:

3 children whose mothers work full time  
 1 fatherless child – mother divorced  
 1 Dutch child  
 1 Chinese child  
 4 Maori children (my emphasis)

- By the 1960s the problem was perceived in terms of cultural and economic disadvantage. Ans Westra’s photographs in *Washday at the Pa* (1964) portrayed the economic poverty of playful Maori children in homes where appliances and European furnishings were absent. Both Maori and Pakeha felt uncomfortable with the stark images. The context of disadvantage and the perceived need for the Maori child to ‘catch up’ to Pakeha children underpinned preschool initiatives for Maori children in the 1960s.
- The Maori child is still a statistic. There are a myriad of reports on the health and educational ‘problems’ of Maori children. These ‘realities’ have fuelled a raft of interventions and solutions, often in the context of early childhood services.
- During the last two decades some counter images have started to emerge, this time constructed by Maori. Most visible is the Maori infant as a competent language learner, who attends Kohanga Reo – a Maori immersion ‘language nest’. Maori constructed images of the Kohanga Reo child skilfully combine: language and cultural prowess; and a warning that these competent mokopuna will need reckoning with as they grow older and more politically powerful.

These insights are fleeting, but a preliminary attempt to map the diverse landscape of childhood and its institutions that we have constructed in ‘aotearoa.nz’.

### MAP SIX: political gazes on early childhood

In understanding the role of the state in relation to early childhood provision it is useful to expand Rose’s view of the psychological ‘gaze’ for governing childhood. The gaze has been broader than psychological. Rationales for state interest and investment in early childhood for – both Maori and Pakeha – shifted to accommodate new perceptions of childhood, education and welfare. The state became an increasingly active partner, but cloaked its gaze in precise ways, politically acceptable at the time.

- **Survival ‘gaze’:** During the late nineteenth century concerns over baby farming scandals, across a number of Western countries, caused infant life protection legislation and the first regulation of those who cared for very young children.

- ***Morality 'gaze'***: Government interest in the fledgling kindergarten movement in the nineteenth century came, via the patronage of prime ministers and politicians for a philanthropic endeavour claiming to inculcate moral habits in children of the colonial poor. That kindergartens did much more was understood, but political interest of the day was concerned with the issues of urban disorder.
- ***Physical 'gaze'***: During the first half of the twentieth century the 'gaze' of the state was primarily framed around campaigns for healthy bodies for a healthy nation. By 1940 Truby King's regimen of scientific childrearing included over 90% of the Pakeha baby population. Kindergartens packaged their programme as complementary to King's regulated regimen. The reality was softer and kinder. The young Maori child and his or her mother, also came under increasing scrutiny from a public health service extending into rural areas.

The second world war marks a divide. Socialised and happier children (which in itself was a new idea), adjusted adults in a saner world and a more just society was the vision. Three broad political 'gazes' have cloaked postwar rationales for early years care and education. Each brought a new kind of political and pedagogical language. The 'gazes' are not exclusive and each was layered alongside previous rationales.

- ***'Psychological gaze'***: By the 1950s a broad psychological paradigm deemed 'understanding' parents and teachers as the crux of successful learning. Developmental psychology advocated fulltime mothering. Preschool institutions were situated as a support for mothers and a backup where mothers failed. Mothers and preschool institutions were portrayed as key agents in socialising children into well-adjusted citizens. Perceived disorders such as, illegitimacy, delinquency, and working mothers were 'understood' in psychological terms. Early childhood institutions were classified as acceptable or unacceptable according to whether they were deemed to cause or cure such disorders.
- ***Liberation 'gaze'***: The diversity of culture and life styles, behaviours and experiences of families could not be contained within the psychologically defined boundaries of normality. So called disorder was symptomatic of wider social and economic issues. From the late 1960s sociological and political explanations provided insight into the rights and ills of minority groups, women and children. Educational institutions were perceived by some as tools of an oppressive state, but also the basis for liberation. Programmes and early childhood institutions should be empowering, for children their family and/or their culture and for teachers. In New Zealand there were:
  - Views that the state and men should shoulder more responsibility for childcare;
  - Campaigns by early childhood teachers for a better deal; and

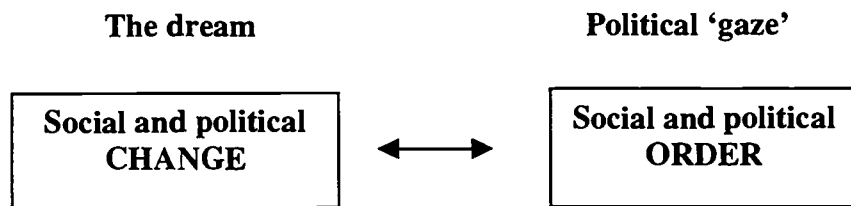
- Campaigns for indigenous rights, where Maori language and land concerns spilled into the arena of early childhood education.

The state, however, was a more cautious participant as the ‘gaze’ shifted to find the cause within the colonial, capitalist and patriarchal structures of the state itself.

- **Economic ‘gaze’:** During the 1980s the state became active in shaping constructions of childhood linked to global economic agendas. The state was persuaded that more investment in early childhood was warranted. National curricula across the education sector were promulgated, with ‘learning outcomes’ and ‘essential skills’ predetermined as the foundation for an ‘enterprise society’. A culture of audit and assurance imported from the world of business management became operative throughout government agencies that also affected early childhood centres. The ‘gaze’ shifted to include the systems and policies of early childhood practice. Audit trails required surveillance and evidence. The tools of child observation have been co-opted towards sighting the measurable outcomes of learning in the minutiae of children’s daily activities.

**MAP SEVEN: Social change and social order**

When the talk of politicians is positioned across the above map, their language is revealing of the political ‘gaze’ of the time. To get funding, acceptance and political support, advocates in the early childhood sector, have always framed their dreams accordingly. The rhetoric of the politician and the advocate, might at times accommodate a similar language and rationale but they are based on different assumptions: social and political change versus social political order. It is this contradictory interface which makes up the politics of early childhood.



A few examples that come from a more detailed compilation of early childhood political rhetoric (May, 2000), include times of accommodation across the ‘dream’ and the ‘gaze’ which creates the possibility a window for political change, as well as times of resistance and political stale mate.

**SURVIVAL: Mother Aubert's founding home: 1898**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>ORDER</b>
We consider the little ones our own and we consider our task over only after they are respectably settled into the world (Suzanne Aubert 1898).	It is open to question whether the cause of public morality is really helped by the concealment of illegitimate births and the provision of facilities for covering up the consequences of vice (Richard Seddon PM).

**MORAL: Kindergartens 1890s-1900's**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>ORDER</b>
Miss [Mary] Richmond saw little ones, too small to go to school, sitting about in the dirt on the pavements, dusty and grubby, learning language which was certainly no good to them, and her tender mother-heart ached for these neglected babies. 'We must have kindergartens for these children' she said and she set to work [in 1898] to get them. (WFKA records)	The danger of a permanent pauper class emerging to pollute the new society (Sir Robert Stout (PM))  May the children be destined to go forth as well ordered and worthy citizens of the land - the ripened fruit of the free kindergarten (Sir Logan Campbell, MP)

**PHYSICAL: Truby King's baby care 1900**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>ORDER</b>
Another necessity for the pre-school child is that sense of security which comes from an ordered background to daily life...The kindergarten realises these basic needs in its carefully planned routines (Olive Grenfell WFKA, 1937).	To save a child-life is an axiom of State preservation; to remedy defect is an axiom of State economy (J. A. Hanan MOE, 1916).

**PSYCHOLOGY OF DISORDER: Working mothers 1950s**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>ORDER</b>
For a lively experience try introducing the subject of childcare at a gathering of strangers. The battle lines will be drawn in two seconds flat. We had almost total opposition from the other preschool organisations and almost total opposition from the MPs of both Parties (Sonja Davies 1960s).	There are thousands of children who go home from school to find their mothers still at work. When I was at school it was understood that the womenfolk of the British Empire were in a class removed from women folk of other countries. We were secure in the knowledge that when we returned home we would find our mothers there (H. L. J. May MP, 1954).

**LIBERATION : Te Kohanga Reo: 1980s**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>ORDER</b>
Maori people have been scapegoats of the pakeha education system too long. Enough is enough. What can we do? We have several options: We can accept IT. We can spit at IT. Join in and change IT or make our own alternatives. Kohanga Reo is an alternative (Hilda Halkyard 1983).	I believe Te Kohanga Reo will mean the end of such things as gangs which we have heard so much about, I am sure of that (Rob Muldoon PM 1982).

**ECONOMIC: 'Quality Journey' 1999**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>ORDER</b>
There are carrots in the next door garden. You are welcome to them, but you have to climb through the barbed wire and the electric fence to get them. People can see it. They can glimpse it but it is too difficult to get. (Childcare manager)	This is the first step to rewarding those providers that can deliver better quality. The document focuses on quality improvement systems and includes a tool for measuring teaching, learning and development practices. The document will set a new benchmark for quality (Nick Smith MOE 1999).

## **MAP EIGHT: windows for change**

History has lessons for planning strategies for change. A New Zealand case study provides some insight. There have been two ‘windows’ for substantive policy rethinks in the government’s investment in the early years: the late 1940s and the late 1980s. Both ‘windows’ were the culmination of decades of persuasion. Each campaign was backed by powerful pedagogical and political rationales in which some seamless political rhetoric could, for awhile, overcome the divides of social change versus social order. In 1947 the Government released its postwar blueprint for early childhood education, the *Report of the Consultative Committee on Preschool Education Services*, (the Bailey Report). In 1988 *Before Five* was released as government’s response to *Education to be More* (1988), (the Meade Report). Even over a forty year time difference there are similarities.

- Both Reports received submissions urging the government to move swiftly to deal with the crises at hand.
- Both Reports were part of wider educational reform and early childhood issues were able to ‘catch onto the coat tails’. In both eras early childhood was optimistically positioned as a political solution to wider ills.
- The recommendations of neither Reports were fully implemented. Both were introduced with staged plans that ended at year one. However, the broad principles underlying each did survive.
- Both initiatives were under Labour Governments and linked to policies to support women and families. In both cases a National Government came to power soon afterwards. The impetus for action was slowed and finance curtailed.

The years between were not lacking in development, but the frustration for those working in the field was insufficient funding, along with incomplete and, for some groups, restrictive policies.

## **MAP NINE: ece.nz@1990s**

A decade of educational reform in New Zealand in the 1990s blueprinted diversity as a model for funding and curriculum in the early childhood sector. The reforms were fuelled in part by global and governmental economic agendas, but shaped by:

- Campaigns for cultural and political self determination by Maori in relation to Pakeha;
- Confidence as a nation to construct our own agendas within and against the tides of external dictates; and
- A pro-active early childhood constituency who – against the odds – were active in redrawing the landscapes of childhood in ‘aotearoa.nz’ with more multiple paths and possibilities.

It is timely to position the *Before Five* reforms and their aftermath amidst the contradictory tides of the past decade.

- ***investment* ↔ *disinvestment***: Government increased its financial investment in early childhood education. This was, however, paralleled by blueprints of government dis-investment in family, education and welfare services. Codes for family and individual responsibility were promoted.
- ***devolution* ↔ *surveillance***: Government promoted policies of devolution in education through ‘community control’ and the ‘self managing school’. Devolution was, however, accompanied by increasing intervention in the everyday detail of early childhood programmes through audit and assurance systems.
- ***diversity* ↔ *standardisation***: Diversity of provision and philosophy was a key policy plank particularly in the context of parental choice and cultural politics. Nevertheless, there was increasing standardisation and quantification via national curricula and defined outcomes.
- ***decolonisation* ↔ *globalisation***: New Zealand pursued political and cultural de-colonisation from Britain and the USA. A parallel process operated in the context of Maori - Pakeha politics. Issues of cultural identity and self determination were expressed in early childhood politics too. On the other hand, children have been subject to an increasing culture of global and/or national ‘universals’ that reduce the complexities and richness of difference.
- ***seamless* ↔ *separation***: New education policies were portrayed as a ‘seamless’ educational progression from home to early childhood; school to tertiary. A cohesive progression of skills laid down in the early years would produce an economically productive adult. Educational agencies attempted to implement seamless policies with seamless staff. As early childhood institutions moved under the seamless umbrella, new strategies emerged to ensure separation. Early childhood curriculum and training remained distinctive and separate to school systems (These are positives!) On the other hand government resisted moves to ensure seamless funding and salaries between early childhood and the school sector.
- ***contestable* ↔ *protected***: ‘Patch protection’ and ‘provider capture’ were examples of a rhetoric that challenged the dominance of established education institutions. The business of education was to be contestable the market place. Competition trimmed quality, over-cut collegiality and unity in the early childhood sector. On the other hand ‘new players’ caused a shake-up of older assumptions. There were winners and losers.

## SUMMARY

These maps of the shifting landscape of early childhood are not yet ~~un~~connected. They are attempts to deconstruct the myths, impose order on the detail, and make sense of our past. There are diverse histories of early childhood and diverse constructions of these histories. Mapping the past, however, has always been combined with dreams for the future, strategies and advocacy for the near future

and pragmatic politics with present. If another 'window for change' is to be forged in 'aotearoa'nz' it is necessary to understand our past, construct a forward vision and a strategy map that unites a sufficient number and wins political acceptance. This has never been easy, but unless early childhood advocates are active in the map's construction there is the danger of early childhood becoming the site of experiment with someone else's blueprint. Early years education is being taken seriously politically. This is the potential problem as politicians, parents, and schools see institutionalised early childhood years as the solution for too many things. As early childhood professionals we have to be clear about our role. The issue being, 'whose blueprint' will guide future development? It is important we are active, not passive in the blueprint's construction, because history's lesson is that the new century's 'before five' childhood is likely to be considerably different to childhood in 2000.

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Organization/Address: <u>Institute for Early Childhood Studies Victoria University Wellington</u>	Telephone:	FAX: <u>64 4 462 5166</u>
	E-Mail Address: <u>helen.may@vuw.ac.nz</u>	Date: <u>27 Oct 00</u>

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