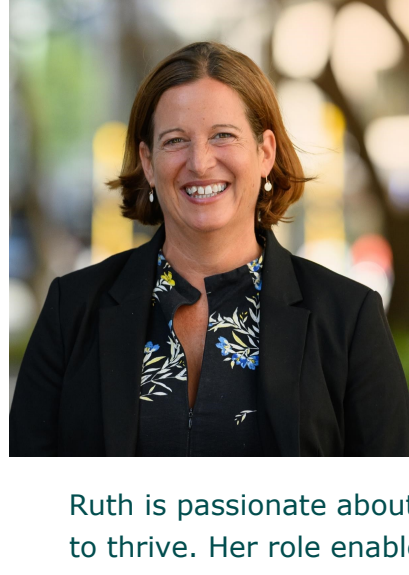


Meet Ruth Shinoda, ERO's Acting Chief Executive and Chief Review Officer



Ruth Shinoda is a name many in the sector will be familiar with. Over the past five years, Ruth has shaped and led ERO's highly successful national centre for education evaluation, Te Ihuwaka, positioning it as a leader in evidence-based educational improvement.

We are pleased to announce that Ruth is ERO's Acting Chief Executive and Chief Review Officer.

Ruth is passionate about ensuring all children get the education they need to thrive. Her role enables her to do that through looking at education outcomes for children, what contributes to them and identify opportunities to improve them.

"ERO's impartial and objective monitoring and evaluation is critical to the integrity of New Zealand's education system," said Ruth.

"Ensuring every learner reaches their potential is a shared responsibility. I would like to acknowledge and thank leaders and educators for all they do in services every day, working towards a truly excellent and equitable education system, where learners thrive."

Ruth has been ERO's Deputy Chief Executive Evaluation and Policy for the past five years. Previously, Ruth has worked in early childhood education in New Zealand (including as Associate Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Education), in England (for the Department of Education) and Japan (as a Dawia Foundation Scholar and also as an ECE teacher). She also has wide experience in evidence and policy both here in New Zealand and the UK and has a BA Honours Degree in Economics. Ruth is also the proud mum of two teenage girls, who keep her busy!

Tēnā koutou katoa

I am delighted to introduce you to Ruth Shinoda, ERO's Acting Chief Executive and Chief Review Officer. Ruth has strong knowledge of the early childhood education sector, with experience in both New Zealand and international contexts. You can read more about Ruth's expertise at the top of this newsletter.

As we are nearing the end of another busy year, I would like to thank you and your team for warmly welcoming our reviewers into your services during 2025.

I hear lots of great feedback from our review team about the wonderful leaders and educators they meet while undertaking their mahi. Your passion for the education and care of Aotearoa New Zealand's youngest learners is clearly evident, and I thank you for all you do every day for children in your services.

I know that you will be keen to know more about what ERO has been doing and what we intend to do in 2026.

Our work is driven by a commitment to support services to improve learning outcomes for all tamariki. We do this through our regular review programme. Our experienced reviewers work with services to identify and acknowledge strengths, and determine improvement actions that will best support each service to ensure children experience high-quality education and care every day.

We know that intentional teaching practices and high-quality early learning experiences lay the foundations for life-long education success. As part of our review process, we make a judgement about where each service sits against a quality threshold. I'm pleased to share the latest insights from our 2024/25 Annual Report, which shows that 53% of stand-alone services met or exceeded the quality threshold, which is up from 36% for services reviewed in 2023/24. This is very encouraging, and indicates a positive improvement in service quality across the motu.

Of the 14 Governing Organisations reviewed in 2024/25, supporting a total of 545 services, 42% met or exceeded the quality threshold, however, 58% fell below the quality threshold. We are now underway with the second cycle of Governing Organisation evaluations and will report on the progress made since the previous evaluation.

If you'd like to read more about what we are seeing in services around the country, you can find our 2024/25 Annual Report [here on our website](#).

You will have seen the proposed changes within the Education and Training (System Reform) Amendment Bill, and you'll be keen to know what this means for ERO's role and reviews. This newsletter updates you on how this proposal is progressing, as well as an update on the Education and Training (Early Childhood Education Reform) Amendment Bill. We will keep you informed as we know more.

Also in today's newsletter, there is information on the updated licensing criteria for centre-based, home-based and hospital-based early learning services, and the National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP).

We hope you find today's newsletter useful. If you missed the last ECE newsletter, you'll find previous editions [on our website](#).

Meri Kirihimete from our team to yours

We take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked alongside us this year – from engaging professionally in rich review experiences that drive improved outcomes for our youngest learners, sharing your insights as part of our national reviews, or engaging with us in online meetings and workshops.

From all of us at ERO, we wish you and your team a very Merry Christmas and a restful summer break. We look forward to working with you again in 2026.

Ko te tamaiti, te putake, o te Kaupapa

The child, the heart of the matter

Ngā mihi
Shelley Booyesen
Deputy Chief Executive
Review and Improvement



In this newsletter:

- Welcoming Viv Ruth – our new Director ECE
- Update: intention to transfer some ECE regulatory functions from MoE to ERO
- Updated licensing criteria for centre-based, home-based and hospital-based services
- National Education and Learning Priorities
- Please complete the Post Review Questionnaire
- Our evidence website and social media

Welcoming Viv Ruth – our new Director ECE

We are thrilled to introduce you to our new Director Early Childhood Education, Viv Ruth.

Viv has joined ERO following more than a decade with Disability Support Services. Prior to that, Viv worked at the Ministry of Education within the ECE space.

Originally a trained kindergarten teacher, Viv holds a Masters of Education along with Special Needs Teaching qualifications. She has previously worked in special education, teacher training and professional learning development positions.



Viv has oversight of ERO's ECE review officers and our reviews of English-medium and Pacific services across the country. She is passionate about all children having access to excellent early childhood education and care.

Welcome Viv!

Update: intention to transfer some ECE regulatory functions from MoE to ERO

Associate Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister Seymour announced in July the Government's intention to move responsibility for licensing, certification, and enforcement of ECE services from the Ministry of Education to ERO.

Since our last update relating to this announcement, Minister Seymour noted that the legislation enabling this change is likely to be included in the Education and Training (System Reform) Amendment Bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament. You can read more about this update here: [Bill giving ECE sector rights and the regulator purpose passed into law | Beehive.govt.nz](#).

At this stage, no changes take effect. The legislative process is still underway, and your ERO reviews will continue as usual.

In other news, the Education and Training (Early Childhood Education Reform) Amendment Bill passed on 19 November 2025, with a planned commencement date 23 February 2026 and sets up the Director of Regulation within the Ministry of Education.

We'll continue to keep you informed as planning moves forward; through updates like this and on our website. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at info@ero.govt.nz.

Updated licensing criteria for centre-based, home-based and hospital-based services

On 28 November 2025, Associate Minister of Education Hon David Seymour announced updated licensing criteria for centre-based, home-based and hospital-based early learning services.

The updated licensing criteria are anticipated to be used from April 2026, and more information and guidance will be provided on the Ministry of Education's website in early 2026.

Until the new criteria are enacted, existing criteria continue to apply.

National Education and Learning Priorities

The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) has been removed from the Education and Training Act.

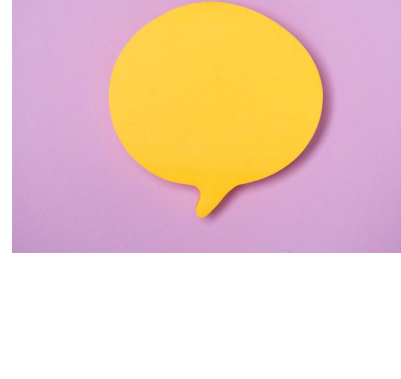
From 1 December 2025, licensed ECE services are no longer required to meet NELP requirements for annual plans, self-review and internal evaluation. This means we will not evaluate the use of the NELP as part of our reviews going forward.

References to NELP in licensing criteria will stay until broader changes roll out in April 2026.

Please complete the Post Review Questionnaire

We are always keen to receive your feedback following an ERO review.

When you receive your confirmed ERO report, we will also send you a link to our Post Review Questionnaire (PRQ). This quick survey helps us to gather your views on our review process, usefulness of the review, what has worked well for your service and what can be improved.



Our evidence website and social media

You can access our national evaluation and research team's insights, reports and guides at www.evidence.ero.govt.nz

We also regularly share news, links, and sneak peeks through our dedicated research social media accounts. Look for 'Te Ihuwaka Education Evaluation Centre' on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.



For more information about ERO and our mahi please visit ero.govt.nz

To be added to our mailing list for this newsletter, please email us at ricomms@ero.govt.nz

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