



Wilf Malcolm Institute  
of Educational Research

*Te Pūtahi Rangahau Mātauranga o Wilf Malcolm*

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO



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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## Spotlight on the Early Years



**The Early Years Research Centre,  
Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research,  
Te Kura Toi Tangata Faculty of Education**

*Front cover photo courtesy of Michael Hall*

**The Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research  
INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH  
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## Early Years Research Centre

The Early Years Research Centre He Kōhanga Toi Tangata uses the harakeke (New Zealand flax) as a symbol for their research in early childhood education. The harakeke is significant in early childhood because of the proverb that describes the outer leaves as representing the elders, the middle leaves as the parents and the inner leaves as the children. The outer leaves surround and support the inner (the children). The Early Years Research Centre researches the child within the family and the wider community.

To contact the Early Years Research Centre please email Associate Professor Linda Mitchell [lindamit@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:lindamit@waikato.ac.nz) or phone: +64 7 858 5171

# Foreword

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The Early Years Research Centre He Kōhanga Toi Tangata is part of the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research in the Faculty of Education. It includes scholars who have an active interest in one or more of three themes of research, with a focus on the early years. The three themes are: pedagogy, policy and community connections. These are not discreet and separate; they interconnect and support each other. Designed with a social justice agenda, the work of the Centre aims to make a difference for young children, early years teachers, and whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand by undertaking robust research that influences policy and informs scholars worldwide.

Highlighted are examples of recent projects by members of the Centre who have undertaken research in each of our theme areas, often in collaboration with early childhood and school participants and university colleagues. The policy research and evaluation projects are closely linked with community connections, and offer valuable insights into forms of early childhood provision that address needs and aspirations of parents and whānau. Research on pedagogy includes: storying strategies with and for teachers; educational affordances of iPads; infant and toddler pedagogies, and the integration of culture into teaching practices. Projects highlighted within the theme of community connections are: educational transitions; research between early childhood centres and museums; understandings of place and space in diverse contexts; aspirations and experiences of families with English as an additional language; and integrated services that provide support for low-income communities, centred around an early childhood service. Please contact any of the researchers on these project teams if you would like to find out more about these projects.

Associate Professor Linda Mitchell  
Director Early Years Research Centre

## Children visiting a museum: Information gathering or creative capacity building? He taonga, he rerenga arorangi

### Why is this research important?

Museums have traditionally had an information sharing purpose: to capture the interest of visitors and add to their knowledge of other lives, places and times. This research builds on young children's creative inclinations to puzzle about the unknown, develop innovative working theories and to expect and enjoy the difference. It is exploring whether a well-designed museum visit can provide opportunities for nurturing innovation and the creative capacities of young people. It is distinctive in that it is researching visits to museums by young children and teachers from early childhood centres, school classrooms, kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori.



*Photo courtesy of Michael Hall*

### What is the background to the project?

The project developed from earlier research projects funded by the Ministry of Education (a Centres of Innovation programme and a Teaching & Learning Research Initiative project). In those projects we explored the ways in which children were interacting with museum collections and artifacts, and we became especially interested in the role of resources that crossed the boundary between the museum and the education site.

**Project life cycle:** April 2014 - March 2017

**Funded by:** Marsden Fund, Royal Society of New Zealand

**Contact:** Professor Margaret Carr [margcarr@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:margcarr@waikato.ac.nz)

## What are the key findings to date?

In pursuit of their own meaning-making purposes and interests children often reconfigure and extend the official messages that the exhibitions of taonga (treasures) are designed to communicate. In our project, children are taking advantage of a museum's potential to serve as a centre of creativity: a site for mingling together old and new ideas. Meanings are expressed by the children in a range of communication modes. These responses are afforded by: dialogue and the use of resources (e.g. sketch books) during the visit, preparation in the education site prior to the visit, together with discussions and work after the visit. The children's responses are personal and idiosyncratic, often – explicitly or implicitly – calling on prior knowledge, interests, dispositions and experience. The project is developing an array of evidence-based creative capacity elements that it is possible to aspire to when young children visit a museum. The two contexts – te reo Māori and English language – are enabling us to construct a cultural analysis of creative disposition that will challenge mono-cultural definitions and protocols.

## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

In the contexts for this project, tamariki/children, kaiako/teachers and taonga/artifacts each collaborate with the other to add creative capacity building to information-gathering. Our highlighting of the features of these combinatory museum encounters will contribute to national and international literature and pedagogy in this domain.

### Who are the principal researchers?

Professor Margaret Carr (far right)

Professor Bronwen Cowie

Dr Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips (top left)

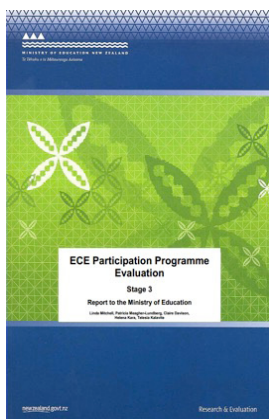
### Research partners:

**(Te Kōhanga Reo & Kura o Mana Tamariki)**

Brenda Soutar (right), Miria Wipaki & Leanne Clayton



# Early Childhood Education Participation Programme Evaluation



## Why was this research important?

The evaluation was important in gauging the effectiveness of a key government early childhood education (ECE) policy aimed at increasing participation for priority families not accessing ECE, and formative in guiding policy development. It is valuable for participants from organisations providing the participation initiatives and ECE services who would like to be more responsive to families in the ways their services are provided and run. The gathering of perspectives from families offers a much needed understanding of their

experiences and aspirations. Overall, the evaluation findings can be a useful resource for thinking about approaches to policy.

## What was the background to the project?

A key government policy for early childhood education (ECE) is to increase participation of priority children (Māori, Pasifika, and from low socio-economic homes) in localities with lower percentages of children attending ECE before they start school. In 2011, the Ministry of Education (MOE) began to implement a programme of six initiatives aimed at increasing ECE participation in selected localities. A team from the Early Years Research Centre have worked with MOE staff to evaluate the programme and individual initiatives. The evaluation has taken place in four stages and included surveys of families and providers, interviews with MOE staff, providers and families, and analysis of MOE enrolment data.

**Project life cycle:** August 2011- December 2015

**Funded by:** Ministry of Education

**Contact:** Associate Professor Linda Mitchell [lindamit@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:lindamit@waikato.ac.nz)





## Integrated early years services: An initial overview of provision in Aotearoa New Zealand

### Why is this research important?

A growing body of research particularly in the United Kingdom and Australia demonstrates the benefits of integrating multi-agency services with early childhood education settings to support the needs and aspirations of families. In New Zealand the concept of 'integrated services', 'joined up services', or 'one-stop shops' is not common. There is anecdotal evidence of service integration at early childhood services around the country but there is no official data or useful information about these initiatives that could inform further policy development.

### What is the background to the project?

In February 2016 at an Early Years Research Centre Policy Forum entitled: *Affordances of integrated early childhood services. What might these be? How might we get there?* the recommendation of the participants at the plenary session was to survey the early childhood sector to gather information about integrated service provision. A national survey of early childhood centres was carried out in July 2016 to gather data about the ways in which ECE services support families.

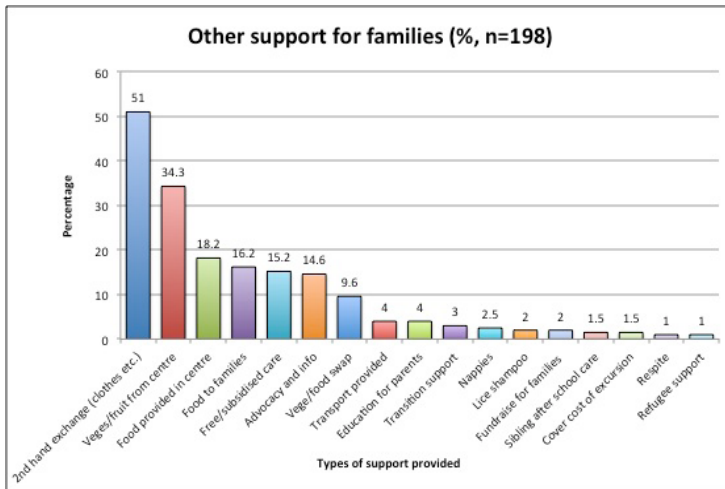
### What are the key findings to date?

Preliminary analysis of the survey data indicated that there is a wide range of ways in which early childhood services use other services to support families. The response of over 400 services (the majority were community-based) showed that some ECE services have strong relationships with a range of other agencies and access these regularly while other ECE services had minimal relationships with other agencies.

**Project life cycle:** June 2016 - December 2017

**Contact:** Dr Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips [jgcp@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:jgcp@waikato.ac.nz)

A very small number of ECE services had other services on their premises.



## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

That early childhood services are very good at endeavouring to support families despite few formal policies to resource the support. Teachers and managers largely appear to create opportunities for supporting families through expending their own time and energy to build relationships with other services. Teachers expressed their support for the concept of joined up services and saw ECE services as offering much potential for supporting families. Over 100 ECE services indicated they wanted further involvement in the research.

### Who are the principal researchers?

Dr Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips (right)  
Associate Professor Linda Mitchell

### Research team:

Sonja Arndt, Maretta Taylor



## Literacy and narrative in the early years: Zooming in and zooming out

### Why is this research important?

We have known for a long time that the extent of very young children's oral vocabulary is related to their later literacy performance in the early school years. Children's oral vocabulary is particularly important for their later reading comprehension once they have surpassed the 'learning to read' phase and have entered the 'reading to learn' phase. Oral language involves much more than simply vocabulary: other critical skills include children's awareness of the sounds of words and their understanding and expression of larger story structures or narratives.

### What is the background to the project?



Building on research that shows that children's narrative competence is linked to later literacy learning at school, we want to understand more fully how these conditions for literacy learning are, and could be, supported within

early education settings. Using a design-based methodology to analyse story-telling episodes within early childhood centres and school classrooms, we are researching the contributions of story-partners and other supports for developing early narrative competence. Our aim is to contribute to the international literature and develop storying strategies with and for teachers.

**Project life cycle:** January 2013 - March 2017

**Funded by:** Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

**Contact:** Dr Amanda Bateman [abateman@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:abateman@waikato.ac.nz)

## What are the key findings to date?

From our preliminary findings we see there are similarities and differences between the ways literacy and narrative are supported in different early years environments at kindergarten and school. The techniques, or teaching strategies used for supporting literacy and narrative often involve collaborative 'telling' of story narratives where teachers provided ideas, prompts and props for children's narrative and literacy activities. Objects play an essential role in children's storytellings where rich environments that provide resources such as book making activities, puppet theatres, access to ICT and pretend play afford rich storytelling opportunities.

## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

Storytelling can be extended and supported through:

- **Engagement with story partners:** When children are engaged in telling stories with peers and teachers they extend and elaborate on their stories to contribute to the ongoing activity,
- **Making objects available:** Objects are used to tell a story around through imagining it as a different item, or talking about it in its actual state, helping to support a storyline,
- **Providing a rich environment:** the inclusion of many different storytelling opportunities encourages children to engage in storytelling activities alone and with others.

### Who is the principal researcher?

Dr Amanda Bateman (right)

#### Research team:

Professor Margaret Carr, Professor Elaine Reese and Dr Alex Gunn



#### Key project publications:

Bateman, A., Carr, M and Gunn, A. (2016, in press). Children's use of objects in their storytelling. In C. Hruska, and A. Gunn (Eds.) *Interactions and learning: Interaction research and early education*. Singapore: Springer.

Bateman, A. and Carr, M. (2016). Pursuing a telling: Managing a multi-unit turn in children's storytelling. In A. Bateman and A. Church (Eds.) *Children and knowledge: Studies in conversation analysis*. (pp. 91-110). Singapore: Springer

# Te Whatu Kete Mātauranga: Weaving Māori and Pasifika infant and toddler theory and practice in early childhood education

## Why is this research important?

Key to educational success for Māori and Pasifika children is the acknowledgement that Māori and Pasifika children are culturally located and the recognition that effective education must embrace culture. This research will explore how early childhood services can better integrate culture into teaching practices by creating culturally responsive, infant and toddler teaching and learning theory, and practice guidelines.



## What is the background to the project?

Using a case study approach, the research focuses on six early childhood service providers. In the first phase (2015), each of the services worked with their communities to collect and collate pūrākau /stories about infant and toddler care and education knowledge and practices. These stories were analysed in terms of how they could be reframed in contemporary early childhood services. In the final phase (2016) each service is utilising an action research cycle to answer self-identified question/s, which emerged as a result of analysis from the first phase.

## What are the key findings to date?

- The critical place of 'Identity and Culture'. Each service is focusing, in one way or another on these two aspects. For the Māori services these tend to link to iwi connectedness and rohe connectedness. For the Pasifika services, the importance of their individual

**Project life cycle:** January 2015 - December 2016

**Funded by:** Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

**Contact:** Dr Lesley Rameka [lrameka@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:lrameka@waikato.ac.nz)

- Pacific groupings is highlighted in all the research questions,
- The importance of tuākana/older children to tēina/younger children learning opportunities,
- The need to change the lenses teachers utilise to enable them to view behaviour and learning from a Māori /Pasifika perspective.

## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

- Each service has identified cultural understandings, values, and artefacts as a means of achieving strong connectedness and relationships with their identity groupings,
- Tuakana/teina learning is not just a culturally responsive pedagogical approach, it is essential for optimal teina learning in Māori and Pacific early childhood services,
- A change of focus from an early childhood (teacher training) perspective to Māori/Pasifika ways of seeing the world and children's learning is critical to the research. Without the change in lens it is difficult to notice, recognise and respond to Māori/Pasifika values.

### Who are the principal researchers?

Dr Lesley Rameka (right)  
Ali Glasgow



### Principal advisors:

Tracey Mansell, Feauai Burgess, Fereni Ete

### Lead teachers:

Patti Howarth, Cindy Wills , Ani Tuheke, Saddle Fiti, Bridget Kauraka, Rita Iosefo

### Key project publications:

Rameka, L., & Glasgow, A. (2015). A Māori and Pacific lens on infant and toddler provision in early childhood education. *MAI Journal*. (4)2, 134-150.

Glasgow, A. & Rameka, L. (2016). Māori and Pacific traditional caregiving practices: Voices from the community. In R.Toumu'a, K. Sanga & S. Johansson Fua ( Eds.). *Weaving education: Theory and practice in Oceania. Selected papers from the second Vaka Pasifiki Education Conference*. Nuku'alofa: University of the South Pacific (pp. 74-86).

## Embodiment, places and education: From early childhood to higher education (EPE)

### Why is this research important?

The research responds to contemporary developments in designing learning environments, and explores complex influences and relationships between embodied learning, notions of place/space and learner subjectivities. It emphasises the importance of place/space in relation to contemporary issues such as cultural diversity, inclusion, refugee resettlement, and neoliberal, outcomes focused educational agendas. It further responds to calls for increasingly philosophical attitudes and orientations in ECE, to offer insights into policy, design and practices in ECE and ITE programmes.

### What is the background to the project?



Kindergarten setting, Sweden

Analysing understandings of place and space in diverse contexts, beginning with the contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand and Sweden, and builds on an earlier similar project between Australia and Sweden. Our previous research and scholarship in phenomenology, subject formation, identity, being and becoming for learners in their

educational space/place underlies this project. Its focus on notions such as embodied learning, diverse communities and values raises complex social, political and historical entanglements and assemblages. The project connects ECE space/place with things, energies and forces in the learning environment and learning.

**Project life cycle:** April 2016 - March 2017

**Funded by:** The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT), Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research

**Contact:** Sonja Arndt [skarndt@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:skarndt@waikato.ac.nz)



## What are the key findings to date?

During the initiation phase of this project we have supported a Summer Research Scholar with a literature review which demonstrated that the key concerns arising for learners and learning in particular educational environments are with relationships, children's voice, cultural sensitivity, responses to dominant ideals and pressures, globalization, sustainability and kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and the view of child/parent as consumer in an age of market and profitability-driven ECE.

## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

- Learning environments impact on learners and learning in infinitely complex material and non-material ways,
- Contextual features, including invisible, the non-human presence of forces, matter and energies are critical considerations in conceptualizing 'quality learning',
- The complexity of these influential factors requires increasingly complex description and analysis,
- Using philosophy as a method of analysis is expected to support such work.

### Who are the principal researchers?

Sonja Arndt (right)

Professor Eva Alerby, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden

#### Research team:

Professor Bronwen Cowie,

Dr Susanne Westman, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden



### Key project publications:

Arndt, S., Alerby, E., & Westman, S. (2016, in press). Places and spaces: Developing an Aotearoa New Zealand/Swedish collaboration. In B. Cowie, & R. McNae (Eds.). *Realising innovative partnerships in educational research: Pedagogies of togetherness*, Sense Publishers.

Arndt, S., Alerby, E., & Westman, S. (2017, forthcoming). Affect, embodiment and interrelationships: Reconceptualising educational policy through encounters with learning spaces and places. Special Issue in *Policy Futures in Education*.

## iPads and opportunities for teaching and learning for young children (iPads n Kids)

### Why was this research important?

Young children are increasingly exposed to, and expected to, make use of digital and mobile technologies as members of a digital generation. This project was initiated to inform the current debate on young children's iPad use and to understand the perspectives of teachers, young children and their parents/ caregivers. The researchers in the project collaborated with two early childhood educators to investigate the educational affordances of iPads for teaching and learning with children in an early childhood education (ECE) centre within Hamilton. In the centre, iPad use was child-directed with a teacher present to guide and facilitate children's participation within group contexts.



### What was the background to the project?

The Early Childhood Curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) acknowledges the important role digital technologies play in young children's lives. It seeks to ensure young children's use of, and learning in, technology-supported educational contexts, occurs in a holistic, socially and culturally appropriate manner. This study included interviewing the teachers, observing teacher-children interactions, collecting children's iPad-supported work and four case studies of children and their families, to identify factors that shaped their iPad interest.

**Project life cycle:** Completed March 2015

**Funded by:** Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research

**Contact:** Dr Elaine Khoo [ekhoo@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:ekhoo@waikato.ac.nz)

## What were the key findings?

The iPad is appealing and can support children's developing literacy, communicative and participatory learning skills and understandings. The iPad's affordances allow for new and different ways of teacher-child/children interaction and the exploration of children's learning interests. In the teachers' practice, the iPad served as a relational, communicative, documentational, informational and observational tool to support child-led learning. Quality teacher-child interaction occurred when teachers were scaffolding children's learning with the iPad, benefitting the individual child and serving as a model for children on how talk can be used and useful to group learning.

## What were the most important facts to take away?

- Teacher understanding of iPad-supported educational opportunities and deliberately incorporating these opportunities into their practices, can support young children's learning. The quality of teacher-child interaction is central to children's awareness and developing the skills, confidence and dispositions for meaningful and productive engagement with iPads as learning tools,
- Young children are able to use iPads to express, share and communicate their ideas to others in meaningful ways,
- Complementary practices and guidelines are important in helping children make sense of the role the iPad can serve as a learning tool, both at the early childhood centre and in children's homes.

### Who was the principal researcher?

Dr Elaine Khoo (right)

**Researcher:** Rosina Merry

**Project mentors:** Professor Bronwen Cowie

Professor Margaret Carr

### Key project publications:

Khoo, E., Merry, R., & Nguyen, N.H., Bennett, T., & MacMillan, N. (2015). iPads and opportunities for teaching and learning for young children, *iPads n kids*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research.

Khoo, E., Merry, R., & Bennett, T. (2015). "I want to say...": Privileging young children's voice in iPad-supported assessment for learning. *Early Childhood Folio*, 19(1), 3-9. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18296/ecf.0002>



## Voices of playgroup

### Why is this research important?

The aims of this research project are to contribute to an understanding of the cultural expectations and ways of being of families from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and how these may affect their interactions with education settings, in particular, the transitions into educational settings in an Aotearoa New Zealand context. The longitudinal nature of the project enables a revisiting of the families and their children's expectations and experiences of education in Aotearoa New Zealand over time.



### What is the background to the project?

The 'Voices of playgroup' research project seeks to capture the educational values, aspirations and experiences of families with English as an additional language along with what they feel has shaped or influenced their understandings of education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim is to gain a better understanding how such culturally determined expectations may affect engagement by children and their families with the education sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand with a particular interest in transitioning into and between services.

**Project life cycle:** April 2015 - May 2017

**Contact:** Simon Archard [simon.archard@wintec.ac.nz](mailto:simon.archard@wintec.ac.nz)

## What are the key findings to date?

Through thematic analysis, the key themes from the data gathered were identified and compiled. Two key themes emerged. These themes were (i) the value and enjoyment the families placed on the concept of play, and (ii) a security in their own cultural identity but a wish for their children to experience the many cultures of Aotearoa New Zealand.

## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

A supported playgroup model can be an important opportunity for teaching practices to interact with the educational expectations and cultural understandings and practices of families with English as an additional language. These interactions can contribute to the families having a better understanding of how and why children learn through play. They can also strengthen families' understandings that their culture and funds of knowledge are important for their children's learning and valued in early childhood education (Mitchell et al, 2015).

### Who are the principal researchers?

Sara Archard (right)

Simon Archard (far right)



### Key project publication:

Archard, S., & Archard, S., (2016). Voices of playgroup: Connecting pedagogy and understandings of early childhood education. *Early Childhood Folio*. 20 (1), 20-24.

## CUPID (Down Under)

An Australasian Collaboration of Universities Pedagogies of Infants' and Toddlers' Development

### Why is this research important?



While there is a growing body of research investigating the presence of infants and toddlers in formal educational settings – information about the programmes and practices taught to students is virtually absent from the research domain. The focus of this project is the extent to which infant and toddler pedagogy is viewed as a specialist field, or one that is subsumed into the generic field of early childhood education, and the provision of undergraduate courses and practicum that contribute to either approach.

### What is the background to the project?

This study seeks to explore, understand and improve the undergraduate students' educational experience and understanding of the subject matter as they prepare to teach infants and toddlers. Building on the design of a parallel USA study, a group of nine universities across Australia and New Zealand, all of which provide teacher education to prepare students for working with infants and toddlers, are surveying one cohort of students over the three/four years of their qualification and into the first year of practice following graduation.

**Project life cycle:** February 2015 -December 2019

**Funded by:** Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER)

**Contact:** Associate Professor Jayne White [whiteej@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:whiteej@waikato.ac.nz)

## What are the key findings to date?

Initial analysis of practicum reports and lecturer/student surveys at year one suggests that the field is highly complex and nuanced - leading to diverse pedagogical approaches and priorities across institutions and countries. This diversity includes: i) the timing of their practical and theoretical engagement with birth-to-three year olds; ii) where their practicum is located, iii) how it is assessed, and iv) how many years the programme spans. We look forward to further insights in the second, third and fourth years of the CUPID study.

## What are the most important facts to take away so far?

At end of year one of a three or four year ECE ITE programme, many Australasian Universities assert that students will not be 'ready' to encounter what they see as additional demands in working with infants and toddlers. Others promote the idea of a generic practice experience across all age groups over all years of study. Both positions are influenced by beliefs concerning prerequisite skills and knowledge deemed necessary for effective practicum with this age, alongside pragmatic issues such as access to settings; and policy demarcations based on age.

### Who are the principal researchers?

Associate Professor Jayne White (right)  
Dr Mira Peter (far right)



**Research team:** Juanita Craw, Sheila Degotardi, Michael Gaffney, Maria Hatzigianni, Andrew Gibbons, Glynne Mackey, Berenice Nyland, Jean Rockel, Margaret Sims .

**Summer Scholars (2015-16):** Maureen Kumeroa and Gareth Ranger.

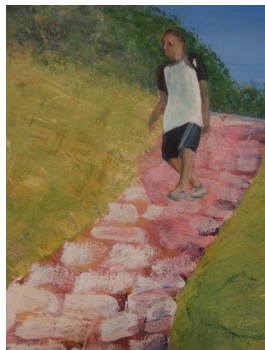
### Key project publication:

White, E,J, Peter, M., Rockel, J., Sims, M. & Kumeroa, M. (2016, in press). First-year practicum experiences for pre-service early childhood teachers working with birth-to-three-year-olds: An Australasian experience. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*.

## Pedagogies of Educational Transitions (POET)

### Why was this research important?

The Pedagogies of Educational Transitions [POET] project involves teams of researchers from New Zealand, Iceland, Sweden, Scotland and Australia to address key questions about educational transitions. POET provides opportunities to examine issues of pedagogy within a range of community and policy contexts. Questions are posed and addressed at the international, comparative level across the five countries to provide evidence to inform national and international debates and provide directions for policy and practice. By highlighting both the challenges and possibilities of educational transitions it provides insights into longer-term educational outcomes.



### What was the background to the project?

In each of the five POET countries there is a policy focus on the early years, particularly as governments express concern about the educational achievements of their children and the long term economic and social consequences of children's engagement in education. There is also recognition of the importance of a positive start to school and policy and practice rhetoric around building effective pedagogies of transition. In order to support 'effective transitions', it is important to understand the ways in which successful or unsuccessful transitions develop, and the interconnected factors involved.

**Project life cycle:** January 2013 - December 2016

**Funded by:** The New Zealand-EU International Research Staff Exchange Scheme [IRSES] Counterpart Fund is supported by Government funding and administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand

**Contact:** Professor Sally Peters [speters@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:speters@waikato.ac.nz)



## What were the key findings?

Through a series of work programmes and exchanges, POET built expertise and skills, and strengthened international research partnerships in the area of researching young children's educational transitions. Findings highlight the similarities and differences across country contexts, including the influence of school starting ages. Indigenous researchers offered new insights into understanding transition experiences. Although the main focus was on children in early childhood and beginning school levels, the project engaged with a number of adult programmes and initiatives highlighting transitions as a tool for change.

## What were the most important facts to take away?

Transitions can be seen as an intrinsic component of existence, within the life of any society. Educational transition points may offer both crisis and opportunity for learners. 'Successful' transitions depend on how success is defined, and whose lens is used. Acceptance, a sense of belonging and opportunities to build on valued learning assist incorporation to a new role and setting. Reciprocal, respectful relationships between all involved are assisted by mutual understanding and appreciation of the 'other'. Effective pedagogies draw on these understandings and are nuanced to the learner and the context.

### Who are the principal researchers?

Associate Professor Sally Peters (right) & Vanessa Paki

#### Research team:

Associate Professor Jayne White, Dr Elmarie Kotze  
Associate Professor Margie Hohepa, Rosina Merry, Dr  
Nadine Ballam & Cheri Waititi

#### Key project publications:

Ballam, N., Perry, B. & Garpelin, A. (2016) (Eds.) *POET - Pedagogies of Educational Transitions*. New York: Springer.  
Special Section: Te Kōhao o Te Rangahau-The indigenous lens on research (2015). *Waikato Journal of Education*, 20(2), 49-60.









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**WHERE THE WORLD IS GOING**  
TE AHUNGA O TE AO

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