

Working in special education

Early intervention teacher





Meet Kim Avery, an early intervention teacher in Christchurch

Kim Avery has worked as an early intervention teacher (EIT) in Christchurch for the Ministry of Education since 2011.

Kim's story

After having her second child Kim decided to enrol at the University of Canterbury to complete a Bachelor of Teaching in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Once she had completed her degree Kim became an ECE teacher, working mainly with 3-5 year olds. She says, "I found myself drawn to children that needed someone to step-up and support them in the classroom". Supported with a study award from the Ministry, Kim has completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching: Early Intervention at the University of Canterbury.

Kim's day-to-day

As an EIT, Kim works with parents, ECE teachers, education support workers (ESWs), and other specialists. "My day-to-day work involves working with adults, problem solving, finding out what resources are available, researching, providing advice and guidance, and working as a part of



a team with the family and other professionals to develop individual education plans.” Kim says her role is to build the capability of families, caregivers and teachers to support the child’s learning and development. This happens through optimising everyday learning experiences.

Reflecting cultural values in her work

For Kim this involves working collaboratively with whānau, “It’s about using their cultural knowledge, prior experiences and learning styles to make learning more appropriate, meaningful and effective for them. It’s about interacting with whānau to make connections between the child’s home and preschool experiences to really understand their reality”.

Rewards of the role

The reward for Kim is “watching an adult’s capability to support their children grow. It’s great to see them empowered to make a difference for their family or early childhood service and then seeing the positive impact on the child”.

Future aspirations

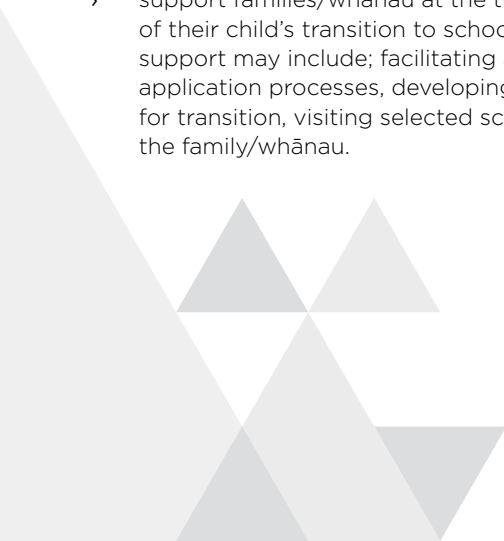
For the future Kim would like to become involved in researching how the Ministry provides services to the ECE community, and how inclusive education is for children with disabilities, their families and teachers.

Nature of the work

The Ministry of Education is a significant employer of early intervention teachers.

Early intervention teachers:

- › support the learning of children with special education needs by working closely with the adults in the child's life e.g. parents, teachers and other professionals, including other Ministry staff and health specialists
- › assess child and family needs by gathering information from the family/whānau about their needs in everyday settings and routines
- › collect information from the ECE service or other professionals involved as part of the ongoing assessment and planning process
- › assist with the development of an individualised intervention plan for the child, family/whānau and teachers
- › play a key role in supporting the implementation of the plan, often through provision of coaching and mentoring for families/whānau and teachers
- › often take a lead role in the facilitation of services for children and families/whānau
- › support families/whānau at the time of their child's transition to school. This support may include; facilitating any funding application processes, developing a plan for transition, visiting selected schools with the family/whānau.



Qualifications and experience

To become an early intervention teacher you need:

- › a Bachelor or Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood)
 - › to be a registered teacher
 - › to have attained or be working towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching (Early Intervention) and
 - › have at least three years early childhood teaching experience.
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Skills and knowledge

In addition to the qualifications, an early intervention teacher must have knowledge of or skills in:

- › Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum
- › child development
- › the range of different early childhood facilities and their philosophies
- › effective early childhood teaching practices
- › inclusive practices for children with a range of special education needs
- › family centred practice
- › working with culturally diverse families/whānau
- › effective communication
- › how to work effectively with adults to support children with special education needs.

Career development

Becoming an early intervention teacher with the Ministry of Education will give you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career.

You will be:

- › be supported and supervised by experienced professional colleagues
- › be kept up to date with the latest evidence
- › take part in ongoing professional learning and development
- › have opportunities to share and extend your knowledge and skills.

There might also be opportunities to take part in projects or working groups and in time, you might be considered for leadership roles.







Further information about early intervention teachers

Special education careers and professional development

For information about the role of the early intervention teacher and working in special education, visit our special education careers webpage **www.education.govt.nz/careers-in-special-education**

Special education scholarships and study awards

If you're interested in a career in special education you may be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out more at **www.education.govt.nz/r/sestudyawards**

Career information

For profiles of different careers visit the Careers New Zealand website **www.careers.govt.nz**

Contact us

Want to speak to someone about a career as an early intervention teacher? Give us a call or drop us an email.

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