



# Working in special education

Psychologist in Education





## Meet Kahu Flutey, an educational psychologist in Wellington

Kahu Flutey has worked as a registered educational psychologist for the Ministry of Education since 2006.

### Kahu's story

Kahu worked as a primary school teacher for 12 years before joining the Ministry as a Special Education Adviser (SEA) in 1999. While working as an SEA Kahu was supported by the Ministry to train as an educational psychologist, and became a fully registered educational psychologist in 2006.

### Kahu's day-to-day

Kahu spends a lot of time with teachers, parents and whānau and other agencies in both the school and home environments. Once involved in a student's life she becomes part of a collaborative team to help them progress and succeed in education.

"An important role as a psychologist, is to be able make sense of all the different information through an educational psychologist's lens," says Kahu.



### Reflecting cultural values in her work

“I am Māori, Samoan and Chinese and I was brought up with what I refer to as ‘Polynesian’ values. I am able to work intuitively with Māori and Pasifika families because I can relate to them and understand well the challenges they face,” says Kahu.

### Rewards of the role

#### Kahu enjoys the variety in her everyday work life.

“This variety involves casework, working with schools and families as well as working with other professionals and organisations. Within all this activity knowing I can make a difference through creating inclusive learning environments for children and young people is hugely rewarding.”

### Future aspirations

“I would like to engage in more research, or to explore leadership opportunities,” she says.

## Nature of the work

The Ministry of Education is a significant employer of educational psychologists.

### Psychologists within the educational sector:

- › work closely with parents and whānau, teachers and other specialists across a range of educational settings (early childhood and school) to help children and young people with special education needs learn and develop
- › develop individualised programmes for learners to overcome the challenges they face
- › apply psychological knowledge and behaviour and learning theory to assist children and young people as well as the adults around them.



## Qualifications and experience

To become a psychologist you need:

- › a master's degree in psychology
  - › a postgraduate diploma in educational psychology (or an equivalent)
  - › to be registered as a psychologist with the New Zealand Psychologists Board.
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## Skills and knowledge

In addition to the qualifications a psychologist must have knowledge of or skills in:

- › Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum and/or the NZ Curriculum/ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa
- › human development
- › supporting special education needs, particularly learning and behaviour, in a variety of settings
- › psychology, education theory and child development
- › community and family support services
- › effective communication, teaching, research and planning
- › confidently and competently facilitating groups and meetings.

## Career development

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

In time you might be considered for leadership roles or have opportunities to take part in projects and working groups.









## Further information about psychologists in education

### Special education careers and professional development

For more information about the role of psychologist and working in special education, visit our special education careers webpage

**[www.education.govt.nz/careers-in-special-education](http://www.education.govt.nz/careers-in-special-education)**

### Special education scholarships and study awards

If you are interested in a career in special education you might be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out more at

**[www.education.govt.nz/r/sestudyawards](http://www.education.govt.nz/r/sestudyawards)**

### Career information

For profiles of different careers visit the Careers New Zealand website **[www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)**

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## Contact us

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

### Ministry of Education – Special Education

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