



15/02/2024



OIA: 1321593 – Statistics on escapes from early childhood education services

Thank you for your email of 25 January 2024 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

1. *How many child/toddler escapes from early learning centres/kindergartens have occurred each year, for the past five years, sorted by region?*
2. *In 2023, what were the most common circumstances that allowed a child/toddler to escape?*
3. *In 2023, what were the repercussions for each escape incident?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

In response to **part one** of your request, we are providing the number of children that have escaped from early childhood education (ECE) services in the past five calendar years, by region, as **Table 1** below. We define escape as where a child has left the premises without the knowledge of adults providing education and care.

Table 1: The number of escapes from ECE services by region over the past five years:

Region	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Auckland	6	4	6	12	12	1	41
Bay of Plenty/Rotorua/Taupo	9	6	9	8	3		35
Canterbury	7	8	7	4	9	1	36
Hawkes Bay/Gisborne		3	2	6	4		15
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast			1	1	1		3
Otago/Southland	2	1	4		14		21
Tai Tokerau		3		3	2		8
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	2	3	3	7	5		20
Waikato	5	4	8	8	5		30
Wellington	3	2	6	6	2		19
Total	34	34	46	55	57	2	228



In response to **part two** of your request, we are providing a breakdown of the circumstances in which children have escaped ECE services in the 2023 calendar year. Please note that these incidents are recorded as either observed (the child was immediately caught as they were observed leaving), or unobserved (the child was not immediately caught when they left the premise). Please refer to **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Breakdown of circumstances in which children escaped ECE centres in 2023:

Circumstances of child leaving	Observed leaving	Not observed leaving	Total
Child climbed fence/gate	13	9	22
Child climbed out a window	1	1	2
Child crawled under fence	0	1	1
Child left as another parent was entering	9	4	13
Child left though a gate that a parent had left open	0	2	2
Child left while they were on an excursion	1	2	3
Child opened a door/ gate	4	10	14
Total	28	29	57

In response to **part three** of your request, we are providing a breakdown of the outcomes and action taken following Ministry investigations into escapes from ECE services in the 2023 calendar year, as **Appendix A**, attached.

Please note, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Thank you again for your email. If you have further questions please feel free to contact our media team in the first instance at media.team@education.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



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Te Mahau | Te Pae Aronui (Operations and Integration)