Briefing Note: Meeting with New Zealand Kindergartens Inc on 9 December 2019

To: Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education
Cc: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
Date: 4 December 2019
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Purpose of Report

This briefing is to support your meeting with Jill Bond, Chief Executive of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc on Monday 9 December from 3.30pm-4.00pm.

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

Agree / Disagree

Summary

- The Kindergarten movement reports to be struggling with the volume of children with additional learning needs. Jill Bond has indicated that she would like to share some innovative ideas with you about how the needs of these tamariki and whānau could be met.

- This briefing provides you with background information and possible responses to issues that may be raised at the meeting.

Susan Howan
Associate Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

Hon Tracey Martin
Associate Minister of Education

4/12/19

12/12/2019
Background

1. New Zealand Kindergartens Inc - Te Pūtahi Kura Puhou o Aotearoa (NZK) is a national community based, not-for-profit organisation. They represent 23 regional kindergartens associations which provide over 500 kindergarten and other services nationwide.

2. Jill Bond is the Chief Executive of NZK. She is a member of the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC), which is made up of representatives from key early learning sector organisations. ECAC meets four times a year to give feedback on proposals by the Government, the Ministry and other government agencies, and identify and discuss difficulties and opportunities facing the sector.

3. Jill Bond is also a member of:
   - an ECAC sub-group reviewing the licensing and certification criteria in respect to minimising the risk of food-related choking in early learning services
   - the Workforce Teacher Supply ECAC sub-group
   - the Early Learning Data and Evidence Advisory Group
   - the PB4L Sector Advisory Group.

Ministry partnerships with local Kindergarten Associations

4. As part of the Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM), a number of Ministry teams are partnering with local kindergartens on innovative responses to meet demand.

5. One example of this is the work that the Porirua Learning Support team is doing with He Whānau Manaaki Kindergarten Association to co-design and implement Te Roopu Arahina Puawaitanga. As part of this work, Ministry of Education (Ministry) specialists visit each of the 16 kindergartens once a month. They coach and work alongside teachers. Strategies and plans are provided and followed up with written notes and feedback for centres to trial between monthly visits.

6. Whānau are invited by kindergarten staff to attend on the days that Ministry staff are visiting. This can be to discuss concerns and receive ideas to use to support ongoing development alongside the teaching teams. Over 100 families have met with our staff since the end of January 2019. They have all received support, ranging from advice and guidance to immediate allocation for a more tailored Early Intervention Service. A number of cases have also been referred to health sector partners at an earlier stage.

7. The Otago/Southland region has also been implementing a similar liaison approach with high referring early learning services (including a number of kindergartens) in Central Otago, Oamaru, Invercargill, South Dunedin and Wanaka.

8. In this initiative, Ministry specialists visit identified early learning services regularly and work with their management to identify children who might need support, the nature of their needs, and how they might be addressed. This could be through advice and guidance to teachers, professional development for staff (including coaching), a centre-level intervention, or targeted individual support. This has been well received by sector bodies, including the Otago Kindergarten Association.
Issues that may be raised and possible responses

9. The Kincergarten movement reports to be struggling with the volume of children with additional learning needs. Jill Bond has indicated that she would like to share some innovative ideas with you about how these tamariki and whānau could be better supported.

10. You may wish to make the following comments:

- Demand for learning support has grown significantly. The number of requests for support that resulted in an Early Intervention Service request being accepted has increased by 20% over the last 6 years.

- The Ministry's regional teams are responding to the challenge of increased demand for specialist support by trying a range of innovative local approaches to meet needs in their communities. One example is the Porirua Learning Support team’s work with He Whānau Manaaki Kindergarten Association.

- This Government has invested an extra $51.9 million in early intervention over five years. Together with other changes that are underway, including the implementation of the Learning Support Action Plan, the roll-out of the LSDM, and trialling changes in practice to bring the services to the child, we are addressing demand in this area and improving the provision of learning support for young children in New Zealand.

- The Ministry would value any feedback or suggestions NZK has on how to better meet demand for early intervention support, and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with NZK on future initiatives.

11. As you are aware, the Ministry has been working with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust (TKRNT) to co-design and deliver a Learning Support Awareness Campaign. The driver for this work is the recognition that the way in which we have been delivering support has not been particularly successful for the TKRNT. Kōhanga are far less likely to request early intervention support from the Ministry than other early learning services. To bridge this gap we have entered into a partnership with TKRNT to increase the knowledge and confidence amongst kōhanga whānau (made up of parents, extended family, kaikō and other kōhanga staff) to recognise, respond to and seek support for tamariki with additional learning needs. This is a unique situation and we would not see the need for this approach with other early learning services.

Proactive Release

12. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.