



3 September 2020

Isabella Broadbent
fyi-request-13556-0036a6b8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Isabella

Thank you for your email of 19 August 2020 to the Ministry requesting the following information:

- *Position on school-aged children at ECEs - Information which explains this change, and more broadly, which addresses the issue of school-aged children attending or being present at early learning services.*
- *I am particularly interested in what background discussions have been had regarding home-educated children being present at Playcentre with their caregiver while their under-6-year-old sibling/s attend Playcentre.*
- *Please include relevant emails, memoranda, file notes, briefings, reports, meeting notes, letters, and all other forms of correspondence. If volume of information is an issue I am content to limit my request to information from the past two years.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act.

We do not hold the information requested, nor do we believe that it is held by any other department, Minister of the Crown or organizations. As such, we are refusing this request under section 18(g) of the Act, however some detail on this issue can be found below.

Change to our website

In August 2020, we did make a change to the information on our website. However, this was not a change in policy. Rather, the change clarified that those participating in home education also cannot attend centre-based early learning services. As such, there are no emails, memoranda, file notes or other correspondence within the scope of your request.

School enrolled children cannot attend centre-based early learning services

As you will have read on our website, children enrolled in school and those receiving home education cannot attend centre-based services, including playcentres. This applies during term time and holidays. This is because the Education and Training Act 2020 only permits centre-based services to provide education and care to children under the age of 6 years.

Centre-based services are set up to provide education and care to pre-school children and operate with a set of rules to ensure the specific needs of younger children are met. Playcentre needs to meet the same requirements as other centre-based services.

One of the requirements is that the premises and resources are kept for the exclusive use of the children participating in the early learning programme. This is about making sure the environment is kept safe for young children, that they have space to explore and that their learning opportunities are not impacted by older children, who generally operate at a different pace and on a different scale to infants and younger children. This means that children enrolled in school or those participating in home education, cannot regularly join in the activities offered at centre-based services during licensed hours.

You can read further information, including some exceptions, on our website at the following link:
<https://education.govt.nz/early-childhood/child-wellbeing-and-participation/children-enrolled-in-school/>

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katrina Casey', written over a vertical line that extends from the signature down towards the typed name below.

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support