



IECB Engagement Forum Tuesday 12 May 2015

Summary of feedback

Topic 1

Evidence suggests that early identification of the need for additional support and early response has lots of benefits for children and young people - and for everyone involved in their education.

From your perspective:

1. What are the barriers to early identification of special education needs?

- MOE involved at ECE. Transition happens or it doesn't.
- Lack of knowledge about what to look for
- Students who haven't attended ECE
- Often not identified if they have been 'embraced through whanau of care'
- Can be labelled as naughty, not necessarily as SE
- Not assessed
- No service for students until there have been issues
- Paperwork is a huge barrier
- Can be dealing with students with multiple issues, hard to identify, try lots of strategies, however they need specialist support
- Children sometimes categorised as behaviour whereas they have learning/other issues
- Culture can be why they are not recognised
- No support around cultural needs. Disability can override culture. Personhood is lost
- Fear of assessment from whanau. – judgement. Won't sign forms
- When parents don't engage, what do we do?
- Lack of empathy from people carry into work with families
- Need to start with an ethic of care
- Time to listen to parents, work with the transition key worker etc when the student is being transitioned from ECE
- The way we assess students – not judging. Should be about where you are working/what is the next learning steps
- Respect/ ethic of care/meaningful assessment
- Training and recognition for SENCOs
- Lack of professional expertise (in some professionals)
- Challenge & skill sets carry into schools
- Need quality teachers alongside the MOE
- Support needs to work with the context
- Teachers supporting teachers
- Critical indicators aren't shared across the different professional silos & educational facilities eg V1 or H1 child is picked up by health as a baby
- Teacher is first identifier. Need to listen
- Burden on families to retell their stories



- Sometimes families are shy/scared
- Unidentified low to moderate needs
- Lack of skill to identify, eg alcohol foetal identified but nothing done because they are functioning 'ok' but struggling in behaviour or educationally
- Privacy issue – only those need to know, know
- Not wanting labels
- Student can not want to be identified sometimes too
- Matching educational information to parents so they understand how their children are performing educationally
- Students enter the system with identified needs eg ASD, down S. Would need identified support but often it isn't in place. Teachers don't know what to do and aren't prepared
- Info isn't on entry to school notes (b4 school check). Information doesn't come to schools like it should
- Assessment/observations – teachers are inconsistent and they need training
- Teacher training – inconsistency in training. Can't be confident in emerging teachers skills
- Parent confidence – not able to advocate for children
- Children not having early childhood experience. Financial barrier for children not already identified. School not prepared
- Transience – service not following the child throughout their school years
- Multi application processes
- Needs often known but not accepted/met (grief process)
- Acceptance by families/schools & being able to resource those needs
- Funding in ECE for EI
- Quality services need focus on early learning and EI
- Transition from EI to school. Identification of needs is critical
- Focus changes in schools from whole child to academic achievement
- Education & knowledge of first teachers in transition
- Variable quality of pre-school education
- Significant money needs to be targeted to need
- Transition/support for students who don't access usual funding streams
- Permission forms – parents signing
- Not verified students – how to support?
- Privacy Act – when parents don't disclose the child's needs

2. What improvements to early identification of needs would you like to see?

- More communication between teachers and the system. No professional forum. Need to bring teachers back to the system, it has been hijacked by specialists.
- Teachers need to be supported with resources/ongoing PLD/more IECB work/good work done on cooperative learning
- Identification 'manual'
- Medical information is shared to educators



- Raising profile and expectation eg SENCO in every school. SENCO should be a career path, not an addon. SENCO should be part of management Structure. Should be full time & trained
- SENCO needs continuity, increasingly really important to strengthen inclusive practice
- EI should go through to 8 years
- Simple application process to Ministry “everything at once”
- School focus on inclusion
- Assistive technology – greater priority & access. Needs to be earlier
- Interagency connections – Health & MSD. B4 school assessment including all information. Needs could be identified by Health professionals at the time. Involve Public Health Nurse (??)
- Resourcing where its needed
- Planning (RTLBS)
- Ensuring every child attends ECE for minimum number of hours
- Better consistency of EI of needs, coordinated system with high trust
- Transition into schools report for all students
- Collaborative teaching/reflection supports, tracking the student
- Students different in different contexts
- Consistent transfer of data

Topic 2

We think that parents and education providers should be placed at the centre of making decisions and coordinating the additional support the child requires.

From your perspective:

1. How could we involve parents, ECE and schools more in decision-making and coordination?

- ORS criteria needs to be broad – 2% of the population
- Need to look holistically at students needs, currently not happening
- ORS benchmarks set in 20th century, now not relevant. Thresholds needs to be raised, not meeting needs
- Need to establish formal & informal meeting processes with families/whanau/schools. Includes take home diary and visual stories
- Need parents voice immediately before every transition point
- More communication with early childhood providers, schools to be aware of needs before child arrives
- Complexity hard for parents – various pots of money, siloed, triple application process, currently need to negotiate boxes
- Start with the child
- Role of SENCO – reaching out to early childhood as this is the first point of contact for child
- IEP is the vehicle, needs to be living, current document



- Name of SENCO needs to be changed to Student Coordinator (??? Needs more thought)
- SENCO is a pivotal role, this is what we do, not singling kids out
- InTauranga collective decision making around allocation of teacher aide funding works but need more funding
- More practical times for working parents
- Need a system that tracks their educational pathway early and to capture children from health and MSD
- School is where the child is the most, so it needs to be the central point. Better management of school systems & communication
- Need a lead person in the school for the child. Professionals can meet away from the family, instead of families going through the IEP meeting (or vice versa if wanted)
- Need a smarter profile of the schools needs
- Ask the parents/family what they need (even if guided when a family doesn't really know) as opposed to the child's deficits and resource appropriately
- Parents at centre
- All education begins with relationships
- We value the time needed to maintain/grow relationships
- Relationships are an investment
- IEP central, coconstructed? Support time
- Meaningful assessment key to all learning
- Cultural responsiveness essential to relationships
- Schools capable/confident to fund hold. Should be able to self-manage
- Concerns with RTLB service – quality and capability of staff is very variable
- One person as coordinator/navigator/broker for families. Meaningful support for parents. Would stop confusion & support (can't read) capability for families
- Kaitawaenga for family from (somewhere?)
- NGO should be parents choice
- Pathway needed for all the families children because of sibling influences
- Partnerships with government and NGOs
- Information for families that is coordinated and makes sense
- Knowing all the information (families). Missing pieces are known by some not to others
- Needs collective decision making & mutual respect

2. What impact would this have on:

- children and young people with special education needs
- parents and whānau
- education providers
- additional support providers?

- Would be easier transitions for students
- System would be in place
- Schools would be ready for students rather than students having to fit the school



- Involving people earlier would make co-ordination earlier
- Transition template would make transition easier
- Better info is going to lead to better pathways. No dots are joining
- Joined up system
- Puts families back at the heart
- Be responsive to each individual child's needs
- Relationships support meaningful assessment
- Support parents to understand the value & purpose of assessment
- Empower parents, need to be conscious of our decisions
- Need to monitor & think about language
- Ongoing PLD for principals
- Leadership development is important
- Multi level co construction of knowledge
- Thinking about teacher and learner dispositions
- Support needed to develop professional development/relationships/with community
- A given that relationships and respect for parents
- Needs to be accountability for professionalism for all team members
- Concerns around how you manage/cope with poor 'service delivery' & lack of responsiveness to/from managers
- Child/family centred model. Everyone going in same direction
- PLD for key worker/navigator role. Needs to be well trained, supported and recognised
- Support aligned to child's needs in timely manner, saving time money and resources
- Focus on families (as they know the child best) would enhance capability/competence.
- Impact on education providers, need to acknowledge them rather than 'the experts'. All the team are in this together.
- Enhanced relationships have to benefit the child
- Open communication will improve the outcomes

Topic 3

Children and young people with special education needs should have a single point of contact that has the authority to plan, coordinate and broker the assistance required.

From your perspective:

1. What impact would this have?

- Transparency
- Student supports may change according to agreement
- Deficit base would disappear
- Inclusive and accessible systems
- Brings a degree of control to the key participants
- Dependant on the disposition of the people in control
- Ease for families



- Less threatening & challenging, more empathic (not having to tell their story to someone new all the time)
- Early childhood services need to be trained
- Barbara Alloa programme at Sylvia Park – person from schools goes to workplace/home and talks about child's progress – would learn from this and could be expanded. Person could have wider training
- Early intervention team/ministry should have liaison role, working into centres
- Needs to be intrinsically linked with Health
- State responsibility!
- One position (SENCO by another name) would understand the needs of families/schools within communities – link to COS, overview of ECEs
- Instead of funding being held centrally would enable local responsibility

2. What benefits would you want from this?

- Supports are in the right place, time and people
- Aspirations are upheld/realised, coordinated and cooperative supports (see previous answer)
- Definition of inclusion
- Identification of needs leads to achievement
- Coherence of systems and supports
- Ownership
- Transparency
- Collaborative decision making
- Better learning for students
- Better support for teachers
- Better communication with parents

3. Where do you think this responsibility best fits?

- All agencies involved with the child
- Key ministries co-operate
- Cross-sector forum model leads to strengthening.
- Education needs to acknowledge what they are teaching for (ie life goals and visions)
- SENCO working hand in glove with the collaborative learning group (IEP)
- Generally the best place is in the school, concern is that there isn't enough resourcing in schools
- This role also needs to be supported with training – dealing with peers/adults/families rather than children
- Also need time allocated to do this role
- Could be state
- Clusters of schools
- Every principal & teacher - Courage of principal to say 'this is an inclusive school' – have to say you are bold and brave in the classroom
- Every child is a learner; every relationship has to be learning relationship
- Boards need to have expectations for inclusive schools – need to back the principal



- Boards need to be clear about vision and be courageous
- Need to have a total shift in attitude

Topic 4

We propose a managed education pathway that supports the child to achieve - from assessment of need through to completion of their education. The plan would be reviewed and updated as the child's needs change over time.

From your perspective:

1. What information would need to be included in this plan?

- Barriers – pre service teacher training, PLD for teachers/schools in inclusive education, classroom management
- National PLD plan
- All kids should have a plan
- Students with SE needs are students first; they are the responsibility of the classroom teacher, not someone else!
- What assessment is meaningful?
- What does learning & achievement look like for students?
- Collaborative learning plan with 3 goals (Student, family, classroom??) Teaching & learning. These plans could be cross agency
- Transition points are currently a focus in education, through school cluster
- Conversations happening, need time to take effect
- Knowledge of learner – family, teacher. Practices in teaching. Assessment driver for authentic planning
- Information about continuity & identified needs, leading to support plan, who, why, where, why.
- Acknowledges building on strengths and vision of the child/family?
- Responsibilities for managing the plan, Navigator
- Accurate identification of child – where the child is at across curriculum levels & their wellbeing
- This question is flawed because it comes from the point of who is doing the assessment. How are you determining the need is the critical point

2. What are some of the barriers to creating and putting this in place?

- Kids needs do not always fit into current fragmented initiatives
- Resource teachers – RTLIT, RT Maori, RTLB – too little, too late, not timely, caseload is too high
- Schools not aware of NGOs/other resources in school communities
- Transience of students/families
- Communication initiative stops at 8, severe behaviour stops at 14. This isn't realistic for many children
- Curricula – Te Wharariki (Knowledge across ECE & schools)



- Remoteness
- Access to support teachers – communities of learning
- Dispositions/relationships/skills & attitudes of leaders
- Local resource – embedded in school
- Information sharing between agencies – Privacy Act
- Professional mistrust & gate-keeping
- Funding for this navigator service
- Current division of funding (Vote Health/ Vote Education, etc)
- How frequently would it be reviewed & updated?
- Lack of identification, poor development of IEPs, the list is long
- No designated person
- Schools aren't resourced to allocate time to meet as the professional team, need to coordinate parents, staff, teachers & students
- Takes longer than an hour and can't be held during school time
- Need to work with the whole school before we look at specialisation

3. How could these barriers be managed?

- More flexible and holistic provision
- 3 tiers – Teir one is teaching teachers and families. Teachers in pre-service & PLD
- Individual specialist support
- Role of SENCO (by another name) would coordinate services
- If SENCO is also teaching, they can't do the job properly
- Te Kura model – scale down. Learning advisor for each student as well as teacher?
This needs to happen for all kids
- Schools are responsible for monitoring learning & progress of all
- These plans could also be cross agencies
- Collaborative & coordinated meetings
- Flexibility of funding & pooling of funding
- Partnerships between agencies
- Planning involves all parties
- CEO group (disability) forum for common themes
- Agreement around funding streams.
- Piloting of a model
- Knowing what would be wanted from navigator
- Defining role and professional responsibilities etc
- Look at models such as services academies
- Need to have a more joined up system wide process
- “Built in, not bolted on”