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**TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
A Narrative Study from Early Childhood Education**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is on the professional development of early childhood educators in New Zealand, and the influences that have contributed to their development. The purpose of the research was to gain an insight into professional development experiences from a teacher's perspective; hence a narrative research approach allowing the voices of early childhood educators to be clearly heard was adopted. Previous studies within New Zealand have investigated such structural aspects of professional development programmes, as accessibility, duration of sessions, and frequency of involvement. This study is unique in that it is concerned with the stories of early childhood educators and the experiences and events they believe have been influential in their own professional development.

During the last decade, professional development programmes in early childhood in New Zealand have focused on the introduction of an early childhood curriculum -Te Whaariki, management and accountability procedures, and other quality issues aimed at improving early childhood education. Few if any have focused on the people who are at the heart of the educational process, the educators, who every day have vital interactions with children, their parents and families. This study demonstrates the need to fill that gap.

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