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# **Inclusion in early childhood settings in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

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## **Abstract**

A case study approach was used in two early childhood centres which both operate on a mixed age group licence. Purposive sampling was used to select the settings in this study. They were both selected on the basis of their Education Review Office (ERO) report which identified them as inclusive and meeting all children's needs. Each case study involved a critical examination of how the ECE settings responded to children's needs. Families/whānau and teachers' perspectives on inclusion and their practice of inclusion in early childhood education were explored. The study sought to find out whether teachers and/or centres practise what they say they do. Examples of inclusion in the two case study centres were explored. In these two case studies both qualitative and quantitative data collecting methods were used; this research is a mixed-method research which presents the research findings from questionnaires, focus group interviews, pedagogical documentation analysis and observations. The findings revealed that inclusion can be a success in early childhood education if well managed. The attitude of the partners in an early childhood settings define what happens in the centres. It was concluded that having a positive attitude towards inclusion and working in partnership with parents contributed to the success of inclusion. Collaboration and communication, the quality of teacher child interaction and having inclusive centre policies and procedures which are followed through help make inclusive education happen. The successes and challenges are highlighted, so that other educational services across sectors may learn from the success stories of these two settings whilst having an awareness of the challenges which they may face.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Background and justification for the study .....	1
Legislation and policies on inclusion .....	3
Early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.....	7
Special education in ECE .....	9
Assessment in ECE .....	10
<i>Te Whāriki</i> : the New Zealand early childhood curriculum .....	11
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Introduction .....	13
Theoretical discourses.....	13
Medical discourse.....	13
Charity discourse.....	14
Lay discourse.....	15
Rights discourse.....	16
Issues of inclusion.....	17
What is inclusion?.....	17
Exclusive attitudes.....	20
Inclusive attitudes.....	23
Culture of the setting.....	24
Professional issues .....	26
Working in partnership.....	26
Social and developmental benefits.....	27
Quality of learning experiences.....	28
Assessment.....	29
Professional development.....	30
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Introduction .....	33
Research paradigm.....	33
Research Design .....	33

Settings.....	34
Participants .....	35
Methods of data collection .....	36
Questionnaires.....	37
Documents. ....	40
Observations. ....	41
Ethical considerations .....	42
Data analysis .....	44
<b>Chapter Four: Bako questionnaire and focus group results.....</b>	<b>46</b>
Introduction .....	46
The setting .....	46
Questionnaire results .....	47
Parents’ and teachers’ opinions about the centre.....	47
Parents’ and teachers’ opinions about values. ....	48
Frequency of parents’ and teachers’ communication.....	50
Parents’ and teachers’ feelings about inclusion.....	52
Parents’ and teachers’ opinions about help for teachers. ....	54
Focus group interviews and additional comments from questionnaires .....	56
Perspectives on inclusion and belonging at Bako.....	56
Partnership at Bako. ....	58
Summary .....	61
<b>Chapter Five: Muti questionnaire and focus group results.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Introduction .....	63
The setting .....	63
Results from questionnaires .....	64
Parents’ and teachers’ opinions about Muti education centre.....	64
Teachers’ and parents’ opinions about values at Muti. ....	66
Frequency of parents’ and teachers’ communication.....	67
Parents’ and teachers’ feelings about inclusion at Muti: .....	69
Parents’ and teachers’ opinions about the quality of help for teachers. ....	71
Focus group interviews and additional comments on questionnaires .....	73
Perspectives on inclusion and belonging at Muti. ....	73
Partnership at Muti.....	76

Contributing to the child's portfolio at Muti .....	79
Summary .....	80
<b>Chapter Six: Observations and document analysis.....</b>	<b>81</b>
Introduction .....	81
Proposition 1: The culture of the setting determines the relationships between children, whānau/families and their teachers .....	82
Respecting all cultures and belonging: .....	82
Involving everyone and partnership:.....	84
Routines as part of centre culture:.....	86
Proposition 2: The quality of teacher-child interaction and learning experiences help in building inclusive settings .....	89
Emergent curriculum and quality of learning opportunities .....	89
Respect: .....	95
Proposition 3: The teachers' responsiveness contribute to meeting the children's individual needs .....	97
Proposition 4: The concept of tuakana-teina promotes inclusive education ..	100
Summary .....	103
<b>Chapter Seven: Discussion.....</b>	<b>104</b>
Introduction .....	104
Positive attitude makes inclusive education happen .....	104
Communication and collaboration help build inclusive settings .....	106
Quality learning experiences enhance successful inclusion .....	108
<b>Chapter Eight: Conclusions .....</b>	<b>112</b>
Introduction .....	112
Review of the study.....	112
Recommendations .....	113
Limitations of the study .....	114
Conclusion .....	115
<b>References.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>124</b>