



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Partners in Learning

Helping your child do well at school





Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for all parents and carers who want their child to do well at school. The information in this booklet will help you know what to expect from your child's school.

▶ “We realised the school was with us once they really listened to us. They helped us with our boys as well as helping our boys.”

What is ERO?

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of children in early childhood services and schools in New Zealand. ERO reviews most early childhood services and schools once every three years.

Partners in learning: helping your child do well at school

You know your child better than anyone, including their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and talents, and what works for them. You are the most important out-of-school influence on your child's educational success.

Your child's teacher is the most important in-school influence on your child's educational success. They will take the time to know your child – what they are interested in and how they like to learn.

Your child is more likely to make progress and succeed when you, your child and their teachers:

- work together in a way that is focused on learning
- share information and expertise
- acknowledge, understand and celebrate similarities and differences.

A child who does well at school and learns a range of skills both in and out of school will have more opportunities and choices in life.

Many children will need extra help at some time during school. Children who need extra help with their learning will benefit even more from extra encouragement and help at home.

▶ "I need to know exactly what is happening for my child, which initiatives are available and where I can get ideas about how I can support my child better at home. When all three of these happen, there is a positive impact on my engagement with the school and with my child's learning."

How much progress should my child be making?

Your child should make a year's progress for a year's work.

What does a year's progress look like at primary school (including intermediate)?

National Standards (for English-medium schools) are the benchmark that children are expected to achieve in reading, writing and maths in Years 1 to 8. Māori medium schools use Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori to benchmark achievements in pānui (reading), kōrero (oral language), tuhituhi (writing) and pāngarau (mathematics).

National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori show where children are at in their learning and what they have to do next. Your school will tell you how your child is doing against the standard and whether they are on track or need extra help.

Children need to do well in reading, writing and maths to do well in all subjects. Working at or above the standards during Years 1 to 8 means your child should be on track to finish secondary school with a worthwhile leaving qualification (at least NCEA Level 2 or similar).



What does a year's progress look like at secondary school?

Secondary schools assess students' progress during Years 9 and 10 in different ways to find out if they are progressing well. Your child's report will indicate progress in each subject area.

Once a student reaches Year 11, and sometimes sooner, the reports will begin to indicate NCEA assessment standards achieved, and progress towards other standards for that year. They may also record whether your child is on track to achieve the literacy and numeracy requirements for NCEA.



To find out more about NCEA and how it works, visit:

www.parents.education.govt.nz and www.nzqa.govt.nz



How do I know my child needs extra help with their learning?

Just like you, teachers want your child to achieve. You can expect someone at the school to contact you if your child is having difficulty. Good leaders and teachers keep in regular contact with parents or carers.

If you are not sure whether your child is working at the expected level for their age, talk to their teacher. If you don't understand what the information says about your child's progress, ask your child's teacher to explain it to you.

▶ At the initial meeting with each child and their parents or whānau, assistant principals used an example of writing work that was 'at' the National Standard, and a sample of their child's work to explore. They talked through what was good, and what needed to happen for their child's work to reach the standard. One parent said this made it really clear about what was expected.

What if my child has additional learning needs?

All children deserve the right to feel welcome, to be included and encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life, regardless of their learning needs.

If your child has a disability, or behavioural needs they may require extra support so that they have a sense of belonging and participate as much as possible in all the same activities as their peers.

Talk to your school about your child's learning needs. They will work with you to have an individual education plan for your child that helps them participate and achieve.



For more information about additional learning needs visit:

www.parents.education.govt.nz

Understanding your child's report

You will get a report or information in a profile or e-learning journal about your child's learning and progress at least twice a year.

It will tell you how your child is achieving or progressing, for example:

- > where they are at
- > where they are going
- > how well they are going
- > what skills they are learning
- > their next steps.

As you read it, think about:

For all children:

- > Does the report tell me whether or not my child is learning at the level they need to in all their subjects?
- > Does the report tell me what I can specifically do at home to help, rather than general advice?
- > How is my child's attendance, effort and attitude? Do I need to find out more?



For children Years 1 to 8:

- › Does the report tell me whether my child is working 'above', 'at', 'below' or 'well below' the national standard for reading, writing and mathematics for their year group?

For children Years 9 to 13:

- › Does the report tell me whether or not my child is on track to completing the literacy and numeracy requirements to gain their qualification at the end of the year?
- › Does the report tell me whether or not my child is on track to achieve the number of credits they need to gain their qualification at the end of the year?

If there's anything you don't understand in your child's report, ask your child's teacher to explain it to you. You can do this any time during the year.

If you are a parent of a school-aged child who does not live with you, in most cases you should still get a report or information about your child's learning and progress. Ask your child's teacher to send you a copy.

Talk with your child about their report

Inviting your child to share and talk you through their report gives an opportunity:

- › for them to talk to you about their learning
- › to hear what they feel and think about their learning, progress, relationship with peers and teachers, wellbeing, and school generally
- › to acknowledge their successes, challenges, efforts and struggles
- › to build trust with your child.

If your child is studying for NCEA Level 1, 2 or 3, they will be able to talk about their subjects, assessments, NCEA credits, and if they're on track to achieving their NCEA qualification.



What can I do if I am worried about my child's learning?

Talk with your child

Talking with your child first is the best way to understand what's happening for them. Together you can take time to decide what the issue is, how big the issue is for them, and what it means for their learning.

Who to contact if your child is at primary school or intermediate

Your child's teacher is an important partner in your child's learning. Together you, your child and their teacher can develop some goals and actions.

Finding the right time and knowing what to say can be difficult. You can call the school to set up a time with the teacher and, if it makes it easier, you can take a family member or friend with you.

The teacher may ask a senior staff member, deputy principal or principal, or a specialist teacher to come to a meeting to suggest further help.

Who to contact if your child is at secondary school

When your child is at secondary school, they'll have different teachers and it might not be as easy to know who to contact. Your child's school will tell you who the best person is to talk to about your child.

If it's not clear, you can contact the school office administrator, or check the parent information booklet, the school guide, or the website.



- ▶ The principal, through the school's kaiāwhina (teacher aide), invited the boys' parents to meet with her. The kaiāwhina helped the parents express their disappointment and frustration with constantly hearing negative things about their boys.

Who will be at the meeting?

If you have set up a meeting, it's worth checking who will be at the meeting and letting them know if you will be bringing anyone. You can always take along a family member or friend for support.

Think about whether or not it might be best to include your child. It might depend on the purpose for the meeting and the age of your child. They might attend the next meeting, or part of the next meeting when you meet to plan, and set goals and actions.

- ▶ "It was a great meeting: we were given clear information and tools to use. The teachers gave the students a clear message that we were all there to help them and that there was a partnership between home and school."



What can I expect the school to do to help my child?

You can expect your child's teacher or teachers to share information with you and work with you to make a plan.

The focus will be on how the teacher and you can help with your child's progress and help them catch up to their year group or to their expected levels with learning.

If the teachers use education terms you don't understand, ask them to explain them. Make sure when the meeting ends you have understood everything so that you're in the best position to help your child.

Any plan you and your child's teachers decide on should have some long-term and short-term learning goals, actions for the teacher and some actions for home. The teacher will give you ideas on learning activities to do at home with your child. Sometimes the school may need extra time to think about home activities before meeting with you again or sending the activities home.

▶ “We set out goals and developed our action plan which we set out to achieve as a whānau.”

Some parents worry about how they can help or where they will find the time. Your child's learning is really important. The teacher and school will help you to support your child's learning at home. Your child needs lots of learning opportunities to catch up with their learning.

Your child will also need to know how you and the school are working together to help them. Think about how and when you will talk about this with your child.

Secondary school

If your child is at secondary school, you can expect the meeting to happen in the same way and with similar questions. Depending whether your child needs help in one subject or several areas, you may meet with a subject teacher or with the year Dean.

If your child is in Year 9 or 10, the focus will be on how well prepared your child will be to gain their qualifications from Year 11 onwards, and meet their goals. If your child is in Year 11, 12 or 13, the focus will be on whether your child is on track to gaining the qualification they are working towards that year, and meeting their goals.

You might want to ask about:

- the qualification/s your child is working towards such as National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 1, 2 or 3, Vocational Pathways Award, University Entrance and/or Scholarship
- the requirements, standards or credits your child has or needs for the qualification they are working towards
- assessment and assignment due dates
- how you can help your child manage their time and prioritise work.

Again, ask the teacher to explain anything you are not sure about. It's important to understand what your child is learning so that you're in the best position to help them.

Keeping in touch

Keeping in touch and follow up is really important. Talk about what works best for you and the school for sharing and talking about learning. It might be communicating by phone, text messaging, email, school portal, home-school notebook or learning journal or portfolio, or online blog or journal.

Also, talk about what works best for you and for the teacher for any follow-up meetings, such as how often and time of day.

Let your child's teacher know that if your child is making really great progress or is struggling you'd like to hear as soon as possible.

▶ Teachers learnt the importance of listening to parents in a respectful way and of helping parents discuss children's learning in a non-judgemental way. This led to parents being more confident in what they were doing to support their child, and in raising any issues at school.



How can I support my child with NCEA?

At secondary school your child will be expected to lead more of their own learning. They will need to keep track of their own progress and work at a steady pace throughout the year, as well as manage workloads around assessments and assignments.

They will be expected to complete work started in class, study for tests, undertake projects or assignments, prepare for new work, practise work they've learnt and do their own research. They need to be well organised, be able to prioritise what is important, and be clear about the marking criteria for all assessments.

Some ways you could help your child learn include:

- Talk with your child's teacher or Dean to ensure your child is enrolled for the right subjects to get where they want to go and meet their aspirations.
- Help your child manage their time. Together make a timetable of assignment and assessment dates.
- Work with them to set goals and put them up around the house.
- Help them develop good work and study habits. Get them to make time each day to read and study.
- Create a place to work. If not at home, then maybe a local library, or a relative's home.
- Create a network of 'go to' people who can help with different subjects – these could be peer homework groups, friends or neighbours, whānau or professional tutors.
- Celebrate good work and effort.

▶ The parents shared that they did not feel able to help their children at home as much as they needed. The kaiāwhina and a deputy principal supported the parents to learn the same positive behaviour strategies and ways of communicating with their sons that the school was using.

More information

Education Review Office

For individual early childhood and school reports and national reports on education issues

www.ero.govt.nz

ERO has published a series of guides that include questions parents and carers can ask schools or kura about their child's learning

www.ero.govt.nz/publications/category/guides-for-parents

Ministry of Education

Information for parents and carers and about the education system and the Ministry of Education

www.education.govt.nz

The Ministry of Education has a parent section that gives practical information about education for parents and carers

<http://parents.education.govt.nz/>

Careers New Zealand

For information about planning a career

www.careers.govt.nz

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

For information about NCEA, Record of Achievement, and the NCEA Student App

www.nzqa.govt.nz

▶ “He is reading more at home now without us prompting, and doing well at school. We have good relationships with the teachers and feel confident the school will keep us informed next year.”



Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter



www.ero.govt.nz