

# Kindergartens Aotearoa

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## **Government undermines early childhood education, ignoring parents and the sector**

Kindergartens Aotearoa welcomes the changes to some aspects of the amended Licensing Criteria and urges the Minister to go further.

Associate education Minister David Seymour last week released the Amendment Criteria 2025 – the standards that early childhood education providers must meet when operating early childhood services.

“While we are relieved that the Minister has listened to the sector and retained the existing sleep checks requirements,” says KA spokesperson Amanda Coulston, “we remain concerned about the continued reductionist approach to regulation”.

Over the past months, organisations focused on child wellbeing and representing parents and teachers raised serious concerns about the government’s direction. These included the Commissioner for Children, the union for early childhood teachers, NZEI Te Riu Roa, Save the Children, kindergarten and childcare organisations, and others.

Kindergartens Aotearoa is glad that this pressure has seen movement by Government and urges them to go further.

Parents want the best for their children, and regulations help ensure standards. The licensing criteria provides the basis for care, protection and education of children.

Coulston says, “Minister Seymour last week said reducing licensing criteria would make early childhood education cheaper, but there is no basis for this claim. The government has reduced standards in early childhood education, putting business profits ahead of children and families. Regulations govern things such as teacher qualifications, curriculum, involving parents in the service, recognising language and culture of families, providing adequate space for children, and safety of premises, and so minimising them favours no one except providers who are hell-bent on making a profit from babies and young children”.

The government needs to listen to advocates and improve early childhood education by moving to more degree-qualified teachers, better child to teacher ratios, and greater affordability for families by controlling fees. Kindergartens Aotearoa believe the government also needs to ensure that children with additional learning needs are well supported and get the early intervention that their children need to thrive.

Kindergarten provides high quality not for profit services around the country with low or no fees. Kindertens Aotearoa represents 260 kindertens catering for 12,000 children each day, from Auckland's North Shore to South Otago.

For more information:

Amanda Coulston, Whānau Manaaki Kindertens ph. 029 2626322