

# Participation in early childhood education



- Early childhood participation levels throughout most of the eight cities have shown an upward trend.
- Participation levels in Manukau and Waitakere remain significantly lower than all other cities.

## WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

The stimulation of learning at an early age has an important bearing on future educational achievement. Social and academic development within early childhood programmes is likely to make the transition to formal education easier. Early childhood education can help reduce the achievement gap separating low income children and more advantaged children. Disadvantage tends to be cumulative, so attaining strong foundations early is important.<sup>19</sup>

This indicator illustrates early childhood education 'apparent' participation rates.<sup>20</sup> It reflects the number of children under 5 years old enrolled in early childhood education centres or home-based education programmes as a proportion of all children aged under 5 years.<sup>21</sup>

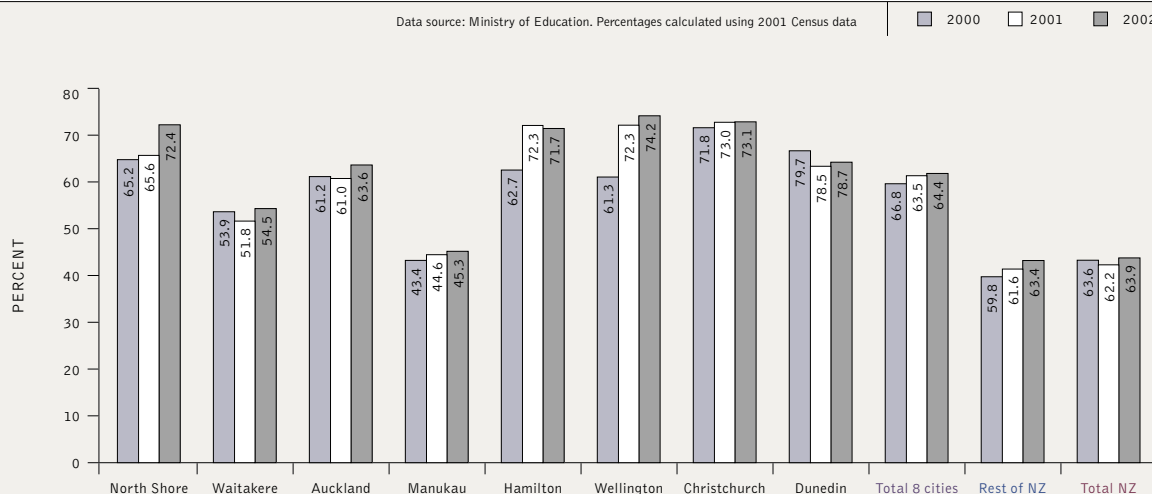
## WHAT DID WE FIND?

Early childhood education participation levels throughout most of the eight cities have shown a marked upward trend from 2000 to 2002.

Dunedin's participation levels were the highest of all eight cities. Wellington saw the largest growth in early childhood participation, increasing from 61.3% in 2000 to 74.2% in 2002. Other cities that saw significant growth were Hamilton and North Shore.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED UNDER 5 YEARS WHO ATTEND STATE FUNDED PRE-SCHOOL (2000 TO 2002)

Data source: Ministry of Education. Percentages calculated using 2001 Census data



<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Education. Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Education, August 2002.

<sup>20</sup> It is possible for children to be enrolled at more than one education service, therefore an 'apparent' participation measure is used. Figures may over estimate the true level of participation in early childhood education. Information collected from schools in July 2001 indicated that around 91% of new entrants had attended early childhood education. (Ministry of Education. July 2001 Early Childhood Statistics) [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)

<sup>21</sup> Includes all licensed: Playcentres, Kindergartens, Education and Care Centres, Homebased Services, Te Kohanga Reo, Correspondence School; and licensed-exempt: Te Kohanga Reo and Early Childhood Development funded Playgroups, Pacific Islands Language Groups and Playcentres. A small percentage of children attend private pre-schools that receive no Government assistance. Children in these schools are not legally required to attend school.

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Participation levels in Manukau and Waitakere remain significantly lower than all other cities, although both saw an increase over the period reviewed. These two cities also continue to have the largest populations of under 5 year olds (comparing 1996 and 2001 Census data) of the eight cities, and the largest proportion of students in low decile schools.

There are varying levels of participation amongst ethnic groups in our largest cities. In 2001, most (94%) European Year One students had attended an early childhood education centre compared with 82% of Maori, 73% of Pacific Islands, and 85% of Asian Year One students.<sup>22</sup> Manukau and Waitakere, with relatively large Maori and Pacific Islands populations, correspondingly have the lowest levels of early childhood participation.

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<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Education. Early Childhood Attendance by Year One Students by Ethnic Group, 2001. [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)