

Building Kaupapa Maori into Early Childhood Education

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This research project sought to examine the use of kaupapa to develop bicultural competency in early childhood education and canvass the perceptions of a range of early childhood practitioners, both Māori and non-Māori, of bicultural competency in early childhood education. The researchers canvassed the views of a cross-section of stakeholders in early childhood education. This was achieved via face-to-face hui, focus groups, online surveys and interviews with a number of participants, both Māori and non-Māori student teachers, graduates, early childhood teachers and ITE-training providers, and marae-based tangata whenua involving whānau, hapū and iwi at five sites. The research results indicated that there needs to be support to understand and implement kaupapa Māori principles, protocols and practices in order to assist the early childhood education sector and shift from a focus on biculturalism to bicultural development. Effective and tailored mentoring of early childhood teachers is needed to implement te reo Māori me ōna tikanga and build their confidence and competence to offer a bicultural learning environment. All early childhood education professionals need complementary bicultural tools to support them to build and integrate kaupapa Māori into early childhood education and bicultural mentoring – ako and tuakana/teina delivery modes will be required to effectively and efficiently implement the use of bicultural resources in early childhood settings.

To achieve cultural competence worthy of the teaching profession, significant learning is required and bicultural understanding and practice has to be implemented during the four stages of a teacher's career.