

Notes on UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Report Card 8: The Child Care Transition. A League Table of early childhood education and care in economically advantaged countries.

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'Although NZ beat out all the other English-speaking countries -- the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and Ireland -- the report highlights serious deficiencies in NZ's early childhood services.'

This is a matter of definition. The areas New Zealand did very well and gave it the high ranking amongst English speaking countries is based on what is called early childhood education (ece) which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Many, if not most, will equate early childhood education with early childhood services.

The areas where there were deficiencies are the responsibility of other government departments. Poverty - Ministry of Social Development, parental leave - WINZ, mortality - Ministry of Health etc. In terms of policy we would like to see more done here to catch up with the 'ece' sector. In particular improving the interface between parental leave and ece enrolment by making it economically feasible for parents to stay at home with their children longer before ece enrolment.

Given that so little is spent on ece in terms of GDP in NZ the ece sector might feel it does quite well. (I did note that this indicator did not include money spent on parental leave or family benefits. I can not see if it was to include funding for health services.) Also I do not think it included money spent on 5 year olds at school given it would be difficult to calculate. While I support the idea of more funding for ece, for the government to improve its standing against the indicators it needs to spend money in the non ece areas, e.g. working for families across all families and improving paid parental leave provisions.