

**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.**

Dr Stuart Middleton
Education commentator

“Yet another overwhelming piece of evidence that quality early childhood care and education is critical to later performance in education. But the report gives New Zealand little cause for satisfaction and certainly no excuse for us to relax effort towards increasing access to and quality of child care and early childhood education services”

Dr Middleton points to the relatively low level of public expenditure on these areas (only two thirds of the OECD average) and the relative high emphasis on child care as two areas for concern. “There is currently good evidence to doubt the ability of the private sector to sustain wide-spread early childhood services. It is a public responsibility to achieve results that are in the public’s interest.”

“The ten benchmarks for developed in this report are to be welcomed as a positive framework within which to set strategy and measure performance in early childhood services”. These benchmarks address the policy framework, access, quality and supporting context.

“The issue in New Zealand is the lumpy provision of services. While we bask in the glory of the over-all provision of childcare and early childhood education at a national level, some of our most disadvantaged communities are further set back in this area with access to these services providing for only 40% of child aged under 5 years.”

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