

**"Advancement of Education to Meet the Special Needs of Individuals
~Toward Realization of Principle of Equity and Social Cohesion ~"**

**"Collaboration Based on Partnership among Related Fields for Appropriate
Service Provision to Individuals"**

**Country Report Summary
for
The 26th Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Education
for Individuals with Special Needs**

The National Institute of Special Education (NISE)

(Yokohama City, Japan: December 4 to 7, 2006)

Adele Peart-Baillie
District Manager
North West District, Auckland
Ministry of Education
Special Education

P.O. Box 33 137
Takapuna
Auckland
New Zealand

Phone: +64 09 487 1100

Fax: +64 09 487 1187

Introduction

New Zealand has a population of around four million people; twenty percent of whom are indigenous Maori. There is also a significant proportion of the population from the Pacific Islands who have made New Zealand their home.

In addition, over the past 20 years, there have been large numbers of migrants arriving from all parts of the world to settle in New Zealand, with many being from our Asian neighbours.

This report will describe how, within the context of the New Zealand Education system, support for children and young people who have special needs can be met through collaborative practices and partnerships between the Ministry of Education and other Ministries and Agencies. Special education needs are defined as needs that cannot be met within a regular early childhood setting, home or family, without extra support. The need may be a physical disability, a sensory impairment, learning or communication delay, a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty, or a combination of these.

Early childhood provision (under 5 years) will also be incorporated into this report as early intervention in early childhood has, as its foundation, holistic and collaborative practices (Odom & Wolery, 2003) .

The report will highlight how whole of government thinking incorporates managing for outcomes which assists with collaboration both within the Ministry of Education and across other government ministries and agencies. “Managing for outcomes and results is about State agencies working to maximise results for New Zealanders” (New Zealand State Services Commission, 2004)

“Toward Realization of Principle of Equity and Social Cohesion”

Collaboration based on partnership to achieve the desired outcomes

Underpinning the government vision and direction for New Zealand is the implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference (Ministry of Health, 2001). The Disability Strategy is explicitly aimed at achieving a more inclusive society and is informed by an understanding of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon, rather than something that exists inside a disabled person. As a consequence, disability is viewed not as something that people have, but as something that happens to people; a process that happens when one group of people create barriers for others in terms of access to places, activities and opportunities usually taken for granted.

This strategy holds the vision of a non-disabling society which is:

‘A society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our full participation.’

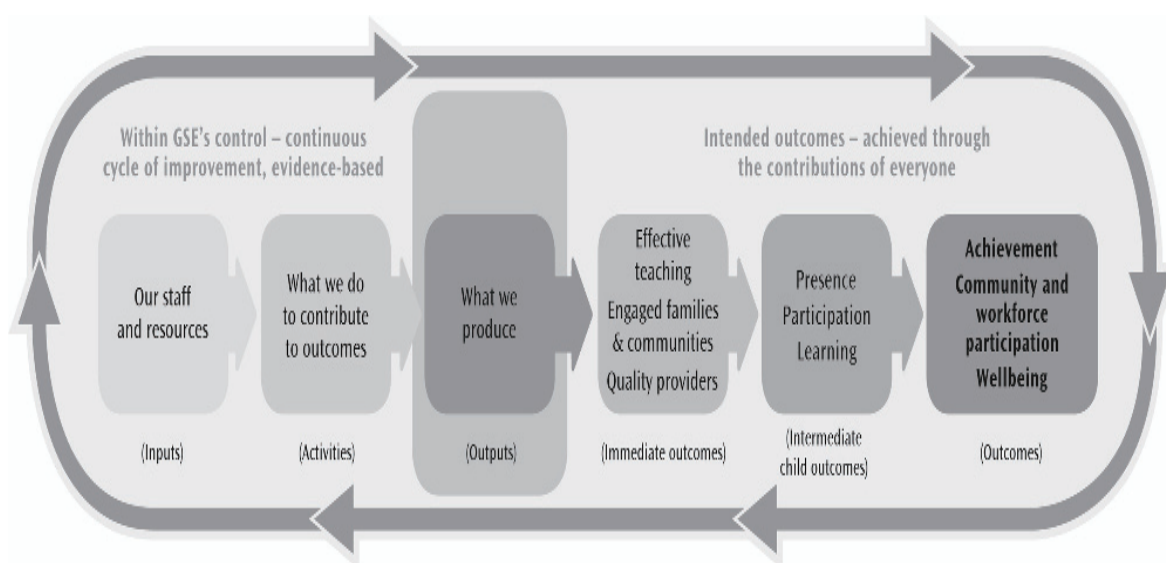
Principles in Practice

The Ministry states that *“The Government’s Special Education Policy is to improve learning*

outcomes for all children and young people with special education needs at their local school, early childhood centre, or wherever they are educated” (2004)

In line with this direction, the Ministry of Education, Special Education has developed a five year action plan seeking “Better outcomes for children.”

This five year plan describes how, as a provider of specialist services, services will be continually improved to achieve better outcomes for children. Through working with an outcome focus, greater integration of planning and service provision across the Ministry and other agencies is being sought. The model used has been based on a ‘managing for results’ model, which is a model developed by the Canadian Treasury Board (2003).



Better Outcomes for Children (Ministry of Education, August 2006)

Working in an outcomes focused model raises the need for recognising the contribution that all parties make to the final outcome. The Ministry of Education (through its Special Education division), identifies that immediate outcomes ensure that all activities and outputs contribute to ‘*effective teaching, engaged families and communities, and quality providers*’, being the wider outcome goals for the Education Sector

‘*Presence, participation and quality learning*’ have been identified as Intermediate outcomes, leading to achievement, community participation and, significantly, workforce participation for young people with special needs.

Early Childhood

Collaboration between services for those with special needs begins in the early childhood sector, where Health and Education Ministries have a close relationship, providing integrated services for

young children to facilitate their wellbeing and learning. The Early Intervention focus has as its centre, the family.

School Sector

Students with special education needs have had the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools since 1989. Placement in a special school is through a statutory process and requires the agreement of the Secretary of Education. Intervention programmes are developed in collaboration with the school educators, specialists and families, and where, required other agencies such as health and social services. An Individual Plan identifies the services and resources that are to be allocated to the student's programme and how the progress will be reviewed.

The Development of Networks of Learning Support

The development of Networks of Learning Support is a response to reducing fragmentation and isolation, and increasing responsiveness and inclusiveness through groups who agree to work together to provide a more collaborative approach to special education provision. Networks may include schools and early childhood education centres, families, providers, and other government agencies with a shared commitment and focus on enhancing outcomes for children and young people with special needs.

National Joint Initiatives looking for shared outcomes

The New Zealand Government encourages ministries to work together to find effective ways of establishing collaborative practices. Examples of these which can support students with special needs and their families to access multiple agencies when required are: Strengthening Families, High and Complex Needs Initiative (HCN), and Youth Justice Teams (YOTS) .

Issues and Challenges

A key challenge in working collaboratively is the ability each agency has to prioritise their work in a way that meets the needs of partnering organisations. This can affect the alignment and timeliness of services.

The cost of working collaboratively is also raised. It can mean multiple resources are expended at the outset. However with a clear sense of purpose and well negotiated roles and responsibilities, the overall services can be less fragmented. This better coordination which is more supportive to families, aims at being not only more effective, but also more efficient in meeting the long term outcomes being sought.

References

- HCN. *Intersectoral Strategy for Children and Young People*. Retrieved 14 September, 2006, from <http://www.hcn.govt.nz/about/>
- Ministry of Education. (2004). *Special Education Aims and Policies*. Retrieved 16/08/2005, from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=7327&indexid=7954&indexparentid=6871#P19_1663
- Ministry of Education. (2002). *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki*, from <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=index&indexid=10943&indexparentid=1095>
- Ministry of Education (2006) *Better Outcomes for Children*, <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=11382&data=1>
- Ministry of Health. (2001). *The New Zealand Disability Strategy*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Health.
- New Zealand State Services Commission. (2004). *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes*. Retrieved 14 September, 2006, from <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?NavID=257&DocID=4127>
- Odom, S. L., & Wolery, M. (2003). A Unified Theory of Practice in Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education: Evidence Based Practices. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37(3), 164-173
- Strengthening Families. Retrieved 14 September, 2006, from <http://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/about/#whatis>
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2003). *The Managing for Results Self-Assessment Tool*.