

Early Childhood Education Change Package

Aim: Ensure an average of 98% enrolment and attendance at participating ELCs by December 2016

Introduction

Quality Early Childhood Education contributes to outcomes for our youngest children, supports families, and leads to improved educational and life outcomes.

As part of the Early Learning Taskforce's focus on supporting early learning and increasing ECE participation we are working with centres across the North Island to innovate and adapt ideas for increasing ECE participation in those communities served.

Background

ECE participation has been identified as a key factor in supporting vulnerable children, which has led to its inclusion in the Better Public Services programme launched in 2012. As part of this programme Government has a goal that by 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality early childhood education.

Children that don't participate in ECE are disproportionately Maori, Pasifika and children from low socio economic backgrounds. Ninety-eight percent of New Zealand European children already participate in ECE. Low participation is not evenly spread across the country. Therefore, the target of 98% participation in ECE by 2016 is, in effect a Maori and Pasifika target in specific areas.

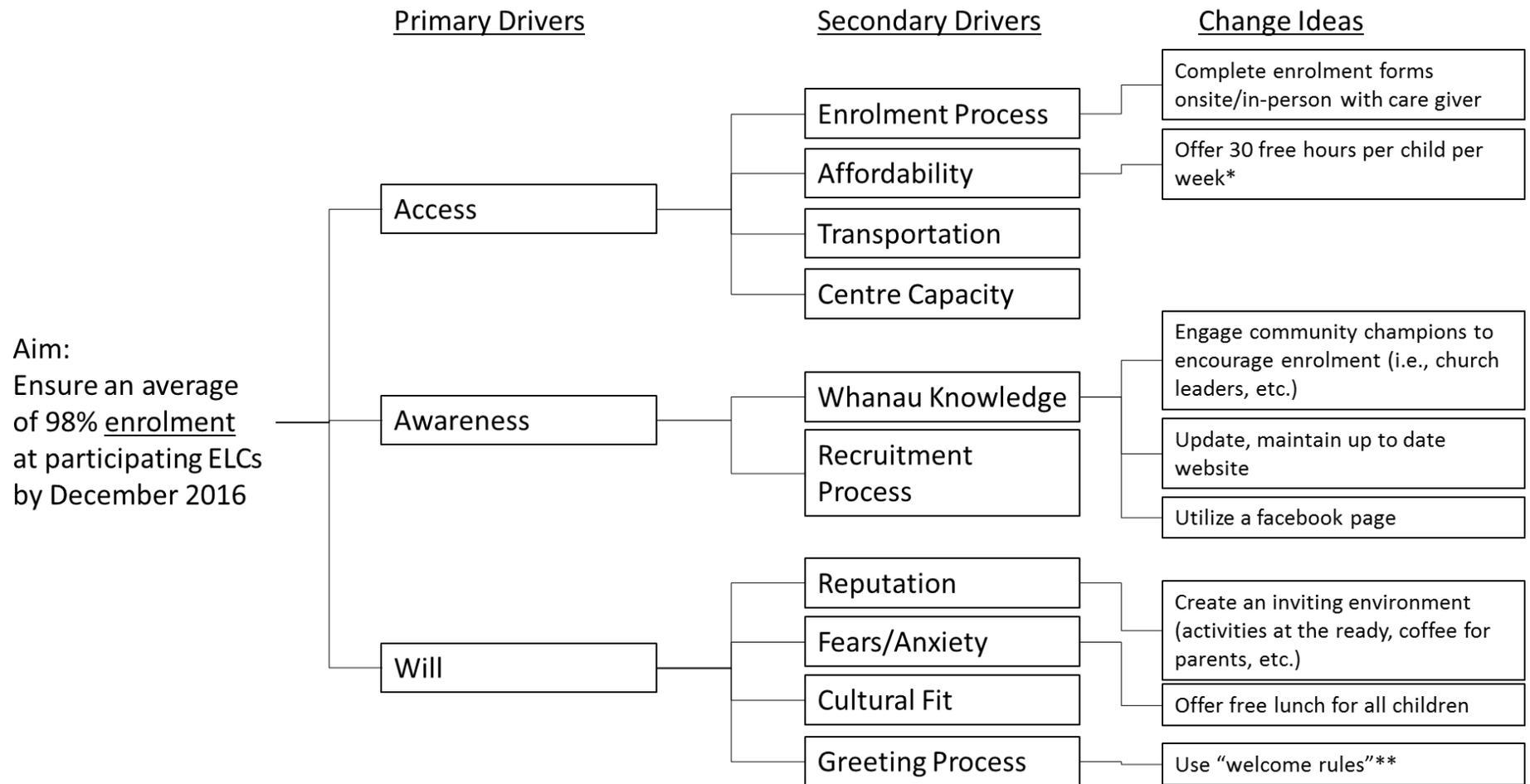
There is also wide variation in duration of regular attendance with around one in five children attending regularly for a year or less. For most children at least a year of regular attendance in quality ECE is required to gain sustainable learning benefits. Research indicates vulnerable children benefit from starting ECE when they are two years old and sustaining regular attendance until starting school.

Vision: Increase participation in early childhood education

Aim: Ensure an average of 98% enrolment and attendance at participating ELCs by December 2016

Theory of Improvement

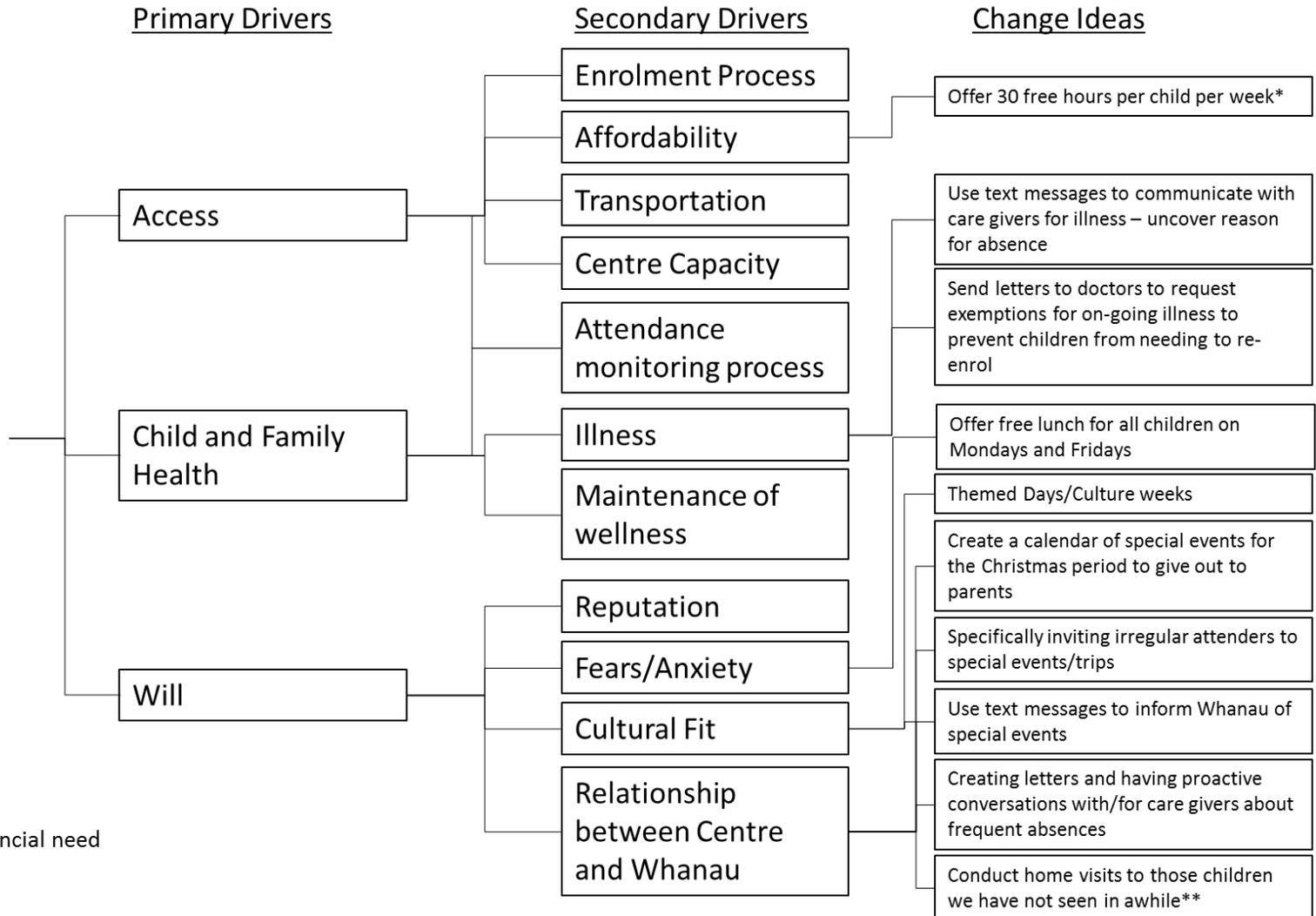
Specific aim around enrolment



*For all children who have financial need **When a person enters the centre a teacher immediately stops and goes to the door to greet and invite in the child and/or caregiver

Specific aim around **attendance**

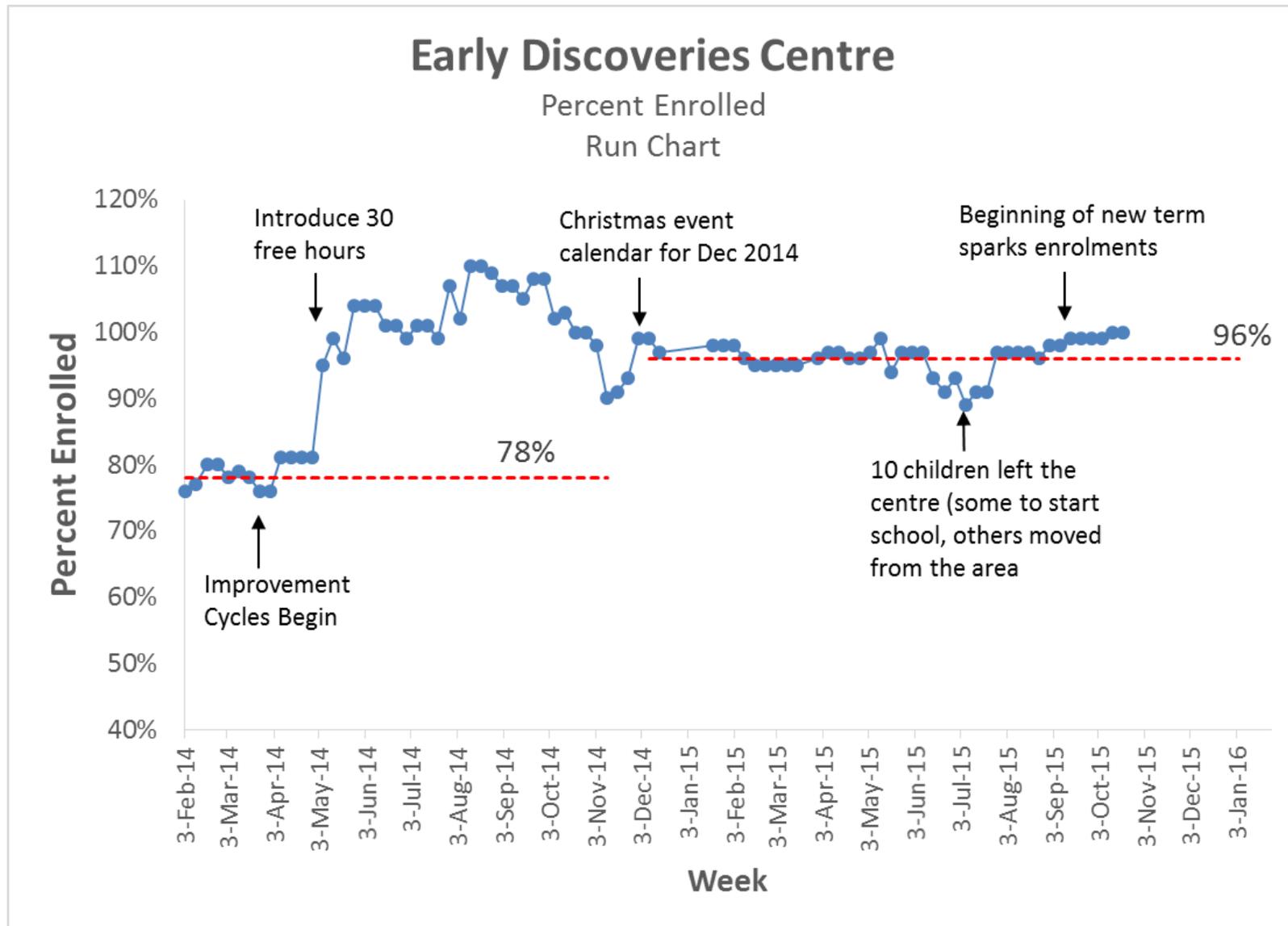
Aim:
Ensure an average of 98% attendance at participating ELCs by December 2016



*For all children who have financial need

**Define locally "awhile"

Evidence that improvement using these ideas is possible



Successful Change Ideas to increase Enrolment

| Description | How to (brief detail description) | Evidence for/from | Possible sequence of adaptation/implementation |
|--|---|--------------------------|---|
| Complete enrolment forms onsite/in-person with care giver | Rather than giving enrolment forms to a caregiver to take, complete and return, provide assistance in the moment to complete the forms with them when they arrive and decide to enrol a child | Sylvia Park Kindergarten | Cycle 1 – complete enrolment process with the next enrolment with one family Cycle 2 – adapt enrolment process to provide personal onsite assistance to complete enrolment with families ~ Change adopted |
| Offer 30* free hours per child per week | For children of families requiring financial subsidy, increase the availability of free hours to 30 hours per child per week | Early Discoveries Centre | Cycle 1 – simulate financial impact in Excel* Cycle 2 – try with 1-5 families Cycle 3 – increase families as financial analysis allows and maintain at a sustainable level ~ change adopted *adapt # of hours based on community need and financial sustainability, 30 hrs worked in South Auckland |
| Update, and maintain up to date website | To ensure parents have open and immediate access to centre events, photos and activities regarding their children | Sylvia Park Kindergarten | Cycle 1: https://www.aka.org.nz/sylvia-park-kindergarten |
| Create an inviting environment (activities at the ready, coffee for parents, etc.) | To encourage parents to drop off children at the start of a session | Kakano Early Learning | Cycle 1 – coffee and tea and milo provided prior to morning session Cycle 2 – coffee, tea, milo and soup provided Cycle 3 – dispensing beverage machine and in addition to children arriving on time, spin off is parents staying longer and engaging in activities with children |
| Use “welcome rules” | To ensure that on arrival to the centre the family will <u>always</u> be welcomed immediately and the child settled into an activity | Sylvia Park Kindergarten | Cycle 1 – tested on all arrivals on one day Cycle 2 – tested for one week ~ Adopted into practice |

Successful Change Ideas to increase Attendance

| Description | How to (brief detail description) | Evidence for/from | Possible sequence of adaptation/implementation |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| Offer 30 free hours per child per week | See above | See above | See above |
| Offer free lunch for all children | Offered on Mondays and Fridays as these are predominantly the days with poor attendance | | Cycle 1 - first week positive impact on attendance on Mondays and Fridays Cycle 2 – change tracked and agreed to continue ~ change adopted |
| Use text messages to communicate with care givers for illness | Parents of children with unexplained absence are contacted via text and the reason for absence uncovered | Early Discoveries Centre | Cycle 1 – tested for absences in first week Cycle 2 – wording adapted to ask for reason for absence ~new process adopted |
| Creating letters and having proactive conversations with/for care givers about frequent absences | Working with families who have a child enrolled and lose that place due to unexplained absence | Early Discoveries Centre | Developed from PDSA above Cycle 1 – discussion with parents of children who are frequently absent to explain implications around enrolment if absent Cycle 2 - drafted letter setting out the above ~new process adopted for frequent absentees |
| Send letters to doctors to request exemptions for on-going illness to prevent children from needing to re-enrol | To assist families of children who are frequently ill who then lose their place at the centre and having to go through the enrolment process again | Early Discoveries Centre | Cycle 1 – discussion with parents of children who are frequently absent to explain implications around enrolment if absent Cycle 2 - drafted letter and sent to doctor with family permission ~new process adopted for frequently ill children |
| Themed Days/Culture weeks | To ensure that children with older siblings who are on school holidays continue to attend early learning | Kakano | Cycle 1 – success after one week of the school holidays (even the older children wanted to attend the special themed days) Cycle 2 – look to advertise ahead of the holidays ~ Adopted into practice |

| Description | How to (brief detail description) | Evidence for/from | Possible sequence of adaptation/implementation |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Create a calendar of special events for the Christmas period to give out to parents | To ensure that children with older siblings who are on school holidays continue to attend early learning | Discoveries Centre And Kakano | Cycle 1 – successful ~ Adopted into practice |
| Specifically inviting irregular attenders to special events/trips | To encourage infrequent attenders to participate through the use of special events | Discoveries Centre And Kakano | Cycle 1 – successful ~ Adopted into practice |
| Use text messages to inform Whanau of special events | To encourage all children to attend through the use of special events | Discoveries Centre | Cycle 1 – successful ~ Adopted into practice |
| Conduct home visits to those children we have not seen in a while | To facilitate an easy process for children who have stopped attending to re-enrol | Discoveries Centre | Cycle 1 – after a 2 week absence a HV to one family resulted in the child re-enrolling and regular attendance ~ Adopted into practice |

Measurement Framework

Enrolment related measures

For weekly capture

- 1) Number of licenced places
- 2) Hours open each day
- 3) Total booked hours for the week
- 4) Number of unique children booked for the week

To be calculated weekly (from above measures)

- 1) Percent of licenced hours that were booked per week
- 2) Full time equivalent children booked per week
- 3) Average booked hours per child per week

Attendance related measures

For weekly capture

- 1) Total hours attended for the week
- 2) Number of unique children attended for the week

To be calculated weekly (from above measures)

- 1) Percent of licenced hours attended during the week
- 2) Average attended hours per child per week