ORANGA TAMARIKI
Ministry for Children

EVIDENCE CENTRE
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA
New Zealand Government

Supporting the education of tamariki and rangatahi with Oranga Tamariki involvement

Best international practice literature scan

November 2023

The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

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Introduction

Under sections 7D and 8-13 of the Children's Act 2014, the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan is a statutory accountability mechanism that requires Chief Executives of children's agencies, to set out how they will work together to improve the wellbeing of the core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki as outlined in the legislation.

The first action plan was published in July 2022 (Children's Agencies, 2022). As part of the Action Plan theme, building an evidence-based picture of need, Action Three states that Oranga Tamariki will lead in-depth assessments of need across education, health, and housing. As one contribution to this, a literature scan has been sought to understand international and/or national best practice responses for supporting care experienced children and young adults, and potentially where there is material available those children on the edge of care as well.

Methodology

Academic and professional journal articles, and some books and book chapters, were identified using EBSCO and Google Scholar; other books and book chapters were identified using Google. In instances where little or no content was available on identified sources from these platforms, where possible alternative methods were used to access material e.g. DeepDyve, ResearchGate, the MSD library and inter-library loan service, and Amazon books.

The literature scan also encompasses:

- grey literature from government and other agencies and organisations; and
- select evidence-based, systematic review, and select organisational websites.

Given that this is a literature scan rather than a full literature review and Oranga Tamariki had several areas of particular interest, the use of search terms and search strategies was iterative rather than pre-determined.

International findings

As a group, educationally children in care lag behind their peers. However addressing this is a complex and multi-facetted issue. Overseas efforts to close this gap have seen limited success although some initiatives show promise.

The report's international findings, which may be relevant to the Aotearoa New Zealand context, are presented separately in relation to:

- system enablers
- age-specific policy, practice, and programmes and
- subgroup-specific policy and practice

System Enablers

Shared Child Welfare and Education System Enablers

The following six findings on how to increase educational engagement and attainment feature prominently in the education of children in care international literature, including several recent systematic (research) reviews:

- Uphold the right of children in care to a quality education and expect more for and from them
- Build (more) effective collaborative inter-agency arrangements
- Strengthen the child's relationships and sense of agency
- Prioritise school and care placement stability and provision of necessary education supports
- Recognise that those with care experience are not a homogenous group
- Address gaps in research and monitoring.

Other literature scan findings are:

Child Welfare System Enablers

- Uphold well-developed care standards
- Ensure educationally-rich placements.
- Consider enrolling children in better state schools

Education System Enablers

- Increase knowledge and understanding of children in care and their education needs
- Robust individualised education assessment, planning, support and monitoring
- Holistic whole-school policies
- Alternative Education and Specialist Schools

Age-specific policy, practice, and programmes

Early childhood

- Enrol parents and foster carers in parenting programmes
- Encourage nightly bedtime stories
- Enrol children in quality Early Childhood Education (ECE)
- Better prepare children for going to school
- Promote targeted universal and preventative family support programmes
- Raise awareness of the benefits of quality ECE
- Make individual ECE provision more planned and purposeful (foster care).

Primary-aged

- Design, adopt or support a fostering home book gift scheme.
- Establish a literacy and numeracy tutoring scheme.

Intermediate and secondary-aged

- Place more focus on children completing their secondary education and gaining a school leaving or equivalent qualification.
- Promote and support engagement in informal learning.
- Take bullying at school seriously.
- Start early preparation and planning for leaving care.
- Include education outcomes as a consideration when selecting residential and foster care programmes and providers (residential and foster care).
- Personalise education (secure residential care).
- Extend the school year (secure residential care).

Tertiary-aged

- Recognise tertiary access and equity needs.
- Develop tertiary outreach and preparation.
- Ensure availability of safe and stable accommodation.
- Allow for later and more gradual transitions from care.
- Make financial entitlements clear and promote.
- Develop campus support provision.
- Promote ‘second chance’ tertiary opportunities.

Subgroup-specific policy and practice

Indigenous children

- Promote Indigenous models and provision.

Gender

- Recognise the education challenges that care-experienced males may face.

Disabilities

- Recognise scale of additional learning needs among children in care and care leavers.

Introduction

Under sections 7D and 8-13 of the Children's Act 2014, the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, is a statutory accountability mechanism that requires Chief Executives of *children's agencies*, to set out how they will work together to improve the wellbeing of the core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki as outlined in the legislation. For the purposes of the Act, *children's agencies* are currently the New Zealand Police, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Heath, Ministry of Justice, and Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children.

In particular, the *children's agencies* must develop a draft Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, and, once approved by the Minster, have it published. The first action plan was published in July 2022 (Children's Agencies, 2022). As part of the Action Plan theme, *building an evidence-based picture of need,* Action 3 states that Oranga Tamariki will lead in-depth assessments of need across education, health, and housing. The series of assessments will be taken to the Social Wellbeing Board, and Child and Youth Wellbeing Ministerial Group to inform decision-making and further cross-agency action on improving access to services to meet the needs of the priority populations.

As one contribution to this, a literature scan has been sought to understand best practice responses for supporting tamariki and rangatahi with previous or current involvement with Oranga Tamariki. The literature scan will support the project to identify responses, such as systems that enable good practice, support, and services, that can inform areas for driving change to better serve Oranga Tamariki priority populations.

However, reflecting the current international literature, the scan mainly focuses on the education of care experienced children and young adults. i.e. those in kin or non-kin foster care, in residential care, or care leavers. Generally, and for readability, these children and young people are referred to, depending on the context, as 'children in care', 'care experienced' or 'care leavers'. That said, some of the report will also be relevant to other children that Oranga Tamariki has involvement with, and some specific references are made to them e.g. those on the edge of care or in the youth justice system.

In terms of report structure, following a background section that discusses the international and national policy and research contexts, as well as a section outlining the literature's methodology and limitations, most of the report is given over to the report's findings. Findings are presented in three parts:

- System-wide international findings (1) Shared across education and child welfare, (2) Child welfare, and (3) Education
- Age-specific international findings (1) Early childhood, (2) Primary-aged, (3) Secondary-aged, and (4) Tertiary-aged
- Subgroup specific international findings (1) Indigenous children, (2) Gender, and (3) Disability.

Each of the three sets of international findings also includes a summary of what we already know from the limited New Zealand education of children in care research literature, as well as some overseas examples of policies and programmes.

The report also includes three appendices: (1) An overview of the education system for *all* children in Aotearoa New Zealand, (2) A summary of education-related National Care Standards, and (3) Initiatives from England, California and Victoria; three jurisdictions that have prioritised the education of care-experienced children and young adults and have demonstrated some success.

Background

The purpose of education

> The purpose of education is to facilitate the flow and experience of *mana* in the individual and in his/her community. The 'fullness' of life was considered to be a function of the degree and quality of mana at play in a person's life. The outward expression of mana in the life of the individual is evidenced not only in their skills, attributes and talents – expertise and skill is widely celebrated – but finally in their 'spiritual authority', their intuitive and wisdom filled *knowledge and insight* of knowing what, when, how and why to do something (Royal, 2007, p.2).

The above quotation from composer, researcher and education advisor Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, was the opening for a 2007 report for the Ministry of Education entitled *The Purpose of Education: Perspectives arising from Mātauranga Māori*. It represents a mātauranga Māori derived perspective on education and its purpose.

Two other useful perspectives on the purpose and aims of education are offered below. Firstly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), which all member states with the exception of the United States have ratified ((Ministry of Social Development, n.d.) presents the following wide-ranging and human-rights orientated aims of children's education in Article 29(1):

> "States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
> (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
> (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
> (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
> (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
> (e) The development of respect for the natural environment"[1].

[1] *The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has produced several detailed 'General Comments' to promote understanding of how the Convention works in practice. The first of these, 'General Comment 1' (United Nations, 2001) was on the aims of education; 'General Comment 11' was on Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention (United Nations, 2009).*

Secondly, taking a contemporary western perspective, in his manifesto for a post-pandemic world, the international education author, speaker and advisor, the late Sir Ken Robinson (Robinson & Robinson, 2022), described education, and its promise, thus: “education must enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active compassionate citizens” (p. 36). For him education has four core purposes: personal, cultural, economic and social. As such, Robinson argues that education should enable children and young people to:

1. Engage with the world within them, as well as the world around them (personal purpose).
2. Understand their own cultures, and to respect the diversity of others (cultural purpose).
3. Become economically responsible and independent (economic purpose).
4. Become active and compassionate citizens (social purpose).

Despite their different worldviews, there are perhaps as many similarities as differences in how, and how broadly, Royal (2007), the United Nations (1989) and Robinson (Robinson & Robinson, 2022) frame the purpose and aims of education.

Robinson also argues that it is vital that we clearly differentiate between four related terms:

- *Learning*…the process of acquiring new skills and understanding.
- *Education*…an organised system of learning.
- *Training*…a type of education that is focused on learning specific skills).
- *School…*a community of learners; a group that comes together to learn with and from each other.

  …Children love to learn, they do it naturally; many have a hard time with education, and some have big problems with school (p. 36).

While it is not inevitable that children in care will have a ‘hard time with education’ or ’big problems with school’, from our collective experience and the research evidence base, we do know that this is the case for many or most of them.

International research on the education of children in care

It’s nearly 50 years since the first empirical research found that the educational attainment of children in care in England was lower than for the rest of the population (Essen et al., 1976). In their study of 414 children identified as being in care from the longitudinal *National Child Development Study* of 16,000 children, Essen and colleagues found that mean scores at the age of 11 in both reading and maths were lower among those in care by up to almost two years, as shown in the following table.

Table 1: 1976 National Child Development Study attainment scores at 11 years

	Mean reading score (age)	Mean maths score (age)
Early in care (276)	9.2	9.5
Later in care (140)	10.1	10.3
Never in care (11,079)	11.1	11.1

Note: Reproduced from "School attainment of children who have been in care" by J. Essen, L. Lambert, & J. Head, 1976, p. 342. Copyright 2006 by Wiley Online.

A similar American study (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978) published shortly afterwards, had remarkably similar results. Since then, a large body of empirical and theoretical literature on the education of care experienced children and young adults has gradually emerged. Internationally, we now have a better understanding of the educational challenges that individuals in these countries face, the competing underlying explanations, and some of the more promising policy and practice initiatives that are making a difference.

There are now several books devoted to the topic (e.g. Cameron et al., 2015; Jackson, 2001; Jackson & Cameron, 2014; McNamara et al., 2019b) as well as numerous widely cited key government, NGO, and academic reports (e.g. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011; Harvey et al., 2015; Jackson et al., 2005; Parliament of NSW Committee on Children and Young People, 2012, Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee, 2012).

However, most of the literature is in the form of journal articles; this includes special issues of the following peer reviewed journals:

- Adoption & Fostering (Jackson, 2007)
- Children and Youth Services Review (Flynn & Dill, 2012)
- European Journal of Social Work (Jackson & Hojer, 2013)
- *Developing Practice* (Matheson, 2016a) and
- *Oxford Review of Education,* (Sebba & Luke, 2019).

While there is a growing literature on the education of children in care from non-Anglo-American countries including Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Spain and Sweden (and in particular on tertiary education and care leavers), most of the overseas literature for this review is limited to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia. There are also a number of systematic and other reviews of the research evidence (e.g. Evans et al., 2016; Forsman and Vinnerljung, 2012; Goding et al., 2022; Luke & O'Higgins, 2018; O'Higgins et al., 2015, 2017; Trout et al., 2008).

Policy framework

The policy framework for the education of children in, or on the edge of, care is presented as follows:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- Oranga Tamariki (Residential Care) Regulations, 1996
- Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018
- Education and Training Act 2020.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Across 54 articles, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989) sets out the 42 civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children up to the age of 18 years (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.), as well as the responsibilities of governments to ensure those rights (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2019; UNICEF Aotearoa, n.d.). Ratified[2] by the New Zealand Government in 1993, the Convention forms an important part of New Zealand's statutory and rights framework for the care and protection of children (Atwool, 2010; Stevens et al., 2011). While some children including Māori, have important additional rights under other international treaties including the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2007a) and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2007b), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history (UNICEF Aotearoa, n.d., United Nations, n.d.)[3].

Internationally under Article 28 of the Convention, all children have a right to education as set out in paragraphs 28(1) to 28(3), and further informed by Article 29 on the five aims of education referred to in the introduction (United Nations, 1989). In terms of what this means for children, the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland (n.d.) has summarised the provisions of Article 28 as "children and young people have the right to education no matter who they are: regardless of race, gender or disability; if they're in detention, or if they're a refugee" (para. 1).

[2] *Aotearoa New Zealand's 1993 ratification was, and remains, subject to three reservations in relation to (a) children unlawfully in New Zealand, (b) the protection of children in employment, and (c) the mixing of juvenile and adult prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2020).*

[3] *Aotearoa New Zealand has also ratified all three Optional Protocols to the Convention. These are: (1) the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2001); (2) the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Pornography and Child Prostitution; and (3) the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (Ministry of Social Development, 2023). However, while not discussed here, Aotearoa New Zealand's ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Torture's Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, likely has more relevance to the education of children in (residential) care than these three optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

More specifically, the Convention states that governments' support for children in education should include:

- encouraging the development of different forms of secondary education including vocational education (Article 28(1)(b))
- making higher education accessible to all "to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means" (Article 28(1)(c))
- ensuring that educational and vocational information and guidance are available to all (Article 28(1)(d))
- taking measures to promote school attendance and reduce school drop-out rates (Article 28(1)(e))

In instances where this right to education is breached, it is likely that some of a child's other rights are also being breached, such as Article 2 (discrimination and punishment), Article 3 (best interest of the child), Article 12 (the right to an opinion and for that opinion to be heard in all matters affecting the child) and of particular relevance for this report Article 20 (the right to special protection and support for children who cannot live with their parents, e.g. those in state care). In relation to Article 20, and "as part of the gradual detailing of expectations associated with the Convention that has been an important part of the role of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child" (Munro et al., 2011b, p. 2,418), the General Assembly of the United Nations resolved to adopt the *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* (United Nations, 2010) in order to enhance the implementation of the Convention specifically in relation to children not being, or at risk of not being, cared for by their parents. As such, the 25-page *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* document more clearly recognises, presents and details state parties' particular responsibilities towards children in care and care leavers, and associated policy and practice recommendations (Munro et al., 2011b). While there are numerous references to education in the guidelines, one specific measure in paragraph 135 worth noting here is that: "ongoing educational and vocational training opportunities should be imparted *as part of* [emphasis added] life skills education to young people leaving care in order to help them to become financially independent and generate their own income" (United Nations, 2010, p. 19).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Convention needs to be implemented in the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As "complementary treaties" (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2019, p. 3), there are some conceptual similarities across the often described 'three Ps' treaty principles of partnership, protection and participation (Hayward, 2023) and the 'three Ps' convention principles of provision, protection and participation (Hammarberg as cited in Fairhall & Woods, 2021). However, for Māori children, there are tensions between their individual rights under the Convention and their collective cultural rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Cleland (2023) argues:

> …for Māori, the most important principles guiding realisation of Māori children's rights are those in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Crown's obligation to honour and respect tiro rangatiratanga – absolute power and authority – is fundamental. Māori look also to DRIP [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples] which recognises their rights to maintain and strengthen their distinct legal, social and cultural institutions (p. 31).

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

As well as some specific references to education in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, education also features in three of the principles to be applied in exercise of powers under the Act. These are as follows:

- General principle: Recognition of "how a decision affects the stability of a child or young person (including the stability of their *education* [emphasis added] and the stability of their connections to community and other contacts), and the impact of disruption on this stability should be considered" (section 5(1)(d)(i)).
- Care and protection principle: With specific reference to children in the care or custody of the Oranga Tamariki chief executive or an approved section 396 organisation, provision should address their particular needs including "material needs relating to *education* [emphasis added], recreation and general living" (section 13(2)(j)(i)D).
- Moving to independence principle: "The young person is to be supported, to the extent that is reasonable and practicable, to address the impact of harm and to achieve and meet their aspirations and needs, with priority to be given to supporting the stability of their *education* [emphasis added]" (section 386AAC(f)).

Oranga Tamariki (Residential Care) Regulations, 1996

As well as a general right to "be afforded a high standard of professional care" (regulation 3), under the regulations children in 'residences'[4] have a specific right to educational and vocational training of generally no less than five hours a day (regulation 13(1)). This includes educational activities both inside and outside of the residence for those of school-age (regulation 13(1)(a)), or vocational training activities outside of the residence (regulation 13(1)(b)), or to regular structured learning activities facilitated by residence staff when such activities or opportunities are not available (regulation 13(1)(c)).

Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018

These regulations include nine education-specific statutory standards (some multi-part), herein referred to as regulations, that the Oranga Tamariki Chief Executive must comply with. Eight of these together make up a specific education section in part two (i.e. regulations 36 to 42), with the ninth (regulation 11) in part one as one of 23 regulations on comprehensive needs assessments (both immediate and longer term), plans, and visits to, and collection of information about, children. These nine education-specific regulations, which have been summarised in Appendix 1, relate to: children aged one to four years (regulation 36); children aged five years (regulation 37); children aged six to 15 years (regulation 38); children aged 16 and

[4] *'Residence' is broadly defined under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 as "…(a) any residential centre, family home, group home, foster home, family resource centre, or other places, approved or recognised for the time being by the chief executive as a place of care or treatment for the purposes of this Act; and (b) includes any place of care or treatment, so approved, whether administered by the Crown or not; but (c) does not include (i) a prison; or (ii) a hospital…; or (iv) [sic] a children's health camp".*

over (regulation 39); obligations to support attendance (regulation 40); other support obligations (regulation 41); monitoring educational progress (regulation 42); and the process for assessing educational needs (regulation 11).

Beyond regulation 11 on the educational needs assessment process, education and training are also explicitly and implicitly included in many or most of the other 22 regulations that make up part one (i.e. regulations 7 to 29). In particular, the specific identification of education and training needs, and assessment of what is required to meet such assessed needs, is one of 10 matters that must be included in the needs assessment (regulation 10(1)(g)).

See Appendix 2 for a more detailed overview of education-related National Care Standards.

Education and Training Act 2020

The Education and Training Act 2020 represents the most significant re-write of education legislation since the 1980s (Cherrington et al., 2021; Ministry of Education, n.d.-h). The 2020 Act incorporates and replaces the Education Acts 1964 and 1989. A key emphasis of the new legislation is that Early Learning Services and schools "are required to be inclusive...as...enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and reinforced by the New Zealand Disability Strategy" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-o). New Zealand schools in particular have "legal and binding obligations to include all learners" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-m).

As well as incorporating some existing provisions, specific new provisions include the following:

- Children have the right to attend school full-time (section 33(2))
- Limits on the use of reduced hours of school attendance (section 42)
- Extension of school board primary objectives including school boards giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (section 127)
- Establishment of a dispute resolution scheme (sections 216-236).

For more information on the Education and Training Act see Appendix 1 The Education System for *all* Children in Aotearoa New Zealand (this appendix also includes material on student voice, 30 year education vision and education objectives, key education policies and strategies, education standards and quality assurance, education provision, education services for children with additional learning needs, and other education programmes).

New Zealand research on educational attainment

In New Zealand there is only a very small and relatively recent body of literature on the education of children in care and care leavers (i.e. Education Review Office, 2013, 2021f; Matheson, 2014, 2015, 2016b, 2019, 2020; Oranga Tamariki, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d; Sutherland, 2006, 2008). There are also a few wider studies on, or that specifically include, children in care with some coverage of education. (e.g. Atwool, 2010; Ernst & Young, 2022; Fleming et al., 2021; Nielsen, 2019; Sanders et al., 2014; The Treasury, 2015).

However, despite an important caveat on the limited nature of any administrative data specifically on the education of children while they are in care, what does seem to be clear is that, in common with other Anglo-American countries, the average educational attainment of New Zealand care experienced children and young adults is likely to be significantly lower than for the general population.

We have four sources that indicate that this may be the case (i.e. Malatest, 2023; Oranga Tamariki, 2019b; Tertiary Education Commission as cited in Matheson, 2023; The Treasury, 2015). Importantly, none of these sources relate exclusively to children who are currently in care, i.e. the first three sources report on adults who were ever in care (for one or more nights) as children. However, despite this and some methodological and individual weaknesses (and strengths), taken together they paint a fairly clear and consistent picture of the likely educational attainment of children currently in care, and care leavers.

The first of these sources is The Treasury's (2015) report *Using Integrated Administrative Data to Understand Children at Risk of Poor Outcomes as Young Adults*; it also featured prominently in the Expert Panel's reports on the Modernising of Child, Youth and Family (2015, 2016). While the authors emphasise its exploratory nature and include several caveats, this analysis of the Ministry of Social Development's Integrated Child Dataset (ICD) relates to children who are at risk of poor outcomes as young adults; it focuses on those born between 1 July 1990 and 30 June 1991 through to age 21. This analysis found that the 1,500 young adults (or 2.4% of children in the 1990/91 birth cohort) who had ever spent any time in Child, Youth and Family care as children, were two times more likely to have failed to gain National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 by age 21, than those in the general population, i.e. 77.7% compared to 36.3% of children overall. Perhaps more surprisingly, as such outcome measures tend to be inter-related, of the six used for those who had ever spent any time in Child, Youth and Family (as was) care, this was actually the most positive finding; for example the analysis also found that that this part of the cohort were 10 times more likely to have been in prison before the age of 21 (i.e. 18.3% compared to 1.8% of all children).

The second source is the analysis of government data that is included in one of the four *Experiences of Education for Children in Care* research reports (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b). Using Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) this compares secondary school educational achievement among 18 to 19-year-olds, by whether they:

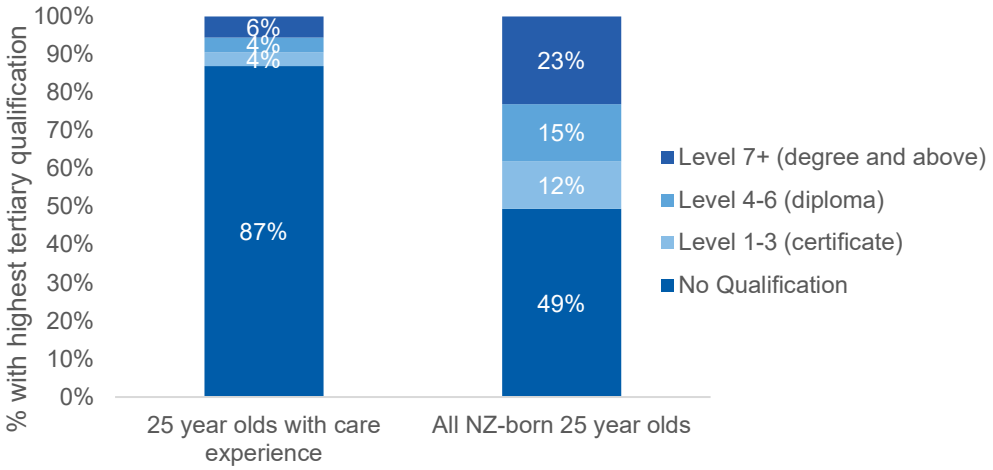
- had any care experience at all
- 2+ years in care over lifetime. or
- no care experience.

This analysis found that 45% of 18 to 19-year-olds with *any* care experience had not gained NCEA Level 1, whereas this was the case for only 16% of those who had never been in care. Conversely, only 12% of 18 to 19-year-olds with any care experience had gained NCEA Level 3 / 4, whereas the corresponding figure for those who had never been in care was 45%.

The third of these sources is an analysis undertaken by the Tertiary Education Commission (as cited in Matheson, 2023) and shown in the following figure. Also

linking administrative data across government departments (Ministry of Education tertiary completions and Oranga Tamariki children in care), this analysis found that 14% of those under the age of 25 who had *ever spent any* time in Child, Youth and Family care as children had gained a tertiary qualification, in comparison to 50% for the general population.

Figure 1: Highest provider-based[5] tertiary qualification completed at age 25 by care status



Note: Adapted from "A Guide for Tertiary Education Organisations on supporting care experienced learners" by I Matheson. Copyright 2023 by Tertiary Education Commission.

Clearly with 6% of care experienced 25-year-olds having a level 7+ qualification (degree and above), this study also confirms Matheson's (2019) qualitative research with care experienced students, that those in New Zealand with a care background can and do go to university and graduate.

Fourthly, the Malatest International (2021, 2023) research for Oranga Tamariki on the new Transitions Support Service includes three wide-ranging annual online / telephone census surveys of children in care and care leavers who were eligible for a transition worker. The latest of these (Malatest International, 2023) includes a finding that of children in care and care leavers aged 16 to 20 years plus (n=408 representing 18% of the cohort) 56% of those *not* in education or training (n=216):

- 38% had gained NCEA 2 or above, and
- 16% had gained NCEA 3 or above.

The report compares these figures of 38% (NCEA 2 or above) and 16% (NCEA 3 or above) to cited Ministry of Education national school leaver's attainment data of 81% and 59% respectively, for *all* of the approximately 60,000 young people who left school in 2020. However, neither of these comparisons take account of the respondents who at the time of the survey were in either secondary or tertiary education (or training) (n=169).

[5] *Tertiary education outside of a school excluding industry training.*

Practice, programmes and provision

The Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre's (2020) guidance document *Supporting tamariki with their education and training needs*, has relevance to all Oranga Tamariki staff. Across the country, there will be practitioners and managers who use the guidance to inform their decision-making in relation to individual children and better address their educational needs.

However, currently, the main inter-agency collaborative programme in relation to the education (and health) of children in care, is the Gateway Assessments (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2016; Oranga Tamariki, 2018; Tuohy, 2019). Established in 2008 (Rankin & Mills, 2008; Tuohy, 2019), there are also several guidance documents for Oranga Tamariki staff that are specifically about the gateway assessment process (Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre, 2016a, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, n.d.).

In relation to gateway assessments for children entering state care, the RTLB Professional Practice Toolkit (Ministry of Education, 2020) identifies the following as Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) responsibilities:

> RTLB will:
> - facilitate a joint-agency meeting within 0-4 days
> - develop a plan that addresses the immediate needs of the child or young person and covers the first month with provision for ongoing monitoring
> - be the Lead Worker during the first month (note: if the child or young person is already in receipt of Ministry of Education Learning Support services, the relevant Learning Support specialist will be designated Lead Worker)
> - work with the classroom teacher/kaiako on strategies to ensure the child/young person settles and succeeds in class
> - work with the classroom teacher/kaiako to ensure the identified education needs are met
> - undertake any assessments that may be necessary
> - be a key member of the inter-agency group and work to strengthen the link between Education and other agencies supporting the child, including the Ministry of Health
> - work with the teacher/kaiako to complete the Education Profile and return it to the Oranga Tamariki Social Worker and the Gateway Assessment Coordinator
> - provide on-going high-quality education information and feedback to the social worker
> - contribute to the development of the Inter-Agency Service Agreement (ISA). (p. 13).

No evaluation of the Gateway Assessment has been identified from public domain literature. However, the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre's evaluation of the Government's $6 million "Access to Services" (ATS) investment does offer some broader insights about the functioning of the wider Gateway Assessment programme. At the time ATS was described as:

> …a trial, attached to the Gateway Assessment system, to better address the identified needs of tamariki and rangatahi in care, or at

> risk of coming into care. ATS introduces an 'enhanced' brokerage role by a specialist Service Lead and provides additional funding to enable direct purchasing of services where business as usual (BAU) public funding streams are exhausted or not available in a timely way (Carswell et al, 2018, p. 7).

This evaluation was generally positive about the strengths of the ATS implementation. The key implementation barriers were found to be primarily "related to issues with utilising Gateway and wider service system issues which require systemic improvement" (Carswell et al., 2018, p. 5). However, while a comprehensive assessment of service gaps was not undertaken and there may be more location-specific gaps, the evaluation found issues related to referrals, communication problems, variability/confusion around roles and responsibilities, service accessibility and indirect costs/affordability, service availability, and engagement with whānau.

Pat Tuohy (2019) who at the time was the Ministry of Health's long-standing Chief Advisor for Child and Youth Health, also reported these and other issues about gateway assessments. With particular reference to education profiles given the focus of this report, he reported that these are not always provided or complete. In relation to other aspects of gateway assessments that needed to be resolved, he identified the following: child and caregiver engagement; social work referrals; clinical assessment; access to services; workforce; access to mental health services; and governance.

Beyond this and the annual Prime Minister's Oranga Tamariki Awards[6] (Oranga Tamariki, 2022), formerly known as the William Wallace Awards, no specific New Zealand programme or provision has been identified that supports the education of children in care and/or care leavers. However, the recent *Well Child Tamariki Ora Review* report (Ministry of Health, 2020) does identify children in state care and their whānau, as one of five priority population groups for this service (the others being children and whānau who are Māori and/or Pacific and/or have disabilities and/or other high needs). In doing so the review recognised long-standing inequities in relation to access to Well Child Tamariki Ora provision and outcomes. While not education per se, the review does call for a stronger strategic alignment between Well Child Tamariki Ora and the respective strategies and early childhood provision of the Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki, including the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan.

However, three guides have been published by government agencies on the education of children in care and those transitioning from care:

- Some years ago, the Ministry of Education (n.d.-s) published Supporting children in care: A guide for educators in early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo, schools, kura and wharekura.

[6] *The annual Prime Minister's Oranga Tamariki Awards, provide $3,000 scholarships for 'winning' children in care; many or most of these awards are used by award recipients for tertiary education and training or other learning opportunities.*

- Oranga Tamariki has published *Enrolling and engaging tamariki and rangatahi in care in education – guidance* on the Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre (2022) website.
- The Tertiary Education Commission's *Guide for Tertiary Education Organisations on Supporting Care Experienced Learners* (Matheson, 2023), developed with the support of some care experienced students, VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai, and the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers in England.

Methodology and limitations

Academic and professional journal articles, and some books and book chapters, were identified using EBSCO and Google Scholar; other books and book chapters were identified using Google. In instances where little or no content was available on identified sources from these platforms, where possible alternative methods were used to access material e.g. DeepDyve, ResearchGate, the MSD library and inter-library loan service, and Amazon books.

The literature scan also encompasses:

- grey literature from government and other agencies and organisations; and
- select evidence-based, systematic review, and select organisational websites.

Given that this is a literature scan rather than a full literature review, and the range of areas of interest, the use of search terms and search strategies was iterative rather than pre-determined.

As always, this literature scan has some limitations:

1. As a literature scan rather than a more comprehensive evidence brief or full literature review, the report aims to synthesise a limited amount of literature relating to a topic area; a pragmatic product, the quality can be affected by the short time frames. Literature scans may be for internal use only. An assessment and discussion of the relevance of international literature to the New Zealand context has also not been included.
2. The international literature and empirical research specifically on children in care who have had their individual educational needs identified, is very limited. While included in this literature scan, most of the international literature is broader, takes a strong inter-agency focus, and is premised on better supporting the education of *all* children in care. Similarly, the international literature on the education of the specific subgroups of interest to Oranga Tamariki is also very limited i.e. Indigenous children, Pacific children, and children (outside of residential care) with high needs. Furthermore: no education of children in care literature has been identified on teacher aides, mentorships, one-on-one time in the classroom, and targeted learning groups; and outside of England the international literature on the education of children on the edge of care is also limited.
3. As most research studies occur in a national or state/province context that reflects particular legal, policy and practice approaches and orientations to both child protection/OOHC and education, there are limitations on the extent to which overseas findings can be applied to New Zealand; only one large-scale international comparative research study has been identified and much of the research is small-scale.
4. Only two overseas research studies specifically on the education of indigenous children in OOHC has been identified (Johnson, 2011, 2014) although as with

Oranga Tamariki (2019b), some 'education of children in care' quantitative studies have differentiated between indigenous and non-indigenous children (e.g. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011; Mitic & Rimer, 2002).

5. Oranga Tamariki administrative data on the education of children while in their care appears, to date, to be limited to information on enrolments (including changes of school) (Independent Children's Monitor, 2023). However, this literature scan does cite material on the education of care experienced adults from reports that have used Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) (e.g. Oranga Tamariki, 2019b). As such please note the following standard IDI disclaimer: *These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit* [*www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/*](www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/)

International findings

Notwithstanding two identified studies (Daly & Gilligan, 2010; Pecora et al., 2006), the international research evidence is otherwise unequivocal that educationally, children in care as a group, lag behind children in the general population (Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012; Jay & McGrath-Lone, 2019; Luke & O'Higgins, 2018; Lund & Stokes, 2020; O'Higgins et al., 2015).

However, this is a complex and multifaceted issue (Dimakosa et al., 2022) and while some specific interventions have been developed to help close the gap, to date these have had limited success, and may in part point to "a lack of understanding about underlying processes and mechanisms" (O'Higgins et al., 2017, p. 198). Broadly what specific interventions there are, tend to span the following: (1) strategic interventions, (2) pilot interventions on spending targeted money, (3) residential schools, (4) community projects, (5) reading encouragement, and (6) tutoring (Liabo, et al., 2012).

That said, from the education of children in care international literature, including several recent systematic (research) reviews, the following six findings on how to increase educational engagement and attainment feature prominently:

- Uphold the right of children in care to a quality education and expect more for and from them
- Build (more) effective collaborative inter-agency arrangements
- Strengthen the child's relationships and sense of agency
- Prioritise school and care placement stability and provision of necessary education supports
- Recognise that those with care experience are not a homogenous group
- Address gaps in research and monitoring.

Discussion of these and other findings follow.

1: System enabler international findings

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of tamariki and rangatahi in, or transitioning from, care

- High rates of education enrolment: There are high rates of school enrolment (91%) amongst children aged 6 to 15 with 5% enrolled in other educational facilities or programmes. For those aged over 15, enrolment in education and training was at 86% while the rate for those under the age of six was 65% (Oranga Tamariki as cited by the Independent Children's Monitor, 2023).
- High rates of school changes for some: 25% of those who were in care had to date experienced three or more school changes (excluding necessary changes between different school stages) compared with 3% of those with no care experience (Oranga Tamariki. (2019b)).
- High rates of educational disengagement: Using Integrated Data Infrastructure, children in care have significantly higher rates of educational disengagement (stand–downs, exclusions,

truancy and in alternative education) than those with no care experience. Those aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, whether instances occurred before and/or since coming into care, were:

  - 3 times more likely to have been suspended in past year
  - 3 times more likely to have been recorded as low to medium truancy (1-83 days) in past year
  - 4 times more likely to have been recorded as high truancy (84 or more days) in past year
  - 9 times more likely to have been stood down in past year.
- School disengagement tends to increase with age (Oranga Tamariki. (2019b)).
- Caregivers need and want support with their children's education: In an Oranga Tamariki caregiver survey (Nielson, 2019) (n= 1,283), 49% of respondents said that over the previous 12 months they had needed help on "formal education/childcare/schooling"; from a choice of 12 issues this was their top area of need.
- Gateway Assessments are undertaken for most children in care, but many take too long to complete: According to Oranga Tamariki (as cited by the Independent Children's Monitor, 2023), 80% of children in care at 31 March 2022 had, for case planning purposes, received a comprehensive interagency Gateway Assessment of their social, emotional, educational, physical and developmental needs. However almost two-thirds (64%) of the assessments took more than 60 days to complete with a small minority (approximately 15%) taking from 181 days with some (less than 1%) taking over two years. The report also highlights that there can then be delays in the identified supports and services that a child needs actually being provided.
- A key Independent Children's Monitor (2023) report finding is that "connections between Oranga Tamariki, health and education providers and communities remain splintered" (p. 9); they also heard that "communication and partnership are ineffective, and the role and responsibilities for supporting tamariki in care to achieve the best outcomes are unclear" (p. 13)

1a: Shared child welfare and education system enablers

1a(i): Uphold the right of children in care to a quality education and expect more for and from them

Under article 28 of the United Nations (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, all children have the right to a quality education; section 20 of the Convention, as well as the provisions of the *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* (United Nations, 2010), place additional obligations on the state in relation to those in care or care experienced. As reflected in the international literature on the education of children in care, such measures should not be limited to, or focused on, only those with assessed learning needs.

In many Anglo-American countries it has long been recognised that too many teachers, social workers, foster carers, and their respective organisations having low education expectations of children in care has contributed to poor outcomes, and that there is a need to expect more educationally for and from children in care (Jackson & Cameron, 2014; Martin & Jackson, 2002; Mendis, 2012; Montserrat et al., 2019).

However, as well as having higher expectations of and for children in care, many researchers argue that these children's education, needs to be sufficiently resourced (Day et, al., 2012; Mannay et al., 2015; Sebba & Luke, 2010). Berger et al. (2023) state: "it must be acknowledged that this requires a tremendous investment of human and material resources including time and money". This can range from

appropriate clothing, books and transportation for school (Day et al., 2012), through to specialist provision and programmes (Berger, et al., 2023).

1a(ii): Build (more) effective collaborative inter-agency arrangements

A lack of integration between the care and education systems impacting negatively on children in care and the need for (more) effective collaborative inter-agency arrangements, features in a number of systematic and evidence reviews (e.g. Liabo et al., 2012; Lund & Stokes, 2020; Mannay et al., 2015; Townsend et al., 2020; Wales Centre for Public Policy, 2021). From their review of interventions, Liabo and colleagues (2012) concluded that "there is clearly room for collaboration in this field, in terms of developing clear definitions of the problem and potential solutions, detailed interventions and incorporated programme evaluations from the intervention design stage onwards" (p. 350). Furthermore, in their evidence review *Multi-agency Working and Outcomes for Children Looked After*, the Wales Centre for Public Policy (2021) found that multi-agency working "has shown to be an effective tool to improve the outcomes of children in care" (p. 6). They identify the following as evidence-informed governance structures/mechanisms and ways to promote team working:

- Governance structures/mechanisms: key worker systems (the use of key workers in particular is supported by a significant body of evidence); information sharing; joint training; co-location; joint funding/pooled budgets; and parental/carer empowerment.
- Effective team working: clarity and accountability; leadership/senior management and local governance; power-sharing between agencies; and shared language/processes/understanding.

One US qualitative research study with foster carers**,** school liaisons, and agency advocates[7] (Zetlin et al., 2010) found that operationally, there at least, such collaboration was not a reality. While all participants recognised that children in foster care faced significant education challenges, they had very different perspectives on this. When children experienced issues at or with school, "all three groups looked to their own group to deal with problems; there was no collaboration, no team approach, and no shared view on how and what was needed" (pp. 251-252). Furthermore, each of the three groups "saw the other groups as needing to play a bigger role and work more collaboratively to develop mutually supportive and responsive practices to address barriers to school success for foster students" (p. 252). More basically, the systematic review of research from England and Wales (Mannay et al., 2015) specifically found that communication between social services and education on the education of children in care is often lacking, and where it does exist it needs to be both more timely and comprehensive.

1a(iii): Strengthen the child's relationships and sense of agency

The absence or existence of supportive relationships with teachers, carers and/or social workers, also features prominently in education of children in care systematic reviews (e.g. Lund & Stokes, 2020; Mannay et al., 2015; Townsend et al., 2020) and

[7] *"Two focus groups consisted of foster parents and relative caregivers…, one focus group consisted of school district counsellors and foster youth liaisons, and one focus group consisted of education liaisons from CW [child welfare] or advocacy agencies" (p. 246).*

across the wider education of children in care literature. While from their included studies Townsend et al. (2020) highlight the importance of key relationships with teachers (and peers), in their systematic reviews both Lund and Stokes (2020) and Mannay et al., (2015) present a broader perspective and refer to the importance of relationships with *supportive* or *key* adults, and so also including carers and social workers. In one English study of children and young people with residential or foster care experience (n=80), Sachdev (as cited in Mannay et al, 2015) found that "there had been an absence of any significant relationships between LAC [Looked After Children] and adults. It was this lack of significant adult relationships which eventually contributed to the young people's low educational achievements" (p. 37).

While inferred with the use of the terms 'barriers' and 'enablers', there is little specific discussion across the literature on whether the interface between 'relationships with adults' and 'educational attainment' is correlational or causal. However, Mannay et al. (2015) do posit that consistent relationships, coupled with stable care and school placements and routine, "featured as key aspects in enabling LACYP [Looked After Children and Young People] to fully participate in learning and school and college life" (p. 116).

More specifically from individual education of children in care research studies:

- Mendis et al. (2015) provide the caveat that such adults must themselves value learning with Day et al. (2019) similarly finding that young people in care wanted stable relationships with caring adults outside of school "who know how to support their educational successes" (p. 1010)
- Rutman and Hubberstey (2018) highlight the importance of a relationship-based approach including someone who tracks and supports school attendance
- Day et al. (2012) found that for care experienced high school and tertiary students in their Michigan study, a lack of supportive relationships with caring adults was the most frequently cited barrier to completing high school and going onto tertiary education; many talked about the importance of earlier relationships with teachers who often 'went the extra mile' at critical junctures to either keep participants in school or to maintain them on their academic trajectory
- Rios and Rocco (2014) found their care experienced tertiary students had had relationships helpful school counsellors while at school for tertiary students, and
- Wilson et al. (2019) point to the need for dedicated specialist workers to liaise with and mentor care experienced students.

In terms of supporting and strengthening children's sense of agency, there is growing recognition of the importance of this (Sebba & Luke, 2019; Goding et al., 2022). In an Australian qualitative study, Tilbury et al. (2014) found that children in care do recognise that education is an important pathway to enable then to achieve future employment and life goals. O'Higgins et al., (2017) also found that children (and their carers) having aspirations appeared to predict greater success. As such, children, both within care and education settings, having their opinions acknowledged in decision-making processes (Townsend et al., 2020), becomes all the more important.

1a(iv): Prioritise school and care placement stability and provision of necessary education supports

The importance of school and/or care placement stability, and the disruption that can otherwise occur, features prominently across several systematic reviews (e.g. Berger et al., 2023; Gypen et al., 2017; Lund & Stokes, 2020; Mannay et al., 2015; Townsend et al., 2020), and the wider literature.

According to Frerer and colleagues (as cited in Pecora et al., 2019), there may be instances where moving to an alternative school is in a child's best interests, and particularly so if they attend a low-performing school. However, notwithstanding this, school stability and continuation, particularly for those at secondary school, is widely recognised across the literature as being important for the educational success of children in care (Jackson et al., 2015; Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003a, 2003b). School stability can also be an important protective factor and support educational resilience (Waxman et al., 2003), "normalcy and predictability" (Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018, p. 257), whilst also avoiding the disruption and many of the relationship and curriculum issues specifically associated with changes in school (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014; Jerczyszyn & Michell, 2019; Mannay et al., 2015). Particularly in relation to teenagers, care placement timing may be important with evidence that overall outcomes for those who no longer have a connection with education, are particularly poor (Sebba et al., 2015).

Ensuring care placement stability is also critically important for the education of children in care (Pecora et al., 2006, 2019; Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018) with Sinclair and colleagues (2021) suggesting that their research implies the need to "place teenagers with foster carers and residential homes with a track record of providing stable, supportive placements" (p. 266); in particular their findings supported their hypothesis that many children in care can 'catch-up' educationally with children with other children with 'similar difficulties' if in stable placements.

In particular, ensuring that all children are promptly enrolled in education is fundamental (Zetlin et al., 2006); in the US this is now a Federal legal requirement on this (National Working Group on Foster Care and Education et al., 2019) and in Victoria new school enrolments for children in care should, wherever possible, be agreed within 24 hours (Victoria State Government, 2018). School attendance and the promotion of school attendance, as well as limiting use of part-time provision and stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions, is also critical (Cameron et al., 2015, Castrechini, 2009, Hwang et al., 2014; Zorc et al., 2013). In England for example, Jackson and Cameron (2014) have reported that children in care had a ten-fold higher risk of exclusion than other children whose behaviour was seen as 'challenging'. More recently, again in England Jackson et al., (2022) have also identified a growing trend in relation to younger children in care; over the year 2018-19 as many as 410 children aged seven or under including 40 four year olds, had experienced one or more school suspensions, with some being permanently excluded.

In terms of helping to identify the most appropriate education supports that might be put in place, a number of systematic reviews specifically on the effectiveness of interventions for children in care have been published (e.g. Evans et al., 2016; Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012; Liabo et al., 2012; Manney et al., 2015; Trout et al.,

2008). By their nature, these systematic reviews largely or exclusively focus on the very small number of interventions internationally that have been the subject of one or more randomised controlled trials. As such, the interventions tend to be very specific, small-scale, manualised programmes. Across the interventions included in such reviews, tutoring (and in particular paired reading discussed elsewhere) is perhaps deemed to be the most promising (Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012; Liabo et al., 2012); here is also some empirical evidence for tailored individual support (Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012), and mentoring (Gypen et al., 2017). However, across these systematic reviews, no intervention has been identified that has been deemed to be evidence-based. Despite the large research literature, Forsman and Vinnerljung (2012) argue that most considered studies were insufficiently theorised and not robust enough. Similarly, Liabo et al. (2012) found that none of their included studies were "robust enough to provide evidence on effectiveness" (p. 341), with Mannay et al., (2015) similarly concluding that the evidence-base was too limited for them to be able to recommend investment in any existing interventions" (p. 3).

From the wider research literature, supporting schools and care placements includes but is not limited to the following.

- Helping children to successfully manage school transitions (Francis et al., 2021)
- Individualised and flexible approaches along with support and partnerships with the home environment. (Cameron et al., 2019: Carroll & Cameron, 2017)
- Additional funding for schools with children in care (Cameron et al., 2019)
- Robust supplementary services (Pecora et al., 2010)
- Sufficient mental health provision in place (Day et al., 2012; McNamara et al., 2019a) and support to address trauma in order to prevent serious behaviour problems in school (Zetlin et al., 2010)
- provide more individual support tailored to the child, including compensatory education opportunities for those who have for whatever reason missed out on schooling, and/or in some jurisdictions because they (are deemed to) have a disability (Education Law Centre, 2022; Gardiner et al., 2019).

1a(v): Recognise that those with care experience are not a homogenous group

Despite commonalities, the backgrounds, experiences, strengths and needs of children in care and those transitioning from care, are not all the same (Brady, 2017; Goding et al., 2022; Sebba & Luke, 2019)). Furthermore, and placement quality aside, the very concept of care itself is not a homogeneous experience either (O'Higgins et al., 2015), ranging from young children in pre-adoption foster placements through to young people in secure residential provision.

However, qualitative or quantitative research-derived typologies can be a useful means of classifying the clustering of variables within subgroups (Babbie, 2020), as a basis for theory, policy and practice development. The following five 'typologies', variously described as 'outcome groups' (Stein, 2006), latent class analysis-based 'profiles', 'classes' or 'subgroups' (Courtney et al., 2010), 'pathways' (Cameron & Bryderup, 2014) and 'groups' (Berridge, 2017; Mendis et al., 2015), can help shape policy and practice responses beyond those simply for the 'average' child in care or care leaver. While all five typologies to some extent address the education of

children in care and/or care leavers, three of these studies (i.e. Berridge, 2017; Cameron & Bryderup, 2014; Mendis, 2015) have a specific education focus.

Stein's (2006) three outcome groups, from his widely cited leaving care research literature-derived typology, are those who are (1) 'moving on', (2) 'survivors', and (3) 'strugglers'[8]. Education is specifically mentioned in relation to two of these. His 'moving on' (successfully) group, who likely had "stability and continuity in their lives…achieved some educational success before leaving care…[and] participating in further or higher education or having a job they liked or being a parent themselves played a significant part in 'feeling normal'" (p. 279). In contrast his 'strugglers' group had experienced significant disruption "especially in relation to their personal relationships and education" (p. 280).

In the US, Courtney and colleagues' (2010) four 'former foster youth' profiles from their *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth* longitudinal study (n=732) were statistically derived (latent class analysis). With the addition of a fourth 'struggling parents' subgroup which at 25% was the second largest, their 'accelerated adults' (36%), 'emerging adults' (21%), and 'troubled and troubling youth' (18%) profiles are very similar to those of Stein (2006) above. In relation to education, "almost all [of the 'accelerated adults'] have a high school diploma, over half have attended some college, and they are the most likely to have a college degree" (p. 5). By contrast those in the "struggling parents" subgroup are "the least likely to have finished high school, the least likely to have attended college, and the least likely to be currently enrolled in school" (p. 6).

From the Danish contribution to the five-country *Young People from a Public Care Background Pathways to Education in Europe* (YiPPEE) research project (Jackson & Cameron, 2014; Matheson, 2022a), five distinct education pathways were identified: (1) young people with 'promising' educational pathways in college or university; (2) young people with 'promising' educational pathways in vocational education and training; (3) young people with 'yo-yo' pathways in education; (4) young people with 'delayed' educational pathways; and (5) young people with health problems that dominate their educational pathways (Cameron & Bryderup, 2014).

Another typology stems from a large mixed methods research project (Sebba et al., 2015) on the educational progress of children in care in England (n=4,849). Berridge's (2017) qualitative component was with young people in care (n=26) aged approximately 16 years,[9] and addressed their experiences of secondary schooling. This study identified four groups of students: (1) 'stressed/unresolved' (students who, despite usually being provided with education and other supports, continue to experience high and ongoing levels of stress, which has a major impact on their schooling; (2) 'committed/trusted support' (students who were educational high achievers and felt cared for, cared about, and educationally supported, by at least one person, whether that be a foster carer, grandparent and/or teacher etc); (3) 'private/self-reliant' (students, both high and low educational achievers, who wanted

[8] *In the author's earlier articles and reports (e.g., Stein, 2005), the term 'victims' rather than 'strugglers' was used.*

[9] *More specifically, those eligible to take their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations.*

to remain independent and autonomous; they generally attributed how well they did at school entirely to themselves) and (4) 'disengaged' (students who could present behavioural challenges to schools, attended mainly for social reasons, and were not necessarily looking for or wanting more educational support).

Finally, the Mendis et al. (2015) typology comes from an Australian qualitative study with 18 care experienced adult women who specifically had university degrees. While this research highlights the importance of individual circumstances and characteristics, five distinct groups were nonetheless identified as follows: (1) Destined (privileged access to resources for learning), (2) Decision (significant adult with a focus on education), (3) Determined (self-motivated) (3) Denied (aspirations for higher education thwarted by accommodation crises in secondary school) and (5) Delayed (uninformed of the value of education at school-age).

1a(vi): Address gaps in research and monitoring

Despite there now being a relatively large body of literature internationally on the education of children in care, most of the identified systematic reviews highlight limitations or significant limitations in the quality or focus of the research and in particular evaluations on the effectiveness of individual interventions. Various gaps to be addressed include the need for the following:

- more *rigorous* intervention research (Evans et al., 2016; Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012; Liabo et al., 2012; Manney et al., 2015; Trout et al., 2008) including use of more randomised-controlled trials or quasi-experimental designs, and larger sample sizes; Evans et al., (2016) do however add the caveat that randomised-controlled trials must be designed to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and sufficiently capture the complexity of social and education interventions and contexts.
- more population-level studies (Jay & McGrath, 2019), as well as studies that better capture the heterogeneity of children in care and their education (O'Higgins et al., 2017; Luke & Higgins, 2018; Goding et al., 2022)
- more (or all) studies clearly describing an intervention's 'theory of change' (Liabo et al., 2012), and more use of other theories, frameworks and mnemonics (Evans et al., 2016), including the use of logic models to depict in more detail "the causal pathway from inputs to outcomes (p. 89).
- more research from the perspective of the care experienced and the professionals and the carers who support them (Berger, et al., 2023; Liabo et al., 2012[10]).

With specific reference to monitoring, Jackson and Cameron (2014) argue that reliable (and timely) statistical information is essential if the educational opportunities for children in care are to be improved with both education and child welfare needing to have access to sufficient administrative data to be able to understand how children in care are faring educationally. For example, in Scotland statistics describing the educational attainment of *Looked After Children* (including those

[10] *Liabo et al (2012) state that as well as the views of professionals and young people in care, future evaluations also need to be underpinned by the views of researchers and policy-makers.*

looked after at home) are published annually by the National Statistics Agency (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2010). As well as documenting and tracking progress at school in a standardised format from the point when each child came into care, Jackson and Cameron (2014) also suggest that information on educational participation and attainment should also be collected by child protection agencies and residential care homes. The need to address gaps in data collection is also identified in the Lund and Stokes (2020) scoping review of Australian research on the education of children in care. In relation to care leavers more generally and inclusive of their education and employment support needs, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022) make a similar point on the need to improve data quality.

1b: Child welfare system enablers

1b(i): Uphold well-developed care standards

In the United States, the Child Welfare League of America first developed and published best practice care standards approximately 50 years ago (Matheson, 2009). Since then, a plethora of international, national, and state/province/territory care standards have been developed and particularly so across Anglo-American countries. From his international study on foster care standards, Matheson (2009) found that care standards had one or more of seven different purposes: (1) aspirations; (2) principles; (3) procedures; (4) specifications; (5) inspection; (6) improvement; and (7) specialist (e.g. training and leaving care). However, two key critical differences are that while some sets of standards are models of good practice others are minimum (legal) requirements, and the extent to which they focus on individual placements as opposed to broader organisational or system-wide issues.

Most published care standards' documents have one or more specifically on education. Current examples with a strong education focus include:

- English fostering services' standards (Department for Education, 2011), (for more information on these see the following overseas example);
- Residential care standards in the Republic of Ireland (Health Information and Quality Authority, 2018) and Ontario (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, 2020);
- Scottish secure care standards (Scottish Government, 2020); and
- Australian out-of-home care standards (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2011).

However, the development of care standards is not a panacea. For example, in Australia McDowall's (2018) CREATE Foundation study found that over the first five years since the introduction of national OOHC standards there were no significant improvements for children in care, and while there were improvements in some areas, in other areas performance was worse. Nonetheless, McDowell (2018) goes on to argue that:

> without the standards and their associated measures and indicators…policymakers, practitioners or researchers would not be

able to determine what is working within the system, or where always states and territories need to do more to improve the lives of the children and young people (p. 119).

1b(ii): Ensure educationally-rich placements

'Educationally-rich' residential or foster care placements (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2010), 'educative supportive placements' (Osborme et al., 2010) or 'learning placements' (Cameron et al., 2015) are care placements where education is valued and supported by the foster carer or residential team. While difficult to define, it generally includes the following:

- Recruiting foster carers and staff who value education by considering this as part of the selection or approval process (Jackson & Cameron, 2012).
- Training foster carers, residential youth workers and social workers on education and schooling, and their role in relation to it (Jackson & Cameron, 2012; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003a, 2003b) including specific training on how to support children with their homework and the importance to attending school meetings (Mannay et al., 2015)
- Foster carers and staff being familiar with the child's courses, qualifications and attainment targets, offering ongoing support and encouragement, and helping the child with personal organisation and planning including having a place for older children to study (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2010; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003a, 2003b).
- Foster carers and staff collaborating with teachers to ensure the child attends school regularly, and keep in contact with the school and act early to avoid escalation of difficulties (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2010).
- Encourage intellectual activity by having books in the home, reading to younger children and regularly discussing the news, events, books and TV (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2010
- Share enthusiasm for learning or particular expertise in a school subject, creative pursuit or sport (or cultural activity), (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2010).

While some foster carers and residential workers support schoolwork and do so well, that is not the case for all carers and some may not see it as part of their role; there may be a need for better training for carers in children's education (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003a). Some foster carers may not have had a positive experience of or value education (Osbourne et al., 2010).

1a(iii): Consider enrolling children in better state schools

In England, Sebba et al. (2015) found that children in care (n=4849[11]) do better in better schools i.e. attending those schools that are higher performing for children in

[11] Sebba et al. (2015) refer to this particular subset of 4849 children as having been in care ('Looked After') for more than a year, and they were the study's main focus. However, the was also some analysis relating to children who had been in care ('Looked After') for less than 12 month, as well as another group referred to as 'Children in Need' but not in care. Across these subgroups al children were eligible to take their GCSE school leaving examinations, with comparisons being made with a control group of 622,970 children who were neither in care (Looked After) or 'Children in Need'.

general. Yet English researchers have long been concerned that children in care are more likely than their peers to attend lower performing schools, with many potentially at schools which do not meet, or sufficiently meet, their needs. As such, for children in England at least, ensuring that high quality state schools are identified and actively considered for children in care can be an important 'intervention' to help close the attainment gap (Gardiner et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2005; O'Sullivan & Westerman; Sebba et al, 2015); this issue and the potential negative impact on the educational attainment of children in care is also identified in the Mannay et al. (2015) systematic review.

However elsewhere in California, through linking individual-level (public school) student education and child welfare data (n=43,140), Wiegman et al. (2014) had a similar finding. They found that those in care were consistently more likely than the general population of students to be enrolled in the lowest-performing schools (15 percent in the bottom ranked 10 percent of schools by decile) and less likely to attend the highest-performing schools (2 per cent in the top ranked 10 per cent of schools by decile). Depending on the type of care, the corresponding figures for the lowest ranked 30 per cent of schools by decile and the highest ranked 30 per cent of schools by decile, were 41 to 43 percent, and 12 to 19 percent respectively.

Overseas examples

Fostering Services: National minimum standards, England

Underpinned by a specific statutory duty to promote educational achievement (Children Act 1989, Section 22(3A)), and issued by the Secretary of State (Care Standards Act, 2000, Section 23), these 30 national standards (Department for Education, 2011) apply to all foster care agencies i.e. local authorities, which make up the majority of placements (Cameron et al., 2019), as well as for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. While used by agencies, the standards are primarily issued for use by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), who take them into account when inspecting fostering services: Ofsted is also responsible for inspecting schools.

The sought outcome of standard 8 on promoting educational attainment is that "the education and achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Children are supported to achieve their educational potential: (p. 20). The standard's seven specific clauses are as follows:

8.1: Children, including pre-school children and older children, have a foster home which promotes a learning environment and supports their development.

8.2: Children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which promote learning.

8.3: Children are supported to attend school, or alternative provision, regularly.

8.4: Children are helped by their foster carer to achieve their educational or training goals and foster carers are supported to work with a child's education provider to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement.

8.5: The fostering service has, and is fully implementing, a written education policy that promotes and values children's education and is understood by foster carers.

8.6: Foster carers maintain regular contact with each child's school and other education settings, attending all parents' meetings as appropriate and advocating for the child where appropriate.

8.7: Foster carers engage and work with schools, colleges and other organisations to support children's education, including advocating to help overcome any problems the child may be

experiencing in their education setting. Foster carers have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress and school attendance record (Department for Education, 2011, p. 20).

While more comprehensive that most, Cameron et al., (2019) does question why "the standards make no mention of foster carers' own educational attainment (other than job related training)… given the well-established link between parental education and that of their children…and the intention in the Standards that fostered children should have an educationally rich environment" (p. 148).

1c: Education system enablers

1c(i): Increase knowledge and understanding of children in care and their education needs

In their recent systematic literature review of UK qualitative and mixed methods studies on the education of children in care, a key finding from Goding et al. (2022) was that "children in care can experience stigma and a limited understanding of the impact of care on their educational experiences" (p. 1). Children feeling stigmatised by teachers (and peers) because they are in care, and/or their behaviours and needs not necessarily being understood, features in other systematic reviews (e.g. Lund & Stokes, 2020; Townsend et al., 2020), and some individual studies (e.g. Berger et al., 2023; Mannay et al., 2015[12]; Sebba & Beveridge, 2019; Zetlin et al., 2012). Indeed, in the Sebba and Beveridge (2019) qualitative English study, Virtual School Heads reported that a lack of understanding by school staff of these children's behaviours was their greatest challenge.

Mannay et al. (2017) caution that teachers just having a better understanding of the complex lives of children in care is not in of itself sufficient and risks lowering expectations which may even permit or even encourage children not to success academically. Their Welsh care experienced participants (n=65) also wanted to be "pushed and challenged in the realisation of their potential (p. 683). From their Australian Delphi study, Berger et al. (2023), also highlight the need for teachers to better understand the strengths, and not just the needs, of children in care.

Elsewhere, Day et al. (2012) refer to the need for teachers to be both caring and competent. In their Michigan study (n=43) on the transition from secondary to tertiary education, they found that those in or formerly in care wanted "caring and competent teachers who are aware of their personal challenges and available during the school day" (p. 9). A related finding from Day et al. (2012) was that care experienced young people wanted teachers to be "flexible, creative, and sensitive to individual learning needs" (p. 9). Also from the US, in a qualitative study with general and special education teachers on their experiences of teaching children in care, Zetlin et al., (2012) found that children in care can "present serious challenges to *beginning* teachers that go largely unaddressed" (p. 4) which they in part attributed to "a lack of teacher preparedness for such challenges" (p. 4).

There have also been some calls for teachers to learn about children in care as part of their qualifying training (e.g. Scottish Government, 2009), and interestingly at the time of writing there is a research-based model for training pre and post-qualifying

[12] *While Mannay et al. (2015) is referred to elsewhere in this report as a systematic review, 'phase 2' of their project was empirical qualitative research with care experienced five to 25 year olds.*

teachers on supporting children in care featured on the website of the Chartered College of Teaching – the professional body for teaching in England (Alix, n.d.). There have also been calls in Australia for whole-school training on children in care (Berger et al., 2023).

However, coverage in the literature on the actual development of formal teacher or whole-school training specifically on children in care is very limited and as such it is difficult to ascertain its prevalence or effectiveness. Certainly, in England Virtual School Heads may provide specific training for their respective schools on children in care (Sebba & Beveridge, 2019), and in the literature there are also Australian examples of programmes that include some training of teachers (Beauchamps, 2015; David & Wise, 2015).

1c(ii): Robust individualised education assessment, planning, support and monitoring

In order to drive education assessment, planning, support, and monitoring, some countries (or individual states, provinces and territories) have developed education processes and procedures either targeted at, or specifically including children in care. Irrespective of whether or not these are statutory requirements, they take two main forms:

- *Individualised Education Plans*
- *Designated Teacher* and *Virtual School Head*-type models

Individualised Education Plans generally seek to identify and address the specific education needs of a child in care, including any learning disabilities, emotional or behavioural challenges, and/or gaps in their education, through the provision of tailored and coordinated support and services; such plans are popular in Anglo-American and Nordic jurisdictions (Beauchamp, 2016; Berger et al., 2023; Liabo et al., 2012; Pirttimaa & Välivaara, 2018; O'Sullivan & Westerman, 2007; Townsend et al., 2023). Such plans are generally, but not necessary, school-led. As well as relevant teachers and other school staff, it is likely expected that the process includes children and their carers, other education professionals (e.g. education psychologist and learning needs specialists), and child welfare and health professionals.

As well as 'Individualised (or Individual) Education Plans', other similar terms include 'Personal Education Plans' and 'Individual Learning Plans'. However, in jurisdictions where such plans exist, their purpose and associated processes can and do vary. In England for example some children in care may be subject to both a 'Personal Education Plan' (because they are in care and this plan is a component of their statutory care plan) and an Education, Health and Care Plan (previously known as an Individual Education Plan on account of them also having a 'Special Education Needs' status) (Department for Education, 2018b). *Some jurisdictions, usually in addition to the above, have also developed* Designated Teacher *and/or* Virtual School Head-*type models*.

In England, every school must have a *Designated Teacher (*or *Designated Worker* in early years settings*) for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children* (Department for Education, 2018b, Matchett, 2022; Mathers, 2019; Sebba, 2020).

Ideally a member of the senior leadership team, their primary role is to promote the educational needs of all care experienced children (i.e. including those no longer in care) within their school and to oversee their educational progress and well-being. Key responsibilities include monitoring the attendance and attainment, liaising with social workers and other professionals, and advocating for the educational needs of these children. In the case of children currently in care, Designated Teachers are also responsible for ensuring that these children have high quality Personal Education Plans and within the school they should be the main plan author. Initially developed in England, there are also similar designated teacher-type models elsewhere including in Scotland (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection, 2020) and Victoria (Victoria Government, 2019). The *Virtual School Head* is another English model (see following example box). Similar programmes are now in place in other jurisdictions including Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Victoria (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection, 2020; Sebba & Berridge, 2019; Victoria Government, 2019).

1c(iii): Holistic whole-school policies

Most of the research literature on the education of children in care, and associated policy and practice, focuses on and targets this specific cohort. However, much of children's learning of course takes place in a classroom and school context. As such, whole-school policies and practices, can also have a major impact, positively or negatively, on children in care (Cameron et al., 2015). As well as specific whole-school policy and practice initiatives such as for example those on school climate and culture (National School Climate Council, n.d.) or student participation (Tisdall, 2010), the focus here is on whole school-policies and practices designed to be more inclusive of children with challenging behaviour, disabilities and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Encompassing a wide range of strategies and practices, *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)* is an evidence-informed three-tiered framework to help schools promote positive behaviour and reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, n.d.). When specifically operationalised with a more structured whole-school implementation focus, or scaled up for use across multiple schools, it may be referred to as *School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)* (Horner et al., 2010).[13]. Widely used internationally, the three tiers are:

- Primary prevention (tier one): Regular and proactive school-wide support for all
- Secondary prevention (tier two): Support for those at risk of developing problem behaviours
- Tertiary prevention (tier three): Support for a few requiring intensive individualised behavioural support

Universal Design for Learning. Is a widely used approach to making education accessible to all students irrespective of their individual and diverse needs.

[13] In New Zealand *Positive Behaviour 4 Learning* appears to be based on *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).*

Developed in the 1990s and widely used in the US and internationally, *Universal Design for Learning* is described as "a framework to improve and optimise teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn" (CAST, n.d., para. 1). It is premised on the notion that every child is highly variable. In order to minimise barriers and maximises outcomes, children need to be provided with multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expressions. Another influential approach is *Learning Without Limits* (Hart et al., 2004; Swann et al., 2012) which seeks to challenge traditional views about ability labelling and the grouping of pupils in schools.

More recently, a small body of literature, particularly from the UK and Australia, on the need for classroom teachers and schools to become trauma-informed (Howard, 2019) and/or attachment-aware (Sebba et al., n.d.). There are now several books specifically written for teachers on trauma and attachment including *Trauma-informed strengths-based classrooms: Teacher strategies for nurturing students healing growth and learning* (Brunzell & Norrish, 2021) from Australia and *The trauma and attachment-aware classroom: A practical guide to supporting children who have encountered trauma and adverse childhood experiences (*Brooks, 2020) from the UK. Inclusive of, but broader than, children in care, the need for such approaches and associated training courses and school-change programmes is premised on their being children who have suffered complex trauma with associated attachment issues, "in most classrooms in most schools" (Howard, 2019, p. 2). However, in terms of policy implications Berger at al. (2023) do caution that "in addition to trauma-informed programs, holistic, whole-school policies are required to address the social, emotional and academic needs of students in OOHC" (p. 16).

More specifically from the education of children in care literature, Cameron et al. (2019) argue that "for young people in care to thrive, learn, and emerge from care with the level of education and skills they need to achieve a good quality of adult life" (p.147), they essentially have two main requirements. Alongside ***educationally-rich placements*** that they refer to as 'learning placements' as previously discussed, such young people also need schools to ensure that they develop (or maintain) a strong holistic ethic of care; they refer to these as *Caring Schools*[14]. Drawing on experience in the US and UK, Cameron et al. (2015) summarises 'caring schools' as follows:

- In caring schools pupils feel valued for their contribution and believe the school cares about their wellbeing,
- children in caring schools make very good academic progress especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds,
- …children are more likely to thrive in school where they are able to develop supportive relationships with teachers,
- attendance at school is vital for success in education and it is important that schools follow up absence and promote good attendance of their…children,

[14] *There are some important similarities to the New Zealand concept of 'caring school' in the Wellbeing@School toolkit (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, n.d.-a) and some of the recent education reforms (see Appendix 1).*

- schools are enormously diverse and getting more so especially in the secondary phase (p. 136).

Alternative Education and Specialist Schools

Yet despite the apparent growth of holistic policies and practice that aim to make individual mainstream schools more inclusive of children with challenging behaviour, disabilities and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds, Wiseman (2018) argues that "state education cannot and does not serve the needs of all students, and alternative education has emerged from a recognition of this need" (p. 15). Specifically in relation to children in care, for many, current educational responses are not effective (Berger et al., 2023; O' Higgins et al., 2017). As such, for some children in care (or on the edge of care) *Alternative Education* may be an important option.

As Sliwka (2008) highlights, internationally the term *Alternative Education* does not have a precise meaning. However, she offers the following as a broad definition:

> Alternative education describes different approaches to teaching and learning other than state-provided mainstream education, usually in the form of public or private schools with a special, often innovative curriculum and a flexible programme of study which is based to a large extent on the individual student's interests and needs (p. 93).

That said, not only does Sliwka's (2008) definition includes Montessori schools, Waldorf schools, Free schools, and Democratic schools, in this OECD report it is these international networks of education provision that are the author's primary focus. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, Alternative Education is deemed to be more specifically for *at risk* groups whose needs for whatever reason are not being met within mainstream schooling.

Nonetheless across countries Alternative Education represents a diverse and variable range of provision with examples including:

- *Magnet Schools* and *Charter Schools*[15] (Wiseman, 2018) in the US
- *Pupil Referral Units* (Smith, 2019) in both England and Wales and
- *Flexi Schools* (Murray, 2018; Shay, 2018; Thomas & Nicholas, 2018) in Australia.

Notably despite the diversity of provision, all of these particular forms of Alternative Education are types of school. Yet in England, a government commissioned review of the quality of Alternative Education (Taylor, 2012) was "critical of a flawed [education] system that fails to provide suitable education and proper accountability for some of the most vulnerable children in the country" (p. 4) and made a number of recommendations. More recently IntegratED (2022b), "a coalition of partner organisations working to reduce preventable exclusions and improve the quality of education for children excluded from school" (p.3), hosted by the Centre for Social Justice think-tank, stated:

> In alternative provision[16] [AP] settings across the country there is some fantastic work being done. But there are also vast

[15] *Magnet Schools as a response to the need for racial integration, and with Charter Schools in this context being those with a specific focus on at risk children.*

[16] *In England 'Alternative Education' is now generally referred to as 'Alternative Provision'.*

> inconsistencies in AP practice and performance and several cold spots, where pupils have a poor-to-zero chance of receiving a quality education (para. 4).

Their accompanying *Alternative Provision Quality Toolkit* (IntegratED, 2022a) also raised significant concerns that while Pupil Referral Units, which are registered and so subject to Ofsted oversight and inspection, were the most common form of Alternative Provision in 2018, by 2021 the most common was unregistered provision and this was growing fast.

However, more positively in Australia, *a James Cook University social return on investment analysis of the economic returns to flexible learning options* (Thomas & Nicholas, 2018) estimated that "for every dollar invested in flexible learning in Australia, society is likely to accrue between $5.9 and $17.6 in return" (p. 3).

Finally in this section a note on other specialist day schools and residential schools which, depending on the particular jurisdiction, may potentially fall outside of both mainstream schooling and alternative education. This could include children in secure care (Gallard et al., 2018; Matheson, 2014) or other forms of child welfare residential care as commonly found in Scandinavia where schooling may sometimes also be provided on the premises (Connolly & Matheson, 2012). It could also include day or residential specialist schools for children with high and complex education needs. For example, Shaw (2017) reviewed literature from the UK, Europe and New Zealand and "compares experiences of children with special (*sic*) educational needs in special and mainstream schools" (p. 292); the study's conclusion was that "special schools in reduced numbers are likely to remain a feature of the inclusive education system, with recommendations for the development of special –mainstream school partnership links" (p. 292).

Overseas examples

Virtual School Heads, England

The English Virtual School Heads initiative was piloted back in 2007-09 across 11 local authorities; the subsequent evaluation research deemed it to be a "valuable role" (Berridge et al., 2009, p.3). The pilot was subsequently rolled out across all of England (Sebba & Berridge, 2019).

While children in care in England attend a range of local schools just as they do elsewhere, the role of the Virtual School Head is to champion and oversee, influence, direct, plan, and monitor the education of all children in the care of their local authority as if they were attending a single school. Working closely with Designated Teachers from individual schools, they may also be responsible for providing training to teachers and carers, collecting data on educational outcomes, and facilitating collaboration between schools and social services (Cameron et al., 2019; Department for Education, 2018a; National Association of Virtual School Heads, 2018; Sebba, 2020; Sebba & Berridge, 2019).

Straddling care and education, Virtual School Heads are usually senior roles and often former primary or secondary Principals or Deputy Principals. They also perform a statutory function; the English Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities in England to appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its children in care. As such, and with limited additional staffing under their direct control, they complement the role of conventional school heads and senior staff: The quality of the Virtual School Headteachers' relationships with schools, in particular their headteachers, was crucial" (Sebba & Beveridge, 2020, p. 8).

Importantly, although not a statutory requirement, the role has recently been extended with additional funding to enable Virtual School Heads to assume certain strategic responsibilities for all

children aged 0-18 in their local authority who either have a social worker or have had a social worker in the past (Department for Education, 2022b). However, research on the impact of the Virtual School model remains limited (Sebba, 2020).

Case example: Inter-agency partnering agreement, Victoria Australia

Victoria has had an interagency partnering agreement on the education of children in care in place since 2003. The third edition was jointly published in 2018 by the Department of Education and Training and the (former) Department of Health and Human Services. Other signatories are the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, Independent Schools Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, and Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

The Partnering Agreement reflects a stated shared commitment to children and young people in OOHC by the care sector, and primary and secondary education sectors. The Partnering Agreement outlines the requirements and responsibilities of all parties to work collaboratively to improve the educational experience and outcomes of children in OOHC. It spans:

- policy and standards,
- practice,
- provision, and
- mechanisms.

With the establishment of the four LOOKOUT education support centres across Victoria, the role and function of, and interface with these, now forms a central component of their interagency partnering agreement. While not a statutory role, the Victoria LOOKOUT education support centres are based on the English (statutory) Virtual School Heads model (Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2019); their designated teacher model is also based on the (statutory) English model of the same name.

2: Age-specific international findings

From the international literature, the following are considered as possible ways of improving the education of children in, or transitioning from, care, and others on the edge of care.

2a: Early childhood

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of tamariki in care

No New Zealand research or administrative data on, or relating to, the early childhood education stage of tamariki in care has been identified.

The international research and literature specifically on early childhood education for children in care is sparse (Cameron et al., 2020; Jackson & Hollingsworth, 2017; Jackson et al., 2022; Mathers, 2019); Jackson and colleagues (2022) used the title ‘invisible children’ for their recent article on the out-of-home care and education of babies and toddlers:

> There is a misperception that babies and toddlers have simple requirements by comparison with older children. This may go some way to explain the lack of policy or guidance specifically directed at the foster care of this age group…On the contrary, it is a vitally important period for learning and development when the foundations are being

laid that will shape children's future relationships and educational trajectories (p. 19).

What empirical research there is, is generally small-scale. As such, the following literature scan findings are tentative in that they have not been confirmed by multiple studies, may be context-specific, and potentially may be subject to change as more research on this topic is published.

Nonetheless, international research interest and the literature in this area are growing; recent empirical research studies include the *Starting Out Right* research project in England (Mathers, 2019; Mathers et al., 2016), the *Early Childhood in Foster and Kinship Care in Australia* research project (Wise, 2018, 2019), and the US *Early Care and Education Participation for Young Children in Foster Care* study (Dorman et al., 2023). These and other studies specific to infants, toddlers and younger children in care, build upon a larger body of knowledge on the benefit of sustained high quality early childhood education for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., Melhuish et al., 2015; Pecora et al., 2019; Sylvia et al., 2010), as well as wider research on the critical importance of a child's first 1,000 days for their future health, behaviour, and education (Moore et al., 2017; Wallander et al., 2021). Overall, what is beginning to emerge is that for many or most children in care, a strong focus on early childhood education may be both a valuable and to date under-utilised, form of 'early intervention' (Mathers, 2019) that helps children in care to catch up with their peers.

2a(i): Enrol parents and foster carers in parenting programmes

There is good research evidence to support parenting programmes for parents and caregivers such as the *Incredible Years* and *Triple P* (California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, 2015a, 2021d). While the parents of children on the edge of care, kin foster carers and indeed non-kin foster carers may attend these programmes alongside others, variants of the Incredible Years and Triple P parenting programmes can also be used specifically with families on the edge of care, kinship carers, or foster carers (Furlong et al., 2021l; Webster-Stratton, 2013). However, research results specifically on programmes for foster carers have been more mixed (e.g. Bywater et al., 2011; Job et al., 2022). More intensive home visiting programmes such as the overseas equivalents of Family Start and Early Start (e.g. Parents as First Teachers and various Indigenous stand-alone or mainstream variants) also have good support evidence for their use (Matheson, 2022b, 2022c).

While some of these programmes are limited to first-time parents, there are overseas examples of these and other programmes being offered to foster carers or informal kinship carers (Parenting Resource Centre, 2013).

2a(ii): Encourage nightly bedtime stories

Developing the habit of reading bedtime stories to a child as part of a regular nightly routine, has a number of benefits for the child in care (Cameron et al., 2015). Taking very little planning, reading bedtime stories has a key role to play in trying to instil a love of books and potentially reading. As such it is one everyday activity that can contribute towards a foster care placement becoming a 'learning placement'. Cameron and colleagues {2015) also suggest that bedtime stories can strengthen

the relationship between child and foster carer, and create a calmer atmosphere for sleep.

2a(iii): Enrol children in quality ECE

As previously stated, there is an established literature on the benefits of ECE for children, including those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. In their article *Too late and not enough for some children* Gilley et al. (2015) report on their Australian research on early childhood education and care usage. The focus of their research was to explore the issue of 'optimal dosage' necessary to improve learning and development outcomes. While there is no consensus across the literature on what an 'optimal dosage' might be and the variables that might be considered, they did suggest that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds would generally make more gains if they started ECE earlier and with more hours than they do in Australia (Gilley et al., 2015). With specific reference to foster care, there is some evidence from the UK and US that children in foster care are also less likely to be enrolled in ECE-type provision (Child Trends, 2010; Mathers, 2019); it is not clear why this might be the case, although Wise (2018, 2019) did not find this in her Australian foster care study where enrolment levels were a little higher than for the general population. However, one way to encourage more children in care to be enrolled in ECE might be to make it free (Mathers, 2019; Wise, 2019) and free or subsidised for those on the edge of care (Mathers, 2019).

2a(iv): Better prepare children for going to school

High-risk children can benefit from being better prepared for going to school (Mathers, 2019; Pears et al., 2013). *Kids in Transition to School* is one pre-school intensive intervention programme for school readiness that encompasses the development of academic, prosocial and self-regulation skills (Davoudzadeh et al., 2015).

2a(v): Promote targeted, universal, and preventative family support programmes

Making use of targeted, universal, and preventative family support programmes such as Head Start and Early Head Start in the US, can provide disadvantaged preschool children with nutrition, health and social services support, as well as opportunities for early educational support and engagement (Lipscomb et al., 2013; Mathers, 2019; Pecora et al., 2019).

2a(vi): Raise awareness of the benefits of quality ECE

Knowledge about and understanding of ECE may vary across foster carers and social workers, and awareness needs to be raised about its benefits (Mathers, 2019). It is also important to recognise that while a child's attachment to their foster carer and sense of security is important and necessary, so is their engagement in educational practices (Cameron et al., 2020). Foster carers and social workers also need to understand what quality provision might look like: it is possible that ECE provision that is of a poor or mediocre quality may be of no value or potentially even detrimental to the child (Gilley et al., 2015; Wise, 2019).

2a(vii): Make individual ECE provision more planned and purposeful

Children in care in state-maintained nurseries in England have a personal education plan as is commonly found for school-age children in care in some other jurisdictions (Mathers, 2019). This is now a similar requirement in Victoria, Australia (Victoria State Government, 2019; Wise, 2019).

Overseas examples

Kids in Transition to School (KITS), United States

Developed by the Oregon Social Learning Center (n.d.-a), Kids in Transition to School is a short-term intensive intervention for children aged 4-6 who are either in care or are at risk for school difficulties (Pears & Kim, 2019). Delivered over the summer before the child's first year at school, the programme has two components:

- 24 sessions at a therapeutic playgroup focused on promoting social-emotional skills and early literacy and
- 8-session parent workshops focused on promoting parent involvement in early literacy and the use of positive parenting practices

Kids in Transition to School is supported by randomised controlled trials (Pears et al., 2013) and has been awarded a scientific rating of *Supported by Research Evidence* by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (2021b). Since its development the programme has been used with a wider range of children including children with developmental disabilities and delays with concurrent behavioural, social, or attentional problems (Pears et al., 2016). As a response to COVID, KITS can also be delivered as an online 16 session groupwork programme for parents (Oregon Social Learning Center, n.d.-b).

Skolfam model, Sweden

The Skolfam model was designed in Sweden to primarily improve academic achievements of children in OOHC; a secondary outcome is to also improve their wellbeing. The programme is targeted at children attending preschool and primary school. Based on an initial assessment of the child using standardised measures, an interdisciplinary team draws up an individually tailored plan and initiates and implements the interventions specified in it. Single interventions delivered within Skolfam have been shown to be effective in previous research, such as Paired Reading (improves literacy skills) and computerised memory training (improves numeracy skills). The child's progress is regularly monitored during the remainder of primary school, with the aim that the child can progress to secondary school at the expected level of their peers. The programme has been evaluated by Durbeej and Hellner (2017) and generated promising results. A more recent study by Tordön and colleagues (2020) showed "improved skills in complex aspects of literacy, mathematics, and cognitive performance, but no improvement in less complex literacy skills, adaptive behavior or mental health symptoms" (p. 1).

2b: Primary-aged

What we know from the small body of research literature on New Zealand education of children in care

- Early reading habits: Matheson (2019) found that most of the care experienced university students in his study had become avid readers and established strong recreational reading habits during their primary schooling years.
- School changes: 24% of children aged 5-9 in care at 30 June 2017, and 20% aged 10-13, were recorded as having had a school change over the previous year (no care experience 7% and 6% respectively). Also, 10% of children aged 5-9 in care at 30 June 2017, and 32% aged 10-13, were recorded as having had 3+ school change over their lifetime to date (no care experience 1% and 4% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).

- Stand-downs: 4% of children aged 5-9 in care at 30 June 2017, and 11% aged 10-13, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience <1% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Suspensions: 1% of children aged 5-9 in care at 30 June 2017, and 4% aged 10-13, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience <1% and <1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 1-83 days: 3% of children aged 5-9 in care at 30 June 2017, and 6% aged 10-13, were recorded by an enrolled school as truancy of 1-83 days over the previous year (no care experience 1% and 2% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 84 days or more: 1% of enrolled children aged 5-9 in care at 30 June 2017, and 3% aged 10-13, were recorded by an enrolled school as truancy of 84 days or more over the previous year (no care experience <1% and <1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).

While more prevalent than early childhood education, the international research and literature specifically on the primary education of children in care or otherwise involved with statutory child protection, is also limited. However, there has long been some interest in the primary education or at least the educational attainment of primary-aged care experienced children e.g. Essen et al., (1976) as previously discussed. As well as attainment data and access to other administrative data, what empirical research there is, is generally small-scale. As such, these literature scan findings are likely to be context-specific, tentative in that they have not been confirmed by multiple studies, and potentially subject to change with more research on this topic being published.

2b(i): Design, adopt or support a fostering home book gift scheme

The importance of developing early reading habits at home has long been recognised in the wider educational achievement literature (Mol & Bus, 2010). As the literacy levels of those in care tend to be below those of their peers (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007; Berridge et al., 2008, McNamara & Fernandez, 2019), in part to address this issue several countries now have foster care book gift schemes in place that seek to engender and support an early love of books and reading (Cameron et al., 2019; Forsman & Vinnerljung, 2012; Griffiths, 2012; Knight, 2013). In New Zealand, many or most children in care or on the edge of care will be in schools that are eligible to join the Duffy Books in Homes (n.d.-a, n.d.-b) programme. While no published evaluation of the Duffy Books in Homes programme has been identified, this school-based scheme appears to follow similar principles to these overseas foster care schemes.

2b(ii): Establish a literacy and numeracy tutoring scheme

Literacy and numeracy tutoring schemes for children in foster care have become increasingly popular over recent years (Cameron et al., 2015: Gardiner et al., 2019), and particularly so in Canada (e.g. Flynn et al., 2012; Harper & Schmidt, 2012; Marquis & Flynn, 2019). Generally they can take two forms; programmes where foster carers are trained to either provide tutoring to a child in their care, and those where others tutor children in foster care on a group basis. Although results seem to be more positive for literacy than numeracy, in a systematic review Forsman and Vinnerljung (2012) found that, unlike many other child welfare education initiatives, such tutoring programmes were supported by research evidence.

One particular structured literacy programme is foster care paired reading. Paired reading is a long-established literacy intervention that involves the pupil and a partner, whether an adult or another child, reading together (Morgan 1976). In this instance delivered by trained foster carers, foster care paired reading involves an interactive cycle moving from the child and foster carer reading out loud together, to the child reading out loud alone with the foster carer supporting them with discussion, questioning and correction as necessary. A UK pre-post study of 35 primary-school aged children in foster care with an average age of nine (Osborne et al., 2010) found that over the programme's 16 week duration, there was an average improvement in reading age of 12 months (range 1 month to 31 months); interestingly, while the children had an average reading age of eight years at the beginning of the programme, the cohort did include some children in foster care whose reading age was above average for their age.[17] From qualitative interviews, the researchers also suggested that the programme may have also improved children's confidence and motivation.

A study replicating this UK programme with Swedish children in foster care aged 8-12 (n=85) using similar age-standardised literacy tests but also administering a short version of the WISC IV (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) (Pearson, 2003), confirms and expands upon the UK findings (Vinnerljung et al., 2014); as well as an average reading age improvement of 11 months (with an attrition rate of only 2.4%) However, as with most interventions, *how* paired reading is delivered may be as important as *what* is done. In a Swedish qualitative study with foster carers on their experiences of using the programme (n=15), Forsman (2017) found that results are likely to be best when carers: have a positive attitude and are involved from the outset; are able to prioritise sessions and fit them around other commitments; are supported throughout the intervention; and in some instances are able to ask for some individual programme adjustments.

Two recent UK qualitative studies (Bell, 2020; Rix et al., 2017) also found that paired reading was associated with considerable relational, social and emotional benefits. However, while paired reading is reportedly widely used in the UK with children in foster care (Bell, 2020) no randomised controlled trial specifically on paired reading has been identified. However, while all studies specifically on paired reading schemes with children in foster care have had very positive findings, a more recent and larger (n=266) trial of a new Reading Together book gifting scheme which incorporated a paired reading approach as a central component (Connolly et al., 2021), found no evidence that the programme was effective.

[17] *It should be noted that 68 children were originally on the programme but for various reasons post-intervention data was not available for 33 of them. This offers some insights into the methodological challenges in the use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs in studies with children in care; while in some senses this intervention is simple, it is complex in that it requires not only ongoing involvement of the child and their foster carer, but also the active participation of the child's school. As such, the 35 children for whom evaluation data was available, may not be representative of the 68 who started the programme.*

Overseas examples

The Letterbox Club programme, England

In several countries there are now reading programmes operating for younger children in foster care, that seek to engender a love of books. In the UK, one promising evidence-supported programme is the Letterbox Club. A joint initiative between The Book Trust and the University of Leicester, this programme was specifically developed to improve achievements in reading and literacy in children in foster care over their summer. Children aged 7-11 years receive monthly personalised parcels posted between May and October each year. Parcels consist of a brightly coloured envelope which is addressed to the child at their foster carer's home and which contains: a personalised letter; two books (one fiction and non-fiction); stationery items (pencils, exercise books, stickers and a maths game (comprising puzzle sheets/practice papers, games with a die/plastic coin, etc.). The programme and its implementation has been evaluated a number of times (Dymoke & Griffiths, 2008; Griffiths et al., 2008, 2012). However, research on the Letterbox Club in Northern Ireland as implemented (possibly with a lack of sufficient programme support for carers and children) found that the programme had no effect (Mooney et al., 2016). As well as some replicated provision in Sweden (Forsman & Junnerljung, 2014), Swedish research (Forsman, 2019) did find some positive if rather limited effects.

Foster care paired reading model, UK

Paired reading is a structured literacy intervention that involves a student (usually primary-aged) and a more fluent partner, whether that be another child at school or an adult at home or elsewhere, reading together (Morgan, 1976); there is good research evidence to support its use. The first adaptation of paired reading for use with children in care (residential and foster care) appears to have been the PRAISE programme in the UK in the 1990s (Menmuir, 2006). However, the 16-week Hampshire County Council foster care-specific programme with its pre-post methodology (Osborne et al., 2010) features more prominently in the literature. In the Hampshire study, notwithstanding the important role that schools played in the programme, the paired reading was delivered at home by trained foster carers. Reading sessions were twice-weekly, and involved an interactive cycle with a book chosen by the child, First of all the child and foster carer read out loud together. The child was then invited read out loud alone with the foster carer supporting them with discussion, questioning and correction as necessary. Foster care paired reading schemes are reportedly now widely used in the UK (Bell, 2020).

Teach Your Children Well tutoring programme, Canada

Teach Your Children Well is a Canadian programme. It has been implemented within both the general population and child welfare settings to enhance reading, language and maths skills. It can be delivered as either:

- a one-on-one direct instruction tutoring programme in which trained foster carers teach their foster children three hours per week, or
- a group-based programme in which trained tutor volunteers teach 3-5 children according to their skill level for two hours each week.

Tutoring consists of direct instruction in reading and maths. Both the reading and maths tutoring consist of four levels. For each level of the reading and maths series, there is a detailed instructor's manual and a student reader and for some levels a student workbook. The aim is to repeat lessons until 'mastery' is achieved. To teach and promote behavioural self-regulation, the programme also incorporates a reward system to help motivate the children to maintain appropriate behaviour during each lesson. RCTs found promising results in relation to reading, but less so on maths.

2c: Intermediate and secondary-aged

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of tamariki and rangatahi in, or transitioning from, care

- School changes: 21% of children aged 14-17 in care at 30 June 2017, were recorded as having had a school change over the previous year (no care experience 5%). Also, 40% were recorded as having had 3+ school change over their lifetime to date (no care experience 6%) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Stand-downs and suspensions: 11% of children aged 10-13 in care at 30 June 2017, and 12% aged 14-17, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience 1% and 3% respectively). On suspensions: 4% of children aged 10-13 in care at 30 June 2017, and 6% aged 14-17, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience <1% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 1-83 days: 6% of children aged 10-13 in care at 30 June 2017, and 11% aged 14-17, were recorded by an enrolled school as truancy of 1-83 days over the previous year (no care experience 2% and 2% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 84 days or more: 3% of children aged 10-13 in care at 30 June 2017, and 11% aged 14-17, were recorded by an enrolled school as truancy of 84 days or more over the previous year (no care experience <1% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Alternative education: 1% of children aged 10-13 in care at 30 June 2017, and 10% aged 14-17, were recorded by an enrolled school as in alternative education over the previous year (no care experience <1% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Care experienced young adults appear to have lower levels of NCEA than those with no care experience. 12% of those with any care experience aged between 18 and 19 years as at 30 June 2017 had achieved NCEA Level 3 / 4 (no care 45%) while 45% failed to gain NCEA Level 1 (no care 16%) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai (2022) recently published their youth participatory action research project (n=23) report exploring why take-up of the statutory entitlement from the age of 18 up to 21 to remain with, or return to live with, a kin or non-kin foster carer, has been lower than expected. While the findings were wide-ranging, almost a quarter (7) of those transitioning from care "talked about the significant role teachers and schools played in their lives, and that remaining connected to school communities was important" (p. 40). Matheson (2019) and Fleming and colleagues (2021) reached a similar finding.
- As part of the YOUTH2000 survey series, analysis of responses from a small subset of respondents (n=65[18]) who were currently involved with Oranga Tamariki (Fleming et al., 2021) found that responses showed the need for "basic rights such as fairness, inclusion and safety, as well as for material essentials such as food and warmth. Students also highlighted needs for social connections and described feelings of personal responsibility" (p. 13).
- Learning in Residential Care (Education Review Office, 2021f) is a national evaluation report on on-site education provision in Oranga Tamariki secure residences. Key findings were that students were positive about their learning; while some education provision was well developed provision in some other residences was weaker, transitions were not always well-planned by teachers, there was no clear education model in place, culturally responsive practice was rather mixed; and there was a lack of opportunities for whānau and caregivers to get engaged in their children's education. These findings echo some from earlier reports on education in secure residences (Education Review Office, 2013, Matheson, 2014; Sutherland, 2006, 2008). As part of this work and drawing on New Zealand and international literature on students in care settings and/or with complex needs, the Education Review Office collaboratively developed with others, including Oranga Tamariki, six components of effective practice[19] and eight enablers of effective provision[20].

[18] This comprised of 61 children at school or kura, and four in Alternative Education or not in education, employment or training. All were from Auckland, Tai Tokerau and Waikato.

[19] "1. Collaboration for effective transitions and pathways, 2. Support for student needs, 3. Appropriate pedagogy and meaningful curriculum, 4. Positive, nurturing relationships and environments, 5.

When it comes to (intermediate and) secondary schooling, the international research and broader literature are much more prolific, be it with a strong focus on school-leaving qualifications and the education challenges that children in care face. Furthermore, many of the earlier findings from the overall and system-wide international research and literature findings largely draw on secondary schooling.

However, across the international research, several important studies and government statistics (e.g. Department for Education, 2020) have found that attainment gaps between secondary school-aged children in care and the general population are significantly larger than amongst those who are primary school-aged. Furthermore, while we can perhaps assume that children in care who do well in primary school will more likely to do well in (intermediate and) secondary school (and those enrolled in and do well in early childhood education are more likely in turn to do well in primary school) these are not necessarily the same children; many, and in some jurisdictions most, children come into care as teenagers.

2c(i): Place more focus on children completing their secondary education and gaining a school leaving or equivalent qualification

While enrolment and attendance are critically important, it is also important to build on these and encourage and support as many children as possible to gain a school leaving or equivalent qualification, stay in education longer, and increase their post-secondary school options (Social Exclusion Unity, 2003). Information on enrolment in and completion of degree programmes is important, but so is information on those taking and passing school leaving or equivalent qualifications, as well as enrolments in and completions of other non-university tertiary programmes.

2c(ii): Promote and support engagement in informal learning

Regular participation in school extracurricular activities (Day et al., 2012; Rutner & Hubberstey, 2018), with foster carers and staff being able to support these, can promote a sense of belonging, relationships, achievement as well as knowledge and skills (Jerczyszyn & Michell, 2019; Pecora et al., 2006). Similarly, leisure and sport, hobbies and other spare time activities outside of school, including paid and unpaid work experience, can also promote inclusion, learning and relationships (Gilligan, 2007a, 2007b, 2019; Godling et al., 2022; Jerczyszyn & Michell, 2019). Early participation in independent living preparation and planning programmes (Day et al., 2012; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022) is another important form of informal learning (Pecora et al., 2006; Godling, 2022).

2c(iii): Take bullying at school seriously

While some children in care may bully others, many children in care are bullied at school and particularly so at secondary school or have concerns for their personal safety; often because they are in care (Anti-Bullying Alliance, n.d.; Berger et al.,

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Educationally focused engagement of whānau and caregivers, 6. Effective leadership and ongoing improvement" (Education Review Office, 2021f, p. 9).

[20] *"1. Workforce capacity and capability, 2. Inter-agency working, 3. Student pathways and transitions, 4. Collaboration with Māori, 5. Models of provision, 6. Evaluation for improvement, 7. Student agency, 8. Whānau agency" (Education Review Office, 2021f, p. 10).*

2023; Day et al., 2012; Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018; Smith, 2018). The English governmental Social Exclusion Unit (2003a, 2003b) report *A better education for children in care*, stated that 60% of the looked after children who were consulted reported being bullied at school, compared with just 10% of all pupils. In a more recent review of UK research specifically on bullying and children in care, Smith (2018) identified several studies that reported that children in care were bullied at school at levels much higher than the general population. Similarly in Australia, in a recent wide-ranging CREATE Foundation survey of children in care (McDowall, 2018) most reported bullying at school (25% of respondents reported instances in this context), while only between 6% and 9% experienced bullying in their placements or while online.

2c(iv): Start early preparation and planning for leaving care

Preparation and planning for leaving care in its various forms, is associated with better outcomes, and education and employment planning is an important part of a young person's preparation for adulthood (Muir & Hand, 2018; McDowall, 2020; SOS Children's Villages International, 2018a, 2018b). However, from the accounts of care leavers, the quality of any such preparation and planning can vary considerably (Häggman-Laitila et al., 2019; Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, 2022); in Australia just ensuring that children have a documented leaving care plan has been a particular challenge (McDowall, 2018; Muir & Hand, 2018). Drawing on the literature and data from 26 member countries including New Zealand, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022) suggests that preparation and planning needs to start early and particularly focus on tertiary education and employment.

2c(v): Include education outcomes as a consideration when selecting residential and foster care programmes and providers

Using a randomised-controlled trial, Leve and Chamberlain (2007) found that (their) *Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care – Adolescents* (now known as Treatment Foster Care Oregon) programme had positive effects on both school attendance and homework. As such this programme has since been rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (2021c, n.d.) as a promising educational intervention for children and adolescents in child welfare (with several other facets of the programme rated as well-supported by research evidence)

2c(vi): Personalise education

With a focus on high quality teaching staff (Juvenile Justice No Child Left Behind Collaboration Project, 2009; Boundy & Karger, 2011) and effective relationships (Matheson, 2014), secure residential care in particular provides an opportunity for children who have been outside of the education system for weeks or months to be re-engaged, whether that be catching up on literacy, accessing mainstream curriculum, and/or gaining short vocational qualifications .

2c(vii): Extend the school year

In some secure residential care facilities their education provision is a key strength and often valued by children, families, residential workers and their managers.

However, in facilities where a mainstream school year has been adopted, some children on remand or in another short placement, may access little or no schooling or education support. Increasingly, an extended school year (up to 52 weeks) is seen as best practice (Juvenile Justice No Child Left Behind Collaboration Project, 2009; Matheson, 2014).

Overseas examples

Better Futures, United States

Better Futures is an intervention for children in their final year of high school, including those with disabilities and/or mental health issues, who are not opposed to the idea of participating in post-secondary education. Developed by Portland State University the 9-month programme comprises:

1. A four-day *Summer Institute* tertiary education immersive experience including three nights in the dorms, two days on the University campus, and one day spent at a community college.
2. 27 hours of community-based coaching over nine months, provided by a successful care experienced college student with a focus on:
    - identifying and working towards valued post-secondary and related goals
    - learning and applying 11 specific metacognitive self-determination skills, and
    - 17 required and youth-determined experiential activities as they carry out plans to achieve their goals (e.g., visiting a college or vocational training programme, gathering college information on the Internet, completing applications, meeting with a supportive adult to discuss plans and support needs)
3. Four to five group mentoring workshops with peers as well as near-peers who already have tertiary education experience. Each workshop comprises an information session with topics chosen by participants, which is then followed by an informal activity and food, fun, and networking. Transport is provided as needed and wanted by participants.

Supported by a randomised controlled trial (Geenen et al., 2015), Better Futures has been awarded a scientific rating of *Supported by Research Evidence* by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (2021a).

Treehouse Educational Advocacy Program, United States

The *Educational Advocacy Program* is for children in care who are of school age, including those who attend or should be attending secondary school. Funded by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families (n.d.) the programme is delivered by Treehouse, a Seattle-based organisation working across Washington state; Treehouse seeks to advance equity and racial justice in the foster care and education systems. This is one of a suite of Treehouse education programmes for children in care collectively referred to as *Fostering Futures.*

Educational Advocates:

- Help students access education-related support services, including those with additional learning needs.
- Prevent school changes when students' home placements change.
- Pave the way for seamless transitions when school changes are unavoidable.
- Minimise the effects of disciplinary actions that keep students out of school.
- Assist high school youth in making up credits when necessary and identifying alternative high school programs to stay engaged and on track to graduate.
- Train caregivers, social workers and students themselves to advocate for students' educational rights (California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, 2015b, program overview).

Working with the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (Education), Treehouse (n.d.-b) provides educational advocates who work with schools, social workers, relatives, foster carers and children in care on a short-term basis (typically 1-6 months), to help resolve difficult issues and remove barriers to success at school. Advocates are co-located in statutory child welfare offices around the state, which enables them to work directly with social workers and support them to include education in the daily case planning of children in foster care. Once the immediate educational needs have been met, the child will be transitioned out of the Educational Advocacy programme. However, while the child's program

enrolment may close, the referral remains current throughout the school year. Therefore, if additional needs occur during the same school year, the youth can be re-enrolled.

While included on the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (2015b, n.d.) website, the Treehouse Educational Advocacy Program only has a scientific rating of *NR: Not able to be rated*.

Treehouse's other four programmes for children in care are specifically for children who are in, should be in, or have recently graduated from, secondary school.

- *Graduation Success* pairs children in secondary school and those in their support system with a Treehouse Education Specialist to both plan for high school graduation and beyond, as well as helping to overcome ant barriers along the way (Treehouse, n.d.-c).
- *Launch Success* is a follow up to *Graduation Success* and provides continued education-focused support beyond secondary school until a tertiary qualification, living wage and stable housing have been obtained (Treehouse, n.d.-d).
- *Dual-system Involved Youth* providing children in, or those who have left, secure residential care with access to basic and specialist education, transition planning and tertiary opportunities (Treehouse, n.d.-a).
- *Tribal Engagement* (Treehouse, n.d.-e) is described later as an international example on Indigenous children in the section on specific subgroups.

2d: Tertiary-aged

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of rangatahi in, or transitioning from, care

- Only one New Zealand research study has been identified specifically on the tertiary education of care experienced students (i.e., Matheson 2015, 2016b, 2019, 2020). Key findings from this qualitative study on the experiences of those who went to university (n=7) were:
    - New Zealanders with a care background whether directly from school or not, can and do go to university; some also graduate (2019).
    - Being in care helped some get to university, while hindering others (2020).
    - Stable secondary schooling and in particular stable upper secondary schooling may be as or more important than stable care placements, and particularly so if the foster carers do not value education or are zoned for schools perceived by young people to be of poor quality. Stable secondary schooling was also associated with a sense of belonging, having friends, positive relationship with one or more members of staff, and opportunities for extra-curricular activities).
    - While at university little support was offered by, or accessed from, universities or Child, Youth and Family (2019).
- However, the Tertiary Commission's 2020 data matching analysis of administrative data (as cited in Matheson, 2023) referred to previously, found that only 14% of those who had *ever* spent time in care, had a tertiary qualification by the age of 25, in comparison to 50% for the general population.
- In the VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai (2022) youth participatory action research project (n=23) referred to previously, almost a third (7) of those transitioning from care "wanted to see more support available regarding education, training and employment" (p. 45). This finding largely centred on the need for the better availability of specific advice, guidance and support, on helping children in care and those transitioning from care to make the transition to tertiary education. Matheson (2019) also found that a supportive relationship with someone in their secondary school was critically important.

Since Sonia Jackson's landmark UK study *To University from Care* (Jackson, 2005) there has been a significant growth across Anglo-American countries in the research on care experienced students in tertiary education, and universities in particular. As

well as some quantitative studies. particularly from the US, much of the research comprises small-scale qualitative studies undertaken by doctoral students on the experiences of care experienced students. Furthermore, experimental, quasi-experimental or evaluation research on this topic is limited, although linked administrative datasets are increasingly being used.

2d(i): Recognise tertiary access and equity needs

While low education expectations is a perennial challenge for many or most children in care and care experienced adults, there needs to be particular recognition by tertiary education organisations and the wider education and child welfare sectors of the access and equity needs of children in care and care experienced students (Courtney et al., 2009; Courtney & Okpych, 2019; Harvey et al., 2015, 2016, 2017, 2022; Jackson & Cameron, 2012, 2014).

2d(ii): Promote tertiary outreach and preparation

In view of their tertiary education equity and access issues, some children in care and care experienced students may require or benefit from tertiary organisation outreach activities as well as preparation and application support (Courtney & Okpych, 2019; National Network for the Education of Care Leavers, 2016). There is some English research evidence that even when those in care have the necessary school leaving qualifications to go to university, they are less likely to do so than those in the general population (Harrison, 2017).

2d(iii): Ensure availability of safe and stable accommodation

A lack of affordable, safe and stable accommodation is a major barrier to those with a care background moving into and completing tertiary courses (Courtney & Hook, 2017; Harrison et al., 2021; McNamara et al., 2019a; Munro et al., 2012; Pecora et al., 2010). Responses include the development of the Australian Education First Youth Foyers model for care leavers and others in tertiary education, training or employment needing accommodation and support (Brotherhood of St Lawrence, n.d.; Harvey, 2019) and in the UK the availability of 52 week on-campus accommodation for care experienced students (Starks, 2013). In some jurisdictions (e.g., Australia, UK) care experienced tertiary or prospective tertiary students are able to remain with their foster (or residential) carers after they have left care on an *extended care* basis (e.g. Department for Education, 2013; Dixon et al., 2020; Munro et al., 2012). However, in the US (e.g. California) and Australia (e.g. Victoria), the current growth of *extended care* provision largely relates to other forms of individual and group accommodation and support (Courtney et al., 2021; Mendes, 2021).

2d(iv): Allow for later and more gradual transitions from care

The research evidence on an association between later and more gradual transitions from care and better education and other outcomes, is growing (Courtney & Hook, 2017; Courtney & Okpych, 2019; Miller et al., 2020; Munro et al., 2011a, 2012). Most

of this research comes from US and UK 'extended (foster[21]) care' schemes developed over recent years. Across jurisdictions, these new 'extended (foster) care schemes' or existing 'extended care arrangements'[22], can take different forms. These broadly include:

- remaining in the care of the state on a formal basis beyond the age of 18 if a young person has not completed their secondary schooling
- remaining in the care of the state on a formal basis until the age of 19, 20 or beyond
- living with a former foster carer on a similar basis to New Zealand's 'Right to Remain or Return' (ETRR) or England's *Staying Put* scheme
- being provided with comprehensive leaving care support, usually in a supervised independent living setting up to the age of 21[23].

The longitudinal Midwest Study (Courtney et al., 2010, 2011) comparing the outcomes from one US state with the option of extended care up to the age of 21 and two others where this was not an option at that time (n=732), found in relation to education, that by age 26, having controlled for other key variables, time in care past the age of 17 was associated with increased educational attainment; "each additional year in care increases the estimated odds of moving to the next level of education by 46%" (Courtney & Hook, 2017, p. 124).

The CalYOUTH longitudinal study in California (Courtney & Okpych, 2019; Okpych, 2022; Okpych & Courtney, 2014, 2020, 2021; Okpych et al., 2021; Courtney & Okpych), found in relation to education, that where extended care was available, this increased care leavers' chances of enrolling in college by the age of 21 by approximately 8-11% (with other associated benefits including higher earnings, although not degree completions).

More recently, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy has found that extended foster care in Washington state, specifically in relation to education (n=3592), was by age 21 associated with greater rates of high school graduation (62% versus 32%) and postsecondary enrolment (55% versus 37%) (Miller et al., 2020). With the development over the years of more inclusive eligibility criteria (for example in the original 2006 pilot, ongoing enrollment in tertiary education was a requirement), Washington state's number of young people in extended foster care has increased from 5% in 2006 to 80% by 2018; their retrospective statistical analysis compared outcomes for those in extended foster care with care leavers who were either not offered or did not take up extended foster care.

Elsewhere, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022) have suggested that countries consider raising their (latest) age of 'leaving care' from 18 to 21 in ways that reflect their particular policy contexts.

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[21] In the US the term 'foster care' has a broader meaning than in other Anglo-American and European countries; the use of the term 'extended foster care' does not necessarily, and it would seem that in most instances does not, mean remain living with a foster carer.

[22] To varying degrees already being in education may be an eligibility criteria for acceptance onto 'extended care schemes' or 'extended care arrangements'.

[23] In the UK this may be referred to 'aftercare' and is less likely to be in a supervised living setting.

2e(v): Make financial entitlements clear and promote

In many judications, and particularly so across the US and UK, care leavers have access to funds for education-related and other costs, whether as an entitlement and/or on a discretionary basis, e.g. tuition fee waivers and childcare: (Harvey et al., 2019; McNamara et al., 2019a; Courtney & Okpych, 2019).

2e(vi): Develop campus support provision

In the United Kingdom, 88 (56%) of the country's Higher Education Institutions (universities and other similar degree-awarding institutions) have been awarded the Buttle Trust Quality Mark in recognition of their efforts to support care leavers (Harvey et al., 2016). Specific offers are now listed on the www.propel.org.uk website – see below. In a 2013 evaluation of the Buttle Trust Quality Mark scheme, 30% of students interviewed reported that they believed that they would have had to give up their university place without the additional supports that their university provided to them (Starks, 2013). While the Buttle Trust Quality Mark scheme has been discontinued, a similar scheme is now operated by the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (2021).

2d(vii): Promote 'second chance' tertiary opportunities

Often care leavers take a different pathway to tertiary education to that of the rest of the population, and for example are much less likely to go straight to university from school (Harrison, 2017; Harvey et al., 2017; Jackson & Cameron, 2014; Jurczyszyn & Tilbury, 2012; Herd & Legge, 2017). As such, as well as needing good information on tertiary pathways while in care, they also need to be able to easily access information as they are transitioning from care, and beyond.

Overseas examples

The Propel website, UK

The Propel website is developed and maintained by Become (formerly The Who Cares? Trust), the English charity and advocacy organisation for children in care and young care leavers. Propel is a fully searchable website providing children in care and care leavers with comprehensive information on the support available to them from colleges and universities offering higher (undergraduate or postgraduate) education courses. Young people considering applying for a higher education course at college or university – and the professionals supporting them – can access information about each institution's pastoral and financial provision for care leavers including:

- whether year-round accommodation is available
- what bursaries and grants are on offer
- what help and support care leavers can expect, and
- who they should get in touch with at each institution.

Most UK colleges and universities, including prestigious traditional research-intensive universities, have chosen to be featured on the website. Propel has been independently evaluated by the University of Northampton.

Care leavers are recognised as a priority group by the Office for Students, the independent regulator of higher education in England. The Office for Students expects all organisations to provide support to care leavers across all access, retention and progression activities.

Raising Expectations programme, Victoria, Australia

The research-informed Raising Expectations programme was established in 2015 as a collaboration between the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (Victoria's peak body for Child and Family Services), La Trobe University, and Federation University Australia (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 2020a, 2023; Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2022; Wilson et al., 2019). Swinburne University of Technology also joined the collaboration in late 2018 (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (2020a). Funded philanthropically for its first three years, the Victoria Department of Education and Training[24] assumed funding responsibility for the programme in 2019. Raising Expectations aims to "increase educational outcomes in post-secondary study for young people that are leaving out-of-home care" (Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2022, para 1) by supporting "young people in out-of-home care and care leavers to aspire to, access and succeed in vocational and higher education" (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, n.d., para 1). In particular, the programme raises "awareness for on-campus wrap-around services for out-of-home care leavers, builds capacity and confidence in care leavers, supports…[Vocational Education and Training} and…[Higher Education] workers to provide integrated support to care leavers, and strengthen care leavers' transitions to post-secondary education" (Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2022, para 6).

Notably, Federation University Australia and Swinburne University of Technology are two of Australia's six dual-sector universities (Vice-Chancellors of Australia's Dual Sector Universities, n.d.); alongside degrees, Swinburne and Federation also provide vocational education and training courses including TAFE (Technical and Further Education) qualifications (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 2020a; Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2022; Wilson et al., 2019).[25] In 2020, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (2020a) published a summary of return on investment (ROI) analysis evaluating programme returns relative to administration costs and social return on investment (SROI) analysis, commissioned from Deloitte Access Economics. They found (as cited in Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 2020a) that "for every dollar invested, Raising Expectations generates an estimated minimum of $1.80 in economic and social benefits. The social benefits of Raising Expectations are found to substantially outweigh the costs" (para. 8). This analysis itself went on to win the 2020 Social Impact Measurement Network Australia (SIMNA) award in the 'Effective Investment in Social Impact Measurement' category (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 2020b).

Individually, the three universities may also individually offer scholarships and other supports that are specific to care experienced young people. The programme at Swinburne University of Technology, called Care Leavers Assistance and Support Program (CLASP), recently won the Equity & Access category of the 2022 Australian Financial Review Higher Education Awards (Hendy, 2022). In terms of results, in 2021 there were 690 (known) care experienced students enrolled across the three Raising Expectations participating universities; by comparison the corresponding figure during the first year of the programme in 2015[26] was 43 (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, n.d.; Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2022). 321 (47%) of the 2021 care experienced students were enrolled on degree courses with 53% enrolled on vocational education (e.g. TAFE) courses[27]. The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (2023) also reports that there have been 150+ course completions since 2020.

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[24] In 2023 the Victoria Department for Education and Training was replaced by the Department of Education, and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, when the latter became the Raising Expectation funding partner (Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 2023).

[25] In terms of equivalency on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2016), Federation University Australia and Swinburne University of Technology offer level 7-10 degrees, level 4-6 diplomas, and level 1-3 certificates.

[26] La Trobe University and Federation University Australia only.

[27] It should be noted that while there appears to have been a substantial increase in care experienced student enrolments at these three universities, no information is available on whether, and if so to what extent, the state-wide number of care experienced student enrolments has also increased i.e. without the Raising Expectations programme it is likely that at least some of these care experienced students would have chosen to attend other universities and TAFEs.

3: Subgroup-specific international findings

3a: Indigenous children

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of tamariki and rangatahi in, or transitioning from, care

- Stand-downs:[28] 8% of Māori children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 9% of Māori and Pacific (excluding Pacific only) children, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (Māori and Māori and Pacific without care experience, 3% and 2% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Suspensions: 4% of Māori children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 1% of Māori and Pacific (excluding Pacific only) children, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience <1% and <1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b),
- Truancy of 1-83 days: 6% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 6% Māori and Pacific (excluding Pacific only) children, were recorded by an enrolled school as low truancy over the previous year (no care experience 2% and 2% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 84 days or more: 4% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 4% Māori and Pacific (excluding Pacific only) children, were recorded by an enrolled school as high truancy over the previous year (no care experience 1% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Alternative education: 7% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 3% females, were recorded by an enrolled school as in alternative education over the previous year (no care experience 1% and <1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Leaving school at 15 or 16 years: 41% of care experienced Māori aged 18 to 19 years of age as at 30 June 2017, and 38% Māori and Pacific, had left school at 15 or 16 years of age (Māori and Māori and Pacific without care experience, 21% and 19% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Achieving NCEA Level 2: 41% of care experienced Māori aged 18 to 19 years of age as at 30 June 2017, and 42% Māori and Pacific, had achieved at least NCEA Level 2 (Māori and Māori and Pacific without care experience, 21% and 70% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).

3a(i): Promote Indigenous models and provision

From the international research, only two studies on the education of Indigenous children in care were identified (Johnson, 2011, 2014). Using indigenist theoretical frameworks, both of these studies were conducted in British Columbia, Canada, by the same researcher. The first (Johnson, 2011) was a doctoral study that explored the educational experiences of 15 urban Indigenous former children in care; as part of this study the researcher also developed an education model for Indigenous children in care. The study's findings included a need for:

- the establishment of an Indigenous educational advocacy organisation with a legislative mandate to require education and child welfare services to work

[28] *Some more recent analysis is available on stand-downs and suspensions (Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, personal communication, 7 October 2022). On stand-downs, 10% of Māori children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2020, and 7.8% of Māori and Pacific (excluding Pacific only) children, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year. In relation to suspensions, 3.4% of Māori children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2020, were suspended from an enrolled school over the previous year (Māori and Pacific figure suppressed due to low numbers).*

closely together and be accountable for making better provision for urban Indigenous youth, e.g., early intervention, targeting support and tutoring
- support services for current historical trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, and
- targeted educational funding for urban Indigenous children in care through to the age of 30.

The second study (Johnson, 2014) was on the development of a trauma-informed approach to the education of Indigenous children in foster care (for more information see following overseas example).

Some other 'education of children in care' quantitative studies have differentiated between Indigenous and non-indigenous children and found that the educational attainment of Indigenous children is on average significantly lower than others in state care (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011; Mitic & Rimer, 2002). However, these studies do not directly address how the education attainment of Indigenous children might be improved.

Overseas examples

Knucwénte-kuc re Stsmémelt.s-kuc Trauma-informed education for Indigenous children in foster care (Johnson, 2014) research study, British Columbia, Canada

Using an Indigenous theoretical framework and methodology, *Knucwénte-kuc re Stsmémelt.s-kuc Trauma-informed education for Indigenous children in foster care* was an intergenerational, community-based research project undertaken with 40 Indigenous educators, social workers, academics, foster parents, Elders, and Indigenous youth from foster care. Using three *talking circles,* the study concluded with the following six recommendations:

> Recommendation 1: The Province of BC [British Columbia] must recognize the inherent rights of Secwepemc Peoples to speak and act on behalf of Indigenous children living on their unceded territories, in Canada's child protection and education systems.
>
> Recommendation 2: Develop creative and cultural ways to encourage educational achievement for Indigenous children in child protective custody.
>
> Recommendation 3: Indigenous children in foster care must have access to an education that has zero tolerance for racism, and that values and includes both Indigenous and Western knowledges, languages, and cultures.
>
> Recommendation 4: Implement mandatory trauma-informed support, training, and education regarding the impacts of historical and current trauma on Indigenous students, families and communities.
>
> Recommendation 5: Stability and safety in schools and foster homes must be a priority for Indigenous children in foster care.
>
> Recommendation 6: Indigenous Peoples and Canada's education and child protection systems must work together to establish realistic educational expectations for Indigenous children in child protection systems affected by health issues and colonialism (pp. 162-170).

Treehouse Tribal Engagement Program, Washington State, United States

Complementing their mainstream education support programmes for children in care (Treehouse, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c) as discussed in the earlier section on intermediate and secondary-aged policy and practice, the Treehouse (n.d.-e[29]) Tribal Engagement Program is for referred Indigenous children aged 13-21 working towards high school completion who are in tribal foster care, i.e. either tribal jurisdiction, or Department of Child, Youth and Families care, and who identify as tribally affiliated.

The programme is delivered by a team of *Tribal Education Specialists* (TEDS) who work in local high schools. Using a cultural lens, the TEDS provide weekly individual coaching and mentoring sessions with referred children in care; skills and topics span education planning, coaching and support.

As well as partnering with children, tribal social workers, caregivers and school, the TEDS also "invest and engage in community events to ensure strong relations within the community that each TEDS serves. We aim to be as collaborative as possible with our partnering tribes, including asking for a tribal community partner to sit on our hiring panel when hiring a TEDS to serve their community and taking part in monthly consultations with their social workers" (Treehouse, n.d.-e, para 2).

The Treehouse Tribal Engagement Program appears to be a new service and is currently limited to four Washington state areas. However, reportedly there are plans to collaborate with more tribes and further expand the programme to other parts of the state with significant Indigenous populations. According to the US Census Bureau 223,000 of the country's 6.79 million Native Americans live in Washington state and represent 2.83% of the state's total population (World Population Review, 2023).

3b: Gender

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of tamariki and rangatahi in, or transitioning from, care

- Stand-downs: 12% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 5% of females, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience 2% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Suspensions: 4% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 1% of females, were stood down from an enrolled school over the previous year (no care experience <1% and <1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 1-83 days: 6% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 6% females, were recorded by an enrolled school as truancy of 1-83 days over the previous year (no care experience 2% and 2% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Truancy of 84 days or more: 4% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 4% females, were recorded by an enrolled school as truancy of 84 days or more over the previous year (no care experience 1% and 1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Alternative education: 7% of male children aged 5-17 in care at 30 June 2017, and 3% females, were recorded by an enrolled school as in alternative education over the previous year (no care experience 1% and <1% respectively) (Oranga Tamariki, 2019b).
- Achieving NCEA Level 2: Care experienced 18- to 19-year-old females were 1.27 times more likely than males to achieve at least NCEA Level 2. For those with no care experience, females were 1.10 times more likely than males to do so.

[29] *The Tribal Engagement Program appears to be a new programme and information is from a single source, i.e. the organisation's own website.*

Recognise the education challenges that care experienced males may face

Across some developed countries, there has been a growing tendency over recent years among the general population for male university students to be outnumbered by their female peers (Goldin et al., 2006; Radloff & Coates, 2010). It has also been found in the US that the gender difference is more marked among low income and minority populations (Jacob, 2002). In New Zealand across all domestic and international provider-based tertiary enrolments (i.e. universities, Te Pūkenga, Wānanga, public providers and private training establishments) in 2022 38% were male and 61% female (1% were listed as another gender) (Ministry of Education, 2022b).

We have long known that males have been significantly under-represented in quantitative North American and UK research studies on care experienced students who go to university (e.g., Brady et al., 2019; Courtney et al., 2011; Rios & Rocco, 2014). The researchers in part attribute this to a stronger tendency for girls to be fostered in comparison to boys, and that foster care tends to be a more educationally-rich environment than residential care. Indeed, from their research-based model of the educational success of children and young people in care, Flynn et al. (2013) found that being female is one of their most consistent predictors of educational success. A Kansas study (Kirk et al., 2012) has also specifically looked at gender differences among those in foster care and found that for their sample (*N* = 550), females were twice as likely to expect to gain a college degree than males.

While less marked, this pattern is also being reflected in some large administrative datasets. For example Harrison (2020) reports, be it with some caveats, that from a snapshot acquired from the Higher Education Statistics Agency comprising all (1,240,574) domiciled university students enrolled in 2016/17[30], only 41% of care experienced students were male, in comparison to 46% of university students overall. In an earlier study Harrison (2017) also found that male care leavers were more likely than their female counterparts to drop-out.

3c: Disabilities

What we already know from the small body of New Zealand research literature on the education of tamariki and rangatahi in, or transitioning from, care

- Learning difficulties: Children in residential and foster care often have individual learning needs, which need to be identified and addressed (Matheson, 2014; Oranga Tamariki, 2019a); Individual learning needs, and in particular learning difficulties, may require the provision of learning support and training (Oranga Tamariki, 2019a).
- Conditions which pre-date the child's entry into care (such as FASD and ADHD) were noted for their prevalence amongst care-experienced children, and it was noted that teachers would benefit from training about teaching children with such disorders. Some of the children who participated in the primary research acknowledged the assistance they receive through learning support, and the difference these people make to their school experience. Learning support is especially beneficial for children with learning difficulties (Oranga Tamariki 2019d).

[30] *Excluding international (including EU) university students as well as all those enrolled in further education colleges.*

Recognise scale of additional learning needs among children in care and care leavers

While definitions and the extent to which the impact of trauma is included vary across countries, a significant proportion of children in care have additional learning needs and would likely benefit from learning support. Where these needs are not recognised and/or not met, the child's ability to progress in line with their peers is impaired (e.g. Zetlin et al., 2010).

A recently published systematic review, concluded that there is limited evidence that being in care is a causal factor for poor educational outcomes (Luke & O'Higgins, 2018). The systematic review supports the findings from earlier research, which noted that care experienced children have high rates of additional learning needs, which were noted to impact academic achievement (Berridge, 2012).

In England over the year 2018/19 (Department for Education, 2020a), children in care were almost three times more likely to have a 'Special Educational Need' (SEN) than all children (28.7% versus 11.9%), and almost nine times more likely to have an education, health and care (EHC) plan than all children (27.2% versus 3.1%). Social, emotional and mental health was the most common primary type of need for looked after children, covering 40.4% of those with EHC plans and 47.5% of those with SEN support.

Also in England, Harrison (2020) has reported from the same dataset above, that 25% of full-time university students identified themselves as having a disability; for part-time university students this increased to 37%.

Conclusion

In 2003 the English governmental Social Exclusion Unit (2003a, 2003b) report *A better education for children in care,* with a foreword by the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, outlined five key evidence-informed inter-agency system changes that were needed. They were:

- **"Greater stability** – so that children in care do not have to move home or school so often.
- **Less time out of school – longer in education** – help with school admissions, better access to education with more support to help children in care attend school regularly and stay on after age 16.
- **Help with schoolwork** – more individual support tailored to the child backed by more training for teachers and social workers.
- **More help from home to support schoolwork** – by giving carers better training in children's education.
- **Improved health and wellbeing** – with teachers, social care staff, health workers and carers all working together in the interests of the child" (p 9.).

While our context is different to that of England, and notwithstanding subsequent international research, policy and practice developments, particularly in the more 'emergent' education of children in care areas of early childhood education, tertiary education, and Indigenous children, twenty years later those five proposed changes to the English system still strongly resonate internationally, and indeed for Aotearoa New Zealand too. In relation to both policy and practice development, greater stability, less time out of school and longer in education, help with schoolwork, more help from home to support schoolwork, and improved health and wellbeing, could provide the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan with a valuable collaborative starting point.

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Appendix 1: The education system for *all* children in Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction

The Aotearoa New Zealand evidence base on the education of children in care and care leavers is small but growing. In terms of policy and practice, there is targeted education provision in secure residences (Education Review Office, 2013, 2021f), gateway assessments for children in care (Ministry of Education, 2015, 2016, Oranga Tamariki, 2018, Tuohy, 2019), the prominent inclusion of education in the national care standards (Oranga Tamariki National Care Standards and Related Matters Regulations, 2018), and the recent Tertiary Education Commission guide for tertiary education organisations on supporting care experienced learners (Matheson, 2023). Yet, notwithstanding these, it is recognised that the development of specific policy and practice initiatives, including strategy, provision, monitoring, practice guidance and information targeted at this group of learners, has to date been somewhat limited. This is particularly apparent when compared to some other Anglo-American jurisdictions such as England, California and Victoria (see Appendix 4).

However, all countries have their own distinct approaches to both education and child welfare. Across the Nordic countries for example, whether despite or because of their stronger emphasis on universal over highly targeted provision, education outcomes for children in care and care leavers (Cameron & Bryderup, 2014; Johansson et al., 2014; Matheson & Connelly, 2012; Paulsen et al., 2023) may be as good if not better than those in England, California and Victoria.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, many individual children in care and care leavers will have been supported through, and benefitted from, education policy and practice initiatives and professional standards that:

- recognise *Te Tiriti o Waitangi,* are culturally responsive and reflect what works for Māori learners (Education Council New Zealand, 2017; Ministry of Education n.d.-g)
- are aimed at other large population groups e.g. Pacific learners (Ministry of Education n.d.-b, Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-c), and/or students with additional learning needs (Ministry of Education n.d.-c), and/or
- seek to make education provision more inclusive (Education Council New Zealand, 2017; Ministry of Education n.d.-f).

As such by way of context for the main body of the report, this appendix provides an overview of relevant key policy and practice initiatives on the education of *all* children in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to a lesser extent young adults too. In doing so there is also recognition of some significant wider policy developments and changes

across the education sector over recent years with Cherrington and colleagues (2021) identifying the following five:

- the development and release of He taonga te tamaiti: Every child a taonga. Early learning action plan 2019-2029
- the development and implementation of the compulsory Aotearoa New Zealand histories curriculum
- the review and implementation of revisions to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)
- the refresh of the New Zealand Curriculum, and
- a major restructuring of vocational education and training with the establishment of Te Pukenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology.

In particular this appendix covers:

- Student voice
- 30 year education vision and education objectives
- Legislation – The Education and Training Act 2020
- Key education strategies and policies
- Education standards and quality assurance
- Education provision
- Education services for children with additional learning needs
- Other key education programmes

Student voice

In 2018, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and the Children's Commissioner released their report *Education Matters to Me: Key Insights – a Starting Point for the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities.* Based on engagements with a diverse range of 1,678[31] children and young people from a wide variety of education settings, the report's stated purpose was to "help ensure children and young people's voices contribute to the development of National Education and Learning Priorities that will be introduced for the first time in 2018" (p. 6).

As such, the report's focus was children's experiences and views, structured around achievement, emotional environment/support networks, transitions, engagement/ disengagement, experiences of tamariki and rangatahi Māori, and suggested key improvements. One online survey (n=1,534) finding was that while 26% of children responded that they really liked going to school, 67% responded that school was ok, with 7% responding that they would rather be anywhere than at school. In the face-to-face discussions, three key themes emerged on what children required to have a successful experience in education: "a great teacher, a supportive and involved family, and friends" (p. 9).

[31] *144 face-to-face engagements and 1,534 online survey responses. Beyond achieving diversity, there is no coverage of participant recruitment or sampling in the report.*

From the combined analysis of the survey responses and face-to-face engagements,

Table 2: Six key insights on how students experience school and what could be improved

1.	**Understand me in my whole world:** Children and young people talked about how they want to be seen for who they are, and to be understood within the context of their home life and experiences.
2.	**People at school are racist towards me:** Many children and young people told us they experience racism at school and are treated unequally because of their culture.
3.	**Relationships mean everything to me:** Children and young people talked about the range of significant relationships that enable them to achieve or prevent them from achieving. Many told us that they cannot begin learning unless they have a trusted relationship with their teacher.
4.	**Teach me the way I learn best:** Children and young people want their teacher to teach them according to their strengths and unique abilities. Learning content was also important, some want to be learning things that they see as relevant to their lives, and their futures.
5.	**I need to be comfortable before I can learn:** Children and young people from all different learning environments stressed the importance of feeling happy and comfortable before they can learn and the impact that their learning environment has on their wellbeing.
6.	**It's my life – let me have a say:** Children and young people experience a lack of choice or participation in decision making about their own lives and schooling. They really want to have a say in their education, and they want teachers to involve them in their learning.

Note: Adapted from 'Education matters to me: Key insights – a starting point for the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities' by New Zealand School Trustees Association and the Children's Commissioner, 2018, p. 9. In the public domain.

Overall the report calls for our education system to ensure that it caters "for *all* of the children and young people of Aotearoa New Zealand" (p. 48).

30 year education vision and education objectives

Also in 2018, the Ministry of Education (2018) published *Shaping a Stronger Education System with New Zealanders.* This discussion document presents the government's 30 year vision for education:

> The vision is grounded in New Zealanders' aspirations for education – to enable every New Zealander to learn and excel, to help their whānau and communities thrive, and to build a productive and sustainable economy and an open and caring society.

- Whakamaua te pae tata kia tina – Take hold of your potential so it becomes your reality.
- We are descendants of explorers, discoverers and innovators who used their knowledge to traverse distant horizons.
- Our learning will be inclusive, equitable and connected so we progress and achieve advances for our people and their future journeys and encounters.
- Whaia ta pae tawhiti kia tata – explore beyond the distant horizon and draw it near! (p. 9).

Building on this vision, much of this discussion paper was structured around five proposed national education objectives, with 10 year actions outlined in relation to

each These were to set the context for both the National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), as well as outlining what the government would be focusing on to improve education outcomes and wellbeing. Since adopted as originally proposed (Ministry of Education, 2020d), the five education objectives, are:

- Objective 1: Learners at the centre – Learners with their whānau are at the centre of education.
- Objective 2: Barrier-free access – Great education opportunities and outcomes are within reach for every learner.
- Objective 3: Quality teaching and leadership – Quality teaching and leadership make the difference for learners and their whanau.
- Objective 4: Future of learning and work – Learning that is relevant to the lives of New Zealanders today and throughout their lives.
- Objective 5: World-class inclusive public education – New Zealand education is trusted and sustainable (p. 8).

In his subsequent foreword to the school's sector report on progress and performance during 2018 (Ministry of Education, 2019c), the then Minister described this approach as being "built on developing a stronger and more explicit focus on wellbeing, equity and inclusion; a commitment to give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the need for greater trust and reciprocity with the teaching profession" (para. 4).

Legislation – The Education and Training Act 2020

As well as being the most significant re-write of education legislation since the 1980s (Cherrington et al., 2021; Ministry of Education, n.d.-h), according to the Ministry of Education (n.d.-i), the Education and Training Act 2020 seeks to:

> give our children and young people a high-quality, safe, culturally respectful, and inclusive education. The Act's changes are based on feedback from parents, teachers, principals, whānau, students and others, about what we can do to make education better, so more children and young people are happy and successful in their education (para 1).

The new Act follows the Kōrero Mātauranga / Education Conversation (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b), the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (2019) report, and the government's response and proposals (Ministry of Education, 2019d).

The Act repeals and replaces all prior education and training legislation including the Education Acts 1964 and 1989, the Education (Pastoral Care) Amendment Act 2019, and the Education (Vocational Education and Training Reform) Amendment Act 2020. It came into effect on 1 August 2020. In addition to administrative changes intended to be "simpler, more user-friendly, and less prescriptive" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-h, para 3), and system wide changes including giving better effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Act makes changes in relation to:

- early childhood education, including ngā kōhanga reo
- New Zealand schools

- tertiary and international education
- planning and reporting for school boards, and
- regulatory impact statements.

However, although in some instances the language has been updated or modified, large parts of the previous legislation have been retained. For example in relation to the focus of this report, all children and young people in New Zealand having a legal right to free primary and secondary education under the Education Act 1989 (section 3) is in the new Act (section 33(1)). Similarly, children with 'special educational needs' [*sic*], whether because of disability or otherwise, having the same rights to enrol and receive education at State schools as students who do not under the Education Act 1989 (section 8(1)), is also in the new Act (section 34(2)).

A key emphasis of the new legislation is that Early Learning Services and "schools are required to be inclusive [of *all* learners]...as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and reinforced by the New Zealand Disability Strategy" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-o). New Zealand schools in particular have "legal and binding obligations to include all learners" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-m). As such, the new Act includes several new provisions relevant to the education of many or most children in care, including the following:

- children have the right to attend school full-time (section 33(2))
- limits on the use of reduced hours of school attendance (section 42)
- extension of school board primary objectives including school boards giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (section 127) and
- establishment of a dispute resolution scheme (sections 216-236).

Children have the right to attend school full-time (section 33(2))

In response to the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (2019) report and the experiences of many children reportedly only being allowed by their schools to attend part-time (Ministry of Education, 2019d), the Act explicitly states that all enrolled students, including those with learning needs and disabilities, have the right not only to attend school (section 33(1)), but to also do so on a full-time basis (Ministry of Education, n.d.-h).

Limits on reduced hours of school attendance (section 42)

While it remains possible for enrolled children to temporarily be on reduced hours of school attendance where their circumstances require, under the new Act this can only be done for 'wellbeing' reasons when all of the following are in place:

- At the request of a parent (section 42(1)), or a full-time caregiver if considered appropriate by the Ministry of Education to do so (section 42(2)).
- Where reduced hours of school attendance would help to meet a child's wellbeing needs as identified, in writing, by a medical practitioner or psychologist.

- As part of a plan to meet such identified wellbeing needs agreed by the parent, principal and the Ministry of Education as being in the best interests of the child.

Such a wellbeing plan can be for no longer than six months, and if requested by the parent and agreed by the principal and the Ministry of Education, may be extended for one further period of six months. As well as reduced hours school attendance because of an agreed wellbeing plan, for enrolled children aged five, reduced hours of school attendance where their circumstances require may also be put in place, as part of a broadly similar 'transitional' plan to full-time attendance (Ministry of Education, n.d.-h).

School board primary objectives (section 127)

As recommended by the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (2019), school board responsibilities are extended to incorporate a much wider range of objectives. Under the repealed Education Act 1989, a board's (only) primary objective was to "ensure that every student at the school is able to attain his or her highest possible standard in educational achievement" (section 5(1)).

This primary objective is retained under section 127(1)(a) of the new Act. However, it is now one of four equally important primary objectives (Ministry of Education, n.d.-h). As well as educational achievement, school boards are now legally required to ensure that their school:

- is physically and emotionally safe for children (and staff), gives effect to relevant children's rights, and takes all reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination including racism, stigma, and bullying[32]
- is inclusive and caters for children with differing needs[33], and
- gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by reflecting local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori in its plans, policies and local curriculum, takes all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori, and achieves equitable educational outcomes for Māori (Ministry of Education, n.d.-h).

Dispute resolution scheme (sections 216-236)

As proposed by the government (Ministry of Education, 2019d) in response to recommendation 5 of the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce's (2019) final report, the Act enables the establishment of new local (complaint and) dispute

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[32] *In terms of this primary objective, Boards needing to give effect to relevant children's rights, and take all reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination including racism, stigma, and bullying under the Education and Training Act 2020, is a new statutory duty. However, the need for schools to be physically and emotionally safe was also in the Education Act 1989 (section 5(2)(a)(i)), be it as a meaning of meeting the Board's single primary objective, rather than as a primary objective in its own right.*

[33] *In terms of this primary objective, Boards needing to ensure that their school is inclusive and caters for children with differing needs, was also in the Education Act 1989 (section 5(2)(a)(ii)), be it as a means of meeting the Board's single primary objective, rather than as a primary objective in its own right.*

resolution panels with mediation, recommendation and decision-making functions, in relation to State school board decisions on:

- rights to education (including enrolment and attendance)
- stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions
- learning support, racism and other types of discrimination
- physical and emotional safety, and
- physical restraint on a student by a teacher or other authorised employee (Ministry of Education, n.d.-h, Changes for New Zealand Schools table row 3).

Key education strategies and policies

National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)

Under the Education and Training Act 2020, the Minister:

- may issue a statement of national education and learning priorities for early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education (section 5), and
- must issue a tertiary education strategy outlining the government's long-term strategic direction (section 7).

As a statutory document, the purpose of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) (Ministry of Education 2020d, n.d.-w) is as follows:

> The NELP is designed to guide those who govern licensed early learning services, ngā kōhanga reo, schools and kura. In particular, licensed early learning services are required to have regard to the NELP as part of the Governance, Management and Administration (GMA) Standard. Boards of schools and kura must have particular regard to the NELP, including when developing or renewing their charters. The TES sets the direction for tertiary education. Tertiary Education Organisations are required to show how they have regard for the TES. The Tertiary Education Commission must give effect to the TES, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority must have regard for the TES (Ministry of Education, 2020d, p.3).

While foreshadowed in *Shaping a Stronger Education System with New Zealanders* (Ministry of Education, 2018) with the inclusion of nine proposed priorities, the eight broadly similar finalised priorities (Ministry of Education, 2020d), each aligned to one of the five education objectives, are shown in the following table:

Table 3: Summary of the National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy

Education Objective	Priority
1. Learners at the centre	1. Ensure places of learning are safe, inclusive and free from racism, discrimination and bullying. 2. Have high aspirations for every learner/ākonga, and support these by partnering with their whānau and communities to design and deliver education that responds to their needs, and sustains their identities, languages and cultures.
2. Barrier-free access	3. Reduce barriers to education for all, including for Māori and Pacific learners/ākonga, disabled learners/ākonga and those with learning support needs. 4. Ensure every learner/ākonga gains sound foundation skills, including language, literacy and numeracy.
3. Quality teaching and leadership	5. Meaningfully incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the everyday life of the place of learning. 6. Develop staff to strengthen teaching, leadership and learner support capability across the education workforce.
4. Future of learning and work	7. Collaborate with industries and employers to ensure learners/ ākonga have the skills, knowledge and pathways to succeed in work.
5. World-class inclusive public education	8. Enhance the contribution of research and mātauranga Māori in addressing local and global challenges (TES only).

Note: Adapted from 'The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)', by Ministry of Education, 2020d, section 3 (What are the NELP

Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia

Ka Hikitia is the Ministry of Education's (n.d.-n) Māori education strategy. Building on *Ka Hikitia managing for success 2008-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2008) and *Ka Hikitia accelerating success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013), a refreshed approach entitled *Ka Hititia – Ka Hāpaitia*, was released in 2020. This sets out how the Ministry will work with education services "to achieve system shifts in education and support Māori learners and their whānau, hapū and iwi to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes and provides an organising framework for the actions we [the Ministry] will take" (para 4). The document states that the approach both informs and is informed by the overall Ministry strategy and policy programme.

Adapted from the previous strategy (Ministry of Education, 2013), *Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia* has the following five guiding principles:

- **Excellent outcomes**: We will support Māori learners and their whānau to achieve excellent education outcomes.
- **Belonging**: We will ensure Māori learners and their whānau have a strong sense of belonging across our education system.
- **Strengths-based**: We will recognise and build on the strengths of Māori learners and their whānau.

- **Productive partnerships**: We will support strong relationships between learners and whānau, hapū, iwi, educators and others to support excellent outcomes.
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi**: We will give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the education system.

As well as identifying how the approach is to be implemented and key actions, *Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia* also includes a focus on outcome domains and key measures including those for learners and their whānau.

Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030

With a vision that "diverse Pacific learners and their families are safe, valued, and equipped to achieve their education aspirations" (p. 7), the purpose of the *Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030* (Ministry of Education, 2020a) is to map how system change will be achieved to better support Pacific learners and families.

The focus of the plan is five key focus areas for change or 'key shifts' that are needed to achieve this vision. These are as follows:

- work reciprocally with diverse Pacific communities to respond to unmet needs, with an initial focus on needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- confront systemic racism and discrimination in education
- enable every teacher, leader and educational professional to take coordinated action to become culturally competent with diverse Pacific learners
- partner with families to design education opportunities together with teachers, leaders and educational professionals so aspirations for learning and employment can be met
- grow, retain and value highly competent teachers, leaders and educational professionals with diverse Pacific whakapapa.

The plan includes planning templates for places of learning as well as families and communities.

Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025

The *Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025* (Ministry of Education, 2019b) addresses the recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry into support for children and young people with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorders (House of Representatives Education and Science Committee, 2016). Highlighting that 20% of all children have learning support needs, the action plan also draws upon ministerial consultation feedback, 22 small local improvement projects, and the piloting and national implementation of a new Learning Support Delivery Model (Ministry of Education, 2019b, n.d.-a, n.d.-d).

The six year action plan largely sets out the following six strategic priorities for learning support:

- Priority 1: Implementation of a new Learning Support Coordinator role in schools and kura.
- Priority 2: Strengthening screening and the early identification of learning support needs.

- Priority 3: Strengthening early intervention.
- Priority 4: Flexible supports and services for neurodiverse children and young people.
- Priority 5: Meeting the learning needs of gifted children and young people.
- Priority 6: improving education for children and young people at risk of disengaging (pp. 10-11).

As well as describing each of the six strategic priorities and why and how they are being implemented, information is also provided on 2019-2025 key actions and timelines, although in several instances these are subject to confirmation of future funding.

Since the publication of the action plan prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, progressed work includes the implementation and evaluation of the first tranche of the new Learning Support Coordinator role with 623 fully funded full-time positions being allocated across 1052 schools and kura (Synergia, 2022). The Learning Support Coordinator role (Ministry of Education, 2020b) is "designed to add capacity and capability to kura/schools and clusters of kura/schools (clusters) [including Early Years Services] to better meet mild to moderate, neurodiverse, or high and-complex learning support needs" (Synergia, 2022, p. 3). In another development, following a formal consultation exercise, the *Highest Needs Change Programme* is "being designed to better support children and young people with the highest learning support needs" (Ministry of Education, 2019b, para 1). Amongst other changes the model will include a new service delivery system based upon the principles from the *Enabling Good Lives* (n.d.) disability sector and government agencies' partnership, as well as the Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, n.d.-n) Māori education strategy outcome domains (Ministry of Education, n.d.-l).

Attendance and Engagement Strategy

The Attendance and Engagement Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2022a) seeks to reverse a "long term trend of low school attendance and disengagement" (p. 5). This trend has been acerbated by COVID-19. As well as exploring the nature of the issue, this three-part strategy presents: (1) expectations for students and whānau, schools, communities and government agencies; (2) attendance targets; and (3) actions. Spanning both attendance and engagement, much of the content is structured around whether students are (physically) present, participating (in their education) and progressing (in their learning). The report includes 13 priority actions. The development of a detailed action plan has since been proposed (Ministry of Education, n.d.-c), across the following four focus areas:

- empowering ākonga and their whānau to engage in education
- strengthening school and kura engagement practice
- strengthening system enablers and supports for engagement
- strengthening cross-government collaboration to address barriers to engagement (para 7).

Other strategies and policies

Other education strategies and policies as identified on the Ministry of Education and Tertiary Education Commission websites, include the following:

- *He taonga te tamaiti: Every child a taonga. Early learning action plan 2019-2029* (Ministry of Education, 2019a)
- Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (Ministry of Education, n.d.-j, Tertiary Education Commission, 2021)
- Disability Action Plans (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-a)

Education standards and quality assurance

In New Zealand there are several agencies with responsibilities for setting education standards and/or quality assurance (Education New Zealand, n.d.; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-b). While standards and quality assurance can take different shapes and forms, the key agencies are the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Education Review Office, Universities New Zealand, and Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. Each of these bodies has specific statutory roles and functions under the Education and Training Act 2020.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (n.d.-i) is "the Government's lead advisor on New Zealand's education system. We shape direction for education agencies and providers, and contribute to the Government's goals for education" (para. 1). As stated, their broad responsibilities include: education sector strategic leadership (including tertiary education); support and resources for the community, education providers, and teachers; school property portfolio management; and interventions for target student groups. However, with specific reference to setting education standards, as well as developing educational goals and curriculum for schools, the Ministry of Education is responsible for writing secondary school achievement standards (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.-b); the Ministry was also responsible for developing the since repealed national literacy and numeracy standards (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, n.d.-b).

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (n.d.-a) assures the qualifications offered by secondary schools and non-university tertiary institutions (Education and Training Act 2020, section 433(1)). Its functions include:

- managing the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2016)
- running all external assessments for National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and New Zealand Scholarship exams
- setting the regulations for the quality assurance for all higher education in New Zealand
- quality assuring the non-university tertiary education and training (Education and Training Act 2020, section 253(b)), i.e. Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, wānanga, private training establishments (PTEs), and government training establishments.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority also sets standards for some unit standards and qualifications, and administers the code of pastoral care (Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021).

Education Review Office

The Education Review Office has a statutory responsibility to 'administer', and report on, reviews of relevant pre-tertiary education services[34] (Education and Training Act 2020, section 463(1)). Reviews of performance and evaluations include: "education reviews [of individual centres and schools]; home-schooling reviews; cluster reviews; contract evaluations; and national evaluations [on specific education topics]" (Education Review Office, 2021h, para 3). Of most relevance here are education reviews and national evaluation reports.

Education reviews are publicly available reports on the quality of education provided for children in individual kōhanga reo, early childhood centres, Kaupapa Māori and Māori-medium kura, and English-medium schools/kura. In particular, the review process examines what is working well and what can be improved (Education Review Office, 2021b, 2021h). While approaches, frameworks, indicators, and self-assessment tools may differ depending on the type of provision being reviewed, generally the focus with school and kura is somewhat different to reviews in early childhood services:

> Reviews of schools are focused on continuous improvement through strengthening the capability of schools in identifying priority areas for improvement, including the effectiveness of engagement with, whānau, iwi and the wider communities. Reviews in early learning services are focused on accountability (including compliance with regulatory requirements), education improvement, and knowledge generation (Education Review Office, 2021a, paras 9-10).

Notably in relation to state and state-integrated English-medium schools/kura, the Education Review Office (2021g) is in the process of transitioning from 'event based external reviews' (p. 5) towards a more tailored and collaborative approach to education reviews, with a strengthened developmental evaluation focus that supports continuous improvement, called *Te Ara Huarau* (previously known as the New Schools Operating Model).

Periodically the Education Review Office (2021a) publishes national reports on specific education topics as part of an ongoing programme of system-wide inquiry. "Areas of focus are wide ranging, including the evaluation of education of groups of students (e.g. high priority learners), key aspects in the provision in the NZ curriculum, and key issues affecting learners (e.g. bullying and learner wellbeing)" (para. 15).

The previously mentioned report *Learning in Residential Care* (Education Review Office, 2021f) on education provision in Oranga Tamariki secure residences, is one example of an Education Review Office national evaluation report. This report is also

[34] This can and does include "reviews of: private and independent schools; homeschooling, schools and kura with international students; school hostels; and new and merging schools' readiness to open" (Education Review Office (2021a, para. 12).

supported by the publication of three guides for leaders and teachers, social workers, and parents and whanāu (Education Review Office, 2021c, 2021d, 2021e). Other recent relevant examples of national evaluation reports are:

- *A Great Start? Education for Disabled Children in Early Childhood Education* (Education Review Office, 2022a).
- *Working Together: How Teacher Aides Can Have the Most Impact* (Education Review Office, 2022d)
- *Thriving at School? Education for Disabled Learners in Schools* (Education Review Office, 2022b)
- *Attendance: Getting Back to School* (Education Review Office, 2023a)
- *Education for All Our Children: Responding to Diverse Cultures* (Education Review Office, 2023b).

Some of these reports also come with companion guidance documents for specific or broader education audiences, e.g. *What You Need to Know About Teacher Aides: A Guide for School Boards* (Education Review Office (2022c).

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (n.d.) is the body responsible for teaching profession standards. Its statutory purpose is "to ensure safe and high-quality leadership, teaching, and learning for children and young people" (Education and Training Act 2020, section 478). The Teaching Council's functions and powers (section 479) include ensuring "quality teaching and high standards by registering teachers, setting and maintaining professional standards and ensuring teachers are competent and fit to practice" (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d., para, 1). Their Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession (Education Council New Zealand, 2017) sets out standards for both ethical behaviour (the Code of Professional Responsibility) and effective teaching practice (Standards for the Teaching Profession).

The Code of Professional Responsibility "reflects the expectations of conduct and integrity that we [in the teaching profession] all share; what we expect of each other and what our learners, their families and whānau, their communities and the public can expect of us" (Education Council New Zealand, 2017, p. 6). The Code's four commitments are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand code of professional responsibility for the teaching profession

COMMITMENT TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION **I will maintain public trust and confidence in the teaching profession by:** 1. demonstrating a commitment to providing high-quality and effective teaching 2. engaging in professional, respectful and collaborative relationships with colleagues 3. demonstrating a high standard of professional behaviour and integrity 4. demonstrating a commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiritio Waitangi partnership in the learning environment 5. contributing to a professional culture that supports and upholds this Code.
COMMITMENT TO LEARNERS **I will work in the best interests of learners by:** 1. promoting the wellbeing of learners and protecting them from harm 2. engaging in ethical and professional relationships with learners that respect professional boundaries 3. respecting the diversity of the heritage, language, identity and culture of all learners 4. affirming Māori learners as tangata whenua and supporting their educational aspirations 5. promoting inclusive practices to support the needs and abilities of all learners 6. being fair and effectively managing my assumptions and personal beliefs.
COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES AND WHĀNAU **I will respect the vital role my learners' families and whānau play in supporting their children's learning by:** 1. engaging in relationships with families and whānau that are professional and respectful 2. engaging families and whānau in their children's learning 3. respecting the diversity of the heritage, language, identity and culture of families and whānau
COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY **I will respect my trusted role in society and the influence I have in shaping futures by:** 1. promoting and protecting the principles of human rights, sustainability and social justice 2. demonstrating a commitment to a Tiriti o Waitangi based Aotearoa New Zealand 3. fostering learners to be active participants in community life and engaged in issues important to the wellbeing of society.

Note: Adapted from 'Our code our standards: Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession' by Education Council New Zealand, 2017, pp.8-13. In the public domain.

Complementing the *Code of Professional Responsibility* on ethical behaviour, the following six *Standards for the Teaching Profession* describe "what high-quality teaching practice looks like and what it means to be a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand" (Education Council New Zealand, 2017, p. 14):

1. Demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.
2. Use inquiry, collaborative problem- solving and professional learning to improve professional capability to impact on the learning and achievement of all learners.
3. Establish and maintain professional relationships and behaviours focused on the learning and wellbeing of each learner.
4. Develop a culture that is focused on learning, and is characterised by respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration and safety.

5. Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information and an understanding of each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures.
6. Teach and respond to learners in a knowledgeable and adaptive way to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace. (Education Council New Zealand, 2017, pp. 14-21).

Universities New Zealand

Universities New Zealand (n.d.) formally known as the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee, is the statutory body primarily responsible for quality assurance across New Zealand's eight universities (Education and Training Act 2020, section 253(c)). Its inter-university course approval and moderation functions under the Act are delegated to its Committee on University Academic Programmes (Universities New Zealand & Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, 2013).

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (n.d), while operationally independent, was established by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee in 1993; it supports universities primarily through a regular cycle of external academic audits.

Tertiary Education Commission

The Tertiary Education Commission is responsible for the planning, funding and monitoring of tertiary education primarily through negotiated investment plans with each funded organisation, and has a statutory duty to give effect to the Tertiary Education Strategy, (Education and Training Act, 2020, Section 409 (1)). While the Commission must monitor and report on funded tertiary institutions on an ongoing basis (Education and Training Act, 2020, Section 405) the focus is on long-term viability and risk, rather than setting education standards or assuring the overall quality of tertiary education provision. Other statutory functions include:

> (e) to provide a publicly available careers advice service
> (f) to facilitate and strengthen the connections between schools, employers, and tertiary education organisations
> (k) to ensure the availability within industry of high-quality vocational education and training
> (l) to promote the availability of vocational education and training to people of a kind or description specified in TEC's statement of intent as people to whom that training has not traditionally been available, and
> (o) to monitor the performance of persons carrying out apprenticeship training activities (Education and Training Act, 2020, section 409).

However notwithstanding the roles of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and Universities New Zealand, within a planning and funding context, there are circumstances in which the Commission may establish specific requirements for some or all learners, that can be seen to relate to the setting of education quality standards and/or the quality assurance of provision. For example, "to encourage and support TEOs [Tertiary Education Organisations] to take a strong and proactive approach to improving outcomes for disabled learners, in 2022 the Tertiary

Education Commission (TEC) introduced a new Investment Plan requirement – Disability Action Plans (DAPs)" (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-a, para. 2).

The TEC also publishes resources to help tertiary organisations support learners. As well as their *Learner Success Framework* (Tertiary Education Commission, n.d.-b), and the previously mentioned *Guide for Tertiary Education Organisations on Supporting Care Experienced Learners* (Matheson, 2023), they have a range of online resources available including several on supporting neurodiverse learners (Tertiary Education Commission, n.a.-c).

Education provision

Education provision in New Zealand is based around a voluntary early learning services sector, compulsory primary and secondary sectors, and voluntary tertiary sector.

Early learning services

There are a wide range of early learning services across the country. They can be 'teacher-led', 'whānau-led' or 'parent-led'. "All…are licensed or certificated by the Ministry of Education…[and] must meet minimum standards of education and care to operate" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-e, para 5).

Table 5: Types of early learning services

Type	Description
Kindergartens (teacher-led)	Most kindergartens accept children between 2 and 5 years and can have set morning and afternoon sessions for different age groups. Some also offer all-day education and care or part-day sessions. Kindergartens are managed by a Kindergarten Association and have 100% qualified and certificated ECE teachers. They work closely with children's families and whānau.
Education and care services (teacher-led)	Education and care services run all-day sessions, or flexible-hour programmes for children from birth to primary school age. Education and care services can be privately owned, owned and operated by a community group, or operated in an organisation for employees with young children. Some have a particular language and cultural focus, others have a specific set of beliefs about teaching and learning, for example, Rudolph Steiner and Montessori.
Home-based education and care (teacher-led)	Home-based education and care is provided for groups of up to four children aged birth to 5 years in either the educator's home or the child's home. Each educator must belong to a home-based service, which provides support through a coordinator who is a qualified and certificated ECE teacher.
Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (teacher-led)	Te Kura (formerly the Correspondence School) offers learning programmes for children aged between 3 and 5 years who can't attend an early learning service or kōhanga reo. Te Kura's early learning educators work with parents, whānau and caregivers to meet a child's early learning needs.
Te Kōhanga Reo (whānau-led)	Te Kōhanga Reo offer a Māori immersion environment for tamariki and their whānau, and caters to tamariki from birth to school age. Te Kōhanga Reo seek to provide: total immersion in te reo Māori me ōna tikanga in daily operations; whānau decision-making, management and responsibility; accountability; and health and wellbeing of mokopuna and whānau.

Type	Description
Playcentres (parent-led)	Playcentres cater for children from birth to school age, and are run cooperatively by parents and member families. Playcentres are part of a regional association for management and programme support. Regional associations are managed by the New Zealand Playcentre Federation.
Playgroups (parent-led)	Playgroups are community-based groups run by parent and whānau volunteers. Sessions are held regularly for no more than four hours per day and are often set up in community halls. To be a playgroup, more than half the children attending must have a parent there with them. Playgroups are not licensed, although they may be certificated in order to receive government funding.
Ngā Puna Kōhungahunga (parent-led)	These are playgroups that encourage learning in and through te reo Māori and tikanga.
Pacific Island Playgroups (parent-led)	These are playgroups in Pasifika languages and cultures including Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island, Niuean, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Fijian.

Note: Adapted from 'Different kinds of early learning services' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-e. In the public domain.

Schools

Different types of schools spanning state, state-integrated, and private schools, are summarised in the following table:

Table 6: Types of schools

Type	Description
State (years 0-13)	The majority of schools in New Zealand. Government-owned, fully state funded, and mostly co-educational: • Contributing primary (year 0-6) • Full primary (year 0-8) • Area (year 0-13) • Composite (range between year 0-13) • Intermediate (year 7-8) • Restricted composite (year 7-10) aka junior high/college or middle school • Secondary (year 9-13) aka high school or college
Designated character (years 0-13)	State schools designated under section 204 of the Education and Training Act 2020 that have their own unique character with their own set of aims, purposes and objectives reflecting their own values. Examples include Māori medium schools affiliated to a particular iwi.
Kura Kaupapa Māori - (years 0-8, 0-13 or 9-13)	Kura Kaupapa Māori or Wharekura, are a specific type of designated character school where teaching and learning is mainly in te reo and the school operates in accordance with Te Aho Matua as its philosophy.
State-integrated (years 0-13)	Mostly schools that started as private schools and have become part of the state system – a state school with a 'special character' which might be a particular religion, philosophy or set of values.

Type	Description
Private (also referred to as independent) (range between years 0-13)	A non-state school that can apply to be registered and that must meet certain standards to be registered. May be either co-educational or single-sex. There are differences between private schools and state schools, usually in terms of their legal structure and how they are governed and funded.
Day Specialist (years 0-13)	A state school providing specialist education and support for students with specific physical, behavioural, sensory or intellectual needs. Enrolments are only accepted through a 'section 9' agreement, and learning can be delivered in base or satellite classrooms, or an Intensive Wrap Around Service.
Residential Specialist and Sensory (years 0-13)	A school providing 24-hour specialist education and support for students with physical, behavioural, sensory or intellectual needs. Enrolments are only accepted through a 'section 9' agreement, and learning can be delivered in base or satellite classrooms, or an Intensive Wrap Around Service.
Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (years 0-13)	Te Kura (formerly the Correspondence School) offers a range of learning options for students who might live remotely or too far from their closest school, live overseas, have medical or special learning requirements, or want to study a specific subject not offered by their school.
Regional health (years 0-13)	Learning opportunities for students who are experiencing significant health issues, and who might be in hospital, recovering at home or gradually returning to school. There are three regional health schools in New Zealand covering the Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch areas.
Teen Parent Unit (years 9-13)	A learning environment provided by some state secondary schools for pregnant or young parent students.

Note: Adapted from 'Types of schools and year levels' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-x. In the public domain.

Most children are enrolled in a state school, with those enrolled in a state-integrated or private school at approximately 10% and 5% respectively (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.).

Alternative education

The Ministry of Education's bilingual education portal Te Kete Ipurangi (n.d.-a),

> Alternative Education is a pathway for learning in education, where young people receive additional learning support. It is one of the suite of options that can be used to re-engage ākonga [students] in a meaningful learning programme targeted to their individual needs and supports them to transition back to school, further education, training, or employment (para 1).

Provision is locally managed by 81 contract holders; most are secondary schools. Alternative education can take the following different forms and also include the previously mentioned Teen Parent Units.

Table 7: Types of alternative education

Type	Description
Activity centres	Activity centres provide educational and pastoral support to secondary students in years 9-13. The support includes a specialised learning programme to: increase attendance, engagement, and achievement at school; improve social outcomes; and enable a successful transition into further education, employment or training.
Services Academies	Service academics are 12 month military-style programmes delivered within some secondary schools. The target student group is year 12 and 13 students, and Māori and Pacific boys in particular, who are at risk of disengaging or have disengaged from school. Their purpose is to: encourage students to stay engaged in learning by providing a motivating and disciplined programme; help students gain improved qualifications; and help them prepare to move successfully into the workforce or further education and training. New Zealand currently has 29 Services Academies.
Study Support Centres	Study Support Centres are educational programmes for students in years 3-8, that provide additional educational support for those who may be at risk of educational underachievement. The Ministry of Education provides funding for schools or community groups to run Study Support Centres outside of regular school times. The programmes are designed to assist senior primary students to develop or improve good study habits, leading to increased achievement as they progress through further education.
Teen parent units	As well as secondary education for pregnant or parenting students, Teen Parent Units provide early childhood education for their young child with an affiliated ECE centre, and access to possible wrap-around supports through other government agencies and community groups. Attached to an existing secondary school, there are currently 25 Teen Parent Units across the country.

Note: Adapted from 'Alternative Education' by Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-a In the public domain.

Tertiary education

The following tertiary education providers are funded by the government through the Tertiary Education Commission (Ministry of Education, n.d.-f).

Table 8: Types of tertiary provider

Type	Description
Universities	New Zealand's eight universities provide degree and postgraduate education, as well as some sub-degree and community programmes. They also host the country's Centres of Research Excellence.
Institutes of technology and polytechnics	Now under the auspices of Te Pūkenga – the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, the country's 18 institutes of technology and polytechnics provide a very wide variety of technical, vocational and professional education.
Wānanga	The three wānanga provide quality education using Māori ways of teaching and learning. Wānanga also have an ongoing role to play in re-engaging learners into education.
Private training establishments	Private training establishments are operated by a wide range of companies, trusts and other entities, and offer post-school education or vocational training. These are diverse in terms of their scale of operation, location, ethnicity, culture and areas of educational expertise.

Type	Description
Government training establishments	Government training establishments are state-owned organisations that offer education or training, for example, NZ Police Training Services and the New Zealand Army.

Note: Adapted from 'Different types of tertiary provider' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-f. In the public domain.

Education services for children with additional learning needs

The Ministry of Education (n.d.-k) *He Pikorua* practice framework for specialist learning support practitioners, has seven guiding principles: mokopuna and whānau-centred; collaborative; strength-based; culturally affirming; inclusive; ecological; and evidence-informed. It focuses "less on services and criteria, and more on joining up services to support mokopuna and the adults around them in ways that build on their strengths" (para. 2). Within that context, Table 9 identifies several specific national services and programmes. However, not all of these programmes and services will necessarily be available for children in all schools or localities.

Table 9: Types of services and programmes for children with additional learning needs

Type	Description
Early Intervention Service (EIS)	The Early Intervention Service (EIS) provides support for children with additional needs from birth until they transition to school. Ministry of Education early intervention teams or contracted providers work with families and early childhood educators who ask for help, when they are concerned about the learning and development impacts of a child's developmental delay, disability, behaviour and/or communication difficulties. Available supports may be provided by early Intervention teachers, Kaitakawaenga (Māori cultural advisors), education support workers, psychologists, and/or speech-language therapists.
Te Kahu Tōī, Intensive Wraparound Service	Te Kahu Tōī, Intensive Wraparound Services (IWS) is a support programme for young people aged 5-14 years who have behaviour, social and/or learning needs that are highly complex and challenging (and may have associated intellectual difficulty), and require support at school, at home and in the community. With the aim of being comprehensive, holistic, youth and family/whānau driven, the young person and their family/whānau members work with an Intensive Wraparound (IW) facilitator and psychologist to build their wraparound team; this can include the whānau's friends and people from the wider community, as well as providers of services and supports.
Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour	The Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) Service is available to work alongside schools and kura to provide learning support when it is needed. They are specialist, itinerant kaiako or teachers who work across a number of schools and kura. RTLB work with education providers and other agencies and service providers to identify local needs and resources, and plan support based on the evidence of what works, to best support children and young people to learn. Support includes system wide, targeted or individual support so that children and young people with learning support needs, including disabilities are welcome and where their achievement, progress, wellbeing and participation is valued.

Type	Description
Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) and Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)	As stated previously as part of the implementation of the *Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025*, in 2020 the first tranche of 623 fully funded full-time Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) positions were allocated to 124 'learning support clusters' and formal Kāhui Ako (Communities of Learning), covering 1,052 schools and kura. With a requirement to be an experienced registered teacher, the purpose of the Learning Support Coordinator role is to add capacity and capability within individual schools and kura and associated clusters (including early years services), to better identify, understand and plan for the learning support needs of local children individually and collectively, and coordinate services and support, ensure appropriately robust and resourced plans are in place and monitored, and be a key contact for whānau. However, beyond that, it was intended that the role would differ in different contexts. Importantly the LSC role does not replace the long established but narrower SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) role (or other learning support roles), in any schools where these exist.
Ongoing Resourcing Scheme	The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) provides support for students with the highest ongoing levels of need for specialist support. Resources are allocated based on individual needs identified through the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and comprise specialist services (e.g. educational psychologist, learning support advisor or speech language therapist etc.), additional teacher time, and/or teacher aide support.
In-Class Support (ICS)/ Teacher Aides	In-Class Support (ICS) funding makes a contribution towards providing a teacher aide for students in years 1-13 with continuing high learning needs, who are not funded through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). In particular, this provision is for students who have been prioritised by schools, Ministry Learning Support teams, and the Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) service as having the most significant learning needs.
Check and Connect: Te Hononga mentoring	Check & Connect: Te Hononga is a two-year, educational mentoring programme for students in years 9 to 11 at risk of disengaging from school. A trained Check & Connect: Te Hononga mentor works with the student to help them to set and achieve their educational goals. This includes working with the student's whānau/family and school, and other service providers who can help the student achieve their goals.

Note: Adapted from 'Students Requiring Learning Support' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-r. In the public domain. Supplemented with material from 'Early Intervention Service (EIS)' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-g, 'Te Kahu Tōī, Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS)' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-t, 'Learning Support Coordinator: A guide to the role' by Ministry of Education, 2020, 'Learning Support Coordinator Evaluation: Phase 3 Formative Process Evaluation' by Synergia, 2022, 'Ongoing Resourcing Scheme' by Ministry of Education, n.d.-o, and 'PB4L – Positive Behaviour for Learning', by the Ministry of Education, n.d.-p.

Other education programmes

Table 10: Types of programmes for all children including those with additional learning needs

Type	Description
The Incredible Years training programmes	The Incredible Years is a comprehensive series of integrated evidence-based training programmes with the overall goal of preventing and treating behaviour problems among children under the age of 12, and promoting their social, emotional, and academic competence. From the US but widely used internationally, programmes for different age groups have been developed for use with either parents or teachers; programmes have also been developed for direct use with children. The Ministry of Education and contracted providers deliver four of these programmes. as follows: • *Incredible Years Teachers*, and *Incredible Years Parent*, for those working with or caring for children aged 3-8 years. These two programmes focus on helping to reduce challenging behaviour and increase children's social and self-control skills. • *Incredible Years Helping Children with Autism (for teachers)* and the *Incredible Years Autism programme (for caregivers and whānau),* for those working with or caring for children on the autism spectrum aged 2-5 years. These two programmes have a focus on promoting children's emotional regulation, positive social interactions, communication skills, and relationships with others.
PB4L – Positive Behaviour for Learning	Based on the *Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports* (PBIS) framework developed at the University of Oregon in the 1990s, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) aims to improve the behaviour and wellbeing of children and young people. Its frameworks and programmes are for individuals, groups, all learning environments, teachers, parents and whānau, and school communities. The PB4L suite offers tools for supporting positive behaviours for learning, in all environments. PB4L is available in two different forms: • *PB4L School-Wide* is a long term, whole-school approach to help schools develop their own social culture that supports learning and positive behaviour. The framework is evidence based. It provides us with a process for considering both learning and behaviour across the whole school, and student by student. • *PB4L Restorative Practice* supports schools to build positive, respectful relationships across the whole school community. It also provides schools with a set of tools to manage behaviour when things go wrong, using a relational approach; this includes three different types of restorative conference, i.e. mini conferences, classroom conferences and formal restorative conferences.

Note: Adapted from 'PB4L – Positive Behaviour for Learning', by the Ministry of Education, n.d.-p. In the public domain. Supplemented with material from 'Positive Behaviour for Learning' by Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b, and 'About the programs' by The Incredible Years, n.d.

Appendix 2: Summary of education-related National Care Standards

Introduction

The Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018, legally came into effect on 1 July 2019.[35] According to Oranga Tamariki (2021a), these 70[36] regulations "set out the standard of care every child and young person needs to do well and be well, and the support all caregivers can expect to receive" (para. 1); the Independent Children's Monitor, 2023b) frames these as "the minimum standard of care that must be provided when the state has custody of a child" (para. 1). Individual care standards or rules, are here-in referred to as regulations

Education-specific regulations

There are nine education-specific regulations (some multi-part), that the Oranga Tamariki Chief Executive must comply with. Seven of these (i.e. regulations 36 to 42) together make up a specific education section in Part 2 of the regulations on support to address a child's or young person's needs. These seven regulations relate to children aged one to four years (regulation 36); children aged five years (regulation 37); children aged six to 15 years (regulation 38); children aged 16 years and over (regulation 39); obligations to support attendance (regulation 40); other support obligations (regulation 41); and monitoring educational progress (regulation 42). The two remaining education-specific statutory national care regulations are on the process for assessing educational needs (regulation 11), and the provision of education-related support for kin and non-kin foster carers (regulation 64). Key aspects of these are summarised below:

Part 1: Needs assessments, plans, and visits to, and collection of information about, children and young persons

When the educational needs of a child are being assessed, the process must include: identifying and considering the child's own education and training goals; considering and planning how their educational needs will be met; and how the achievement of their goals will be supported through both formal and informal education (regulation 11(1)).

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[35] Five of the ten regulations in part six on monitoring and reporting on compliance with these regulations, came into effect later on 31 December 2020.

[36] There are 87 regulations in all with six preliminary regulations (regulations 1 to 6) and 10 regulations that make up part six on monitoring and reporting on compliance with these regulations (regulations 77 to 87).

Part 2: Support to address child's or young person's needs

- All children aged 1-4 years must be enrolled in a licensed early childhood service or certified playgroup, where this is in their best interests (regulation 36(1)).
- For all children aged 5 years, a formal decision must be made on whether it is in their best interests to be enrolled in a registered school, or a licensed early childhood service or certified playgroup (regulation 37(2)).
- Children aged 6 to 15 years must be enrolled in a registered school (regulation 38(1)); in the event that there is a dispute about a child's enrolment at a particular school, the Oranga Tamariki Chief Executive must take steps to resolve the dispute including, where necessary, bringing legal proceedings (regulation 38(2)).
- Those aged 16 and over must be assisted to be registered in a registered school or Tertiary Education Organisation, or to obtain employment (regulation 39).
- Reasonable steps must be taken to support school attendance (regulation 40(1)) including through information to caregivers about their role in supporting education and attendance (regulation 40(2)(a)), obtaining updates from schools on attendance (regulation 40(2)(b)), putting in place arrangements to address any attendance concerns (regulation 40(2)(c)), facilitating alternative education where a child is suspended or excluded from school (regulation 40(2)(d)), and providing representation at any hearing to consider a suspension or exclusion (regulation 40(2)(e)). Where children are enrolled in a licensed early childhood service or a certificated playgroup, there is a similar requirement to support attendance (regulation 40(3)).

- Assistance must be provided to support a child's education and training needs (regulation 41(1)) including equipment and materials (regulation 41(1)(a)), education-related donations and school fees (regulation 41(1)(b)), and additional supports needed to succeed in education (regulation 41(1)(c)) including transport and additional tuition or education programmes (regulation 41(2)).
- Children's educational progress must be monitored, and regular contact with the education provider maintained (regulation 42(1)(a)). More broadly, children's educational achievement must also be supported, in coordination with other relevant agencies (regulation 42(1)(b)). These duties must be carried out by: ensuring that the education provider has sufficient appropriate information about the child and their circumstances (regulation 42(2)(a)); engaging at least once a term with the education provider to discuss progress and the child's circumstances, unless deemed inappropriate (regulation 42(2)(b)); taking all reasonable steps to obtain a written update each term on educational progress (regulation 42(2)(c)); and in instances where the update suggests that the child's educational goals may not be achieved, taking any necessary steps to address such risks (regulation 42(2)(d)).

Part 3: Caregiver and care placement assessment and support

- Caregivers must be provided with any needed education-related support on how they can encourage and support children's education, as well as additional resources needed to support informal learning (regulation 64(a)).

Other education-included regulations

Part 1: Needs assessments, plans, and visits to, and collection of information about, children and young persons

Beyond regulation 11 on the process for specifically assessing educational needs, education and training are also explicitly and implicitly included in many of the other 22 regulations that make up Part 1 of the regulations on needs assessments, plans, and visits to, and collection of information about, children and young persons. In particular, education and training needs (regulation 10(1)(g)) is one of 10 matters that must be included in the needs assessment (and assessment of what is required to meet those needs).

Beyond regulation 11 on the educational needs assessment process, education and training are also explicitly and implicitly included in many or most of the other 22 regulations that make up part one (i.e. regulations 7 to 29) . In particular the specific identification of education and training needs, and assessment of what is required to meet such assessed needs, is one of ten matters that must be included in the needs assessment (regulation 10(1)(g).

Appendix 3: England, California and Victoria

To illustrate what others are doing in relation to policy and practice to raise the educational attainment of children in care and care leavers, this appendix presents material on systems and initiatives in three selected Anglo-American jurisdictions where there has been a strong focus over recent years on this issue, namely England, California and Victoria.

These three jurisdictions, with their strong *child protection* orientation (Gilbert et al., 2011) have developed targeted systems and initiatives on the education of children in care that can be easily identified. However, it should be noted that Scandinavian and some other European countries, with their stronger *child focus* or *family service* orientation (Gilbert et al., 2011) and greater reliance on universal services and higher levels of engagement in mainstream schooling, are achieving results that may be as good if not better than those in England, California and Victoria (e.g., Cameron & Bryderup, 2014; Jackson & Cameron, 2014; Johansson et al., 2014; Matheson & Connelly, 2012; Paulsen et al., 2023).

England

Policy framework

As referenced in the background section, internationally the first identified research study on the education of *children in care*[37] was carried out in England (Essen et al., 1976). In this landmark *National Child Development Study* comparing 414 children in care with 16,000 not in care, it found that mean scores at the age of 11 in both reading and maths were up to two years lower for children in care. Since then, research by Sonia Jackson and other past and present academic researchers (e.g. David Berridge, Claire Cameron, and Judy Sebba), whether funded by government or non-government or philanthropic organisations, has arguably had more of an impact upon the education of children in care policy and practice in England, than any other area of child welfare.

Today, 150 English local authorities have the strategic lead for children's education. They have a legal duty to ensure that every child fulfils his or her educational potential (Local Government Association, n.d.-b). With the exception of autonomous

[37] *While for consistency I generally use the term children in care in this section as elsewhere, in England the current legal term for children in residential or foster care is Looked After Children. This is where a child is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21], is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV], or is subject to a placement order. The term has also been widely adopted across the English policy, research, and practice literature, and indeed by local authorities and the wider sector. As such the term Looked After Children is also used here when it forms part of the title of a policy, initiative or job, or is otherwise contextually helpful.*

Academy Schools (now in the majority) which were introduced in 1996 and are directly funded by the Department for Education, individual local authorities are responsible for most state-funded primary schools and the remaining secondary schools. These local authorities are also responsible for social care provision for children with the greatest needs including "children who are disabled, who have to be protected from harm, or who need to be placed in residential or foster care" (Institute for Government, 2019, p. 62).

The main policy levers used in relation to the education of children in care in England are primary legislation, regulations, statutory guidance, and non-statutory guidance (Coram Children's Legal Centre, 2022) and include the following:

- Each local authority must appoint at least one person to ensure that the specific legal requirement to promote the educational achievement of children in care is properly discharged. This statutory function, under section 99 of the Children and Families Act 2014, is usually fulfilled by a Virtual School Head; statutory guidance on the role of Virtual School Heads has since been put in place (Department for Education, 2018a). This duty was extended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to also promote the education of children who were previously in care. More recently the duty was further extended to also take a strategic leadership role in promoting the educational attendance, attainment and progress of all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past six years due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons (now referred to as *Children With a Social Worker*); this accounts for approximately one in 10 of all English children (Department for Education, 2022b).
- Local authorities need to consider the educational implications of key safeguarding and welfare decisions (Department for Education, 2018a). Where children require a care placement, social workers, virtual school heads, independent reviewing officers, schools, and special education, must ensure appropriate education provision is arranged at the same time as a care placement (Department for Education, 2018a). In particular, regulation 10 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, requires that the child's social worker must ensure that all efforts are made to minimise disruption to the child's education, i.e. where possible a care placement should be arranged so that a child can remain with the same school or education provider.
- A Personal Education Plan is a statutory requirement for all *Looked After Children*, is an integral part of the child's *Looked After Children's* care/detention plan and should be reviewed regularly. Statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked after children requires that a range of specified educational and developmental needs and issues are addressed (Department for Education, 2018a). They are designed to ensure that the child's 'corporate parents' make all important decisions jointly, i.e. carers, teachers, social workers and any other professionals working with the child.
- Every school must have a *Designated Teacher* (or *Designated Worker* in early years settings) for *Looked After Children* and *Previously Looked After Children* (Department for Education, 2018b, Matchett, 2022). Ideally a member of the senior leadership team, Designated Teachers are responsible for championing the educational needs of all looked after children and care experienced children

within their school; in the case of looked after children, they are also responsible for ensuring that they have good quality Personal Education Plans and within the school they should be the main plan author.

At the national policy level both education and care come under the auspices of the Department for Education; similarly state (and some independent) schools, early years and children's social care services (including residential and foster care provision) are all regularly inspected by a single government body - the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted).

In England there is also a strong focus on monitoring the education and educational attainment of children generally which includes comprehensive datasets on children in care in particular. The Department for Education (2020a, 2020b, 2022a) publishes 'Average Attainment 8 scores' annually at the national, regional and local authority level; this data measures the results of all students at state-funded mainstream schools in England across eight GCSE[38]-level qualifications[39]. Attainment 8 scores have been "designed to encourage schools to focus on improving the performance of all pupils – not just those pushing for top grades" (The Good Schools Guide, n.d., para. 1). It includes separate average scores for children who have been in care continuously for more than 12 months at year end, as well as those in care for less than 12 months; these can be compared with the score for the general population and certain other subgroups, e.g. the broader category of *Children in Need* as defined by the Children Act 1989 as well as the broader category again of *Children who have been in need in the last six years.* As well as Attainment 8 the Department for Education has also introduced the related 'value-added' measure *Progress 8* which "indicates how much a secondary school has helped pupils improve (or progress) over a five-year period when compared to a government-calculated expected level of improvement" (The Good Schools Guide, n.d. para 4.).

As well as Attainment 8 and Progress 8, there is also regular statistical reporting on children in care with comparisons to other subgroups and all pupils, including the following:

- 'special education needs' (SEN)
- educational attainment at key stages 1 and 3 (with Attainment 8 and Progress 8 above based on key stages 2 and 4)
- destinations from school, i.e. education, training and employment
- absence from school
- permanent exclusions and suspensions from school
- type of school attended.

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[38] General Certificate of Secondary Education usually taken when a student is aged 16.

[39] "Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list" (Local Government Association, n.d.-a). They comprise of "all state-funded schools including local authority maintained mainstream schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges, further education colleges with provision for 14- to 16-year-olds and state-funded special schools. They exclude independent schools, independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, hospital schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision" (Local Government Information).

Government care and education initiatives

Other relevant Department for Education initiatives include the following:

- All mainstream schools including Academies, must give the highest priority in their oversubscription criteria to looked-after and previously looked-after children (Department for Education, 2018a), i.e. “they cannot refuse to admit a looked after child on the basis of challenging behaviour (pp.13-14); subsequently the House of Commons Education Committee (2022) has recommended that schools that flout the requirement to admit looked after children should be sanctioned: “we must end the culture of impunity which allows schools to block admissions of children in care” (p. 3).
- Statutory guidance requiring local authorities, as corporate parents, to:
  > “not tolerate drift and delay where children the authority looks after are without an education placement that is appropriate to their assessed needs. This includes using their powers of direction in a timely way rather than delay issuing a direction as a result of protracted negotiation (Department for Education, 2018a, p. 14).
- Pupil Premium policy includes £2,410 for each looked after child annually for schools (Carpenter et al., 2013; Department for Education, 2022c, 2022e, Education Endowment Foundation, 2022; Sebba, 2020).
- Care leavers a higher education priority group with £2,410 bursaries, and the possibilities of 365 accommodation options, and mentoring opportunities (AdvanceHE, n.d.).
- Assisted boarding for looked after children in private schools (Schools Together, n.d.).
- Education, training and employment-focused *Staying Put* (Department for Education, 2013; Munro et al., 2012) and *Staying Close* (Department for Education, 2022d; Dixon et al, 2020) 18-21 years extended care schemes for those in foster care and residential care respectively, that build upon broader transitioning from care statutory duties.

Non-government care and education initiatives

While some of the following may be funded by the Department for Education or other government departments, these are essentially non-government care and education initiatives:

- Tertiary Quality Mark award scheme recognising tertiary education institutions that support care leavers (National Network for the Education of Care Leavers, 2021).
- PROPEL tertiary education searchable website with support offers for care leavers (for more information on the BECOME charity’ PROPEL website, see overseas exemplar in earlier section on tertiary education policy and practice).
- Annual conference and practice guidance for Virtual School Heads (National Association of Virtual School Heads, 2019, n.d.).
- Education of care experienced children online Master's level module (Bath Spa University, n.d.).

- Paired reading, tutoring, book clubs, and professional and inter-professional training, as well as a strong academic research network e.g. University of Oxford Rees Centre.

Evidence of success

With so many policy and practice changes and initiatives in place at both the national and local authority level spanning early childhood education through to tertiary, attribution is a challenge. This is further compounded by perennial issues with the quality of administrative data, the generally small-scale nature of any evaluation research, and the complexities around making meaningful international comparisons.

In England the previously mentioned 'Average Attainment 8 scores' for looked after children (Department for Education, 2020a, 2020b, 2022a), is a key measure of progress; over the last three years there have been significant score increases as shown in the table below:

Table 11: Average Attainment 8 scores for looked after children, England 2018/19 to 2020/21

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Looked after for more than 12 months continuous average	19%	21.3%	23.2%
Looked after for less than 12 months continuous average	12.8%	16.4%	17%
Overall pupil average	46.7%	50.2%	50.9%

Note: Adapted from "Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities" by Department for Education, 2022a. Copyright 2022 by Department for Education.

However, while the increase in average attainment scores for looked after children over these three academic years is encouraging, this reporting method does perhaps capture and highlight the size of the attainment gap more clearly than previous reporting methods. It should also be noted that due to COVID both the 2019/20 and 2020/21 GCSE exams were cancelled and alternative assessment mechanisms were put in place; the mechanisms used in each of the two years were also different. As such the Department for Education (2022) cautions that "2000 and 2021 pupil attainment data should not be directly compared to pupil attainment data from previous years for the purposes of measuring year-on-year changes in pupil performance" (Key stage 4 attainment). Furthermore because of changes in how Attainment 8 is calculated there are also issues in relation to comparing Attainment 8 scores between 2016-2019 (Department for Education, 2022).

Beyond schooling, one particular area of hope is increased participation by care leavers[40] in tertiary education. The English *Moving On Up* (Harrison, 2017) study found that 12% of care leavers entered higher education (i.e. a degree course at a university or related institution) by the age of 23; this is much higher than previous estimates. That said, care leavers were still less likely to enter higher education than others with similar demographic profiles and qualifications. Furthermore, "even once entry qualifications were taken into account, care leavers were around 38% more likely to withdraw from their course and not return" (p. 3).

[40] English administrative data on care leavers includes unaccompanied asylum seekers, some of whom may have gone to the UK in part because they already valued education.

However, despite the range of developments above, from early years through to tertiary education, the House of Commons Education Committee has just published a report on the education of children in residential care in England which still paints a 'bleak picture' (p. 3); much of the report and its recommendations also relate to children in foster care. As well as the previous reference to the committee wanting schools who refuse to admit looked after children to be sanctioned in order to get more children into good or excellent schools, other recommendations were to:

- Urgently tackle the national scandal of children missing education or receiving sub-par unregulated 'education'.
- Extend Pupil Premium Plus funding to schools and virtual schools for children beyond the age of 16 who are 'looked after' or in care, plus those children previously looked-after.
- Boost career outcomes for care leavers.
- Strengthen the powers of Virtual School Heads.
- Fully roll-out Staying Close accommodation and support nationally as part of statutory provision for those aged 18 to 21 who were in residential care.
- Tackle the *black hole* of data.
- Review funding of for-profit providers and whether they should continue to have a role in the public care of children.

California

In the US, early research findings (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978) on the education of children in care were remarkably similar to those of Essen et al. (1976) in England, i.e. when compared to the general population they also found a significant educational attainment gap amongst children in care. While dispersed across a much wider number and range of researchers than in the UK, key US researchers on the education of children in care and care leavers include Andrea Zetlin (California), Mark Courtney (California) and Peter Pecora (Washington).

Policy framework

In the US, policy development occurs at the federal, state and county level. However federal level policy levers used in relation to the education of children in care[41], might best be framed as permissive federal legislation with financial reimbursement to states for eligible expenditure. California, and certainly in comparison to other US States, also has "strong public community college and university systems, was an early adopter of extended foster care, has a robust advocacy community, and has enacted state laws that provide financial and programmatic support to foster students" (Okpych, 2022).

The primary federal initiative in relation to the education of children in care is the *H. Chafee Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood* (Chafee). Taken up by California and 37 other states with the establishment of relevant laws and policies (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020, n.d.), the Chafee programme provides funding to states for services and supports with the aim of ensuring that children in

[41] The term care is used here. It should be noted that in the US the term foster care, as opposed to foster family care, includes those in residential care.

care receive the educational services they need to make a successful transition to adulthood. Spanning (i) completing high school, (ii) post-secondary education planning and (iii) funding, the following are examples given by the federal government, of possible areas of support that may be eligible for federal funding:

- (i) Support for completing high school:
    - "Academic counselling,
    - preparation for a general educational development (GED) high school equivalency certification, including studying for the GED exam,
    - tutoring, help with homework, and study skills training,
    - literacy training,
    - help accessing educational resources,
    - credit recovery programs for youth who are behind in school or dropout recovery programs for youth who have dropped out of school and fallen behind academically to help them take or repeat a course through classroom, online, small-group, or one-on-one instruction" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020, p. 2).
- (ii) Planning for postsecondary education
    - college preparatory programs and planning assistance,
    - classes to prepare for college aptitude tests,
    - assistance with completing college applications and financial aid applications,
    - payment of fees for college aptitude tests and college applications,
    - college tours,
    - tutoring while in college, and
    - designated on-campus personnel to assist the student in accessing available supports and services" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020, pp. 2-3).
- (iii) Financial supports for postsecondary programmes
    - While not specific to those in care*, Free Application for Federal Student Aid* recognises that youth who were in foster care are in unique circumstances and as such financial information regarding their legal guardians and foster parents does not need to be included in their application.
    - More specifically, the *Education and Training Voucher Program;* provides current and former OOHC youth with limited funding of up to $5,000 of assistance each year up until their 26th birthday as a contribution towards tuition, room and board, or other education-related costs.
    - California and 33 other states also provide their own financial assistance programme for students who are or were formerly in foster care; this is usually in the form of vouchers, waivers, grants, or scholarships that cover the full cost of tuition and fees to attend the state's public universities (California Department of Social Services, n.d.; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020, n.d.).

The *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act 2008* is federal legislation which primarily seeks to promote permanent families for children in care through relative guardianship and adoption. However, the Act also amended Title IV-

E of the Social Security Act (the largest federal funding stream for child welfare activities) to extend the age of eligibility from 18 to 21 years of age for those in education, training or employment. While referred to as *extended care*, for the first time states now have the option (but are not required), to use federal funding for young people transitioning from care accommodation and support, and for promoting education, training and employment opportunities. Many US states, including California, have now adopted legislation to establish such provision. California enacted the California Fostering Connections to Success Act in 2010 and began extending care two years later. With the largest state population of children in care, California is arguably the most important early adopter of the new policy. To support the implementation of the new legislation and provision in California, the CalYOUTH project was established as an evaluation of the impact of the legislation on outcomes during the transition to adulthood.

Since 2011, all 50 U.S. states have been legislatively mandated to collect data from representative samples of 17-year-olds in foster care and to track their outcomes up to age 21.

Other relevant government care and education initiatives

Federal

- Federal requirement for case plans to include specified education information and educational stability. *Title IV-E of the Social Security Act* (42 U.S.C. § 670 et seq.) requires states to "develop case plans for children in foster care and that the case plans include, among other things, the names of the child's education providers, the child's grade level performance, the child's school records, and any other relevant education information concerning the child as determined by the child welfare agency (42 U.S.C. §§ 671(a)(16), 675(1)(C)). The case plan also must include a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care. This includes a plan for the exchange of school records when immediate enrolment of the youth is needed (42 U.S.C. § 675(1) (G))" (as cited in Judicial Council of California, 2019, p. 1). California state law goes further and also requires that each care plan incorporate a summary of the education information of the child including "the names of the education providers, grade level performance, school records, assurances that the child's placement in foster care takes into account proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement, the number of school transfers the child has experienced, and the child's educational progress. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 16010(a)(1)); see also Welf. & Inst. Code, § 16501.16." (as cited in Judicial Council of California, 2019, pp. 1-2).
- The *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act 2008* is federal legislation which primarily seeks to promote permanent families for children in care through relative guardianship and adoption. However, the Act also amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (the largest federal funding stream for child welfare activities) to extend the age of eligibility from 18 to 21 years of age for those in education, training or employment. While referred to as *extended care*, for the first time states now have the option (but are not required), to use Federal funding for transitioning from care accommodation and support, and promoting education, training and employment opportunities.

- The *Uninterrupted Scholars Act* 2014. This amendment to the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* permits educational agencies and institutions to disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of students in care, without parental consent, to authorised case workers or other child welfare agency or tribal organisation representatives (United States Department of Education, 2014, para 1).

State

- Since 2014, the California Department of Social Services (n.d.) has been sharing weekly administrative data on children in care with the California Department of Education; following a state-wide data matching process, local public education boards or authorities (California Department of Education, n.d.; Educational Results Partnership & California College Pathways, 2019):
    - Department of Education Foster Youth Services Co-ordinating Programs to raise educational achievement (e.g. Riverside County Office of Education, n.d.).
    - When a child comes into OOHC, agencies must collaborate on agreeing transport arrangements if remaining in the school of origin is in the child's best interests (California Department of Education, n.d.).
- In order to decrease the number of high schools attended, the state of California requires that children in care be afforded the opportunity to stay in their current school when their placement changes: "A Best Interest Determination (BID) process that includes the education rights holder must take place whenever a placement change occurs to determine if it is in the student's best interest to change schools or remain in the school of origin" (Educational Results Partnership & California College Pathways, 2019, p. 20).

Relevant non-government care and education initiatives

California College Pathways (CCP) is a public-private partnership which aims to create a seamless system of support for children in care as they transition from high school to colleges and universities. In particular they help:

- equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and supports to pursue their college and career goals,
- enrol students in a post-secondary degree or certification programme that prepares them for gainful employment,
- students earn a college degree or certificate,
- students embark upon a career path. (Educational Results Partnership & California College Pathways, 2019).

> "CCP supports research to better understand foster youth experiences to and through college, including the identification of systemic barriers and effective practices to support this important student population. The network of campuses, and the funders and practitioners who support them, use research findings to support the continuous improvement of post-secondary, secondary and child welfare systems through actionable data, training and technical assistance, as well as to engage in

advocacy and policy implementation efforts that strengthen the connections between research, policy and practice that can improve the experience of foster youth": (p. 1).

- Eight editions of California Foster Youth Education law fact sheets (California Foster Youth Education Task Force, 2021).
- Tertiary campus support programmes: With eight in California, these programmes provide financial, academic, social/emotional, and housing supports to help former foster OOHC stay in tertiary education and graduate (Dworsky, & Pérez, 2009).
- While developed in Oregon rather than California, two relevant educational interventions have been recognised in California as being *supported by research* evidence (*Better Futures* and *Kids in Transition to School* as previously mentioned) or with *promising research evidence* (*Treatment Foster Care Oregon – Adolescents* also as previously referenced) by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (n.d.). With more limited evidence, details of a further eight relevant programmes are included on the website with a scientific rating of *not able to be rated.* However no educational interventions gained the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare's highest scientific rating of *well supported by research evidence*.
- When a student completes an application for admission for a California community college, they are invited to self-report their foster care status (Educational Results Partnership & California College Pathways, 2019).

Evidence of success

While there is a range of promising individual studies which may suggest that at least some of the initiatives in the US and/or California are having a positive impact, more definitive evaluation or applied research examining trends over time is limited. While the statutory National Youth in Transition Database on youth transitioning from care was established in 2011 and includes two education measures, full information over five years has only been identified in relation to a single cohort, i.e. those aged 17 during F2014. There has also been criticism that the collection of data on tertiary enrolments is limited to three single points in time at 17, 19, 21 years; as such it excludes any other enrolments in between participant's interviews/surveys and so may under-count overall engagement in tertiary education (Okpych, 2022).

Table 12 presents the available National Youth in Transition Database on tertiary education engagement both nationally and for California. However, while the sample is a little different and participants on average are six months older, Okpych (2022) augments this with data from the California CalYOUTH study as an argument for a more reliable national estimate of tertiary education engagement; this also provides an alternative estimate for California, with 57% of 21-year-olds transitioning from care currently or previously being enrolled in tertiary education[42].

[42] *It remains to be seen whether such levels of engagement translate to more qualifications, although Okpych and Courtney (2014, 2020) found in the CalYOUTH study that amongst youth transitioning from care any time in tertiary education was associated with some improved outcomes including increased earning power, when compared to those who did not spend any time in tertiary education.*

Table 12: Comparison of postsecondary enrolment rates from National Youth in Transition Database and CalYOUTH studies

	National Youth in Transition Database		California CalYOUTH study		
Age	Nationally currently enrolled	California currently enrolled	Currently enrolled	Previously enrolled since last interview	Currently enrolled **and** previously enrolled since last interview
17	3.3%	2.9%	3.9%	n/a	n/a
19	28%	36.1%	36.9%	14.8%	51.7%
21	22.2%	29%	25.5%	31.7%	57.2%

Note: Adapted from "Estimating a national college enrollment rate for youth with foster care histories using the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD): Limitations of NYTD and a call to revise and relaunch" by N Okpych, 2022, p. 12. Copyright 2022 by Routledge.

In terms of secondary and tertiary qualifications, US national data is limited as the statutory *National Youth in Transition Database* only collects data at ages 17, 19 and 21 years and as such for many youth their tertiary qualifications are excluded (e.g. four year degrees). Furthermore, full information over five years has only been identified in relation to a single cohort (aged 17 during F2014).

What we do know from this is that nationally for 70% of those aged 21 transitioning out of care, a high school diploma[43] or the GED credential[44] is their highest qualification (Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, 2020). We know that a vocational certificate, vocational license or associate degree[45] were the highest qualification at the age of 21 for 4%, 1% and 2% respectively. We also know that 21% had no secondary or tertiary qualification. However in California among all participants in the California CalYOUTH study previously mentioned (n=719), by the age of 23, the majority had enrolled in college and 9.6% had completed a (2 or 4 year) college degree (Okpych, et al., 2021).

[43] Graduated having attended and passed all the required classes in a traditional high school setting.

[44] A high school equivalency diploma gained having passed four high school tests demonstrating a similar level of knowledge.

[45] While shown as 0%, for a very small number of those transitioning from care their highest qualification was recorded as either a bachelor's degree (10) or higher degree (26).

Victoria, Australia

In Australia, both education and care[46] are state responsibilities. However, the national standards for out-of-home care (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs & National Framework Implementation Working Group, 2011) require states and territories to work to enhance children's life chances including through appropriate education; two of the eleven national OOHC standards relate specifically to education as follows:

- "Standard 6: Children and young people in care access and participate in education and early childhood services to maximise their educational outcomes" (p. 10)
- "Standard 7: Children and young people up to at least 18 years are supported to be engaged in appropriate education, training and/or employment" (p. 11).

Furthermore, while not specific to education, Standard 4 requires that "each child and young person has an individualised plan that details their health, *education* [emphasis added] and other needs" (p. 9).

Four associated performance indicators were developed and nationally agreed in relation to these three standards:

- the proportion of children and young people achieving national reading and numeracy benchmarks at year five
- the number and proportion of 3- and 4-year-old children who participate in quality early childhood education and child care services
- the proportion of young people who complete year 10 and the proportion who complete year 12 or equivalent Vocational Education & Training
- the proportion of children and young people who have a current documented case plan.

More recently, the national Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Australian Education Ministers, 2019), identifies "learners in out-of-home care" (p. 17) as one group at risk of educational disadvantage and needing targeted support as part of Australia's vision for a world class education system.

However, in Victoria the state government specifically promotes itself as the *Education State* stating that: "we're making Victoria the Education State by building an education system that produces excellence and reduces the impact of disadvantage" (Victoria State Government, 2022c, para 1); it has a range of supporting initiatives and targets in place. Certainly Victoria has led many of the *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) standardised testing programme domains[47] and year[48] categories since the programme's establishment in 2008. For example, in 2022 Victoria across all students was either the top or second top performing Australian state or territory for 15 of 20 of the domain/year categories (Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting

[46] *For consistency I generally use the term care in this section as elsewhere, although in Australia the more commonly used term for children in residential or foster care is out-of-home care.*

[47] *Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy.*

[48] *Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.*

Authority, 2022a, 2022b). While not published, according to McGaw et al. (2020), the NAPLAN programme can also identify and potentially report on all tested children who are in care.

Victoria is also taking a leading role across states and territories on the education of children in care; over recent years the Victoria government has put a range of initiatives in place on the education of children in care, spanning early childhood education through to tertiary education. There is also a strong research focus in Victoria with several key researchers with a strong interest in this area (e.g. Patricia McNamara, Sarah Wise, Andrew Harvey).

Policy framework

The policy framework in Victoria primarily consists of a state-wide interagency agreement on policy, practice, roles, responsibilities and arrangements and mechanisms specifically in relation to the education of children in out-of-home care (Victoria State Government, 2018), and a range of government funded initiatives. Victoria's particular focus on state-wide interagency partnering agreements is long-standing and goes back almost 20 years.

Relevant government care and education initiatives

- Four LOOKOUT Centres, each with a principal-led multi-disciplinary team, that advocate, monitor, advise, and build capability and capacity (Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2017, 2019; Victoria State Government, 2022-a).
- A recently introduced interagency OOHC early childhood education partnering agreement with the aim of increasing participation in universal ECE provision including Early Start Kindergarten (Victoria State Government, 2019).
- New extended out-of-home care and leaving care provision with strong education/training focus (Mendes, 2021).

Relevant non-government care and education initiatives

- Victoria Department of Education and Training-funded *Raising Expectations* tertiary education information and support partnership (Victoria State Government, 2022-b) – for more information on *Raising Expectations* see overseas exemplar in earlier section on tertiary education policy and practice.
- Various specialist education programmes and provision for children in or on the edge of care, e.g. Berry Street (Berry Street, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d) and Anglicare Victoria (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c); while not specifically for children in out-of-home care, Berry Street also operates the 200-student Berry Street School (n.d.) across four campuses.
- Seven Youth Foyers including three *Education First Youth Foyers* in mainstream education settings (Brotherhood of St Laurence, n.d.; Foyer Foundation. (n.d.).
- Four-day *Berry Street Education Model* student engagement training programme (Berry Street, n.d.-a). The model is based on the work of the Berry Street School (n.d.) with the training programme aiming to enable "teachers to increase engagement of students with complex, unmet learning

needs and to successfully improve *all* students' self-regulation, relationships, wellbeing, growth and academic achievement" (para 1); in his co-authored book *Creating Trauma-informed, Strengths-based Classrooms: Teacher Strategies for Nurturing Students' Healing, Growth, and Learning*, the training programme developer reports that more than 40,000 teachers have participated in the model (Brunzell & Norrish, 2021).

- Publication of a comprehensive education guide (pp. 57) for carers of children in OOHC *(Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, 20*19*).*

Evidence of success

Unfortunately, despite the development of national performance indicators to support the introduction of OOHC standards in 2011 referred to previously, from the latest Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022) monitoring report, nationally no comparative[49] or other data appears to have been made available for publication in relation to either of the two specific national education standards. With the exception of the one health-specific standard, data is available on all of the other national standards including that each child and young person has an individualised plan that details their health, *education* [emphasis added] and other needs. However, from a baseline measure of 89.2% in 2013, national performance on this measure has actually deteriorated rather than improved, with only 88.8% of children and young people having a current documented case plan in 2021.

What does exist in Victoria is some very promising tertiary education enrolment data, with the Victoria Department of Education and Training (2022) reporting that in 2021 there were 690 (known) care experienced students enrolled at Victoria's three Raising Expectations participating universities.[50]

However, notwithstanding this, and the plethora of other initiatives, there remain ongoing concerns in Victoria about the education of children in OOHC (Victoria Commission for Children and Young People, 2022) with the Commission currently conducting a systemic inquiry into the schooling experience of children in OOHC.

[49] *The monitoring report does include 2013 'baseline' data taken from a pre-existing Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2015) study.*

[50] *The Raising Expectations programme is a collaboration between the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, La Trobe University, Federation University Australia and Swinburne University of Technology. For more information on the programme see the Raising Expectations overseas exemplar on pages 41-42.*