

## Understanding the current use of te reo Māori in English-medium early childhood education and care settings

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### Biography

*Yvonne grew up in Cheviot, North Canterbury. Her family live in Ōtautahi, and some of her whānau also live in Whakatāne. She has been studying in Dunedin for six years, and is currently doing her Clinical Psychology training and PhD at the University of Otago. Yvonne is passionate about working with her tamariki and their whānau within both mental health and education spaces. Her research interests include children's language development, te reo Māori revitalisation, and the enhancement of children's self-regulation skills. In addition, she is currently conducting clinical interviews with adult Māori to better understand whether personality assessment questionnaires currently used within mental health settings are appropriate for Māori, and whether improvements to these measures need to be considered.*

### ABSTRACT

In response to several factors which contributed to a decline in those speaking te reo Māori, many initiatives have been implemented to actively increase this figure. One strategy was the development of targeted curriculum guidelines designed specifically to support the teaching and learning of te reo Māori in English-medium schools. Moreover, the protection and promotion of te reo Māori in formal early learning settings, such as early childhood and care centres (ECEC) is one context which has been recognised as integral for maintaining the survival of the endangered language. However, despite recent revitalisation efforts, current rates of learning te reo Māori may not be sufficient to achieve the desired language revitalisation goals.

As part of the current study, we videoed conversations between early childhood educators and tamariki (aged 17- to 24-months) during different routines. Te reo Māori was quantitatively assessed among 24 early childhood education centres throughout Aotearoa, across five ECEC routines; book time, kai time, group time, free play, and nappy change. Te reo Māori was used most often during kai time and group time and used least during nappy change and free play. While scripted te reo Māori use (e.g., karakia and waiata) were well used, opportunities for more spontaneous and complex te reo Māori use remains. Educators' self-reported ratings of te reo Māori proficiency will also be detailed. This research provides insight into the current use of te reo Māori in mainstream ECEC settings, and an enhanced understanding of early childhood educators' self-reported te reo Māori proficiency. We will include applications for practice and reflect on kaiako contributions to te reo Māori revitalisation goals within their ECEC classrooms.