Teacher Identities and the Complex Business of Early Childhood Education and Care in Aotearoa

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Abstract

This research critically examines the ways in which early childhood teachers understand and construct their teaching identities. Specifically, it examines how they understand their work, commitments, and priorities in a diverse, highly regulated, and privatised sector. The research uses a range of methods: a discourse analysis of six key national ECEC (early childhood education and care) policy texts, focus groups with ECEC teachers, interviews with centre leaders (head teachers, managers, and owners), and interviews with teacher educators. The theoretical framing of the research emphasises the construction of teachers' identities through discourse. CDA provides the methodological approach through which the research reveals and problematises the constitutive role of discourse in the construction of teacher identities. CDA is overtly political and has an emancipatory agenda. The findings of the research invite consideration of other possible ways of being a teacher and understanding teacher identities.

The findings reveal how ECEC teachers form their identities in complex ways in an uneven and competitive sector shaped by overlapping discourses and discursive practices. The policy analysis assembles seven intersecting discourses that position teachers in various and sometimes contradictory ways. The policy analysis highlights and critically examines two prevalent identities: The Professional and The Kaiako. Participants' narratives reveal inconsistent and contradictory engagements with notions of care, the ongoing bifurcation of care and education, and political and contextual nuances of how care is used to position teachers unequally. While ECEC teachers feel pressure to conform and perform to increasing regulatory expectations, they also participate in these processes as normative frameworks to judge their own and others' professionalism. Teachers are largely uncritical of the ways in which these externally imposed processes orientate values and practices and impinge on professional autonomy, illustrating a strong governing of teacher identities and practices. The historical discourses of kindergarten and childcare and the private sector's diverse and competitive nature provide influential contexts for ongoing identity negotiations. Participant experiences in different ECEC contexts give rise to three identities: The Kindergarten Teacher, The Compliant Employee, and The Entrepreneur. The research critically examines each, pointing to the constraints and opportunities present for teachers. A key concern from these findings relates to the divisions and inequities among ECEC teachers in different contexts, resulting in the exclusion of particular teachers, a lack of collective agency, and loss of advocacy in the sector.

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Glossary of Māori Terms

atua Māori	Māori gods
hapū	a hapū is made up of a number of whānau groups and is a form of subtribe
iwi	extended kinship group - tribe
kaiako	teacher
kaupapa (Māori)	Māori approaches to language, customs, knowledge, principles, ideology and agenda
kōrero	talk, discuss
mana	status
mātua	parents
mauri	life force
mokopuna	grandchild
pākehā	New Zealander of European decent
raranga	weaving
tamariki	children
tangata Tiriti	people of the Treaty (literal), non-indigenous New Zealanders who are in the country by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi.
tangata whenua	people of the land (literal), indigenous people
te ao mārama	the world of life and light, this world, Earth
te kore	the realm of potential being, The Void
te pō	the realm of darkness, night
te reo (Māori)	the Māori language
tikanga (Māori)	Māori ways of doing, including practices, customs and rituals
tino rangatiratanga	self-determination
tīpuna	ancestors
wairua	spirituality
whakataukī	proverb
whakawhānaungatanga	the process of relationship building
whānau	family

List of Abbreviations

CDA	critical discourse analysis
COI	Centres of Innovation
DA	discourse analysis
DOPs	desirable objectives and practices
ECANZ	Education Council Aotearoa NZ
ECC	Early Childhood Council
ECE	early childhood education
ECEC	early childhood education and care
EL	early learning
ELS	early learning service
ERO	Education Review Office
HCT	human capital theory
MoE	Ministry of Education
NZCA	New Zealand National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZEI	New Zealand Education Institute
NZK	New Zealand Kindergartens
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCT	public choice theory
RIE	Resources for Infant Educarers
TE	teacher educators
TECANZ	Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand
UAHPEC	University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

Chapter 1. Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore ECEC (early childhood education and care) teacher identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter Aotearoa). The overarching contexts of ECEC are a significant factor in undertaking the research. ECEC is a diverse sector which, for the last 3 decades, has been the focus of intense government attention and regulation, rapid professionalisation and large-scale expansion of the private sector. Teachers work in a wide range of different settings from community-based kindergartens and education and care centres (EC centres), to small owner-operator private centres and large corporate operations. Government subsidies and increased demand have made ECEC a viable business opportunity. The private sector, which includes a large corporate presence, has grown exponentially. The changing ECEC landscape, including the shifting political terrain, has been the focus of much scholarship (Duncan et al., 2007; Farquhar & Gibbons, 2019; May, 2014; Mitchell, 2005, 2015; Stuart, 2018), but surprisingly few research projects have focused on the impact on teacher identities (Dalli, 2012a; Duhn, 2010; Farquhar, 2010; Warren, 2014). In this research, teacher identities are understood as a key organising element in teachers' professional lives, providing a framework with which teachers know how to be, how to act, and how to understand (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This research contributes to the ECEC landscape by offering a heightened understanding of how external contexts (global, national and centre level) impact on teacher identities—that is, how teachers understand themselves and their work within a business/economic context. It is hoped that examining the ways that teacher identities are influenced by, and interact within, these contexts will contribute to teachers' self-understanding and inform how they respond to their positioning in the sector and the potential opportunities and constraints that result.

This chapter introduces the research starting with how I arrived at the research topic and my positioning within the project. Two key concepts, *identities* and *discourse*, underpin the research. These are introduced and followed by an explanation of the research design. Next, a contextual overview of the current ECEC sector is provided. The teacher participants for this research were located in kindergartens or ECEC centres, both community based and private. The distinct histories of these two settings continue to influence understandings of teachers and can be traced in the narratives of participants. They also inform many of the policy

developments that have impacted the sector. A brief history of two services is presented to provide background to these aspects of the research. The chapter ends with an overview of the organisation of the thesis.

Research Problem

The genesis of the research comes from my observations and experiences working as a teacher, and later as a teacher educator (TE) in an evolving and dynamic sector. Undoubtedly, my career has been the result of the political attention to and growth of the ECEC sector. I began by studying for a Diploma of Teaching (ECE), a new qualification resulting from the integration of care and education services under the umbrella of the Department of Education in 1986. Two years before I enrolled, the policy advisory document *Education to be More* (Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group [ECCEWG], 1988) made the case for an increasingly unified sector in terms of regulations, qualifications and funding (Tyler-Merrick et al., 2018). Internationally this was considered progressive, a significant step towards dismantling the false dichotomy between care and education and the existing two-tiered system of kindergartens and childcare services (Moss, 2006). As a result, kindergarten teachers and childcare workers were now thought of, in policy terms at least, as early childhood teachers. Both spaces were considered to be equally about care and education—a potentially new orientation for teachers in both settings. I finished my teacher education, a newly minted early childhood teacher, just a few years before the release of the ground-breaking *Te Whāriki—He Whāriki Mātauranga Mo Ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa—Early Childhood Curriculum* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1996c). *Te Whāriki* made a clear political statement about the bicultural and democratic potential of ECEC. It influenced my understanding of teaching work enormously and was foundational to my sense of what it meant to be a teacher in Aotearoa. I worked as an ECEC teacher in a range of settings during a decade of increasingly centralised policy governing the sector, and enormous sector growth. My teaching job description was also changing. I no longer just needed to worry about my everyday work with children and families. Assessment of learning, planning and evaluation, strategic planning and review entered the lexicon of new professional tasks that defined my work. In 2002, *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki: 2002–2012: A 10-Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education* (MoE, 2002) set out a plan for professionalising the sector including a timeline for a fully qualified sector. This policy undoubtedly led to an opportunity for me to move into teacher education 2 years later, as numbers in teacher education programmes swelled in response to demand for qualified

teachers. Frustratingly, the incoming National government retrenched many of the gains made in *Pathways* (including reducing the requirement for qualified teachers to 50%). My work in teacher education allowed me to visit student-teachers in a wide range of ECEC centres, where I observed the impact of professionalisation and sector growth first hand. Over time, the changes to provision and the impact of a competitive market in ECEC have been striking. In particular, the dominance of privately owned centres has become undeniable. In 2002, 55% of EC services were privately owned; by 2019 the proportion had risen to 71% (Education Counts, 2019b). Corporate ECEC is now a dominant feature of the landscape, especially in Auckland.

The interest in this research came about as a result of my own teaching experiences, watching new teachers move into a sector that is markedly different from the one I started in and noticing the impact of their teaching environments. ECEC teachers work in an increasingly diverse, complex and highly regulated sector shaped by overlapping discourses including those of governments, ECEC markets and communities. This research is motivated by a commitment to contribute to improving conditions for teachers by identifying and critically examining how current contexts and influences shape their understandings of their work and themselves as teachers (their teaching identities), and the opportunities and constraints such a complex and evolving landscape presents. Urban (2010) suggests that teacher identity is a key organising element in how teachers make sense of their work; based on this, I developed the following research questions.

Research Questions

The main question for this research is

> How do ECEC teachers understand and construct their teacher identities?

The sub questions which guided the research design are

> What discourses can be identified in ECEC policies, and what are the implications of these for teacher identities?
>
> How do centre leaders and initial teacher educators understand teachers and their work, and how might these understandings enable or constrain teacher identities?

Current Contexts—Early Childhood Education and Care in Aotearoa

This section provides an overview of the current ECEC sector in order to give context to the research, and to introduce some key terms that are used to organise and describe the sector in

its present form. ECEC in Aotearoa is not compulsory, but by the time they start school (usually on the day they turn 5) most children will have participated in some form of ECEC (Education Counts, 2019a). Since there is no state provision of ECEC, all services are either *community-based* or *privately owned*. Community-based services include kindergartens under the umbrella of New Zealand Kindergartens (NZK); incorporated societies; charitable, statutory, or community trusts; or centres owned by community organisations such as a city council, university or church. These services do not make a profit for any one person or company. Financial gains are returned to the organisation to benefit the service. Private services are defined as owned by a private company, publicly listed company, private trust, partnership, or an individual owner-operator (Education Counts, 2019b). Private services are able to make financial gains and distribute these to their members. There is no difference between how community-based and privately owned centres are funded. However, while community-based services are required to provide a full financial report to the Ministry of Education on their financial performance, privately owned centres need only report on the funding received by the Ministry of Education, meaning that other revenue (including attendance fees) is unaccounted for in the public domain (Mitchell, 2019).

In addition, ECEC services in Aotearoa are licensed as *teacher-led* or *parent/whānau-led*. In teacher-led services at least 50% of the adults working with children must have an ECEC qualification and registration. The benchmark qualification is a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education), a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education), or an equivalent early childhood teaching qualification at Level 7 or above recognised by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand [TECANZ]. Teacher-led services include kindergartens and education and care services (ECEC services). In parent/whānau-led services, parents and whānau (extended family) are primarily responsible for the care and education programmes of the service. These include Playcentre and Te Kōhanga Reo. While acknowledging the important contribution that parent/whānau-led services make to the ECEC landscape, this research focuses on teachers in kindergartens and ECEC services. Table 1.1 presents an overview of the different ECEC services, the type of programme offered, and ownership models.

Table 1.1

Overview of ECEC Services in Aotearoa(adapted from Tyler-Merrick et al., 2018; Education Counts, 2019b, 2019c)

License type	Service type	Programme	Ownership and management structures	Number of services in 2019	Percentage of current Sector	Number of teachers in service in 2019
Teacher-led	Kindergarten	Usually cater for 3–5-year-olds. Traditionally sessional but often school-day sessions	Community-based Managed by 29 regional kindergarten associations under the umbrella organisation New Zealand Kindergarten Association	654	14%	990
	Education and care services [ECEC services]	Birth to 5 years Mix of full-day and sessional programmes. Include different philosophies and approaches including Montessori, Steiner, Reggio, RIE, as well as Māori and Pacific immersion settings	Community-based and private	2,670 779 community-based 1,890 private	57%	5,303
	Home-based services	Birth to 5 years Part and full-day programmes	Community-based and private	453 35 community-based 418 private	10%	315
Parent/ whānau-led	Playcentre	Usually 2–5-year-olds Sessional programmes	Community-based. Individual Playcentres are cooperatively managed by parents, and supported by the umbrella organisation: Playcentre Aotearoa	403	>10%	n/a
	Te Kōhanga Reo	Birth to 5 years School-day or full-day programmes. The core mission of Te Kōhanga Reo is to revive and sustain Māori language and culture	Community-based. Individual kōhanga are cooperatively managed by whānau under the umbrella organisation: National Kōhanga Reo Trust	444	10%	n/a

Kindergarten Teachers and Childcare Workers

The teachers and centre leaders who participated in the research were all currently employed in either a kindergarten or an ECEC centre. Many of the participants had worked across services at different points in their careers. The historical positionings of kindergarten and ECEC centres continue to strongly shape the identities for the teachers in this research. As mentioned above, bringing childcare services under the auspices of the Department of Education was intended to end the false dichotomy between education and care that had arisen out of the separate histories of childcare and kindergarten (Dalli, 2012b). The success of this policy goal has been significantly undermined by continuing fluctuations in government support for ECEC which have endured a pattern of policy gains and retrenchments (Mitchell, 2019). Childcare services

(now referred to as ECEC services) had emerged from a history of caring for “needy” children and later, as a service to working mothers. Kindergarten had developed from a tradition more directly aligned with the benefits of preschool education and the ideas of Froebel (May, 2019). The distinct foundations of these two services set influential discursive conditions in which participants negotiated their own identities, and attributed identities to others. The histories of the two services leading up to policy developments in the late 1980s are briefly revisited here because they are relevant to the statements and discursive moves that occur in the policy texts examined in Chapter 4 and echoed in the experiences and positioning of teacher participants reported on in later chapters.

In the 1980s, childcare workers were typically minimally qualified. Childcare services were not required to have qualified teachers until 1986, and then only in the supervisory role. Caring for young children was still largely associated with mothering and the marginalised status of motherhood impacted on the status of childcare workers (May Cook, 1985). Arguments for the potential benefits of childcare, for women and children, emerged from the women’s rights movement. These collided with developing and existing ideas around attachment and maternal deprivation, the role of the women in the home and the psychological welfare of children, which positioned childcare as harmful. May (2019) writes that conversations about childcare at that time were “controversial and emotive” (p. 55). Many working women sought private childcare arrangements, keeping debates about childcare in the private domain. However, a growing number of both commercial and community childcare services relied on a combination of attendance fees and a small amount of government funding. Low wages, poor work conditions, low status, and high staff turnover were (and still are) key problems for the childcare sector. The combination of a growing and underregulated childcare sector alongside liberation politics of the time effectively set the scene for an increasingly organised and politicised workforce advocating for better training, better pay and more recognition for their work (May, 2019). These voices impacted significantly on policy developments in the 1980s, including *Education to be More* (ECCEWG, 1988) and *Before Five* (Lange, 1988), both of which rejected differences in purpose and status across the sector. In later years, the rise of the private and corporate sector, fluctuations and reversals in government support for ECEC services, including for qualification levels and work conditions, have meant that many teachers not in kindergarten are left to negotiate their salaries and work conditions on their own

through individual employment contracts, without the collective backing of their union which made a difference in the mid-80s.

In contrast, kindergarten had emerged from a history of middle-class charitable and philanthropic endeavours, as well as the pedagogical influences of Froebel who emphasised the role of play in facilitating children's development. The kindergarten movement evolved from providing educational opportunities to the inner-city poor to becoming "a politically acceptable preschool education service for all children" (May, 2019, p. 2). A part of the acceptance of kindergarten as a place for middle-class children can be attributed to the decline in domestic servants in Aotearoa after World War II. May (2013) comments that the demand for kindergarten grew once middle-class women could no longer leave their children in the care of someone else in their own homes. Equally as influential were postwar ideas that psychologically healthy children were critical to the establishment of a peaceful society. The science of child psychology, with its intense focus on child development, was viewed as the key to understanding children and their developmental needs and these views were embraced by kindergarten teachers.

Responding to the middle-class acceptance that kindergarten was important to children's development and education, kindergarten became fully state funded in 1948, and kindergarten teachers became state employees. All kindergarten teachers undertook a 2-year training programme, initially in separate kindergarten colleges, reflecting a commitment to training and qualifications that continues to distinguish the kindergarten movement. Unlike childcare workers, kindergarten teachers were not positioned as substitute mothers or merely as custodians of children. Instead, with their expertise in pedagogy and child development, kindergarten teachers were seen as valuable assets in assisting mothers to produce well-adjusted and productive citizens. Traditionally, kindergarten teacher training was assumed to be particularly desirable for middle-class girls as a suitable career before marriage, and as good preparation for motherhood (May, 2019). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, kindergarten teachers were becoming more political and found more in common with the politics of their childcare counterparts. Kindergarten teachers become, "a significant voice in shaping the politics of early childhood education" (May, 2019, p. 164). The history of the kindergarten movement has contributed to a distinct traditional kindergarten culture which Duncan (2007) identifies as being built on the "founding philosophies and principles" of kindergarten including three key elements:

> first, fees were not charged for attendance ... second, trained and qualified teachers were employed; and third, parents and caregivers were involved in the running of the service. (p. 324)

Kamenarac (2019) adds that kindergarten culture also includes kindergarten "teachers being politically active through their union, and advocating for others—children, families, other teaching professionals and the profession" (p. 204) and notes that this aspect of kindergarten culture is significantly supported because of the nature of the collective employment contracts in kindergarten negotiated through participation in the union and union activism.

Political, social, psychological and pedagogical postwar influences drove the development of the kindergarten and childcare movements leading up to 1986. This brief overview reveals a number of tensions that are implicated in the subsequent policies of ECEC and continue to contribute to current understandings of ECEC teacher identities. The division between "care" and "education" services in 1986 was evident. The low status of childcare workers reflected the low status given to the unpaid care work of mothers and public apprehension that childcare was harmful to children. The contributions of women to the paid workforce competed with ideas about the importance of raising children in the home. Paradoxically, the importance given to the early years of a child's life in the postwar discourse of child psychology and child development studies enabled kindergarten teachers to position their work through an educational lens, and as important to the maintenance of a peaceful and healthy society. Relationships between childcare workers, kindergarten teachers and parents were also constructed through these competing narratives—one as an ally and an educator, and one as a paid worker.

Identities and Discourse

In this research, teacher identities are understood to be an organising framework for how teachers understand themselves and their work, including their positioning in the education sector, their commitments and priorities as teachers and what is important in terms of practice. Gee (2018) defines identity as "a way of being in the world connected to special ways of doing and knowing" (p. 76). ECEC teacher identities are distinct in that they focus on what it means to be an early childhood teacher. Gee proposes that teaching is an activity-based identity and points out that

> activity-based identities are not IN a person. They are a reciprocal relationship between a person and a social group and its core defining features. Such identities change in history as groups change their activities, norms, values and standards. (p. 74)

Therefore, a teacher identity is not something that someone has but is something that someone does repeatedly, and becomes continually. Language plays a powerful role in this ongoing process. This research explores the role of language in ECEC teachers' identity constructions by focusing on discourse: historically specific sets of values, beliefs and knowledge that shape our understandings of the world (Mac Naughton, 2005). A fuller discussion of identities and discourse occurs in the next chapter but key ideas are introduced below.

Discourse features in the research in two ways: Firstly, the dominant discourses that inflect and shape the sector are examined, and secondly participants' language is examined in relation to how they: negotiate their identities, position some identities as the accepted "norm" in particular contexts, and, to consider what discourses and identities may be marginalised or silenced (Chan & Perkins, 2015). The ECEC sector, globally and nationally, is imbued with discourses that work to generate and claim understandings of ECEC. These discourses can be particularly powerful when they have an institutional basis such as when they are mandated through policy documents. Dominant discourses are naturalised over time and become taken-for-granted knowledge, generating a persuasive consensus for what it means to be a teacher (Locke, 2004; Mac Naughton, 2005). The discourses that pervade and shape the sector can become normative and used to classify, categorise and organise individuals and groups (Locke, 2004). They produce and regulate how we understand ourselves and others, and the practices and purposes of being an ECEC teacher and, as Chan and Ritchie (2020) warn, can be "uncritically performed by practitioners" (p. 225). The complex landscape of ECEC outlined earlier gives rise to shifting, overlapping and sometimes antagonistic discursive contexts. Teachers negotiate their identities by taking up, resisting or innovating a position in response to these and are able to construct dynamic, multiple and even opposing identities (Gee, 2014a; Baxter, 2016). Identities are also established relationally. By constructing some ways of being, acting and representing ECEC teachers as the norm, in opposition or contrast to others, identities are established through the processes of inclusion and exclusion (Gee, 2018; Weedon, 2004). The concepts of classifying, positioning, inclusion and exclusion are key to understanding how identities are constructed in response to discourse. This research used

critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the role that discourse plays in shaping teacher identities, and to "render the norms and hierarchies of discourses visible" (Chan & Ritchie, 2020, p. 225) in order to disrupt power relations and open up spaces for multiple and more inclusive ways of being a teacher.

Research Design

The research is a qualitative investigation into how ECEC teachers understand and construct their identities. The research methods employed include examination and analysis of six key policy texts from different eras of ECEC policy; focus groups with eight qualified early childhood teachers; individual interviews with 13 centre owners and managers, and five TEs. Analysis of the policy texts and transcripts generated through focus group and interview processes was undertaken using discourse analysis (DA) or, more specifically, CDA. Research using DA is premised on the understanding that language builds meaning in the world, rather than merely describing it and involves the analysis of discourse represented in texts in order to reveal the often-covert ways that discourse works to influence and shape understandings, in this case of teacher identities. Research using CDA goes further, by arguing that all language is political and results in effects that can be identified such as the kinds of teacher identities that are privileged or marginalised (Fairclough, 2013). A goal of CDA is to identify the norms and hierarchies of discourse, opening them up to critical examination, creating possibilities for heightened understanding and change. The policies and transcripts were analysed using a set of nine tools adapted from Gee's (2014a, 2014b) work in DA. Each tool focuses on a different way that meaning is constructed in language, revealing the discourses and the discursive practices that are accepted and come to function as truths about teachers and their work. Chapter 3 provides a detailed overview of the research methods employed, CDA as a methodological approach to the research, and the steps and tools of analysis.

Language Choices in the Research

I use the phrase *early childhood education and care* (ECEC) to refer to any licensed early childhood service for children before they go to school. The choice acknowledges the inseparable nature of education and care for the children and teachers who spend their time in kindergartens and ECEC centres. The displacement of care and the educationalisation of the sector and the impact of this on teacher identities are themes in the research. A number of terms are used in official documents in Aotearoa; the most common of which is *early childhood education* (ECE). More recently, the Ministry of Education has taken up *early learning services*

(ELS) as a nomenclature. The disappearance of the words “education” and “care” in how we name the sector is, for me, a reflection of the low status and marginalisation of both as a valued part of teachers’ professional work. The use of ECEC is a small resistance to this movement.

Similarly, the naming of teachers in the ECEC sector is inconsistent and political. Various terms have tried to capture both the diversity of individuals that work in ECEC centres and the specific nature of the work. Teachers have been (and are) variously called teachers, workers, caregivers, staff, adults, carers, practitioners and educarers. Each one of these is problematic for what it says or does not say about the work and professional standing of ECEC teachers. In 2017, *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) adopted the term *kaiako*, the simplest definition of which is teacher. In *Te Whāriki*, however, kaiako is used to refer to any adult that works with children in an ECEC setting (MoE, 2017). Therefore, the kaiako of *Te Whāriki* is not necessarily a qualified teacher. The nomenclature kaiako has the potential to act as a unifying title that expresses a collective identity unique to teachers in Aotearoa. However, I am reluctant to use the term here because of the lack of collective dialogue and shared understanding about who a kaiako is. I use the words *teacher* or *ECEC teacher* primarily to refer to the qualified teachers that are the focus of the research but also to refer to unqualified individuals who are employed in teaching positions, all the while acknowledging the inadequacies of language to capture dynamics in the sector.

Finally, Aotearoa is used to acknowledge Māori as the indigenous people of this land, and the partnership arrangements in Te Tiriti o Waitangi between Māori and the British Crown representing all tangata Tiriti (people who are here due to agreements in Te Tiriti) to govern the land together.

Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is made up of nine chapters. This introductory chapter overviews the research problem by asking how teachers construct their identities in a dynamic and diverse sector. This chapter positions the research in the unique landscape of ECEC in Aotearoa including briefly revisiting the historical positioning of two distinct ECEC services that are central to the research—kindergartens and ECEC centres. It introduces the concept of identity as it is employed in the research and the influence of discourse on identity is highlighted.

Chapter 2 begins by examining the underpinning concepts of identity and discourse. The relationship between discourse and identity is explored, focusing on how discourse constructs particular ways of being to which teachers must conform in order to be recognised (Chan & Perkins, 2015). The chapter then examines the literature and the prevailing national and global discourses that construe the purpose of ECEC and the work of teachers in particular ways. It identifies three broad sets of discourse: 1) neoliberal discourse including public choice theory, privatisation and human capital theory (HCT); 2) democratic discourse including discussion about the opportunities and limitations of *Te Whāriki* in providing a local example of democratic discourse; and 3) discourses of care, including the ways they enable and constrain teacher identities.

Chapter 3 locates the research within the qualitative paradigm, overviews the research methods and introduces CDA as the methodological approach used to examine the political effects of the constitutive role that discourse plays in shaping ECEC teachers' identities. The specific tools and steps for analysis are explained. My own positioning and subjectivity are discussed followed by discussion of ethical considerations and research limitations.

Chapter 4, the first of five findings chapters, is a CDA of six key policy texts from different eras of ECEC policy. The analysis uncovers seven prevalent discourses: quality, human capital; social investment; innovation; privatisation; biculturalism; and democratic participation. Each of these discourses, and the ways they compete and assemble, are examined in relation to how they position teachers. Two prevalent teacher identities that emerge from the analysis are examined: The Professional Teacher and The Kaiako.

The next four chapters in the thesis report and analyse findings emerging from the CDA of focus groups and individual interviews with teachers, centre leaders and TEs. Chapter 5 illuminates inconsistent and contradictory engagements with notions of care in the participants' discussions about teaching work. This chapter also reveals the discursive investment made by teachers and TEs in the relational discourses of *Te Whāriki*, points to marginalisation of care tasks associated with children's bodies and the negative implications for teachers' status and identities when these tasks are visible parts of their work. Chapter 6 identifies the growing influence of performative policy technologies on teachers' work. This chapter discusses the implications for some participants' active (and seemingly uncritical) participation in these processes, and how such activities contributed to their sense of

credibility and status. Chapter 7 examines teacher identities in the context of the kindergarten service, revealing the ways that kindergarten is positioned and perpetuated as a privileged service across the participant groups. Kindergarten teachers were frequently represented as having an enhanced status and distinct identity from which some participants felt excluded. The ongoing influence of the historical discourses of kindergarten, and their intersection with policy initiatives to privatise, professionalise and educationalise the sector are discussed as influences on kindergarten teacher identities. Chapter 8 turns to participant discussions about the private sector. The diversity of private provision, and the associated range of opportunities and experiences for teachers as a result is acknowledged. The influence of neoliberal discourse, in particular the values of freedom of choice, competition and entrepreneurship, are identified through participant narratives. Two prevalent teacher identities emerged from participant discussions about the private sector. These are The Compliant Employee and The Entrepreneur. The implications, opportunities and constraints of these identities are examined. Chapter 8 also illuminates how differences between teachers are intensified through the processes of classification, inclusion and exclusion that emerge from participant interviews and focus groups. Perceived hierarchies between teachers are highlighted, based on a range of factors including ethnicity, language and socioeconomic status.

The final chapter summarises the research, highlighting and discussing key findings and the contributions of the thesis to the scholarship. Implications for the sector, policy and initial teacher education are suggested, as well as directions for future research.

Chapter 2. Teacher Identities and Discourse in Early Childhood Education and Care

This research employs discourse as a theoretical framework for examining the field of ECEC in relation to teacher identities. The concept of discourse is applied in two ways. The first, addressed in this chapter through a review of literature, refers to the dominant discourses that pervade the sector and seek to dominate understandings of ECEC and teachers. The second focuses on how teachers use language to position themselves in relation to discourse and construct their identities. The first section of this chapter discusses the performative and constructive elements of discourse, and the ways in which discourse influences teachers' identities. Next, through an examination of the literature, a range of dominant global and national discourses that pervade understandings of ECEC and constitute teachers in particular ways are presented.

Identities and Discourse

This research investigates the ways that teachers perceive and construct their teacher identities through their own discourse (the way they use language) and in interaction with other discourses about ECEC, teachers and teaching. Theories which emphasise the construction of identity through language underpin the research (Baxter, 2016; de Fina et al., 2006; Gee, 2018). The meanings and knowledge that are drawn on to understand the purposes of ECEC and the work of teachers are understood to be a result of discourse. Gee (2018) argues that identities and discourses are opposite sides of the same coin: "Identity is someone enacting a discourse, and discourse is a historical process and set way with words deeds, and things that allow people to enact socially recognisable identities" (p. 132). Discourse as a theoretical concept that underpins the research is defined first, followed by a discussion on the role of discourse in the construction of identities.

Discourses are historically and contextually specific ways of talking about and representing the world. However, more than just reflecting the world, discourses actively create it. They can be understood as both *productive* in that they contribute to the shaping of thoughts, ideas, values, identities and relationships and *regulatory*, framing what it is possible to think, feel, understand and practise (R. Rogers, 2011). Fairclough (2010) defines discourse as a social practice "not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (p. 19). Discourses significantly influence how we

understand ourselves and our world by privileging some meanings, values and beliefs and excluding other interpretations or views. Discourses and their resulting discursive practices act as sets of rules and behaviours, defining how it is possible to think, act, speak and understand.

Discourses are most powerful when they have an institutional basis. The discourses of ECEC are located in several forms of institutions including education, the organisation of family and work, and more recently the economy (Stuart, 2018). Each of these are framed by particular ideologies or world views which influence the kinds of discourses they create and distribute. Within and between these institutional contexts, different ways of understanding the world exist. They vie for the power and status of becoming the “real” version—the version that becomes accepted as common-sense through which individuals come to organise their understanding of the world, and their position in it (Locke, 2004). When discourses become dominant, the truths they project become understood as the “natural and immutable essences of the world and of people” (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012, p. 33) rather than as particular constructions of reality. Officially sanctioned truths become woven together in what Foucault (1984) called regimes of truth that work to discipline and regulate (govern) behaviour. These, in turn, have consequences in terms of privilege, status, access to resources and decision making (Gee, 2014b).

From this perspective, discourse, knowledge and power are intimately connected (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). The power of discourse lies in the ability to assert particular forms of knowledge as legitimate while at the same time undermining and marginalising others. Knowledge can be seen as an instrument of power because of the ways in which it influences perceptions of reality (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). In ECEC, for example, the influence of developmental discourse, articulated in developmental theory, has become a dominant way to understand children. As a discourse it has been critiqued extensively (Cannella, 2002; Mac Naughton, 2005). Developmental truths have produced “developmentally appropriate” early childhood programmes and understandings of children as normal or needing interventions. They position the work of ECEC teachers as being to facilitate and maximise children’s developmental growth (Mac Naughton, 2005). These truths are given an institutional base promoted by international bodies, governments, and governing bodies, in the form of curriculums and policies defining best practice. The growth of developmental theory as a dominant discourse has been traced by authors such as Bloch (1992) and Cannella (2002) who point to the ways it governs the sector

by constructing what is possible to think, act and do, and marginalises other ways of understanding children.

Individuals position and govern themselves within these discursive regimes, acting and interacting from within the constraints and possibilities of the discourse, and constructing their views, ideas, behaviour and meanings through them (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Mac Naughton, 2005). These responses can include resistance and even innovation—constructing alternative discourses and possibilities. For example, Warren's (2014) research about newly qualified ECEC teachers identifies a number of discourses that position teachers and their work in conflicting ways. Warren identifies a relational professionalism discourse that positions teachers as "committed to and skilled in warm, trusting and positive professional relationships" (p. 130). She also identifies an authority discourse which positions teachers as "knowledgeable, professional and skilled within hierarchical professional relationships" (p. 130). Warren finds that these dominant discourses constrained how the ECEC teachers in her research thought about their work and themselves, and limited their ability to critically reflect on their work.

Dominant discourses exist in relation to the counter-discourses they seek to marginalise. Counter-discourses may be less powerful, particularly if they do not have the authority of an institutional basis, but the extent to which they are available to individuals also offers a different discursive space from which to negotiate realities, practices and identities. Within and between competing discourses and practices, teachers are offered a range of ways of understanding themselves, and their work. These discursive contexts, and the ways that they collide, compete or assemble, contribute to determining "the pervasiveness and persuasiveness of what comes to be accepted as legitimised ways of behaving and being" as an ECEC teacher (Osgood, 2012, p. 28). The ways in which power consolidates in discourse, and the implications that this has for how teachers negotiate identities, can be exposed and problematised by adopting a critical approach to discourse (Osgood, 2012).

Drawing on the understanding that discourse is a way of representing, acting and being (Fairclough, 2013), an analysis of discourse can systematically examine the structure of language and uncover the various ways in which we imbue language with meaning in particular contexts and for specific purposes (Gee, 2011, 2014b). Gee (2011) argues that all language use is political and all forms of DA should seek to understand language practices in terms of their implications for political and social goods: things such as power, status, solidarity, and

resources (Gee, 2011). A key purpose of CDA is to speak to, challenge and even intervene in institutional discourses by exposing and interrupting them, highlighting marginalised discourse and creating spaces for other ways of speaking and acting.

Discourse in the Construction of Identities

In this research, discourse is understood as a major constitutive force that shapes teacher identities. The work of Gee (2011, 2014a, 2014b, 2018) and others (Baxter, 2008, 2016; de Fina et al., 2006; Weedon, 1997) have been useful in theorising the processes of identity construction in response to discourse. The processes of recognition and enactment in discourse, classification, positioning, inclusion and exclusion are foundational to the ways in which identity construction in this research is understood.

Recent scholarship views identity as a process that is always embedded in social practices within which discourse has a central role (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012; Fairclough, 2010). There is disagreement in the literature as to whether identities are constructed solely in discourse (Baxter, 2016; Weedon, 1997) or whether discourse is one significant factor among others (de Fina et al., 2006; Fairclough, 2003). Taking a poststructural stance, Baxter (2008) argues that there are "no forms of knowledge that can be separated from the structures, conventions and conceptuality of language as inscribed within discourse" (p. 46). Fairclough (2010), however, contends that DA should focus on the relationship between discourse and "other objects, elements, or moments" (p. 4). Regardless, there is strong agreement that discourse is pivotal to identity construction.

As vehicles of ideology and power, discourses produce homogenous categories (perceptions, behaviours, characteristics, values, etc.) with the intent to define the reality and identities of individuals, and play down, pathologise or silence differences (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012). These imposed characteristics, to the degree that they are accepted or encounter resistance, become naturalised as the status quo. Particular discursive constructions are taken up, actively or passively, by the individuals they target because they come to be seen as natural and desirable ways of being; and to be constituted outside of them as unnatural and undesirable (de Fina et al., 2006). This aligns with Gee's (2014b) proposition that discourses are matters of enactment and recognition:

> If you put language, actions, interactions, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools and places together in such a way that others recognise you as a particular type of *who*

> (identity), engaged in a particular type of *what* (activity), here and now, then you have pulled off a Discourse. (p. 52)

Strategically, taking up a position within a discourse is one way that individuals get recognised because of the power associated with how particular identities become accepted as the norm in particular contexts (Gee, 2018). Gee (2011) adds that individuals can be recognised in "multiple ways, in partial ways, in contradictory ways, in disputed ways, in negotiable ways and so on and so forth" (p. 38). In addition, the capacity to include and exclude is an important part of how identities, as representations, function. Weedon (2004) points out that identities are always constantly being defined in "a relation of difference to what they are not … All identities have their 'others' from which they mark their differences" (p. 19). ECEC teachers' positioning in discourse, including the enactment of discursive practices and ways of being, is one way that they can be recognised and through which they can judge and exclude others (Weedon, 2004).

However, processes of categorisation, homogenisation, inclusion and exclusion are always at stake and subject to resistance and innovations (de Fina et al., 2006). They can be interrupted, disputed or resisted by different means: by those acting under different/rival ideological discourses; because of the ways in which individuals are positioned within multiple discourses; and/or because of the unique mix of personal and professional experiences and commitments each teacher brings with them (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012). Osgood's (2012) research, for example, shows the ways in which ECEC teachers drew on the personal histories and subjective experiences to create counter-discourses to the hegemonic constructions of professionalism imposed on them through policy. Their discursive positioning in their immediate contexts (the ECEC centres they worked in) also played a significant role in shaping how they conceptualised their own teacher identities.

The degree of agency ECEC teachers have in constructing their own professional identities depends on the discursive, historical and institutional resources they have at their disposal including from within their localised networks of practice such as their immediate places of employment (Osgood, 2012). Davies (2004) defines agency as the capacity of individuals to identify, understand, reflect on and challenge the discourses in which they are constructed, to choose from the multiple options available and even to innovate. Therefore, identities can be constituted in imposed discourses *and* individuals have the ability to contest this imposition, to

intervene actively in the shaping of their own identities. This bidirectional view of agency is explained by de Fina et al. (2006):

> On one hand, historical, sociocultural forces in the form of dominant discourses or master narratives position speakers in their situated practices and construct who they are without their agentive involvement. On the other hand, speakers position themselves as constructive and interactive agents and choose the means by which they construct their identities vis-à-vis others as well as vis-à-vis dominant discourses and master narratives. (p. 7)

The processes of identity construction described above are positional and strategic. They highlight the "locally occasioned, fluid and ever-changing nature" of identity (p. 3). For this reason, in this research the plural, *identities* is primarily used. This perspective of identity reveals an orientation to identities that is necessarily antiessentialist. Identity, influenced by a shifting, often intersecting and antagonistic set of discursive conditions and practices is not unified, or stable (Gibson, 2015). Teachers may construct or negotiate different identities, and take on a number of roles, including contradictory ones, depending on the discursive, historical and sociocultural resources upon which they draw at different times and in different contexts. Teachers' identities are "constantly shaped, reshaped and adapted" (Soreide, 2006, p. 545) through the various discourses about teaching available to them and are understood as contingent, fragile and open to reconstruction (Thomas, 2012).

Uses of Discourse in this Thesis

This chapter identifies some of the dominant discourses that circulate through the ECEC sector and contribute to which (and why) specific ECEC teacher identities are more recognisable and legitimate than others in particular contexts. Locke (2004) describes these as "sense making stories" (p. 5). In ECEC, there are many sense making stories that include, among many others, stories about the benefits and purposes of ECEC, and the kinds of teachers that best serve these. Moss (2013) for example, points to a story of "high quality and high returns" as a dominant story told globally about ECEC:

> The dominant narrative says, in a nutshell, that ECEC brings high returns on investment, including improved education, employment and earnings (the "human capital argument"), and reduction in a range of social problems. ECEC is the answer to both individual and national survival in a highly competitive world and to ameliorating the casualties of that same world—a sort of modern-day philosopher's stone. (p. 370)

As a powerful dominant discourse that looms large across the ECEC sector, human capital discourse will be examined further, later in the chapter. However, in relation to its power as a meaning-making story, Moss (2014) argues that "Whenever particular stories come to crowd out others, when they come to dominate the field, we need to not only interrogate these stories critically but also ask why they get to be so influential" (p. 60). The participants in this research are located in and through these dominant discourses which are part of the discursive resources they draw on to negotiate their teacher identities. Identifying and problematising the dominant discourses that shape the sector, contribute to understandings about the discursive contexts in which teachers negotiate their identities.

Later in the thesis, the use of discourse shifts from the macro and dominant discourses that shape the ECEC sector to focus on the language used in policy texts, and by the research participants, in specific contexts to establish particular meanings. CDA is employed to examine how teachers are positioned in policy through discourse, and how participants positioned themselves and others. In line with the critical goals of CDA, the political effects of such negotiations are a fundamental part of this examination.

The remainder of this chapter overviews some of the dominant discourses that pervade the ECEC sector with implications for how ECEC teachers are positioned and can conceive their identities. The section begins with an overview of neoliberalism and its influence on re/defining the purposes and practices of ECEC, nationally and globally. Under neoliberalism, three particular discourses significantly impact on possibilities for understanding ECEC identities: public choice theory, privatisation and HCT, outlined below. The ways in which these policy discourses come together in a powerful assemblage to promote economically driven agendas, and the intentional and unintentional effects of these on teachers' professional identities are discussed.

Neoliberal Discourse in Early Childhood Education and Care

Neoliberalism has been called a grand narrative of our time, pervading every aspect of our lives and defining all aspects of our relationships (Moss, 2014). As an abiding discourse in education (as well as nearly every other institution), it poses an ongoing challenge both because of its potency and because of the effective way it has reconfigured the purposes and subjects of education including teachers and children (Ball, 2012; Gibbons, 2013). Fairclough (2003) suggests that the project of neoliberalism is largely a language project—achieved through the

discursive practices of government that set out to constitute a particular set of relations among governments, corporations, society and individuals. Lightfoot-Rueda and Peach (2015) call neoliberalism a loaded term, ill-defined and unevenly applied. Creating a clear definition of neoliberalism, its path through global and national policy, and its impact, can be difficult. Firstly, because the logic and relationships it sets out have been introduced at different times, and in different places in a piecemeal way, making the installation of neoliberalism well-hidden and seemingly ubiquitous—as the only order-of-things available (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Lightfoot-Rueda & Peach, 2015; Press et al., 2018). Secondly, because rather than being a monolithic entity, with universal and static characteristics, neoliberalism is a complex, shifting and sometimes incoherent set of strategies. Ball (2012) suggests neoliberalism is best thought of as a bundle or assemblage of multiple ideas and practices (re)produced at different points in time, in different locations and at different intersections with other discourses and new applications. Ball and others note the way that neoliberalism appropriates other discourses to its own agenda, "cannibalizing them in such a way that neoliberalism itself appears more desirable, or more innocent than it is" (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 258).

Despite its amorphous nature, some central characteristics of neoliberalism can be identified. The underlying principle of neoliberalism is heightened individualism registered through the pursuit of individual freedom, autonomy and choice (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Within neoliberal discourse, freedom is narrowly redefined as freedom from want. Individual freedom can be obtained through individual effort and merit and through individual entrepreneurial activity. Concepts of citizenship are also transformed. Individuals are reconfigured as *homo economicus*—enterprising and competitive individuals across all dimensions of their life (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The role of government is to maximise opportunities for the pursuit of such freedom by deregulating and privatising the economy, and by removing state interference that might engender dependence on the state (such as welfare measures). Moss (2014) asserts that first and foremost neoliberalism is a "victory of the economic and a defeat of the social" (p. 66) because of the way it has redefined government responsibility; shifting it from being primarily about human wellbeing, and economic wellbeing for social purposes, to enabling the individual pursuit of wealth through an increased role in markets and a smaller role in government in all aspects of human affairs (Codd, 2005). Under the logic of neoliberal discourse, the social and political are collapsed into the economic, and all aspects of social life are reconceptualised along economic lines (Moss, 2014).

A shared concern in the educational literature is that the neoliberal worldview, including the reduction of education to its economic role, is becoming hegemonic (Apple, 2005; Ball, 2012; Sims, 2017). Education is a clear site for producing the kinds of highly individualised, responsibilised human subjects that neoliberal citizenship requires. This view of education positions teachers as responsible for developing the specific skills that students need to participate in the neoliberal economic system. Attick (2017) argues that this close connection between teachers and their influence on future neoliberal citizens positions teachers as critical to both neoliberalism and its opponents, leading to increased government control over what and how teachers teach. Teaching work is reframed as developing the economic potential of students, and teachers are also increasingly compelled to act as homo economicus in their own work (Attick, 2017). Attick and others (Apple, 2005; Gibson et al., 2015) point to the ways in which teachers find themselves needing to constantly prove that they are working effectively and efficiently towards economic ends through student achievements and through the economic viability of their institutions. Scholars point to an increased audit culture in all spheres of education, including early childhood, as a key example (Gibbons, 2013; Gibson et al., 2015; Sims, 2017). Audit cultures manifest in practices such as mandated accountability processes (including participation in ongoing internal and external reviews), performance management and external definitions of best practice (Attick, 2017). Thus, educational institutions, teachers and children are the subjects of and subject to neoliberal discourse.

Through the discourse of neoliberalism, not only governments, but also institutions, groups and individuals take up, as their central concern, their relationship to the economy. Neoliberalism privileges free-market agendas and the privatisation of services not previously considered to be a part of the economic realm, including education (Devine, 2000). Three discourses in particular contribute significantly to the web of discourses and policy technologies of neoliberalism: public choice theory (PCT) and privatisation, and HCT. These are particularly relevant to unpacking the impact of neoliberalism on ECEC, and on shaping the identities of ECEC teachers. Each is discussed below.

Public Choice Theory and Privatisation

PCT and privatisation are examined together here, because they exist in a codependent relationship—privatisation is the inevitable expression of PCT. Two key features of PCT are the use of heightened individualism and the idealisation of the market as a model for all human interactions (Devine, 2000). In PCT, individuals are expected to act as homo economicus:

enterprising, competitive and individualistic (Burch, 2009). These forms of human interactions are best served through market approaches as businesses seek to maximise their profits by responding quickly to public demand (Boston et al., 1996).

Devine (2000) observes that PCT "is only about the public insofar as the public comprises individuals" (p. 7). PCT casts all human interactions into a dynamic of consumers and providers who work in an exchange paradigm where individual choice and competition create the perfect and most efficient service at the lowest cost. The application of market-based principles to most human interactions is considered fair in that it allows an exchange between them without any violation of individual freedoms; the underlying assumption is that it is a choice between individuals who both understand the rules of the exchange (Devine, 2000). PCT theory creates an argument for the privatisation of ECEC in which relationships between early childhood services and families are reduced to a commercial exchange. Parents are constructed as consumers acting in their own self-interests (and those of their children) equipped with the knowledge to choose the care and educational arrangements that work best for their family. As consumers, parents create demands about what kind of care and education they would like, and the marketplace rises to meet their demands with affordable, high-quality, accessible and innovative ECCE services.

The logic and effects of PCT when applied to the education and care of young children have been critically examined (Ball & Vincent, 2005; Meagher & Cortis, 2009; Sumsion & Goodfellow, 2009). Although ECEC markets purport to be consumer driven, a repeated criticism from the scholarship is that ECEC is actually provider driven—with parents being resigned to taking what is available rather than what is desirable (Sumsion & Goodfellow, 2009; Vincent & Ball, 2006). Meagher and Cortis (2009) point out that since children, not parents, are the end users of the service, the roles of consumers and providers cannot be perfectly played out, especially because children may not be able to report their experiences clearly, and because the needs of children and parents are not always aligned. Goodfellow (2005) argues that the casting of parents as well-informed, rational and empowered consumers is highly problematic, not least because it belies the emotionality involved in the exchange of care. Brooker (2016) argues that difficult relationships between parents and ECEC teachers can emerge when parents are cast into the role of service user (silencing the potential voices of children in this process), and teachers into the role of service provider, with relationships underpinned by neoliberal values

such as choice, consumer rights and customer satisfaction. Vincent and Ball (2006) highlight issues of power in the consumer/provider relationships:

> Silence surrounds issues of power and control shaping carer-family relationships. There is a tendency for each party to see itself as vulnerable and reliant on the other: carers on parents' behaviour as service users, their ultimate say in dictating the extent of the relationship with the child; and parents on carer's behaviour towards their children. (p. 134)

Similarly, Osgood (2012) finds that relationships between parents (predominantly mothers) and teachers are significantly strained when teachers are cast into inferior positions of servitude to professional working mothers. Osgood argues that privatised care provides a site for highly classed relationships where negative constructions of teachers emerge, damaging their sense of professional worth, "It appears that workers in (private sector) nurseries become dehumanised and obscured from parent view where nursery provision is 'marketed' to parents as 'service'" (p. 108).

Wasmuth and Nitecki (2017) argue that the most visible and worrisome impact of neoliberal discourse in education is privatisation. Dýrfjörð and Magnúsdóttir (2016) note that part of the neoliberal agenda is to blur the boundaries between the public and private and to "weave itself into the fabric of everyday life" (p. 81). The impact of privatisation, an inevitable outcome of PCT discourse, has a ripple effect across the sector, encompassing not just privately owned for-profit centres but the community-based and not-for-profit sector as well. Ball (2007) explains that privatisation changes the behaviour of all services by creating the conditions where they must take on the behaviour, rhetoric and values of the private sector as they compete in the same market place and are transformed by the discourse of privatisation. Ball further warns that privatisation is not just a technical change to the delivery of educational services but changes what it means to be a teacher (and a learner), the "ways that we think about ourselves and others" and is a "total social transformation" changing the "framework of possibilities" (p. 187) within which we act. Woodrow (2008) proposes that in competitive ECEC services, centres may focus on developing their own "brand" of professionalism where loyalty to the company is preferred over loyalty to the profession, families or communities. In particular, Woodrow points to branding practices across corporate ECEC services that include the homogenisation of appearances (through uniforms, building design and resources, etc.), programmes and

practices. A focus on marketing, profit and corporate loyalty may marginalise traditional teaching values such as collectivism, community and collegiality (Woodrow, 2008).

In Aotearoa, ECEC is vulnerable to privatisation discourse, partly because there is no strong tradition of public ECEC in this country. As outlined in Chapter 1, ECEC services have tended to evolve out of philanthropic concern or community need and in local and diverse ways, meaning private provision has long been a feature of the ECEC landscape. In addition, state interest in ECEC intensified at the same time as neoliberal ideologies were being applied across government policy. Neoliberal discourse, PCT and privatisation were woven into the policy solutions to the new problems of ECEC provision and participation. Press et al. (2018) write that neoliberal hegemony in Aotearoa (and Australia) has normalised the market approach to provision to such an extent that it is difficult to imagine the role of ECEC in society in alternative ways. A number of local critiques have been made in relation to privatisation (Duhn, 2010; Farquhar, 2012; Mitchell, 2012, 2014; Tesar, 2015). Among the many concerns about privatisation, May and Mitchell (2009) point to a lack of equal access to services as well as the oversupply and undersupply of ECEC in some areas. This concern has empirical backing in the international literature (Cleveland, 2008; Cleveland et al., 2007). Duhn's (2010) work notes the growth of the large-scale corporate ECEC providers (and the marginalisation of small, independently owned centres) as a consequence of privatisation discourses and policies here. She outlines a number of ways in which this might narrow conceptualisations of professionalism. These include separating the teaching aspects of centre life from the decision-making aspects at a managerial (business) level; and construing professionalism as doing well for the company, including taking up the challenge to increase profits.

More recently, Kamenarac (2019) has examined the impact of national ECEC policy on teacher identities. Her work reveals the way in which teachers in different ECEC services are impacted by privatisation. In Aotearoa, ECEC services, regardless of whether they are community-based or privately owned, compete in a marketised landscape. As a result, kindergarten teachers reported having to shift their focus from children's needs to the sustainability of the kindergarten service. In addition, teachers and managers in private for-profit services portrayed a constant tension in their work between doing well for the business and their responsibilities to children and families. Kamenarac's (2019) research concludes with a challenge for those in the ECEC sector to confront and challenge the imposition of neoliberal and privatisation discourses and to consider more democratic and collective ways of being.

Human Capital Theory

HCT is dominant in ECEC policy nationally and globally and is an influential way in which educational purposes become orientated to economic outcomes. How HCT shapes the purposes of ECEC and the roles and identities of teachers has received critical attention in the literature (Bilgi, 2015; Buzzelli, 2015; Lightfoot-Rueda & Peach, 2015; Moss, 2014; K. Smith et al., 2016). HCT is a neoliberal investment framework developed by economists including Theodore Schults and Gary Becker. It is primarily concerned with how individuals can contribute to the economic wellbeing of a country by maximising their human capital in the form of education, training and knowledge (Buzzelli, 2015; Keeley, 2007). While HCT is complex, it essentially positions education as an investment with the potential to produce long-term returns, which should be judged on the same basis as any other long-term investment (Keeley, 2007, Lightfoot-Rueda & Peach, 2015). PCT is central to arguments developed in HCT because of the underpinning assumption that humans will act according to their individual calculations of costs and benefits (Spring, 2015).

James Heckman (2000, 2013; Heckman & Masterov, 2007) has been influential in creating arguments for the use of HCT in ECEC policy globally. The work of Heckman and of Keeley (2007), another human capital theorist, has been taken up and reified by supranational organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and has been influential in arguments for government investment in ECEC here and for the continued privatisation of the sector. Heckman's (2013) essay "Giving Kids A Fair Chance," for example, is a summary of his arguments for investment in ECEC to-date. In particular, Heckman draws on child development studies, neuroscience and the experiences of programmes such as HighScope to argue that investment in the early years is "crucial in creating the abilities, motivation and other personality traits that produce success downstream: in school, in the workforce, and in other aspects of life" (p. 125). Heckman constructs a case for early intervention, targeted at the most disadvantaged children—those who do not receive "parental investment" in the early years—as one of the most economical ways to promote workforce productivity. He suggests that targeting the early years helps to "avoid the equity-efficiency trade-off that plagues most social policy" (p. 33).

As Farquhar (2012) argues, this is a particularly narrow view of ECEC. Children are seen as targets for investment, "not fully human, and in need of strategies to ensure their health, wellbeing and education" (p. 295). As an extension of this framing, parents, teachers and

centres are seen firstly as producers of human capital. Stuart (2013) discusses why this view is problematic for teachers:

> Economists do not see teachers as agentic agents; rather schools are viewed as another version of the firm, with inputs into students, notably those who are "disadvantaged," ensuring good outcomes. (p. 55)

Several scholars argue that when education is conceptualised as inputs and outcomes, teachers become framed as investment brokers charged with ensuring that the investment in children pays off (Gibson et al., 2015; Stuart, 2013). Delaune (2017) points to the ways that HCT theory, through its concern with investment and outcomes, draws children and teachers further into a deeper relationship with measurement (and for teachers, accountability). Delaune questions how these relations will displace traditional concerns in ECEC, such as care, and undermine the inclusion of particular kinds of knowledge, such as indigenous perspectives whose value cannot be easily measured by an investment framework.

In HCT, the kinds of early childhood programmes that should attract investment are programmes that have been shown through research to yield the highest returns in relation to character, motivation and cognition (Heckman, 2013), attributes that are most relevant to the creation of productive workers. Therefore, HCT has an evidence-based focus, and calls for increased standardisation across the sector and higher levels of accountability for teachers. The danger is that ECEC programmes become homogenised, constructed and imposed by research concerned with what works best for producing "smart and productive citizens" (Gibson et al., 2015, p. 327). Paradoxically, such impositions are contradictory to how children learn:

> The more we know about the complexity of learning, children's diverse strategies and multiple theories of knowledge, the more we seek to impose learning strategies and curriculum goals that reduce the complexities of this learning and knowing. (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 14)

Fenech and Sumsion (2007) and others (Moss, 2013; Sims, 2017) critique the constructions of professionalism that result from standardised programmes and teaching methods. Professionalism becomes defined as the ability to apply technical practices that help children meet standardised learning outcomes, silencing or constructing as deficient other ways of being a teacher. Osgood (2012) further argues that the evidence movement is a product of neoliberal discourse and a means to support the neoliberal agenda:

> By problematising the notion of an "evidence base," it becomes possible to conceive of government and related instruments using, commissioning and promoting findings of selected research and dismissing other relevant sources of "evidence" that do not support its position. (p. 55)

Neoliberal Discourse and ECEC Teacher Identities

The combined effect of neoliberal discourse, HCT, PCT and privatisation is a strong governing of teachers who come to understand their teacher identities through the logic of the discourse. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) explain:

> since we ourselves are inscribed in discourse, we govern ourselves through dominant discourse, acting on ourselves rather than being directly acted upon: we do not speak a discourse, it speaks us. (p. 19)

Neoliberal discourse, HCT and PCT "speak" teachers in contradictory ways, enabling and constraining particular professional identities. The literature review has pointed to discursive constructions of teachers as technicians, service providers and investment brokers as some of the possible identities teachers might take up as result. Neoliberal discourse offers a double-edged sword to ECEC teachers (Ailwood, 2017). Strategic use of HCT, for example, offers a way to argue that the early years, and therefore ECEC teachers' work, matter. Professional recognition and status, within the discourse, are seductive social goods on offer for teachers who conform. On the other hand, neoliberal discourse marginalises other important aspects of ECEC. Professional autonomy, partnerships and relationships, creative pedagogies, local knowledges and holistic care and wellbeing are silenced as legitimate values, beliefs and practices. These losses potentially leave teachers personally and professionally diminished (Ailwood, 2017; Osgood, 2010). The rise and impact of neoliberal discourse in educational arrangements is vociferously critiqued globally; a major theme of this criticism is that economic and market discourses directly counter aims for a democratic and socially just society (Apple, 2005; Mitchell, 2019) Arising from these critiques, an alternative conceptualisation of ECEC is proposed: one that focuses on the capacity of education to build democratic societies. This alternative discourse is discussed next.

Democratic Discourse in Early Childhood Education and Care

Moss (2012) argues that "markets need not be the only show in town" (p. 191). Despite the dominant neoliberal discourse in ECEC, there are alternative narratives that offer different understandings of the purposes of ECEC, and the identities of teachers (Moss, 2015, 2019).

Mitchell (2019) suggests that one such alternative promotes democracy as a central value and practice, conceptualising ECEC centres as sites of democratic citizenship. Democracy is about "deliberating on public concerns, and determining the public good, and doing so in public spaces" (Moss, 2014, p. 180). Democracy as a central purpose of education is, as Mitchell (2019) points out, both "a very old and at the same time new idea for contemporary times" (p. 1) and draws from educational discourse that has an important place in educational history. Democracy was a central theme for major educational thinkers of the last century, such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire and Loris Malaguzzi.

Nitecki and Wasmuth (2017) connect democratic discourse to notions of human, child and citizenry rights. Scholars such as Moss and Petrie (2002) conceive the role of educational settings to be both social and political, acting as forums or spaces where communities (teachers, families, children and others) can come together to develop their capacities for critical engagement and social responsibility (Giroux, 1992; Moss & Petrie, 2002). Moss (2014) explains how participation and contribution from all members of an ECEC community are the hallmarks of democratic education. Such participation occurs through the everyday enactments of democratic values and relationships in practice centred on

> dialogue, and listening, respect for diversity and other perspectives, a readiness to contest and negotiate, and recognition of one's own partial knowledge and particular perspective. (p. 122)

Democratic discourse positions parents and children as citizens rather than consumers, capable of contributing to and engaging with the educational process, and matters of importance in their lives and communities. An important feature in this reconceptualisation is a shift (back) to the fundamental premise that education is a public good (a social or collective good) and responsibility, within which every child and family has a right to participate. Apple (2005) argues that it is the antithesis of the neoliberal ideal that offers a vision of democracy that is "consumer-driven and overly individualistic" (p. 11) and that sets the aim of education to prepare children to become individualised entrepreneurs of their own lives.

Teachers, in democratic discourse, also shift from being perceived as service providers and "investment brokers" (Gibson et al., 2015) to "public intellectuals" who are able to take on a "critical and political role in defining the nature of their work and the conditions under which they work" (Giroux, 1992, p. 109). Freire (2005) positions teachers as "cultural workers" whose key task is to reflect critically and engage with the meanings of teaching, learning and

education in their particular cultural and local contexts. Fenech et al. (2010) offer a similar view, envisioning a kind of professionalism which is both activist and transformative:

> Activist teacher professionals cultivate trust within their setting and beyond with other stakeholders such as parents and policy makers; demonstrate active trust where philosophical approaches, values, and approaches are openly debated and owned; and critically reflect on the "state of play" so as to generate options where they can act rather than be acted on. (p. 91)

Moss (2008) points to the ECEC centres in Reggio Emilia to propose a construction of ECEC teachers as researchers "co-constructing knowledge, as well as identities and values" (p. 36) alongside not just other teacher-researchers but the child and family. Teachers are necessarily reflective, dialogic and relational; able to listen and critically engage "without grasping the other and making the other into the same" (p. 37).

Moss (2014) and Mitchell (2019) suggest the conditions in which this kind of practice, and teachers, can flourish. In relation to teachers, careful attention to specialisation of initial teacher education, work conditions, recognition, and diversity of the teaching population are fundamental to the vision. On a political level, both scholars point to the importance of ECEC being available to all families and children as an entitlement of citizenship and suggest that the purposes of education should be collectively and locally determined. Moss (2014) is careful to point out that he uses the term education in the broadest sense of the word; with room for pedagogical and other locally defined projects, and with "much room for experimentation" (p. 174). Moss has been particularly active in promoting ECEC as a site of democratic experimentalism as an alternative to the discourses of HCT and privatisation (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Moss, 2008, 2014, 2015, 2019). In Aotearoa, this idea is taken up by Mitchell (2019) and others (Farquhar, 2012; Farquhar & Sansom, 2017; Skerrett et al., 2013; A. Smith, 2016; Tesar, 2015) who point to the potential and limits of the national ECEC curriculum *Te Whāriki* the conditions for democratic education.

Te Whāriki as a Model of Democratic Education in Aotearoa?

Te Whāriki—the national early childhood curriculum for Aotearoa—has been described as a bicultural, nonprescriptive, holistic and social cultural curriculum (Ritchie et al., 2014) that makes a political statement about "children, their uniqueness and ethnicity rights in Aotearoa, New Zealand" (May, 2002, p. 32). The potential of *Te Whāriki* to provide the conditions to facilitate democratic education, and to be a resistant force to the neoliberal turn has received

attention in the literature (Mitchell, 2019; Tesar, 2015). Mitchell (2019) points out that *Te Whāriki* potentially provides a "strong platform for collective democracy to flourish" (p. 65). The document's central metaphor is that of a woven mat that emphasises the co-construction of a local curriculum with the entire centre community (MoE, 1996c). Further, the principles—whakamana (empowerment), kotahitanga (holistic development), whānau tangata (family and community), and ngā hononga (relationships)—emphasise mana (status), empowerment, and holistic and relational understandings of participation. While democracy is not explicitly named, these comprise a set of values that fit with democratic tradition (Mitchell, 2019). Other scholars point to social justice messages in *Te Whāriki.* Chan and Ritchie (2019), for example, highlight messages that ask teachers to understand and engage critically and equitably with all children and families in a centre. The authors argue that this requires a commitment by teachers to "disrupt the privileged status of dominant cultural ideologies and language in order to avoid marginalising the non-mainstream knowledge of immigrant families" (p. 68).

However, several authors have argued that *Te Whāriki* is an assemblage of discourses, including the overlapping influences of both democratic and neoliberal discourses (Cederman, 2008; Duhn, 2006, 2008; Farquhar, 2015). The presence of neoliberal discourse is even more visible in the 2017 update of the document. Farquhar and Sansom (2017) argue that the revised curriculum "takes minimal account of local place and democratic participation" (p. 64), and includes a more overt focus on learning outcomes. The language in the document has also changed to reflect a focus away from "education" in the broadest sense of its meaning to the more narrowly focused concept of "learning." According to Farquhar and Sansom, these changes signal "a substantial departure" from traditional early childhood ideas that "orients early childhood towards a particularly neoliberal future" and is "the end of *Te Whāriki* as we currently know it" (p. 64).

Democratic Discourse and ECEC Teacher Identities

The discourses of democracy as they are described above promote sets of values, beliefs and practices including the central idea of education as a social good, with practices that facilitate participation and dialogue. ECE is not constructed as a private economic exchange between individuals but rather as a place of social and political engagement. While neoliberal discourse offers teachers identities as service providers, technicians and/or investment brokers, democratic discourse represents the work of teachers to be inclusive, dialogic and relational. Democratic discourse suggests particular identities for teachers as public intellectuals (Giroux,

1992) or cultural workers (Freire, 2005) suggesting that teachers are critically engaged and political advocates and activists engaged with their local communities and priorities. Moss (2014) further suggests an identity as a researcher or co-constructor with children and families, again highlighting the relational, intellectual and communicative aspects of teaching. Such identities are embedded in the national and local politics of the communities they serve.

Care Discourse in Early Childhood Education and Care

Arguably, care is a central activity for all teachers, but, in ECEC, care work is more visible because of the age and dependency of children on adults for their custodial, bodily and emotional care (Davies & Degotardi, 2015; Rockel, 2009). Having a caring disposition is consistently identified by both teachers and parents as an important element of effective teaching practice (Brooker, 2016; Davies & Degotardi, 2015; Goldstein & Lake, 2000). However, the ways in which care influences the identities of ECEC teachers are complex. Different perspectives on care include assumptions about the social relationships in ECEC centres that offer teachers particular ways of understanding themselves and their work; leading Barnes (2019) to assert that "care is both an opportunity and a danger in relation to work with young children" (p. 18). Tensions in the positioning of care are evidenced in a growing body of literature examining care in ECEC which points out both the centrality of care and the potential for care work to be gendered, essentialised and exploitative (Ailwood, 2017; Andrew, 2015a; Langford, 2006; Langford et al., 2017; Rosen, 2019). Literature on ethics of care, as a framework for the inclusion of care as central to ECEC teaching work, is also expanding (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Taggart, 2016). These two strands of the literature are explored below.

The ways in which care is positioned in ECEC practice can be understood as a gendered issue, highly political and value laden. In a feminised sector, care can be assumed as something that just happens, that does not require much consideration, or warrant much value. Maternal discourse, discussed below, essentialises care in this way. Ailwood (2017) and others (Aslanian, 2015; Van Laere et al., 2014) point out that without robust attention to articulating the place and complexity of care in ECEC, such associations can lead to problematic issues of power and privilege. Sevenhuijsen (1998), for example, writes:

> People with power are often more in a position to receive or demand care than to provide it, and conversely, people with less social power find themselves more often on the "underside of care" that is, in institutions in which they provide care without much

> power over the conditions and the means, and often in positions of invisibility and voicelessness. (p. 24)

Sevenhuijsen's assertion makes sense when we understand that it is parents who negotiate care on behalf of their children, often through the privatised services of ECEC. Bartlett (2006) argues that care work, with its close association to notions of dependency and vulnerability, can be treated with hostility under a neoliberal system that celebrates autonomous individualism. A dependency on care can be seen as a moral failing or a phase to be moved through as swiftly as possible rather than as an essential aspect of pedagogical work (Barnes, 2019; Bartlett, 2006). ECEC scholars have called for the valorisation of care in the work of teachers by recognising the centrality of care and interdependency to everyday life, and countering the deficit treatment of dependency at the core of neoliberal ideology (Langford et al., 2017). Central to this challenge is to confront essentialist and oppressive constructions of care embedded in teaching work, and to articulate teacher identities that assert care as integral to the complex work of ECEC teachers (Langford & White, 2019; Osgood, 2012; Taggart, 2016). A feminist ethics of care provides a space for teachers to articulate and integrate care into their understandings of professionalism by bringing to the fore the relational and care aspects of ECEC work and positioning these as critical, intellectual and affective (Ailwood, 2017; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Rosen, 2019; Taggart, 2016).

Maternal Discourse and Care in ECEC

Maternal discourse is deeply embedded in ECEC and "historically tenacious" (Langford, 2006, p. 120). It has an ongoing impact on how teaching work is perceived. Maternal discourse can be defined as an essentialist and ideological formation that

> naturalises motherhood, positing that women's mothering is a function of women's female nurture, women's biological reproductive capacities, and/or human evolutionary development…[and] requires mothers' exclusive and self-less attention to and care for children. (DiQuinzo, 2005, p. 228)

The idea that women, through their biological capacity to mother, are most suited to the care and education of young children has been traced in foundational ECEC theories including those of Froebel, Bowlby, Montessori, and Pestalozzi (Ailwood, 2007; Aslanian, 2015). Attachment theories emerging after World War II, also perpetuate the image of the loving mother as a personification of the ideal ECEC teacher (Van Laere et al., 2014). Maternal discourse lingers in

essentialist notions that much of ECEC teaching practice is rooted in instinct and that ECEC teachers are naturally caring (Goldstein & Lake, 2000; Osgood, 2012).

A number of scholars have argued that perpetually discursively connecting care with mothering negatively impacts on ECEC teachers' professional status and identities by marginalising the potential of care to become a part of the pedagogical experience or to be recognised as an intellectual act (Ailwood, 2007; Andrew, 2015b; Andrew & Newman, 2012; Rockel, 2009). Recognising care as important to teaching activity threatens notions of professionalism conceptualised through traditional and masculine discourses that emphasise specialised expertise, qualifications and professional autonomy (Aslanian, 2015; Osgood, 2012). Osgood (2012) positions the tension between care and professionalism as a gender issue that is deeply entrenched in the ECEC sector:

> As a highly gendered employment sector strongly associated with the realms of caring and nurturance, [ECEC] becomes understood as lacking in professionalism precisely because it is deemed hyper feminine. (p. 120)

One result of this paradox is the disappearance of care discourse from policy and curriculum documents, rendering teachers' care work invisible and making it difficult for teachers to assert the importance of care in their teacher identities (Aslanian, 2015; Campbell-Barr, 2014)

Bown et al. (2011) assert that the construction of ECEC as a private childcare arrangement for women and by women implies that relationships in ECEC centres should replicate the mother/child relationship. Andrew and Newman (2012) further argue that the positioning of ECEC as substitute mother-care in a competitive marketplace inevitably leads to imbalances in power relations and exploitation of the workforce. Keeping childcare affordable, accessible and competitive relies on keeping wages low. The willingness to participate in low-pay, low-status and emotionally demanding childcare work is sometimes explained by pointing to ECEC teachers' commitment to and satisfaction with the work—a narrative Andrew and Newman point out stems from assumptions "that require women to devote themselves selflessly to raising children" and leads to "exploitation of vocational passion" (p. 243).

A further manifestation of maternal *and* neoliberal discourse is the construction of a hierarchy between education and care which Van Laere et al. (2014) refer to as a mind/body dualism. Within this hierarchy, care is narrowly defined as being primarily custodial and emotional labour (about the body). Understandings of education are established separate from any

notions of care, as about the mind and, through neoliberal discourse, as about preparation for school and work. In this relationship, care is subordinate and prerequisite to education. Van Laere et al. (2014) discuss the material and social implications of this mind/body dualism for teachers' identities, arguing that it perpetuates a hierarchical divide. Teachers who are able to articulate their work as primarily educational (by marginalising that care is important to their work and identities) are able to claim a professional status that is not as readily available when care activities are a more visible part of a teacher's work. Divisions between teachers who are responsible for the mind and teachers who care for bodies and feelings are intensified by divided care and education sectors in many countries (Fenech et al., 2010). Moreover, Andrew (2015a) argues that this division exists even between teachers with equivalent qualifications. This may result in professional insecurity, and, as argued above, even the exploitation of teachers for whom care work is a highly visible activity (such for infant and toddler teachers). A further implication for professional identities is raised by Bown et al. (2011) who suggest that narrow definitions of care as nurturing may "limit and discourage early childhood educators from intellectualising and politicising their pedagogical practice" and reduce the work of ECEC teachers to "apolitical passiveness" (p. 274).

This section has pointed to the literature that discusses the impact of maternal discourse in the sector. As a gendered discourse that essentialises care as unskilled and unintellectual, it offers restricted and potentially inequitable identities for and between teachers, and imposes a hierarchy between care and education. Scholars point to the embedded issues of power and privilege in relations of care, and the possibilities for conceptualisations of care to be oppressive and exploitative. Essentialised notions of ECEC work as nurture marginalise opportunities for teachers to conceptualise their work (including their care work) in intellectual and political ways. Langford et al. (2017) call for a revalorisation of care as a way of contesting the subordinate place of care in the ECEC discourse by drawing attention to an ethics of care. This strand of the literature is discussed next.

Ethics of Care

Scholars have argued for a transformation of the concept of care in ECEC including a discursive dismantling of the care–education divide, and for rearticulating the "political, contextual and emotional nuances in caring experiences" (Langford, 2019, p. 9). Feminist ethics of care are frequently pointed to in the literature as having the potential to create new spaces for care in ECEC practice (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Langford et al., 2017; Taggart, 2016). Ethics of care

originate from attempts by feminist scholars such as Noddings (2013), Sevenhuijsen (1998), and Held (2006) to articulate the private caring experiences of women and their contributions to the public and political realms. Care ethics challenge neoliberal ideas of autonomous individualism that position caring for others and being cared for as unwelcome burdens. Instead, ethics of care are constructed on the notion of interdependence, acknowledging that as a species we are all, to different degrees, dependant on the attention and care of others (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005).

The work of Noddings (2013), and in particular her conceptualisation of care as an exchange between two parties, the carer and the cared-for, has been particularly influential in ECEC and education more widely. Noddings positions care as foundational to moral and ethical conceptualisations of pedagogic activity, proposing that the purpose of education is to produce "better people" (p. 1). Feminist theorists including Tronto (1993) and Sevenhuijsen (1998) have built on Noddings's work to explore the application of relational care ethics in institutions, and to challenge the feminisation of care. Sevenhuijsen (1998), for example, argues that an ethics of care can become the basis for making decisions in institutions by taking into consideration people's needs and the particularities of the contexts in which the decision is being made (which include the sociocultural, institutional and political contexts) and by acknowledging inherent power relationships. Care ethics resonate with concepts of democratic citizenship because of the emphasis on dialogue and participatory processes, and through the framing of education as a moral, ethical and political endeavour. Ethics of care can offer a critical framework for reconsidering how we organise the institutional care and education of children, and how we construct the work of teachers including the contextual, emotional and intellectual elements of their work (Barnes, 2019).

However, Rosen (2019) explores the limits of the "turn to care" in improving the status and conditions for *all* ECEC teachers by paying attention to the way ethics of care can elevate emotional and relational engagement and disconnect from the "dirty and repetitive labour of care" (p. 82). Rosen warns that valorising only some aspects of care may unintentionally reproduce the problems it seeks to address, creating a hierarchy of care work in which custodial and bodily care is marginalised and perceived as subordinate to other aspects of care that are more relational and affective:

> Such stratifications of labouring bodies are apparent in ECE contexts where there are often sharp divisions between professionalised educators and teaching assistants, as

> well as in quasi-familial settings where the labour of migrant domestic work frees up parents to engage in the more prized activities of reading bedtime stories. (pp. 82–83)

The undervaluing of care, and variations in care labour, can be mapped onto inequities based on "gender, class, 'race,' and immigration status" (p. 88) and manifest in poor remuneration and work conditions. Other scholars also highlight the ways that care activities are embedded in relations of power and inequality (Andrew, 2015a; Andrew & Newman, 2012; Langford et al., 2017) and provide a challenge to those in ECEC to be alert to the ways in which different types of care labour are more visible for some teachers than others, and can be used to construct hierarchies between teachers, excluding some from claiming a professional identity, and potentially lead to exploitation.

Care Discourse and ECEC Teacher Identities

The careful consideration and rearticulation of care in the work of ECEC teachers can provide a rich ground for contesting the role of care, for challenging how professionalism can be claimed, and for considering how care might contribute to professional identities (Gibbons, 2007). When the role of care in teaching work is elevated, it need not diminish the professional status or identities of teachers. Ethics of care, as the basis for decision making, recognise the nuanced, relational and complex work of teachers and provide a discourse for positioning ECEC work as intellectual, sensitive and highly skilled, and able to be theorised pedagogically (Ailwood, 2017). Within this framework, professionalism is conceived of as an inherently ethical and relational practice. Langford et al. (2017) argue that reasserting the role of care can "contribute to more equitable, solidaristic, and democratic social relations" (p. 320) including between groups of teachers who sit either side of the care–education divide. It provides another platform for ECEC teachers to reject the constructions of service providers, investment brokers and technicians offered to them through neoliberal discourse (Taggart, 2016). However, Rosen (2019) and others warn that reducing understandings of care to nurturance and relational work alone, by ignoring the more menial and messy aspects of care, may undermine these potentials, creating divisions and hierarchies between teachers, and leading to exclusions and exploitation.

Summary

This chapter has identified some of the dominant discourses, uncovered from a review of the literature, that animate the ECEC sector. These discourses are presented as "sense making stories" (Locke, 2004) which give rise to dynamic, multiple and even opposing identity positions that teachers are able to take up, resist, or innovate as they negotiate their own identities

(Gee, 2018). Their ability to do so depends on whether teachers are able to identify and understand their positioning in discourse, as well as their access to alternative discursive resources. The chapter has considered the ways in which neoliberal discourse, which includes PCT, privatisation and HCT, positions teachers as entrepreneurs, service providers, technicians and investment brokers (Gibson et al., 2015; Moss, 2014; Pupala et al., 2016; K. Smith et al., 2016). The literature argues that while strategic use of neoliberal discourse provides opportunities for teachers to claim professional recognition and status, it also constructs and governs teachers "from above," marginalising the potential for locally and dialogically constructed identities (Moss, 2014). Democratic discourse, including discourse traced in the national curriculum *Te Whāriki*, has also been examined. Democratic discourse resists an economic focus for ECEC and instead positions ECEC centres as places of relationship and citizenship, and ECEC work as centred on listening, respect and dialogue. Teachers are positioned as "cultural workers" (Freire, 2005), "public intellectuals" (Giroux, 1992) and "activists" (Fenech & Sumsion, 2007) committed to engagement with communities they serve. A third influential discourse identified in the literature centres around constructions of care. Disagreements in care discourse about the position of care as social good, and a framework for institutional decision making have been examined. Where care discourse is essentialised and gendered, it becomes limiting and deprofessionalising for teachers (Ailwood, 2007). However, when care is conceptualised through an ethical lens, it can be a powerful way to construct ECEC centres, relationships and teaching work (Langford et al., 2017).

Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed overview of the research project, the research design, CDA methodology and methods designed to address the overall research question: *How do ECEC teachers understand and construct their teacher identities?* The chapter begins by locating the research within the qualitative paradigm and then outlines the research design, research methods and processes. Next, CDA as the methodological approach used in the research is discussed, followed by an explanation of the data analysis. The nine CDA tools, adapted from Gee (2014a, 2014b), used to closely examine the relationships between participants' language and ways of being and representing ECEC teachers, are introduced. My own positioning and subjectivity are discussed next. The final sections of the chapter discuss ethical considerations and research limitations.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research aims to understand the complexities and nuances of complex social worlds and phenomena at the local level (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). Knowledge is understood to be local and situated, and is generated from the particular sociocultural, political and historical contexts within which the research is framed (File et al., 2017). These features are consistent with this research which sought to examine the influences on the professional identities of ECEC teachers, situated in the unique context of Aotearoa, within diverse ECEC centres and in a particular historical and political moment. The historical and current contexts in which the research is located are overviewed in Chapter 1, with specific policy contributions introduced in Chapter 4.

Qualitative research can be defined by its effort to "highlight the meanings people make and the actions they take" (Luttrell, 2010, p. 1), and by its commitment to using participants' own words and experiences. The primary methods of data gathering in this research were policy analysis, focus groups and individual interviews. The meanings made in policy and by participants about ECEC, the work of teachers, and identities were understood to be influenced by the discourses that shape the wider field of ECEC. Enquiring about participants' perspectives and experiences, in focus groups and through interviews, resulted in the production of transcripts. In alignment with CDA, the transcripts and policy documents were treated as texts and analysed. Including a number of different participant groups allowed multiple representations of identities to emerge, and provided a space for participants to interpret their

own experiences. These research methods and the process for analysis were flexible enough that unexpected findings could emerge and be responded to during the research process. This corresponds with the dialectical nature of qualitative research, which typically tacks back and forth between data collection and analysis in an iterative way (Luttrell, 2010).

Qualitative researchers do not claim to discover generalisable and objective truths that can be universally applied. The understandings generated in this research are understood to be local and provisional, and are presented here as one possible reading of the data (Hughes, 2001; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2010). Although the research does not claim to be representative in a positivist sense, it is possible that the findings will be useful for those working in ECEC, particularly ECEC teachers and others seeking a critical understanding of ECEC work. The research may also have currency in other situations including being useful to those engaged in theorising ECEC teacher identity. The research aims to highlight the ways in which discourse works on and through teachers to enable and constrain particular teacher identities, and to offer new understandings. In exposing and problematising the discursive constructions of teacher identities, possibilities for a wider range of identities can be considered.

Research Methods

The research methods used were

a. Policy analysis
b. Focus groups with qualified, practising ECEC teachers
c. Individual interviews with qualified ECEC owners, managers and professional leaders such as head teachers
d. Individual interviews with initial teacher educators

Justifications and criteria for the inclusion of each method are explained below.

Policy Analysis

Policy texts are sites where subject positions are created as ECEC and the work of teachers is problematised, and policy solutions created. In this research, policy texts are regarded as artefacts of discourse and are considered an important source of data (Peers, 2018). The policy analysis answers the research question: *What discourses can be identified in ECEC policies, and what are the implications of these for teacher identities?* Six key policy texts, from different eras of ECEC policy, each of which makes a significant statement about ECEC education and the work of teachers are analysed. The selected documents are:

1988 *Education to be More. The Report of the Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group* (*ETBM*; ECCEWG, 1988).

1988 *Before Five. Early Childhood Care and Education in New Zealand*. (Lange, 1988).

1996 *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early Childhood Curriculum* (MoE, 1996c).

2002 *Pathways to the Future. Ngā Huarahi Arataki: 2002–2012. A 10-Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education* (MoE, 2002).

2011 *An Agenda for Amazing Children. Final Report of the ECE Taskforce* (ECE Taskforce, 2011).

2017 *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early Childhood Curriculum* (MoE, 2017).

Summaries of the documents including the key aims and themes, and the processes involved in producing them, are presented at the beginning of Chapter 4.

Policy Selection. Three of the policies selected are "significant policy blueprints" (May, 2020, p. 336) for ECEC that have emerged during different eras of ECEC policy in Aotearoa (A. Smith & May, 2018). *Before Five* (1988), *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki* (2002) and *An Agenda for Amazing Children* (2011) have each been influenced by the political philosophies of the governments under which they were developed, national and global political movements, and the current research agendas of the time. In these policies, teachers are positioned as doing important ideological work on behalf of the government, and discourses about teachers and teaching are interwoven with larger social and economic discourses (O'Neill, 2005). *ETBM* is known "nationally and internationally as a significant philosophical statement" on ECEC education (May, 2020, p. 212). *ETBM* set the foundations for the contemporary ECEC sector. The essential elements for the model of ECEC it proposed were retained in *Before Five*. Both iterations of *Te Whāriki* are included because of the importance to the ECEC sector and the daily work of teachers. *Te Whāriki's* widespread acceptance provides a point of solidarity for a diverse ECEC sector (Te One & Ewens, 2019). In this research, the curriculum is also understood as a political instrument for promoting particular purposes of ECEC and the work of teachers. Each policy analysed seeks to promote correct readings or certain discursive truths about ECEC

education and teachers. The decision to choose big policies from a number of different eras allows the historical emergence of different official discourses to be identified and explored in relation to the professional identities of ECEC teachers. Each of the policies chosen contribute substantially to the foundations of a policy architecture that promotes particular constructions of teachers. They are “windows” into the discourses that were in circulation at the time and are recognised for their capacity to set discursive boundaries for what can and cannot be said about the work of teachers. Tracing how particular discourses emerge and gain (or lose) power over time illuminates the effects of shifts in power/knowledge on teachers and opens up ways to consider “losses, gaps and silences” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 151).

All policies are part of and contribute to chains of discourse that overlap and seek to establish normative understandings (Fairclough, 2003). Each policy selected is influenced by global and national social and economic discourse. In turn, the boundaries and practices set in policies analysed in this research travel and are recontextualised through the production of a raft of additional local policy documents. Fairclough (2003) explains the process by which the discourse in one text is appropriated by, and relocated in, the context of another. These subsequent documents do further work to direct and persuade teachers to accept constructions of teaching. The following chains of policy and discourse illustrate this point. *ETBM* and *Before Five* led to the production of the *Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices* [DOPs] (MoE, 1990) which further set out quality standards for learning and development, communication and consultation, and administration. *Te Whāriki* (1996c) and *Pathways to the Future* (2002) led to *Kei Tua o te Pae—Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (Carr et al., 2004–2009), a best-practice guide to assessment which aligns with and further articulates the philosophy of *Te Whāriki*. More recent documents such as *Our Code Our Standards*. *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession* (Education Council Aotearoa New Zealand [ECANZ], 2017) set out official expectations about teachers, their behaviour and the purposes of their work. These documents have not formed the main policy analysis, but their messages and influences are considered as part of the implications of the policy discourses uncovered. Their relationship to policies analysed and the work they do to promote and persuade is considered in the discussion section of the policy analysis chapter.

Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

Transcripts from three different participant groups were gathered. These are focus groups with qualified, practising ECEC teachers; individual interviews with centre leaders (head teachers, managers and owners); and individual interviews with TEs. The inclusion of these participant groups addresses the research questions: *How do ECEC teachers understand and construct their teacher identities? How do centre leaders and initial teacher educators understand teachers and their work, and how might these understandings enable or constrain teacher identities?* The different participant groups are included in order to provide space for a plurality of voices and accounts of working in ECEC and being a teacher. The intention in the analysis across and between these different groups is not to strictly compare and contrast, nor to uncover a coherent and agreed narrative, but rather to juxtapose and counterpose the accounts between and within participant groups "to generate a rich textual play amongst them" (Baxter, 2008, p. 67). This next section outlines the justification for the inclusion of each participant group. An overview of participant selection and recruitment, and focus group and interview processes follow.

Focus Groups with Practising, Qualified Early Childhood Teachers. Two groups of four qualified ECEC teachers (n=8) participated in two focus groups held 1 month apart. The purpose of the focus groups was to gain perspectives from a range of teachers including teachers with experience in kindergarten, community-based and privately owned centres and at different points in their careers. Table 3.1 provides an overview of ECEC teacher participants. Focus groups were chosen because they allowed for in-depth discussion between teacher participants as they shared, listened and responded to each other's experiences of being a teacher. Hennink (2015) describes the potential of focus groups to generate a large range of interactive data quickly that has increasing depth and detail. Focus groups are designed to uncover a range of perspectives and issues as the group produces collective narratives together that go beyond individual perspectives (Hennink, 2015). The focus groups provided a space for both individual, conflicting and shared accounts to be heard and for participants to reflect as a group on the experience of being a teacher. For example, in the first focus group a teacher participant shared a number of reasons why she felt excluded from applying for jobs with the kindergarten service. Her perspective generated a discussion between group members about how the contexts of kindergarten (both historical and contemporary) shape the identities of teachers in that service. The dynamics of multiple voices in this conversation, including

participants from inside and outside of kindergarten, generated group insights that would have been less accessible otherwise (Freeman, 2006). The focus groups provided, both for the researcher and the participants, a mechanism to hear, consider and understand different experiences of being a teacher and, in doing so, to extend understandings of how teacher identities are socially and discursively constructed (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). In addition, the nature of CDA analysis means that *how* the group constructed meanings together was as important as the experiences they shared (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Literature on focus group methods recommends small groups of between four to eight participants (Hennink, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The decision to have two small focus groups of four rather than one larger one was based on the idea of achieving both variation in experiences and allowing space for participants to share and discuss their experiences in depth. A limitation of small focus groups, pointed to in the literature, is that they are more likely to be affected by group dynamics and/or dominant group members (Hennink, 2015). Therefore, a part of my role was to alleviate this risk by being aware of group dynamics and individual contributions. Focus group processes are explained later the chapter. Participant recruitment and selection for the focus groups is addressed in the section below.

Recruitment and Selection: ECEC Teachers. A research notice (Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the research and inviting participation from ECEC teachers and leaders was distributed through a number of different third-party channels. These included the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI)—a major ECEC union; ChildForum—a nationwide ECEC education network; and the Early Childhood Council (ECC)—a national early childhood group whose primary purpose is to promote the interests of independently owned ECEC centres. In each case, the research notices were made available to potential participants through the electronic newsletters and social media platforms of each organisation. In addition, the research notice was posted, via the page moderator, on NZ ECE TEACHERS—a popular Facebook group for ECEC teachers in this country. Finally, the research notice was sent out to partnership centres via the practicum administrators of two tertiary providers. Potential participants were asked to contact me via email. Reminder emails were sent out at 2-week intervals (three times in total) until it was clear that no more participants would be recruited.

Selection criteria for ECEC teachers included being a currently practising and qualified early childhood teacher, and aimed to achieve representation from teachers with a range of years of

experience, and from a range of different types of organisations. Hennink (2015) reports that both homogeneity and diversity are important to focus group make-up. Participants should have enough in common to identify with each other, and build rapport easily, and this should be balanced with diversity in experience and perspectives. A practical consideration was that participants needed to be able to travel to the focus groups, being held at the University of Auckland's campus. This restricted the participants to those working in the wider Auckland area. However, participant response was low and nearly every eligible ECEC teacher that contacted me was included. Two potential participants who made initial contact were excluded because they were not currently working in an ECEC centre. Two further potential participants were initially included but could not make any of the focus group times offered and subsequently withdrew their participation. All eligible potential ECEC teacher participants who contacted me were sent a participant information sheet (Appendix B) and consent form (Appendix C) and were invited to ask any questions about the research and their potential involvement. Once it became clear that no other ECEC teacher participants would be recruited, and consent forms for all participating teachers had been collected, I negotiated a time for the focus groups to take place.

Table 3.1

ECEC Teacher Participants

Pseudonym	Position	Highest teaching qualification	Type of ECEC service currently employed in	Total years teaching experience
Tom	Teacher	B Tech (ECE)	Kindergarten	12
Aadilia	Teacher	Grad Dip Tech (ECE)	Community-based	8
Georgia	Owner/teacher	B Ed (Montessori EC Teaching)	Independent—private	17
Marama	Teacher	B Tech (ECE)	Independent—private	11
Nicole	Head teacher	B Tech (ECE)	Community-based	8
Judy	Teacher	Grad Dip Tech (ECE)	Corporate—private	19
Tahlia	Teacher	Grad Dip Tech (ECE)	Independent—private	2
Sian	Teacher	B Tech (ECE)	Independent—private	5

Focus Group Process: ECEC Teachers. All of the focus groups were held in the early evening, on campus at the University of Auckland and lasted approximately 1 hour. I facilitated each focus group. The first focus group, for each group, was semistructured with a set of questions that served as a framework of possible questions rather than obligatory questions the group had to discuss (Appendix D). The exception to this was the first question, which asked each group member to introduce themselves, and to share something about where they currently worked.

This question was designed as an introduction in order to build some common ground in the group, and to give each speaker the floor early in the discussion (Hennink, 2015). The remaining questions were designed as prompts to encourage the sharing and discussion of experiences relevant to being a teacher and to teacher identity. The possible questions sought the groups' opinion on what makes a good early childhood teacher, what kind of things impacted on their work, what they thought the issues in the sector were, as well as what they thought of the recent inclusion of the term kaiako in *Te Whāriki* as a nomenclature for all adults working in ECEC centres. My role as facilitator was to provide information about the research and focus group processes, including relevant ethical considerations; to enhance group cohesion; to encourage an atmosphere of open discussion in the group; and to ensure that all participants had opportunities to participate by managing any dynamics (Hennink, 2015). I also asked clarifying and follow-up questions, and encouraged group members to respond to each other where I felt it would encourage a deeper consideration of the topic being discussed. All focus groups were audio recorded. Transcripts of the first focus group were sent to each member, 2 weeks after the groups had met. The purpose of providing the transcripts was for reflective purposes only. Participants were not able to alter or amend the transcript but were invited to read their groups' initial conversation, and to bring to the next meeting any follow-up thoughts or reflections.

Each group met a month later for a follow-up discussion. These focus groups were a chance for the participants to revisit or expand on any of the ideas or discussions from the first group, as well as for me to follow up on any ideas or accounts that arose and to probe these in more depth. For example, the first meeting of Focus Group 1 included a discussion about the use of kaiako in the recently revised version of *Te Whāriki*. Several group members reported on conversations they had had with their teams as a result, and discussed the ways their thinking about the use of this term had been complicated by the focus group discussion. In the second meeting for Focus Group 2, I had planned some questions to follow up on comments made about the differences between the perceived status of kindergarten teachers and other early childhood teachers. The planned follow-up prompts for the second focus groups are included in Appendix E. Again, these were treated as possible rather than obligatory questions.

Although the literature warns that group dynamics are one of the most challenging things about focus groups, the experience in this research was that group members quickly established rapport with each other, and were keen to hear and share experiences. Teacher

participants commented to me after each focus group and via email how much they enjoyed being able to talk with other teachers, outside of the complexities of their own workplaces, to discuss experiences and issues. The benefit of focus groups in supporting teachers to explore their own identities, and the role of group context in supporting this, mirrors other research projects employing focus-group methods (Farquhar & Tesar, 2016). This aspect of the focus groups was an unplanned benefit of the research and the possibilities for focus groups to support teacher development and solidarity is considered further in the conclusion chapter.

Individual Interviews With Centre Leaders

Thirteen individuals, from different ECEC services, who were in positions of leadership, participated in 1-hour semistructured individual interviews. These participants were either centre owners, managers, or in another kind of leadership position such as a head teacher or curriculum leader position. This group is sometimes collectively referred to as centre leaders in the research. However, the experiences of owners and managers were unique and this group of participants is also referred to separately. Previous research has indicated that teachers' locations in different ECEC services contribute to how they experience professionalism (Gibson, 2013; Osgood, 2004; Press & Woodrow, 2005). However, research from this country has not yet focused directly on how different types of ECEC services contribute to the discursive landscape around teaching and being a teacher. Individuals from a range of different types of services and roles were sought with the idea that these would generate a richer body of data, contributing to the range of voices and accounts that are included in the analysis, including "differently orientated voices" (Baxter, 2016, p. 67)—in this case the voices of ECEC leaders located in a range of services. Using individual interviews removed concerns that may have arisen about commercial sensitivity, competition between services, or questions of loyalty. Conducting individual interviews allowed a layer of confidentiality that is relinquished in focus group settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Table 3.2 provides an overview of the centre leaders participant group.

Recruitment and Selection: Centre Leaders. The recruitment procedures used to recruit ECEC teachers for the focus groups were followed to recruit ECEC leaders for individual interviews. The selection criteria included having an early childhood teaching qualification and aimed for representation from a range of different kinds of services, and from individuals in different positions (from owners, to managers and professional leaders). In addition, participants needed to be accessible for a face-to-face individual interview. This meant that most

participants were recruited from the wider Auckland area, although two were located in Hamilton, a 2-hour drive from Auckland. All ECEC leaders who contacted me were sent a participant information sheet (Appendix F) and consent form (Appendix G). Most eligible participants who made contact (13 in total) were included for interview.

The criteria that ECEC leaders needed to be qualified early childhood teachers was included because it meant that this group of participants would also have had experiences being teachers (some of them had dual teaching/leadership positions). It was hoped that they could draw on both their experiences of being a teacher and being a leader in the interview.

Table 3.2

Centre Leader Participants

Pseudonym	Position	Relevant qualification/s	Type of ECEC service	Total years of experience in ECEC
Barb	Owner/manager	B Tech (ECE)	Independent—private	7
Christie	Head teacher	B Tech (ECE)	Kindergarten	9
Gladis	Owner/manager	B Ed (ECE) PG Dip Ed	Independent—private	25
Josie	Owner/manager	Dip Tech (ECE) Grad Dip—Education Management (ECE)	Franchise—private	24
Hana	Manager/teacher	B Tech	Community-based	25
Stella	Manager	Dip Tech (ECE) MEd	Community-based	17
Laverne	Manager	BTech (ECE) PG Dip Ed	Community-based	18
Esther	Manager/teacher	Dip Tech (ECE)	Community-based	22
Paula	Manager	B Tech (ECE)	Independent—private	20
Mary	Manager	B Tech (ECE)	Community-based	25+
Anna	Manager	B Tech (ECE)	Independent—private	15
Mandy	Manager	B Ed	Corporate—private	27
Lucy	Owner/manager	B Ed	Independent—private	40+

Interview Process: Centre Leaders. Once the consent form from each participant was collected, I arranged a time and place for the interview to take place. Some centre managers, owners and professional leaders preferred to have their interviews outside of centre hours. In these cases, an interview space on the University of Auckland campus was secured for interviews to take place. Other participants preferred for interviews to take place at their ECEC setting, meaning that I travelled to them. These interviews took place both during and after centre hours.

Individual interviews with this group of participants took a semistructured format using open-ended questions (Appendix H). Each interview lasted between 50 to 90 minutes. A set of seven suggested questions, including two warm-up questions, was designed to provide opportunities for the participant to talk about their experiences and perspectives of ECEC and ECEC teachers

and teaching. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that the role of an interviewer is to establish rapport with the interviewee, and to remain neutral in listening to their responses. This balance helps establish a comfortable interview environment which encourages participants to respond in a detailed way to the questions, and to raise issues of relevance as they see them. Creswell and Poth further point out that nature of individual interviews sets up unequal power dynamics that can be mitigated to some degree by taking a collaborative approach to the interview. Therefore, the participants had a large degree of control over the topics covered in the interview. Answering every question on the schedule was less important than providing an interview environment where participants could identify things they believed were relevant to their experiences of leadership or centre ownership and to the experience of being a teacher. My role was to listen, take notes, and ask clarification or follow-up questions. As each interview proceeded, I kept the interview schedule close to hand and returned to it if it was necessary. Participants often answered questions on the schedule as they talked, without having to be directly asked.

All the individual interviews were recorded and transcribed. At the end of the interview, participants were invited to email me if they had any additional insights or comments. A few weeks after each interview, a verbatim transcript was emailed to the participants. They were given a 4-week period in which to adjust, add to or amend the transcript. Only two of the teacher participants altered their transcripts—both adding additional reflections they had had after the interview and after reading the transcript. The amended transcripts were used for analysis.

Individual Interviews With Teacher Educators

Five TEs, from three different tertiary organisations, participated in 1-hour semistructured individual interviews. Initial teacher education is a significant source of discourse around what it means to be a teacher. Individual TEs bring their own understandings and values about ECEC to their work with students. TEs can be in the position of simultaneously contributing to, critiquing and teaching about policy and issues in the sector. In their role as researchers, they also reinforce, challenge or construct discourse. They are in the unique position of being able to closely observe (through practicum visits and centre relationships) and work with the ECEC sector while not being completely immersed in it. Initially it was hoped that this group of participants could also be involved in a focus group but difficulties with recruitment and

scheduling meant that individual interviews were offered instead. Table 3.3 provides an overview of TE participants.

Recruitment and Selection: Teacher Educators. To recruit TE participants, I contacted the programme leaders or administrators of the six main initial teacher education providers operating in the Auckland area with a request to distribute a research notice (Appendix I) to their ECEC lecturers or tutors. One provider did not respond but five other providers agreed to circulate the research notice, via email, to their ECEC lecturers. One provider required approval from their internal research ethics committee. The process for this was handled by the programme leader who informed me once approval was granted and the notice had been circulated. The response rate from TEs was low and all eight potential participants (representing three different institutions) who made initial contact were sent participant information sheets (Appendix J) and consent forms (Appendix K). Out of the eight potential participants who made contact, five were interviewed. One withdrew participation before the interview occurred, and two others were not available at the time data collection was occurring.

Table 3.3

Teacher Educator Participants

Pseudonym	Pseudonym for institution	Highest qualification	ECE teacher experience	Years in initial teacher education
Kelly	Institution 1	PhD	Yes	15–20
Tui	Institution 2	BEd	Yes	15–20
Cheryl	Institution 2	MEd	Yes	10–15
Peta	Institution 2	MEd	Yes	15–20
Jolene	Institution 3	MEd	Yes	15–20

Interview Process: Teacher Educators. Once consent was gathered, a time and place for interviews was agreed upon based on suitability and convenience for the interviewee. Interviews typically took place during work hours and at the participant's place of work. Interviews with TEs also took a semistructured format using open-ended questions (Appendix L). Interviews lasted approximately an hour (between 50–70 minutes). The questions were designed to invite participants to talk about their own initial teacher education programmes and initial teacher education generally, as well as share thoughts and perspectives on the ECEC sector and the work of early childhood teachers. As with the other interviews, my role as the interviewer was to encourage participants to respond in a detailed way to the questions and to raise issues of relevance as they saw them. During the interviews, I again saw my role as to

listen, ask for clarification or further detail and ask follow-up questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Very occasionally, I redirected the conversation if I felt it had strayed too far from the central topic. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. TEs were sent a transcript of their interview 2 weeks after the interview had taken place and were invited to add to or amend their transcripts before they were used for analysis. One TE amended and expanded on some of her interview responses. The amended transcript was included for analysis. The transcripts generated from the focus groups and interview data were analysed using CDA. The next section outlines CDA as a methodological approach.

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA provides the methodological approach for this research. CDA is an umbrella term for range of approaches. It is located within the "broad church" of qualitative research (Harreveld et al., 2016) which encompass a vast and expanding array of research approaches. While sharing some foundational principles, each approach stems from a different discipline (Lester et al., 2016). A very broad definition of CDA is that it is the critical study of language (represented through speech, text, images and design) in order to address social problems. CDA is concerned with

> a critical theory of the social world, the relationship of discourse in the construction and representation of this social world, and a methodology that allows them to describe, interpret and explain such relationships. (R. Rogers, 2011, p.3)

The aim of this section is to outline an understanding of CDA as it has been applied in this research.

The origins of CDA lie in applied linguistics. CDA is a form of DA. DA is the study of language-in-use, specifically how language is structured to make meaning in specific contexts. Gee (2014b) defines meaning in DA as an integration of ways of saying, doing and being. DA systematically examines the structure of language "as it is being used to uncover different ways of saying things, doing things and being things in the world" (Gee, 2014b, p. 9). The goal of DA is generally descriptive in that it looks to understand and describe how language works. CDA is distinguished from DA in that CDA also aims to "speak to and perhaps intervene in institutional, social and political, issues, problems and controversies in the world" (Gee, 2014b, p. 9). While Gee's (2014b) perspective is that all DA is political because language itself is political, CDA is overtly focused on understanding and exposing the political effects of language and contributing to change.

Various approaches to CDA include social semiotics (e.g., Hodge & Kress, 1988, 1993), discourse historical methods (e.g., Wodak, 2008), textual analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2011), and feminist CDA (e.g., Lazar, 2005). The differences lie in their methods of analysis as well as the extent to which they emphasise a linguistic or sociohistorical focus (Lester et al., 2016). However, across the approaches are two shared understandings. The first is that language is performative, building the world rather than just reflecting and describing reality (Fairclough, 2013; Gee, 2014b; Locke, 2004; Wodak, 2008). The second is that language is political, because it is through language that social practices and identities (such as teacher identities) are constructed, ascribed, resisted and enacted as discourses and practices become naturalised (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2014b). It is these twin underpinnings that made CDA a useful approach for this research which sets out to explore the effects of discourse on ECEC teacher identities and to illuminate the political implications of these effects including how discourse makes particular ways of being an ECEC teacher seem possible or unsayable, professional or less professional.

Foucauldian DA is also sometimes, perhaps controversially, called CDA (Baxter, 2008; Osgood, 2012; Vaara, 2015; Walshaw, 2007). Although the epistemological assumptions of Foucauldian DA are different, there are linkages because of the influence of Foucault's ideas about discourse on CDA. Foucault's (1988) theory of discourse, as "practices which form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49) has been influential in the work of CDA scholars in shifting the view of discourse from a linguistic to a social category. Fairclough (2003, 2010), Gee (2011) and Locke (2004), for example, all acknowledge Foucault's influence on their particular versions of CDA. Fairclough (2003) draws on Foucault to emphasise the social nature of discourse by defining it as a "practice not just of representing the world, but defining it" (p. 214). (Similarly, Gee (2014b) writes that discourses are "ways of building things in the world" (p. 31) including identities. Both scholars highlight the constitutive and performative elements of discourse. This research draws mostly on Gee (2014a, 2014b) for its approach to CDA, by selecting from Gee's (2014a) tools for analysis. It shares with Gee and others an understanding of discourse as ways of speaking, thinking, acting, and practising around an issue with outcomes and effects that can be identified, including who can become an early childhood teacher and what practices and identities are considered more or less legitimate, more or less professional.

CDA does not reduce everything to discourse but emphasises the dialectics of social structures and discourse. In CDA, discourse is seen to have an effect on social structures as well as being

determined by them (Fairclough, 2003). CDA begins with the assumption that society is embedded with unequal social relations, the creation and maintenance of which are hidden from view and become accepted as the ways things are. A goal of CDA is to study the sometimes-opaque relationships between language and social structures, and to try to explain how and why some patterns are privileged over others (Fairclough, 2010; R. Rogers, 2011). Inherent in this goal is the assumption that language is always shaped by and constitutive of specific social practices that "have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power" (Gee, 2011, p. 32).

The aim of CDA, set out above, reveals its critical nature as well as its overtly political and emancipatory agenda. In CDA, discourses are not viewed as neutral but a major locus of ideology (Vaara, 2015). Exposing the effects of texts in representing, inculcating, sustaining or changing ideologies is an overriding concern of CDA research (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough (2003, 2010) and Gee (2011) both take a broad view of ideology. Fairclough (2003) defines ideology as "representations which can be shown to contribute to social relations of power and domination" (p. 9) between groups. Gee (1996) understands ideology to be "social theories which involve generalisations (beliefs, claims) about the ways in which goods are distributed in society" (p. 21). Ideologies work through discourse as "an elaborate story told about the ideal conduct of some aspect of human affairs" (Locke, 2004, p. 21) to become the common-sense or naturalised way of seeing, being and doing in the world. A key purpose of CDA is to reveal these common-sense positions, denaturalise them and expose them as discursive constructions opening up possibilities for social change. Identifying and problematising the taken-for-granted "stories" about ECEC teachers, as well as the way teachers consciously and unconsciously fashion their own identities in relation to these stories, was possible through the critical analysis of the discourses within and through which the research was located.

CDA is used in this study to examine the constitutive role that discourse plays in ECEC teachers' identities. In CDA, identity is viewed as influenced, at least in part, by discourse, and views discourse as manifested in the ways that individuals understand and enact their identities (Gee, 2018; Locke, 2004). The systematic analysis and interpretation of texts, a defining feature of CDA, offers a way to potentially reveal how power is consolidated through discourse to shape ECEC teacher identities, recognising the often-covert ways in which this occurs. CDA offers a methodology that illuminates the interconnected web of discourses and discursive practices in the data, and provides a method for examining how they come together with other social

practices to enable or constrain particular identities for ECEC teachers. Undertaking a critical appraisal of the ways in which teacher identities are shaped within and through discourse also opens up consideration about the other possible ways of being an ECEC teacher and other ways of understanding teacher identities.

The focus of the theory and practice of CDA is on the structure of texts and talk. Each CDA approach is distinguished by the degree to which it is linguistically or socially and historically focused and whether the analytic foci attend to language at a micro- (conversational), meso- (institutional) or macro- (sociohistorical) level, or whether it oscillates between them. Micro-orientated discourse approaches include analysis of linguistic features of talk whereas macro-orientated approaches focus on historical or genealogical analyses, power and subjectification (Lester et al., 2016). Drawing primarily on the analytical methods of Gee (2011, 2014a, 2014b), analysis in this research occurs in a recursive manner between the macro and micro, considering the interdiscursive relationship between what is said in the text, and the sociopolitical contexts of the text. Nine CDA tools were employed to analyse textual data (policy documents and transcripts) in order to consider the macro- and microdiscursive effects of text in relation to ECEC teacher identities. The tools are explained below.

Data Analysis Using a CDA Toolbox

This section outlines the data analysis process using CDA. There is no agreed set of procedures for undertaking a CDA. The approach taken depends on the unique research design, the research questions and the understandings of discourse brought to the research problem. Therefore, R. Rogers (2011) suggests that each researcher build their own analysis toolbox based on the needs of the research. Considerations for collating a toolbox for analysis in this project were guided by the understanding of how discourse functions in text to create meaning. Every piece of text is embedded in macro- and microcontexts which Fairclough (2003) refers to as the internal and external relations of the text. The internal relations of a text refer to what is said and how what is said is used to assign significance to relationships, discourses or identities. The internal relations of a text can be *syntagmatic*—elements that are actually present in the text, or *paradigmatic*—the relationship between what is present in the text and what might have been present but is not. In other words, elements that are significantly absent (Fairclough, 2003). The external relations of a text consider the contexts in which the text is placed, which help to create it and which give it meaning (Gee, 2014a). Examining the external relations of a text allows the researcher to ask questions of the text that move beyond the

structure of the text to take notice of the social, cultural and political meanings present (Gee, 2014a). Fairclough (2003) suggests that CDA should consider both aspects, and the relationship between them, moving in a recursive manner between the two during analysis. Consideration of these two levels provided a useful starting point for selecting CDA tools.

The idea of a toolbox was that different tools might be more useful for different pieces of text by offering a different analytical lens. To collate a CDA toolbox, I looked for tools or concepts that would help to account for the internal and external relations of the text and that would be useful to apply to the large amount of data generated. To do this, I drew from Gee's (2014a, 2014b) approach to DA, specifically his seven building tasks. The building tasks are designed as analytical entry points to a text. According to Gee (2014a) language is used to say things, to do things and be things; to build meaning in the world including identities:

> Whenever we speak or write, we often (and often simultaneously) construct or build seven things, or seven areas of "reality." Let's call these seven things the "seven building tasks" of language. In turn, since we use language to build seven things, a discourse analyst can ask seven different questions about any piece of language-in-use. (p. 32)

Gee (2014) names these seven building tasks: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Each building task has an associated question about how language structure works to privilege some practices and identities and to marginalise others. These were useful because they did not assume an in-depth knowledge of linguistic analysis (functional grammar) but allowed the analysis to focus on asking questions of the text in relation to the kinds of meaning it builds in the world. Each piece of text can be read with Gee's building tasks in mind, although some building tasks will be more illuminating than others for different texts. The building tasks are integrally linked to each other and often mutually supported by the same words and phrases. As well as the internal relations of a text, the external relations were considered in analysis. Two additional analytical concepts from the CDA literature were used to examine the external relations of each piece of text. These were situated meanings, intertextuality and assumptions (Fairclough, 2003). The nine CDA tools, their associated critical questions and their application are explained below.

Significance Tool. How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways? The significance tool focuses on how language is used to build or lessen the significance of something in a piece of language, or to signal to others how significant

something is. This can be done through phrasing or by using words that mark significance, attitude or feeling.

Practices Tool. What practices or activities is this piece of language being used to enact? How are these practices normalised by particular social groups or institutions? Some practices are socially recognised or institutionally supported as being central to belonging to a particular group. This tool focuses on how language both reflects and constructs the practices that need to be enacted to be recognised within a particular kind of identity: the socially and institutionally normalised ways of being (Gee, 2014b).

Identities Tool. What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact? What identity or identities is this piece of language seeking to enact for others? This tool focuses on how language is used to signal taking on a particular identities or attributing identities to others. This might be done by speaking in a particular way, for example, using the language specifically from educational or business fields, by attributing particular skills or knowledge to a specific group, or by explicitly comparing and contrasting identities.

Relationships Tool. What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others? The relationships tool draws attention to how language is used to signal the relationship we have or want to have with others; to build, sustain or change relationships. It can be used to focus on social relationships and distance between groups, as well as inclusion and exclusion in relation to belonging to particular identities.

Politics Tool (The Distribution of Social Goods). What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating? Gee (2014a) uses the term politics to refer to the distribution of social goods. Social goods can be anything that a social group, or society as a whole, sees as worth having and can include recognition and status, and being accepted as normal or important. Gee (2011) counts these as social goods because they “are ultimately what gives people power and status in society (or not)” (p. 32). The politics tool focuses on the way that language is used to construct and distribute which social goods are worth having, and to infer who should have them (or not).

Connections Tool. How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things? How does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another? The connections tool focuses on how

connections between things are rendered visible or important in language (or not) and considers the implications of the connections we make in language between things.

Sign-Systems and Knowledge Tool. How does this piece of language privilege or deprivilege specific sign systems, different ways of knowing and believing, or claims to knowledge and belief? The sign-systems and knowledge tool focuses on the way language is used to construct (or obscure) different communicational systems and different ways of knowing and understanding the world. Communicational systems might be specific languages (such as te reo Māori) or language varieties such the language of a particular discipline (for example, developmental psychology) or other sign systems such as the use of data and graphs in policy texts. Different sign systems represent different sorts of knowledge or beliefs. An example Gee (2014a) uses is that physicists believe the language of mathematics is a superior way of communicating knowledge about the world. The sign-systems and knowledge tool focuses on how language is used to privilege (or not) particular sign systems and claims to knowledge over others.

The seven tools outlined above are specifically used to examine the internal relations of the policy texts and transcripts generated through the research methods. As well as the internal relations of a text, tools that focused on the external relations were also included in the tool box. Three additional analytical concepts were adapted to examine the external relations of each piece of text. These were Gee's (2014a) situated meanings tool as well as the concepts of intertextuality and assumptions adapted from Fairclough (2003). Each is explained below.

Situated Meanings Tool. What specific meanings need to be attributed to the words and phrases given the context and how the context is construed? Gee (2011) offers the concept of situated meanings as one way of examining the external relations of a text. The situated meanings of a text involve taking note of how language takes on specific or "situated" meanings in the different contexts in which it is used. Taking note of the situated meanings in a text might include noting how the particular public debates, motifs or themes are present in the background of the text and recognising that these represent disputes between and among discourses.

Intertextuality and Assumptions Tool. What other voices or texts are incorporated or excluded? What new or different meanings are created? What is left unsaid or taken for granted? The external relations of a text can also be examined by considering the intertextual

references within a text, that is by seeing specific texts as parts of longer chains of texts. Fairclough (2003) notes that, "for any particular text or type of texts, there is a set of other texts and a set of voices which are potentially relevant, and potentially incorporated into the text" (p. 47). All texts are linked to other texts, in different ways: through reference to public debates, main actors or events; or explicit or indirect references. Intertextuality can be examined by asking what other voices or texts are included or excluded, or how voices or meanings are textured together to create new meanings in a text—in a process of recontextualisation.

Similar to the concept of intertextuality, assumptions also exist within a text to influence what is said and unsaid and what is taken for granted. Unlike intertextuality, assumptions are not directly attributable to another specific text. Assumptions can be existential (about what exists), propositional (what is, can or will be the case), or value-based (about what is good or desirable). The kind of assumptions are being made and the discourses they belong to can be analysed using CDA. By asking what meanings are taken for granted within a text, and situating these within wider discourses, CDA can begin to consider what and how teacher identities are being served in a particular text. The next section moves to an explanation of how, given the large amount of text generated, the analysis was carried out.

Steps for Analysis

Confronted with hundreds of pages of text, it was difficult to know where to begin. Policy texts and transcripts were analysed separately at first, and then later considered in relation to each other. Analysis occurred in recursive steps which involved multiple readings of the texts. The steps for analysis are listed first and then explained in more detail below. The steps were:

1. Listening to audio recordings (for focus group and interview data) and rereading policy texts and transcripts for familiarity.
2. Coding in NVivo for emerging themes and topics (as nodes).
3. Reducing data further by collapsing related nodes.
4. Selecting "data episodes" for analysis.
5. Applying the CDA toolbox.

The first step for analysis was to read and reread each policy text and transcript, as well as listening to and making notes from the audio recordings for the focus groups and individual interviews. In this preliminary stage I was aiming for familiarity. I worked with the audio

recordings, the transcripts and notes I made during each interview and focus group. I made note of where I thought themes or patterns might be taking shape, and began to note where these also occurred across the texts. I also noted on the transcripts where the unspoken dynamics in an interview (such as pauses or signs of agreement such as clapping) occurred.

Next, NVivo software was applied as a data management tool. NVivo was useful in storing and organising the large amounts of text that had been generated. Each transcript was loaded into NVivo and coded using nodes according to topics that were evident in particular statements. For example, the following statement from a teacher was initially coded using the following nodes: passion, RIE,[1] philosophy, purpose-built buildings, leadership, teaching teams, professional development.

> I was really fortunate to work at the RIE-based learning centre and um, obviously, it was a purpose built and the manager was so awesome and so respectful and so was the teaching team and we all got trained and it was such a passion in it without even getting any money there was such a passion in it

This initial coding process produced over 100 nodes. See Appendix M for a tree map, generated from NVivo, from this initial stage of coding. The size of the square in the tree map indicates the strength of the themes across the transcript data. Next, I reduced the data further by grouping the nodes into related categories. For example, the nodes kindergarten work conditions, qualifications, kindergarten history, kindergarten association changes, kindergarten practices, kindergarten teachers, and kindergarten comparisons were collapsed into a data set labelled teacher identities in kindergarten. This initial sorting and coding of the data allowed the initial general themes to emerge, and also allowed statements to be sorted and easily accessed under each theme. I chose four major overall themes to work with, each of which was strongly supported in the data, and had relevance to the policy analysis and to the macrodiscourses identified through the literature review. These four overarching themes were care, professionalisation, kindergarten teacher identities and private sector teacher identities.

The next step was to begin a more complex and detailed analysis using the CDA toolbox. NVivo had limited use at this stage of the data analysis, which occurred using paper and pencil. In this

[1] RIE stands for Resources for Infant Educarers and is an approach to caring for and educating infants based on the teachings of Magda Gerber and Emmi Pikler. The principles of RIE are founded in notions of respect and a view of infants as competent and autonomous learners (Petrie & Owen, 2005).

step, I chose “data episodes” (particular statements) within each theme to work with more closely (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). To choose which parts of the data to work with, I followed the advice of Fairclough (2003), looking for statements that might be interpreted as “rules” or “boundaries” for being an ECEC teacher. Moving beyond searching for big themes, at this stage of the analysis I looked for chunks of data where agreements and disagreements occurred, where there were nuances, contradictions, ambiguities and points of resistance (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). I used the CDA tools to ask questions about the internal and external relations of these data episodes, searching for the function and effect of what participants had said in relation to ECEC professional identities. The CDA tools helped to locate patterns in the data, both in terms of commonalities and differences in participants’ experiences and perspectives.

The initial themes generated in the earlier steps acted as temporary containers for organising the data. The significance of the labels was challenged as the data was analysed more closely. For example, although there is a theme labelled kindergarten teacher identities, the aim of the analysis was not to produce a coherent narrative of kindergarten or to describe a unified kindergarten teacher identity. Applying the CDA tools to particular data episodes located under the theme heading *kindergarten* revealed the nuances and contradictions in the participants’ accounts of kindergarten. Kindergarten was treated as a discursive construct in which particular practices, subjectivities and materialities were privileged. The analysis enabled these to be located and analysed for their effects on participants’ negotiations of their own professional identities.

The choices made in this step, and in earlier steps, inevitably involved elements of subjectivity which I attempted to confront through multiple readings and rereadings of the data, deliberately searching out statements that said “otherwise” about my findings, and through critical conversations with my research supervisors. In presenting the research findings and conclusions, I was again challenged to account for my own subjectivity as a researcher and TE closely connected to the field of ECEC education. This challenge, which is central to all qualitative research is explored in the following section.

Reflexivity and Positionality

Reflexivity is an important skill for any qualitative researcher. Qualitative research does not claim to be wholly objective and researchers using qualitative approaches are considered to be located inside (and never outside) the research process (Grieshaber, 2001). Luttrell (2010)

names reflexivity as the “preeminent skill” for conducting qualitative research because the researcher is understood to be the “primary instrument” (p. 3) for data gathering and analysis. Reflexivity is a process by which researchers undertake critical self-reflection about their own positionality, biases and theoretical preferences across the entire research process and come to understand the limitations and strengths of the “instrument.”

Taking a reflexive stance that contextualises my positionality within the research was crucial. The research problem originated from my own experiences as a teacher and TE, which are outlined in Chapter 1. At the start of the research project, I had been involved in ECEC in Aotearoa for over 2 decades, working as both a teacher, a centre manager, and a TE. During this time, ECEC has undergone tremendous change, weathering policy shifts between governments that simultaneously encouraged rapid professionalisation of the sector, and pathed the way for increasingly privatised provision. I have had a long-standing interest in the impact of policy on equity issues, inspired by the significant feminist and activist role models I had as lecturers during my own undergraduate teaching degree in the early 1990s. The seeds for this research are firmly located in my own history and subjective experiences in ECEC. This subjectivity is implicated in all points of the research process—from formulating the research problem, choosing the methodology, to analysing the data and in my relationships with my participants (Lichtman, 2014).

CDA research is explicitly political. As a methodology it can be an important tool in critiquing dominant discourses and enacting change. However, as someone embedded in the field of ECEC, and other fields (academia, PhD studentship, teacher education) I am also caught up in dominant discourses. In this research, I was challenged to confront the ways my own discourse use impacted on the research and findings, acknowledging the possibility that the research itself became a means to reinforce and reinscribe discourse. R. Rogers (2011) calls for greater researcher reflexivity in CDA research, while Warburton (2016) suggests researchers critically engage with their own research assumptions and process, in order to reveal their entanglements with dominant discourses.

Taking a reflexive stance in the research was an ethical act which challenged me to consider my relationships with my participants, the ways I interpreted and represented their accounts, and their role in the research process (Cousin, 2010). Throughout the research process, I examined my own intentions, assumptions and biases—my contributions to and entanglements in

discourse. However, a function of discourse is how it limits being able to think, speak, feel and value otherwise. Therefore, I was also aware that "the self is not fully transparent to itself" (Lichtman, 2014, p. 27). Rereading and revisiting the data in iterative cycles, I tried to make the familiar seem strange (Gee, 2011), surfacing my own location in the discourse. I used my community of fellow doctoral students, the TEs I worked alongside and my research supervisors as critical friends to help challenge my readings of the data. In foregrounding my own placement in the research, I hope to make it accessible to others, and therefore vulnerable to judgement and evaluation (Madison, 2005). The inclusion of quotes and illustrative examples from the participants are intended to expose and document my process of understanding the data, offering the reader an opportunity to critically evaluate the analysis. This is an acknowledgement that the data might be read in different ways, and that my interpretations of the research problem and the data are just one possible way of understanding.

Validity and Limitations

In qualitative research, validity is concerned with the integrity and trustworthiness of the conclusions that are generated (Bryman, 2016). Many qualitative scholars acknowledge the concept of validity in qualitative research is vexed, with conceptualisations of validity closely tied to the epistemological stance of different research approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2008). This research, grounded in the concept of discourse as constructing and constituting the world, does not aim to uncover any kind of universal truth about teacher identities. CDA is concerned with layers of interpretation that are understood to be "temporal, located and open to reinterpretation" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 257). Gee (2014b) explains:

> Validity is not constituted by arguing that a discourse analysis "reflects reality" in any simple way … First, humans interpret the world, they do not have access to it "just as it is." They must use language or some other symbol systems with which to interpret it and thereby render it meaningful in certain ways. A discourse analysis itself is an interpretation of the interpretive work people have done in specific contexts. It is, in that sense of an interpretation of an interpretation. (p. 141)

Given that CDA is necessarily about critical interrogation and interpretation, validity can be seen as an ethical relationship with research participants where representation and interpretation of voices, researcher positioning and reflexivity are central issues and should be

transparent (Cannella & Lincoln, 2015). These issues of validity, and the ways they are attended to in this research, are addressed in the reflexivity and positionality section above.

Gee's (2014a) concepts of convergence and coverage were also useful in considering issues of validity related to CDA research. Convergence refers to the idea that a CDA is more valid the more the findings uncovered by the various CDA tools converge. The tools focus on different ways of constructing meaning in language, but they also overlap. Therefore, when different tools converge to identify similar meanings, the trustworthiness of the interpretation increases. Coverage, similar to the concept of triangulation, suggests that the analysis is more valid when it can be applied to different data. This research included both policy texts from different eras and authors, and transcripts generated from three different participant groups. In addition, the use of the nine different tools allowed the data to be read and reread in relation to different critical questions. These different sources and lenses for interpretation add to the integrity of the conclusions generated.

The highly interpretative and political nature of CDA, and my own positioning within the field, resist any claim that the findings and conclusions presented here are objective or neutral. The ways in which I have attempted to confront my own reading of the data, and document my interpretation processes so that they can be interrogated by others, are outlined in this section and the section above. The research includes a small number of participants, mostly from the Auckland area, and from teacher-led services. The research does not claim to represent the ECEC sector as a whole, in all of its complexity. Including other service types (such as home-based services or playcentres) would have elicited different data, different voices and no doubt raised new issues. In addition, all participants were qualified teachers. The issue of unqualified teachers in the sector, and unqualified centre owners, was raised repeatedly by participants as an issue for the sector. Given the need to limit the size of this research, this set of voices is missing but is an important area for future research. Likewise, although I had a number of participants from both community-based and private centres, participation from those who work in corporate ECEC was limited.

I am also aware that the participants who chose to be involved felt comfortable to share their experiences, views and perspectives. Throughout the research, participants pointed to groups of teachers whom they felt were exploited and disconnected from the larger ECEC community. The positioning of this group of teachers in participants' narratives is attended to in the

findings. It is not surprising that exploited and marginalised voices, experiences and perspectives are missing from this research given the fear and alienation that accompanies such experiences. It is vital, however, that such research is undertaken.

Ethics

Ethical considerations for the research were informed by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee [UAHPEC] *Guiding Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants* (UAHPEC, 2016). The ethical principles outlined in this document include autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice. A detailed application outlining the intent and process for the research was submitted to UAHPEC and approved before participant recruitment and data collection began (Appendix N). The main ethical considerations for this project included voluntary participation and the right to withdraw, informed consent, confidentiality, and the handling and storage of data.

Participants were approached through third-parties and were invited to make contact with me if they were interested in participating. This removed any risk of coercion and ensured that participation was entirely voluntary. All potential participants were provided with an information sheet with a background to the research, an outline of the research process, and detailed information about their participation. This included information about their right to withdraw at any point, the limits around the withdrawal of their data, confidentiality and the handling and storage of data. Written consent was secured from each participant before data collection began. Early on in the research planning, the decision to hold focus groups with teachers, but individual interviews with centre managers, was made based on the risk that uneven power relationships and competitive interests between and within these two groups might impact on the full participation of individuals. Further, all participants in the individual interviews were given copies of their transcripts and a 4-week window in which to explain, delete or alter their interview data. The nature of focus group data meant that although participants could withdraw their participation at any point, including opting not to answer particular questions, they could not withdraw their data once the focus group had taken place. This restriction around the right to withdraw was made clear to participants in their information sheets and again, at the beginning of each focus group. However, focus group participants were able to review the transcript of their first meeting, and clarify or respond to any comments or issues raised in the first meeting during the second focus group.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methodology, beginning by positioning the research in the qualitative paradigm. The research design, including the methods and research processes, participant recruitment and make-up, have been explained in detail. CDA has been introduced as a methodological approach used to examine the constitutive role that discourse plays in ECEC teachers' professional identities. CDA provided a way to analyse the textual data generated from policy texts and transcripts from three participant groups: ECEC teachers, centre leaders, and TEs. The application of a CDA tool box comprising nine tools, primarily from Gee's (2014a, 2014b) approach to DA, has been explained. Issues of validity specific to qualitative and discourse orientated research have been attended to, with a focus on transparency and reflexivity in relation to my own positioning as a researcher. Finally, ethical considerations relevant to the research design have been outlined.

The following five chapters present and discuss the findings from the CDA of policy (Chapter 4) as well as of the interview and focus group transcripts. These include chapters on how teachers are positioned within discourses of care (Chapter 5), and the ways in which some teachers engage with regulatory documents and processes to understand and enact their identities (Chapter 6). Following this, the influence of particular contexts on teacher identity is examined, especially kindergarten (Chapter 7) and identities in the private sector (Chapter 8).

Chapter 4. Teacher Identities in Policy: The Professional and The Kaiako

Introduction

The research question guiding this chapter is: *What discourses can be identified in key ECEC policies, and what are the implications of these for teacher identities?* A key task is to examine the ways in which teachers are discursively constructed in policy texts, opening these up to scrutiny, offering insights into what kinds of identities are privileged or marginalised, and considering whose interests are served as a result. The analysis reveals seven prevalent and intersecting discourses: quality, human capital, social investment, innovation, privatisation, biculturalism, and democratic participation. CDA emphasises the idea that discourses contribute to shaping identities by cultivating discursive truths about what kind of teacher identities count (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012; Gee, 2018). In this chapter, policy discourses are revealed and examined in relation to how they position teachers. The chapter is organised into two sections – reflecting two prominent and different teacher identities which arose from the policy analysis: The Professional and The Kaiako.

Policy Selection and CDA Method

Six policy texts from across important eras of ECEC policy development critical to the development of the sector were chosen. (Refer to page 41 for a full explanation). Each policy is considered to be significant in influencing the sector, either as a policy blueprint for sector development or, in the case of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996c, 2017) as a curriculum document with significant influence on ECEC teachers' daily work. An overview of each policy is provided in Table 4.1 including the title, author, type of policy text and a brief summary. The final column identifies the implications of each document for teachers, emphasising the professionalisation of the ECEC teaching workforce in policy over time. Each of these big policy texts has informed additional documents that further influence official expectations about teachers and the purposes of their work. Discourse travels through these chains of documents promoting particular (and sometimes multiple) teacher identities. These subsequent texts are presented under the intertextuality tool. Their relationships to the policies analysed, and their messages and influences, are considered in the discussion section of this chapter.

Table 4.1

Policy Texts for Analysis

Year	Document title and author	Document type and summary	Implications for teachers
1988	*Education to Be More. The Report of the Early Childhood Working Group* (*ETBM*) (ECCEWG, 1988)	***Advisory document*** Identifies five areas for immediate improvement: the status of the sector, equity of access to services, self-determination of Māori, status of women, inequitable funding structures. Argues for increased government intervention and investment in ECEC. *ETBM* recommended significant changes to ECEC policy and administration of ECEC.	Suggests equal role and standing for childcare and kindergarten teachers Emphasises the educational potential and purposes of childcare. Recommends increased training and development for childcare workers. Positions teachers as in partnership with parents, and as important to cultural transmission.
1988	*Before Five. Early Childhood Care and Education in New Zealand* (Lange, 1988)	***Government report*** Takes up most of the recommendations in *ETBM*. Focuses on equalising funding across ECEC services.	Suggests increased expectations for training and development of teachers.
1996	*Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early Childhood Curriculum* (MoE, 1996c)	***Curriculum document*** The first national curriculum document for ECEC in Aotearoa. The result of wide consultation with the sector and a partnership between the writers and the Kōhanga Reo National Trust. Described as nonprescriptive, bicultural and sociocultural. Communities weave their own curriculum from four principles and five strands.	Arguably offers teachers increased status. Expectations that teachers understand and work with the complex underpinning ideas in *Te Whāriki* including sociocultural theory and bicultural pedagogies. Expectations that teachers work with families and communities to construct curriculum.
2002	*Pathways to the Future. Ngā Huarahi Arataki: 2002–2012. A 10-Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education* (MoE, 2002)	***Policy planning document*** First strategic plan for the sector underpinned by three strategic goals: to promote participation, to improve quality, and to enhance collaborative relationships. Introduced qualification targets and professional registration goals for teachers, centre-based research, self-review processes.	Focuses on the professionalisation of the sector through qualifications, research-informed practice and self-review processes.
2011	*An Agenda for Amazing Children. Final Report of the ECE Taskforce* (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	***Advisory document*** Commissioned by incoming National government. The Taskforce was asked to "identify a future state for early childhood education" in Aotearoa and include recommendations that did not increase expenditure. Makes 65 wide-ranging recommendations for ECEC that focus on results-based targeted social funding.	The attendant implications for teachers were a tightening of accountability practices including internal and external evaluation processes as well as an emphasis on best-evidence practices, innovation and research.
2017	*Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mō nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early Childhood Curriculum* (MoE, 2017)	***Curriculum document*** Retains the principles, strands and goals. Refreshed design, updated context, language, examples, and implementation advice. Fewer learning outcomes (118–120). Kaupapa Māori, Pasifika approaches and critical theories added to sociocultural theory as underpinning theories and approaches.	Teachers are referred to as kaiako. *Te Whāriki* includes a section on the responsibilities of kaiako which suggests that their primary responsibility is to facilitate learning and development.

A CDA of each policy text was undertaken by applying the CDA tools outlined in detail in Chapter 3. Each tool represents a different way that language can be used to build and

naturalise meaning in a text. A critical question associated with each tool provides a different entry point to examining the text. Gee (2018) notes that “the tools are essentially questions we ask of the data we want to analyse” (p. 130) and likens this process to “reverse engineering.” Each tool helps to take the text apart, revealing how the parts function alone and together to create dominant meanings and conventions, including the values, activities and norms that a teacher needs to enact to be recognised. Each tool helps to explicate a different aspect of the mean-making process—the different ways that discourses “constitute and construct the world in meaning” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124).

Each policy was read and reread, with a different critical question (CDA tool) in mind. Gee (2014a) comments that the different tools will be variously useful for different texts and that there will be significant overlaps and repetitions in what the tools uncover. This convergence in findings across the tools contributes to the validity of the findings, as explained by Gee (2014b), “A discourse analysis is more, rather than less valid … the more the answers to the questions converge in how they support the analysis” (p. 195). This was the case for the policy analysis presented below. While all the tools were applied in the analysis, there were many repetitions in what each tool uncovered. In order to avoid a high degree of repetition in the presentation of the findings, only the tools that were the most useful in helping to deconstruct the texts and exposing the discourses and identities constituted in them are presented. Findings from each of these tools are presented in tables 4.2–4.12. Each table includes the tool, its associated question(s) and a selection of representative statements that demonstrate the findings revealed through the use of the tool. An additional column identifies the discourse(s) being promoted by the different ways meaning is constructed in each text. Reading across the tables, it is possible to see how particular discourses and teacher identities are embedded in each policy text, as well as the evolution of these across documents. Blank spaces underneath document titles indicate that this particular discourse was not significantly evident in that document. They are retained in the tables because they help to reveal discontinuities and differences in discourse across the policies. The paragraph preceding each table summarises the findings for each tool.

The Professional

One of the key findings of the policy analysis was the development, across documents, of the idea of a professional early childhood teacher. The tables below map the construction of an identity I have named The Professional. This identity is the result of the combination of a

number of different discourses: quality, human capital and social investment, privatisation, and innovation. The following tools, connections, identities, practices, politics and intertextuality, identified key developments. The intertextuality tool is presented in Table 4.6 to identify some of the subsequent documents, which further work to promote The Professional identity by setting out specific expectations and practices. Table 4.6 is not a record of every subsequent policy. Its purpose is to illustrate the ways in which discourses promoted in influential national policy texts travel and come to influence understandings about teachers and their work.

Connections Tool: The Professional

The connections tool (Table 4.2) directs analysis to noticing how things are connected through the way language is structured and also considers the implications of these connections by asking what is left out or disconnected. Persistent connections between quality and teachers are made across three policy texts: *ETBM*, *Pathways*, and *Agenda*. Professionalising the ECEC sector is established as "*the* solution" to improving quality in *Pathways*, for example. The connection between teachers and quality is repeatedly made in the language of *Agenda* which positions teachers as "one of the most important indicators of quality" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 4). The singularity of the connection between teacher professionalism and quality allows the disconnection (silencing) of many other factors that might be understood as contributing to definitions of quality and could become issues for policy to address. These include issues such as centre work conditions, the extent of family and community involvement in decision making, or the impact of privatisation on how centre revenue is used. The term quality is not used in the 1996 version of *Te Whāriki*, and only once in the 2017 version, in the foreword in the context of "quality early learning" with no explicit connection to teachers (MoE, 2017, p. 2). Quality discourse strongly entered the ECEC policy lexicon after *Te Whāriki* was initially developed, and the curriculum document draws on other discourse and ideas about the work of adults in ECEC settings.

Table 4.2

Connections Tool: The Professional Teacher

Connections—How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
Quality & teachers ECEC High quality early childhood services are clearly dependent on skilled early childhood teachers. (p. 31)	Quality
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
-	
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2008)	
Quality and professionally trained teachers The solution to improving quality sector wide is to increase the number of professionally trained teachers responsible for providing education and care to children. (p. 13) Improving ECE quality through increasing the numbers of qualified teachers. Many ECE teachers in New Zealand are not qualified, yet there is a strong correlation between quality ECE and teacher qualifications. (p. 6)	Quality
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
Highly qualified professional teachers The drive to higher quality across the sector needs to be continued through greater professionalism—as measured by qualifications of service staff. (p. 4) A powerful body of evidence exists to demonstrate the significant, positive returns that societies can gain from making investments in high-quality, professionally led early childhood education for all children. (p. 150)	Quality
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
-	

Identities Tool: The Professional

The identities tool (Table 4.3) focuses on the ways in which language is used to build or attribute teacher identities in each policy text. This can be identified by looking to see how teachers are described and positioned in each document, what kind of knowledge or skills they are expected to demonstrate, as well as how the purpose of their work is construed. The identities tool and the practices tool can overlap. To avoid repetition, the practices that define The Professional are presented next. The identities tool reveals the ways in which ECEC teachers are represented as more professional over time, shifting from childcare workers with an educational focus to "well-qualified and respected early childhood education professionals" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 152). Representations of teachers as skilled, qualified, accountable and innovative professionals intensify in *Pathways* and *Agenda*; both considered to be blueprint documents for the sector (May, 2019). At the same time, both iterations of *Te Whāriki* represent teachers as among a range of adults who collectively take responsibility for the learning and development of children in the programme. Representations of teachers in *Te*

Whāriki are collaborative and relational. The implications of these different representations on teacher identity are explored later in the chapter under the heading: The kaiako. Nomenclatures also shift across the policy texts, from staff and workers in *ETBM* and *Before Five* to teachers in *Pathways*, and adults and kaiako in *Te Whāriki*.

Table 4.3

Identities Tool: The Professional

Identities—What identities are attributed to teachers in each document?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
Trained teachers A policy of encouraging trained staff is essential to improving the quality of early childhood care and education. (p. 34) *Care and education: Childcare worker in an educational role* Care and education are inseparable for the young child, and certainly the needs of children and their families do not differ by virtue of their attending different services. (p. 31) *Education as the central focus of ECEC work* It is essential that early childhood services keep as their central focus the meeting of the educational needs of families. (p. 47) *Quality & ECEC teaching as a specialised role* Not just anybody can provide good quality care and education. (p. 18)	Quality
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
Training: The Government will consider ways in which staff taking on new responsibilities can be given training, information, and support. (p. 11)	Quality
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
Use of nomenclature "adults" Implications for adult responsibilities for management, organisation, and practice in early childhood settings are set out for each strand. (p. 10) *Training* Management must also ensure that training is available to support children's learning and development and to implement the curriculum in everyday practice. (p. 27)	
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2008)	
Quality and professionally trained teachers: Improving ECE quality through increasing the numbers of qualified teachers. Many ECE teachers in New Zealand are not qualified, yet there is a strong correlation between quality ECE and teacher qualifications. (p. 6) *Professional registration: ECEC teachers are the same as teachers in schools* Some of the biggest shifts in direction will be: …the introduction of professional registration requirements for all teachers in teacher-led services, such as those already applying in the schools sector and kindergarten. (p. 8)	Quality
Teachers as researchers through Centres of Innovation scheme/evidence-based, replicable practices The centres capitalise on those most likely to produce the best ideas—the people working in ECE services. The programme sees ECE teachers combining their skills with the complementary skills of researchers. Their resulting work means that innovation is quantified and tested before being captured in a format suitable for replication throughout the sector. (p. 15)	Innovation
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
Professionalisation through teacher education, professional development, a focus on best practice, and self-review	Quality

The Taskforce's vision is for a highly paid, well-qualified and respected early childhood education profession. This begins with two dimensions: a) teacher education and b) improving professional development opportunities for all staff. (p. 152)	
A qualified and professional sector committed to strong leadership and professional development, continuous learning and using current best teaching practice will ensure access for all to high-quality early childhood education services. (p. 159)	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
Use of nomenclature "kaiako"	
Kaiako includes all teachers, educators and other adults, including parents in parent-led services, who have the responsibility for the care and education of children in an ECE setting (p. 7)	
Kaiako—focus is on learning and development	
Kaiako are the key resource in an ECE service. Their primary responsibility is to facilitate children's learning and development through thoughtful and intentional pedagogy. (p. 59)	

Practices Tool: The Professional

The practices tool (Table 4.4) focuses on how the documents communicate particular practices (or activities) that teachers need to carry out to be recognised as a professional teacher. Across the documents, participation in training and, later, qualifications and teacher registration become important to the overall goal of professionalising the sector. In *ETBM,* teaching practices such as curriculum planning, assessment and evaluation are represented as core aspects of teachers' work. This signalled a change for many adults in ECEC services who may have previously seen their work as simply caring for and looking after children in the absence of their parents. These practices are also carefully outlined in *Te Whāriki* although the shared and collaborative nature of these activities with others in the ECEC community is highlighted. In *Pathways* and *Agenda*, professional and qualified teachers are expected to participate in practices that regulate and define what they do to greater extents. These include registration processes aligned with professional standards, and participation in self-review to inform external review. Expectations that teaching work encompasses these practices intensify in *Agenda* with messages about practice that is continuously improving, innovative and has measurable outcomes. Once again, a notable feature of the language across the documents is the way that notions of quality are repeatedly invoked to strengthen and provide a justification for increased regulation of teachers' work.

Table 4.4

Practices Tool: The Professional

Practices Tool: What practices does the document communicate are important for teachers?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
Training for desired levels of quality, programme planning	Quality

Appropriate training and the development of knowledge and skills means that caregivers will have a greater understanding of children and how they develop…more effective planning of programmes … better constructed and more developmental play. (pp. 17–18) *Curriculum planning, assessment and evaluation as key activities for teachers* The identifiable characteristics of good quality are … curriculum planning and implementation that is developmentally appropriate. (p. 17) A clear curriculum philosophy, staff discussion of programme plans and systematic evaluation are essential for attaining good-quality early childhood services. (p. 18)	
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
Collaborative curriculum planning and implementation, and assessment In order to enable the curriculum to meet the needs of all children, adults working in early childhood education need to be knowledgeable about children's development and early childhood curriculum, skilled at implementing curriculum, thoughtful about what they do, aware of their role as models for learning willing to try alternatives, and well supported by management. (p. 27)	
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2008)	
Quality practices, evidence-based teaching, self-review, external review. Research aspects of quality to provide information for the development of quality practices. (p. 15) Develop and implement self-review processes that reflect on quality practices and contribute to external review processes. (p. 15)	Quality
Innovation, research, evidence-based and replicable teaching practices We are constantly challenging and extending the depth of knowledge within the ECE sector. Centres of Innovation foster research and development in the ECE sector and reflect New Zealand's heritage of ingenuity and innovation. The centres capitalise on the experience of those most likely to produce the best ideas—the people working in ECE services. The programme sees ECE teachers combining their skills with the complementary skills of researchers. The resulting work means innovation is quantified and tested before being captured in a format suitable for replication throughout the sector. (p. 15)	Innovation
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
Research, evaluation, evidence-based teaching A stronger emphasis on quality needs to be reinforced and supported by investment in the identification of effective professional practice, and focussed research and evaluation. (p. 4) *Review, evaluation and continuous improvement* Alongside this drive for higher qualification levels, there needs to be a stronger and increased focus on developing broader measures and assessments of the quality of provision. (p. 4) All early childhood education services need to acknowledge the benefits of continuously reviewing, evaluating and improving teaching practice. (p. 157) The Taskforce also recommends that the process of self-review be embedded into a service's management practice. Every centre should have in place a programme of self-improvement that identifies a service's values, priorities and areas for improvement. This should then link into individual teacher's self-development programmes. (p. 158)	Quality
Innovation and continuous improvement, quality, meeting the needs of children and families 10. Promote innovation across the sector. Organisational innovation is a way to promote continuous improvement in the quality and efficiency of our services for children. We are keen to ensure that, through time, individuals and organisations in the early childhood education sector will be able to consciously explore how to keep getting better at providing services that meet the needs of children and their families. This will help the early childhood education sector move from good to great. (p. 19)	Innovation
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	

Assessment, planning and evaluation for systematic improvement By analysing such assessment information, gathered over time, Kaiako are able to track changes in children's capabilities, consider possible pathways for learning, and plan to support these. (p. 63) The purpose of evaluation is the systematic improvement in the ECE setting. (p. 65)	

Politics Tool: The Professional

The politics tool (Table 4.5) is used to focus on what counts as a social good in the text. Specifically, the politics tool was used to focus on what kinds of social goods ECEC is constructed as delivering, and the roles of teachers in that process. Participation in "quality" ECEC for children and families is strongly represented, across the documents, as a social good with educational, economic and social benefits that pay off into adulthood, and is increasingly positioned as being important for target demographics where participation in ECEC is identified as being low. This discursive positioning of ECEC intensifies across the documents and is used to create arguments about government investment in ECEC as a strategy for producing productive adults. Teachers are positioned as responsible for successful outcomes of ECEC and, by association, of government investments. This new responsibility for teachers offers more recognition and status (social goods) but at cost to professional autonomy. An additional embedded assumption across the policy texts is that the current diversity of services, including private services, is a positive feature that facilitates consumer choice. Consumer choice is a key value (or social good) in neoliberal discourse that also has implications for teachers who are cast in the role of service provider tasked with attracting parent customers and maintaining centre competitiveness.

Table 4.5

Politics Tool: The Professional

Politics—How do the documents construct or assume what counts as a social good, and how it should be distributed? What implications do these have for how teachers' work is constructed?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
ECEC for future social and educational success. Embedded implications are that teachers are responsible for ensuring investments in ECEC are successful Early childhood care and education can bridge the skills and knowledge gap, before such children slide into a downward spiral. The findings about the educational benefits of early childhood care and education are extensive. (p. 14)	Quality Human capital
Diversity of provision, choice. The teacher's role encompasses responding to consumer choice and maintaining standards set by government In addition we strongly support: flexibility and diversity in early childhood education and care…responsiveness to consumer needs. (p. 5) It need not follow that government should become an early childhood care and education provider itself: its role is simply to ensure that appropriate early childhood care and education *is* provided. (p. 20)	Privatisation

Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
ECEC as an investment—teachers as responsible for investment Research shows that resources put into early childhood care and education have proven results. Not only do they enhance the individual child's learning, the advantages gained help create success in adult life. Improvements in this sector are an investment in the future. Our children are our future. They need a good start in life. (p. iii)	Quality
Status of ECEC At all levels of education, the early childhood sector will have equal status with other education sectors. (p. 2)	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
-	
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2008)	
ECEC as an investment in future success—teachers as responsible for investment paying off Early childhood education is a first critical step in building the foundation for a child's ongoing learning and development. (p. 2) Quality is a key focus…the quality of early childhood education today influences the wellbeing of citizens and society in the future. (p. 9) *ECEC as targeted towards groups that are "missing out"* Although NZ ECE participation rates are high, some children are still missing out, often because families are not well informed about the value of ECE to their children's development both in the present and in the future. (p. 6)	Quality Human capital
Diversity and choice The choice of ECE services is broad: this country has a strong ECE sector offering a diverse range of services to meet the education and care needs of most children, families and whānau. (p. 5)	Choice Privatisation
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
ECEC produces human capital/ECEC as a social investment—teachers as responsible for investment Convergence in the results of substantial international evidence, based on well-designed longitudinal research studies and cost-benefit analysis, reveals positive long-term effects for individuals who have experienced high-quality early childhood education compared to individuals who have not. (p. 21) Long term outcomes for children can include attainment of higher levels of education, more employment opportunities and higher incomes, more stable relationships and reduced crime and welfare use. These benefits only result from participation in quality early childhood education. (p. 40)	Human capital Social investment
Innovation in facilitating quality and excellence teachers as innovators By innovating, individuals and organisations involved in early childhood education learn to do better and to remain relevant … To move from a good early childhood education system to a great one we must all play a part in promoting, supporting and disseminating innovation that is forward focused and excellence driven. (p. 162) Innovation is central to the continuous improvement of quality and excellence in early childhood education in New Zealand. (p. 163)	Innovation
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
ECEC (and teachers) to produce 21st Century citizens and lifelong learners All children are born with immense potential. Quality early learning helps our children begin to realise that potential and build a strong foundation for alter learning and for life … New Zealand's early standards are amongst the highest in the world … and [the curriculum] provides clear and empowering learning outcomes…and positions our children as 21st century citizens, learning how to learn in. fast changing and globally connected world … Education is the critical cornerstone of lifelong learning and puts our youngest learners on pathway to quality life outcomes. (p. 2)	Human capital Social investment

Intertextuality Tool and Assumptions: The Professional

The intertextuality tool contributes to the mapping of discourses within and across texts by identifying how meanings and social practices are influenced as a result of their place in a chain of texts. Table 4.6 identifies a range of additional documents, produced as a result of policy discourse, which further establish systems, processes and practices to ensure quality. Increased measures of standardisation are evident across the documents with attempts to both define and measure quality; frequently these focus on the work of teachers. This includes drawing ECEC centres (and teachers) into the national evaluation and reporting system overseen by the Education Review Office (ERO). ECEC teachers also become part of a national regulatory system that includes their membership of a governing body: TECANZ (formally known as ECANZ). TECANZ sets expectations for teaching practice and behaviour, and oversees registration processes for teachers. Teachers' work is governed through documents such as *Our Code Our Standards. Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession* (ECANZ, 2017). These documents make no distinctions between ECEC teachers and teachers from other sectors, overlooking what might be unique to ECEC teaching work and identities. Instead, assumptions that ECEC teachers have the same understandings about "effective teaching practice" and "what it means to be a teacher in Aotearoa" as other teachers are evident (ECANZ, 2017, inside front cover). Further attempts to define what quality teaching practice looks like in the context of Aotearoa and across sectors are made through the development of competency standards such as *Tātaiako. Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (ECANZ, 2011) and *Tapasā. Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners* (MoE, 2018). The expectations that teachers engage actively in self-review and internal review can be seen through a progression of documents such as *Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua. Self-Review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (MoE, 2008), *He Pou Tātaki: How ERO reviews EC services* (ERO, 2013a) and *Effective Internal Evaluation for Improvement* (ERO, 2016). Across the documents, a professional teacher identity emerges out of the intersection of key expectations and ideas. These include expectations that teachers are highly regulated, quality focused, qualified, and subject to accountably processes and ongoing review.

Table 4.6

Intertextuality Tool and Assumptions: The Professional Teacher

Year	Document title and author	Document type and summary
1990	*Early Childhood Charter Guidelines. A statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices* (*DOPs*; MoE, 1990).	**Supplement in the *Education Gazette*:** Conveyed the government's expectations of the standard of education and care that early childhood services provide. Implementing *DOPs* was mandatory for all chartered ECEC services
1996	*Revised Desirable Objectives and Practices* (*Revised DOPs*; MoE, 1996b).	**Supplement in the *Education Gazette*:** *Revised DOPs* to align with *Te Whāriki*. Implementing *DOPs* was mandatory for all chartered ECEC services.
1996	*What Counts as Quality in Childcare?* (ERO, 1996*)*	**National evaluation report:** Utilises the findings of national external evaluations undertaken by the ERO to report evaluative information about childcare.
1996	*Quality in Action. Te Mahi Whai Hua. Implementing the Revised Desirable Objectives and Practices in New Zealand Early Childhood Services* (MoE, 1996a).	**Best-practice resource:** Produced to assist ECEC centres and teachers in the implementation of the *Revised DOPs* (MoE, 1996b).
1997	*What Counts as Quality in Kindergarten?* (ERO, 1997*).*	**National evaluation report:** Utilises the findings of national external evaluations undertaken by the ERO to report evaluative information about kindergartens.
1999	*The Quality Journey: Improving Quality in Early Childhood Services. He Haerenga Whai Hua* (Meade et al., 1999).	**Best-practice resource:** Produced by the MoE, this resource provides guidance for centres undertaking self-review. The *Quality Journey* extends concepts and ideas found in the *Revised DOPs* (MoE, 1996b), *Quality in Action* (MoE, 1996a) and *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996c)
2004	*Kei Tua O Te Pae—Assessment for Early Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (Carr et al., 2004–2009).	**Best-practice resource:** Produced by the MoE to help teachers undertake assessment practices aligned to the principles of *Te Whāriki* and focused on the continuous improvement of teaching practice. The resource includes a series of exemplar books covering different aspects of assessment practice.
2005	*Self-Review in Early Childhood Education* (ERO, 2005).	**National evaluation report:** Reports on the evaluation of the quality and outcomes of self-review across 168 early childhood services.
2006	*Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua: Self-Review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (MoE, 2006).	**Best-practice resource:** Designed for teachers and centres to learn about review and to improve the effectiveness of self-review processes.
2007	*Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2007).	**National teacher standards:** Describes standards of teaching practice for teachers graduating as qualified teachers in Aotearoa.
2009	*The Quality of Education and Care in Kindergartens* (ERO, 2009a).	**National evaluation report:** Utilises the findings of national external evaluations undertaken by the ERO to report evaluative information about kindergarten. The report focuses on the extent to which kindergartens provide high-quality programmes by paying attention to their planning, assessment and evaluation systems, learning environments, interactions, self-review processes, and other aspects of compliance.
2009	*Implementing Self-Review on ECE services* (ERO, 2009b).	**National Evaluation Report:** Follows up report from *Self-Review in Early Childhood Education* (ERO, 2005). Reports on the progress services are making with self-review.
2010	*Quality in Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2010a).	**National Evaluation Report:** Reports on findings for ERO national evaluations and individual centre ERO reviews

		to identify factors that contribute to high- and low-quality ECEC.
2010	*The Practising Teacher Criteria* (New Zealand Teachers' Council, 2010).	**National Criteria for Qualified Teachers:** *The Practising Teacher Criteria* describe quality teaching for all fully certificated teachers in Aotearoa.
2011	*Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (New Zealand Teachers' Council, 2011).	**Teacher Competency Framework:** This document describes related behaviours for teachers, working with Māori learners, at different stages of their teaching career. Teachers need to ensure they have the competencies of all stages up to their current level.
2013	*He Pou Tātaki. How ERO Reviews Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2013a).	**Evaluation Framework:** This document explains the ERO external evaluation methodology with the intention that ECEC services will be better prepared and orientate internal review practices towards it.
2016	*Effective Internal Evaluation for Improvement* (ERO, 2016).	**Evaluation Framework:** A joint publication with the MoE, this publication outlines the preferred methods for internal evaluation and evaluative thinking for any educational institution.
2017	*Our Code/Our Standards. Code of Professional Responsibility for the Teaching Profession* (ECANZ, 2017).	**National Teaching Standards for qualified and registered teachers:** The code sets out expected standards for ethical behaviour, and the standards describe expectations of effective teaching practice.
2018	*Tapasā. Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners* (MoE, 2018).	**Teacher Competency Framework:** This document describes related behaviours for teachers, working with Pacific learners, at different stages of their teaching career. Teachers need to ensure they have the competencies of all stages up to their current level.

Discussion: Constructing The Professional in Policy

The professionalisation of the sector over time is evident in the policy texts analysed—what is also evident is the marshalling of particular ideas that constitute what an ECEC professional teacher is: skilful, qualified, quality focused and accountable. The discussion below maps the construction of The Professional in policy, culminating in the acceptance of ECEC teachers as full members of the wider teaching profession, and considers the implications of such an identity. As the purposes of ECEC shift from being about care *and* education to focus on economic and entrepreneurial orientations, ECEC teachers are subject to policy reforms that seek to more tightly define what a professional ECEC teacher is and does.

The sections below examine the ways in which human capital discourse, privatisation and innovation assemble and intensify across the texts analysed to create persuasive arguments about the importance of ensuring quality ECEC: discursively constructed as the "best bet" for an "upward trajectory in terms of social and economic outcomes" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 4). The connections tool reveals the ways in which teachers are persistently positioned as "one of the most important indicators" of quality; their work critical to achieving the potential long-term social and economic benefits of ECEC (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 4). As a result, teachers

become the key targets for policy reform and a range of subsequent documents are produced to proactively shape teaching priorities and practices. Many of these documents are written with a view to measuring or documenting accountability towards externally defined competencies and standards. Listed under the intertextuality tool, these additional documents are also considered in the discussion below.

The evolution from childcare worker and kindergarten teacher to professional ECEC teacher is highlighted through the identities tool which tracks shifts in nomenclatures and the positioning of teachers in policy. As outlined in Chapter 1, prior to *ETBM,* childcare workers and kindergarten teachers were positioned differently with each service maintaining a different focus. *ETBM* uses the term early childhood teacher for the first time in policy, arguing for the inclusion of care *and* education in all ECEC settings asserting that "trained staff" (p. 31) and "skilled early childhood teachers" (p. 36) are necessary to optimise the many educational and social benefits of ECEC. The professionalisation of the sector continues in *Pathways* which argues that "the solution to improving quality sector wide is to increase the number of professionally trained teachers" (MoE, 2002, p. 13). *Pathways* sets out a strategy for a fully qualified sector and requirements for professional registration, pointing out that this requirement puts all ECEC teachers on the same level as "the schools sector and kindergarten" (MoE, 2002, p. 8). *Agenda* also sets out the vision for a "well-qualified and respected profession" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 152) defined through its willingness to embrace the values of continuous improvement, evidence-based practices, and innovation. The result of such a vision is that qualified ECEC teachers now belong to a governing body, TECANZ, and are subject to the definitions of practice and standards set out through the processes of teacher registration. Such expectations can be seen in contemporary documents such as *Our Code Our Standards* (ECANZ, 2017). *Our Code Our Standards* (ECANZ, 2017) aims to "define, inspire and guide" (p. 2) teachers "regardless of their role or teaching environment" (inside cover). This document tightly defines professionalism, by outlining clear expectations for how teachers behave and perform their roles. The document is explicit that teachers across contexts and sectors are defined by the same professional responsibilities and shared understandings of effective teaching practice. *Our Code Our Standards* employs phrases such as "our profession" and "as teachers, we understand" (ECANZ, 2017, p. 6) to invite ECEC teachers to think of themselves as belonging to the profession of teaching and the wider teaching sector. Such language may also make it hard for teachers to critically engage with the limitations or

suitability of the standardised messages in the documents. To do so may risk being seen as unprofessional. There is less space for teachers to decide, alongside their communities, what values, behaviours, and expectations should take priority or to speak out about the limitations of predefined standards applied to all teachers, in all contexts. The construction of The Professional in policy offers an elevation in status but limits teacher autonomy. Promoting an inclusive-sounding "we understand" inextricably engages teachers in a commitment: to qualifications, registration processes regulated through a range of competency standards, externally defined "measures and assessments of… quality," and "evidence-based" practices (ECE Taskforce, 2011, pp. 5–6).

Quality, Human Capital Theory and Social Investment

The policy texts, especially *Pathways* and *Agenda*, invest heavily in a particular version of a professional teacher by drawing on specific ideas around quality and by investing in human capital discourse. The notion of quality itself is, as Dahlberg et al. (2013) point out, empty of meaning but becomes "inscribed with assumptions and values" (p. ix) as it is embedded in policy texts. "The continuous improvement of quality" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 163) is a main focus of policy across the texts. The politics and connections tools reveal the way in which the policy texts are embedded with particular discursive truths about quality ECEC that have implications for teacher identities. The politics tool traces how quality comes to be defined through persistent and persuasive arguments about the importance of ECEC to the government's agenda for economic success, and the amelioration of a range of social ills:

> Long term outcomes for children can include attainment of higher levels of education, more employment opportunities and higher incomes, more stable relationships and reduced crime and welfare use. These benefits only result from participation in quality early childhood education. (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 40)

Teachers, established as "the solution" to better quality, come to be held accountable through measures of qualifications and compliance with quality practices such as self-review and evidence-based practice (MoE, 2002, p. 13). A stream of documents emphasising the importance of review processes follow. *Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua: Self-Review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (MoE, 2008) introduces responsibilities for centres and teachers to plan systematic review schedules based on setting priorities, collecting and evaluating evidence, and planning for change. *He Pou Tātaki. How ERO Reviews Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2013a) shares the ERO's evaluation methodology with the explicit aim to "increase the

capability within early childhood services to undertake internal evaluation (self-review) as a routine activity for both accountability and improvement purposes" (p. 11).

ETBM makes repeated connections between "caregiver training" and "desired levels of quality" claiming that "not just anybody can provide good quality care and education" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 22) and later arguing that "A policy of encouraging trained staff is essential to improving the quality of early childhood care and education" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 34). In *Pathways,* three out of the five strategies for improving quality are directly aimed at the work of teachers and illustrate the ways in which teachers become increasingly targeted as the means by which governments can achieve their quality goals. The three strategies are "to increase the number of registered teachers," to promote the "effective delivery of *Te Whāriki*," and, "the establishment of and reflection on quality practices in teaching and learning" (MoE, 2002, pp. 14–15). Quality appears in eight of the nine key messages summarised in the first pages of *Agenda* (ECE Taskforce, 2011). The development of high-quality services through an increased focus on teachers' work continues as a significant focus illustrated in claims that "the drive to higher quality across the sector needs to be continued through greater professionalism" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 3). The wording of these statements is assertive. Phrases such as "essential" and "the drive to higher quality" are persuasive about the need to focus the policy gaze on teachers.

Arguments about the human capital potential of ECEC are also strong discursive truths threaded throughout the texts. HCT is a globally dominant discourse concerned with the potential of ECEC to assist children to "realise the skills, knowledge and competencies, attitudes and other characteristics that can contribute to his or her productivity" (Moss, 2014, p. 19). Human capital discourse projects and imposes a particular way of understanding and orientating the purposes of ECEC to economic ends. Teachers are expected to take up and be accountable to these priorities as a key focus of their work. In the policy texts analysed, human capital discourse intersects with ideas about social investment to assert that government investments in the early years of a child's life yield the highest and longest returns (Buchanan, 2015). This creates a strong narrative about the social and educational benefits of ECEC that bolsters the importance of ECEC work (and teachers) and serves as justification for investment. *ETBM* presents "extensive research" to present the educational and social benefits of ECEC, arguing that, "good quality early childhood care and education sets the foundation for children's future, personal and educational development" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 13). *Before Five*

asserts that a stronger government focus on ECEC is an "investment in the future" (Lange, 1988, p. iii).

Human capital discourse intensifies in *Pathways* and significantly again in *Agenda*. *Pathways* employs human capital discourse to argue the importance of ECEC education in influencing the "wellbeing of citizens and society in the future" (MoE, 2002, p. 2). The focus in *Pathways* is specifically on target demographics where participation is identified as being low, "particularly, Māori, Pasifika, low-socio economic and rural communities" (MoE, 2002, p. 3). *Agenda* is saturated with human capital discourse, and a narrower focus on ECEC's contribution to the economic wellbeing of the nation is evident. A key message in *Agenda* is that "early investment in citizens will increase their ability to contribute to society as productive adults, equipped and willing to give more than they take" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 3). The case for government investment in ECEC is presented through five research lessons that demonstrate a "convergence in the results of substantial international evidence" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 21) creating an authoritative argument for the long-term educational, social and economic benefits of ECEC for children and their families. Finally, the growth of economic logic, aligned with HC discourse, is evident in the foreword of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), which positions ECEC as a "critical cornerstone" important to "a strong foundation for later learning and for life" and "quality life outcomes" (MoE, 2017, p. 2).

Close discursive links to human capital and social investment discourse suggest that teaching work should be orientated towards practices that ensure government investments pay off. The interest in defining and auditing quality practices for the sector is evident in the number of documents that focus on defining and measuring quality listed under the intertextuality tool. Such an interest continues to frame the political gaze on teachers. *Pathways* seeks to establish the importance of research to informing "understandings of quality" (MoE, 2002, p. 19) and in strategies that set out to "further develop exemplars of effective practice" and "research aspects of quality to provide information for the development of quality practices" (MoE, 2002, p. 15). Similarly, *Agenda* includes strategies that call for "the emphasis on quality to be reinforced and supported by investment in the identification of effective professional practice, and focused by research and evaluation" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 4). Teachers are subject to increasingly defined understandings of the purposes and practices of ECEC. Issues such as poverty, class, ethnicity, colonisation, diversity or gender are rendered invisible through assumptions that all children who access quality ECEC will have equal opportunities to be

successful and productive (K. Smith et al., 2016). In turn, these issues are rendered invisible in the work of teachers who are constituted through an economic narrative, complying to practices that ensure investments pay off rather than engaging with the historical or political dimensions of education (Gibson et al., 2015).

The outcome of persistent discursive connections between human capital, quality and teachers is a plethora of documents that further outline expectations for teachers. These include teaching exemplars, best-evidence syntheses, and a growth in research partnerships between universities and ECEC services. Some examples include: the *Revised DOPs* (MoE, 1996b) which outline mandatory expectations for quality ECEC based on the principles of *Te Whāriki*. *Quality in Action* (MoE, 1998b) is a resource for ECEC centres that "describes and gives examples of good practice" and provides "indicators that would suggest a service is meeting the requirements of DOPs" (MoE, 1998b, p. 7). *Pathways* led to the development of *Kei Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (KTOTP; Carr et al., 2004–2009), a best-practice guide to narrative assessment that also contains strong messages about good practice. Both the ERO and the MoE regularly release reports outlining understandings of best practice, and sector evaluations. Some examples of these, including the document *Quality in Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2010a), are listed under the intertextuality tool. Recently developed competency standards contribute to the professional registration and review processes. These include the previously mentioned *Our Code Our Standards* (ECANZ, 2017) which aims to "identify and develop high quality practices" (p. 14). Another, *Tātaiako. Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (ECANZ, 2011, p. 4) "defines behaviours" in relation to cultural competence.

The practices tool illuminates the ways in which policy texts orientate teaching practice towards the strategies that will be most effective in the production of human capital. *Pathways* and *Agenda* both include strategies that outline increased accountability and compliance expectations for teachers. *Pathways* sets out a strategy to "develop and implement self-review processes that reflect on quality practices and contribute to external review" (MoE, 2002, p. 15). *Agenda* (ECE Taskforce, 2011) calls for "stronger and increased focus" on the "measures of quality provision" (p. 4) as well as for teachers to engage in "continuous evaluation, review and improvement" (p. 158). These policy directions have resulted in a range of additional documents teachers are expected to work with such as *He Pou Tātaki: How the ERO Reviews Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2013a) and *Effective Internal Evaluation for Improvement* (ERO,

2016). Both these documents outline the expected processes for external and internal evaluation that direct management practices in ECEC centres. Teachers are increasingly subject to managerial and performative technologies that focus their energies towards compliance with external processes and expectations. These two documents were mentioned a number of times in the teacher focus groups as participants identify them as important to their work. The impact of managerial and performative expectations on how some of teachers in this research understand their teacher identities is the focus of Chapter 6.

Together, quality, human capital and social investment discourses create powerful discursive truths that set the foundations for increased governmental interest in the work of adults in ECEC centres, and are further translated into technologies and practices that produce teachers' work in increasingly predetermined ways. ECEC teachers are governed and surveilled according to external measures and accountabilities and they must buy into these to claim professional status. Biesta (2017) notes that increased expectations for accountability can seem desirable because of the ways in which arguments for them combine different discourses and agendas. In this policy analysis, quality, human capital and social investment are connected to equity issues, choice, accountability to investments and evidence. All of these forms of governance offer teachers increased professional recognition and status. The notion of being accountable is not necessarily wrong. Accountability, understood as a dialogical relationship between teachers and the members of their centre community, is presented in the second part of this chapter where consultation and partnership with parents and whānau is positioned as a key priority for teachers' work. Expectations for dialogue and partnership in decision making can also be traced in documents such as *He Pou Tātaki* which includes messages such as, "Teachers provide opportunities for parents and whanau to contribute their perspectives to the design of the service's curriculum" (ERO, 2013a, p. 33). These orientations to accountability are weakened in policy texts which simultaneously direct teachers towards compliance with externally imposed expectations. Governing bodies, such as the ERO and TECANZ, increasingly take up neoliberal understandings of accountability. Biesta (2017) takes a critical view of the distorted meanings of accountability associated with predefined and standardised notions of quality. More democratic understandings of accountability and the complexities present when they intersect with neoliberal ideas are discussed in more detail in the second part of this chapter.

Privatisation and Choice

Neoliberal discourse is also evident across the policy texts through assumptions that a market approach will deliver the best services for children and families. The ways in which choice, organisational flexibility and diversity in provision are constructed as highly valuable features for the sector to support and retain are illuminated using the politics tool. Parental choice is frequently represented as a desirable social good, with the resulting implication that ECEC is a commodity to be traded between providers and families. Teachers are cast in the role of service providers and entrepreneurs creating services that best fit the needs of consumer parents. *ETBM* is explicit in its support for "real choices" for families, "flexibility and diversity" of services, and "responsiveness to consumer needs" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 5). *Pathways* also creates a persuasive discursive connection between "a strong sector" and the values of choice and diverse provision: "The choice of ECE services is broad: This country has a strong ECE sector offering a diverse range of services to meet the education and care needs of most children, parents, families and whānau" (MoE, 2002, p. 5). By positioning choice as a key value and "opportunity" for the sector, the role of the marketplace is privileged as a policy solution to provision (MoE, 2002, p. 6). *Agenda* similarly focuses on creating the conditions to retain "a distinctly diverse sector" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 33). Despite acknowledging concerns in the submissions about the private sector, *Agenda* continues to present issues in the sector as being a difference between high- and low-quality centres, that can be partially resolved by supporting parents to make better choices for their children, and through further regulation of teachers' work. Quality, choice and accountability become further interwoven in a persuasive argument for both continued privatisation and stronger governance of teachers. Further evidence that privatisation and choice have become embedded discursive truths in the sector occur through messages in *Te Whāriki* which expound the "diversity of services" and their "wide range of governance and ownership structures" as a "valuable feature of early learning provision in New Zealand" and goes on to acknowledge "the large scale expansion of early childhood education and care" which has allowed parents and whānau to "choose … based on their needs and preferences" (MoE, 2017, p. 8).

The construction of ECEC centres as services to families, and teachers as service providers, collides with other representations of these relationships, as more collaborative and democratic. These are presented in the second part of this chapter: The Kaiako. *Pathways* has an overall goal to promote collaborative relationships across the sector and *Te Whāriki* (1996c,

2017) promotes relationships between whānau, families and teachers that are based on models of shared decision making. These messages are undermined through the repeated expectations that ECEC centres, and therefore teachers, should be "responsive to consumer-needs" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 5), and "facilitate choices" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 33) in a market-based sector. Moss (2014) critiques the preoccupation with individual choice that is a feature of neoliberal policy reform globally for the way in which it undermines collective decision making, and makes it more difficult for teachers to base teaching decisions on ethical, political or collective grounds. Similarly, Barraclough and Smith (2002) caution against placing too much emphasis on the value of parental choice, pointing out that research has not found a relationship between parent satisfaction and research-based measures of quality. These authors argue that the professional knowledge and experience that teachers bring to their work should not be dismissed as a result of parental preference or demand (Barraclough & Smith, 2002). The relationships between teachers, families and services in a market-based environment remain unproblematised in policy, despite the difficulty of these relationships identified in the literature (Barraclough & Smith, 2002; Osgood, 2012; Penn, 2007; Vincent & Ball, 2006). The impact of market approaches to provision on the ways that centre leaders and teachers understand and experience their work is discussed in Chapter 8.

Innovation

An additional expectation for teachers, connected to quality and privatisation discourse, is innovative practice. Innovation is presented as a core educational value and practice and is part of the web of neoliberal discourse that constructs The Professional identity. Innovation enters the policy lexicon in *Pathways* through statements that call for "ingenuity and innovation" in practice (MoE, 2002, p. 15). In *Pathways,* innovation is proposed as the solution to social and educational problems, especially for target groups. Innovation is represented as ensuring forward-orientated and evidence-based change. Scholarship identifies innovation as a tool of neoliberalism that travels from the business and private enterprise sectors, increasingly linked to social and economic change in public and private services (Moffatt et al., 2016). As a discursive practice, innovation further governs the work of teachers by directing their attention and energies to strategies that are evidence based, with assumptions that these can be applied equally successfully across populations and contexts. The license to be innovative has the potential to free teachers from issues of compliance and accountability and to creatively address issues relevant to their local communities. However, the policy reveals that innovation

is discursively and exclusively connected to teaching practices focused narrowly on learning outcomes which can be quantified, tested and replicated. Biesta (2017) questions whether innovation and its link to evidence-based practice deepens professional knowledge and judgement or attempts to overrule it. Teachers' local experiences and the important judgements made in consideration of them are undermined. The possibilities for growth in innovative practice are promoted as endless, but, paradoxically, opportunities for perceiving educational problems and for creative and responsive teaching practices are narrowed.

In *Pathways*, the establishment of the "Centres of Innovation" [COI] research programme to "develop and distribute" and "showcase excellence and innovation" (MoE, 2002, p. 15) is an example of how quality, evidence-based practice and innovation come together to assert particular values and realities for teachers. The goal of the COI programme is for teachers and researchers to work together to "extend the effectiveness of teaching and learning" (MoE, 2002, p. 15). As a research programme it is highly valued in the sector because of the ways in which it positions teachers as researchers and educational leaders, and because the process of disseminating findings from COI projects allows professional knowledge to be shared. The danger lies not in researching and sharing professional knowledge but in the linear processes proposed in *Pathways* and the discursive connection made to the value of evidence-based practice. These connections suggest more than just a sharing of professional knowledge. The processes of innovation in *Pathways* end with "capturing" a "replicable" set of teaching practices which can be shared and applied across settings (MoE, 2002, p. 15). The "resulting work means innovation is quantified and tested before being captured in a format suitable for replication" (MoE, 2002, p. 15). Such statements disregard the contextual factors and priorities of different communities and potentially leave little room for the professional judgement of teachers who, when encountering evidence-based research, still need to decide the relevance and value of such research in their own contexts.

Innovation is a significant measure of quality in *Agenda*. In Essay 11, *Promoting an Innovative, Continuously Improving Sector,* the missing link to better quality ECEC is an attitude of innovation in teachers. Being innovative is a sign of good practice, "By innovating, individuals and organisations … learn to do better … to move from a good early childhood education system to great one we must all play a part in promoting, supporting and disseminating innovation" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 162). Innovation is promoted as a new core educational value and practice, and as part of teachers' professional responsibilities. Excellent teachers are

positioned as researchers whose task is to continuously improve, develop and disseminate new practices. Innovation is promoted in the context of policy discourse that is dominated by HCT and economic imperatives, and, through the privatisation of the sector, expects providers and teachers to operate in entrepreneurial ways. A list of where innovation is needed reveals the economic orientation of innovation in *Agenda*:

> services that engage families more intensively with their children's learning … better promote children's learning and development … services at hours that suit working families … ways on improving quality that do not increase costs … new dissemination methods … better ways of enabling learning for children from diverse backgrounds. (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 163)

From this list, it is possible to see that innovation is about increasing choice for families, enhancing the development of human capital, and the productivity of children and adults in EC centres. Innovation discourses encourage teachers to be forward focused and entrepreneurial, to respond to the demands of the consumer market and to support the government's human capital agenda.

This section has outlined how the neoliberal discourses of human capital, quality, privatisation and innovation intersect across policy texts to promote a particular understanding of a professional ECEC teacher far removed from the historical images of childcare worker and kindergarten teacher. Biesta (2017) argues that the rise of neoliberal forms of governance in education have led to "three post-democratic distortions" (p. 319) which in turn impact on understandings of professionalism: the transformation of democratic conceptions of accountability into technical-managerial conceptions; the transformation of students into customers (or, in the case of ECEC, parents); and the transformation of professional knowledge into "evidence," linked to evidence-based practice. Each of these distortions are evident in this policy analysis.

The prominence of neoliberal discourse in the Aotearoa ECEC policy is the local version of what Moss (2014) calls the globally dominant "story of quality and high returns":

> Find, invest in and apply the correct human technologies—aka "quality"—during early childhood and you will get high returns on investment … A simple equation beckons and beguiles: "early intervention" + "quality" = increased "human capital" + national success (or at least survival) in a cut throat global economy. (p. 3)

The Aotearoa policy story reflects a global story and is evidence of this country's participation in a globalised education paradigm focused on the governance of education and teachers in an increasingly "hegemonic neo-liberal policy-scape" (Hunkin, 2016, p. 36). Teachers are encouraged to think of themselves as vital to policy success, and to take up teacher identities that are highly accountable, forward focused, innovative and consumer aware. These expectations for teachers are created through the discursive practices and technologies that emerge over time in policy and related documents and which come to be seen as the most credible ways to organise the sector. They include a more managerial focus on performance and compliance in practice, increased emphasis on meeting learning outcomes, increased engagement in ongoing review processes, meeting competency standards, and creating services that meet parent consumers' individual preferences and needs (ECANZ, 2017; ERO, 2013, 2015; MoE, 1999, 2008). Teachers are compelled to comply with such expectations to be recognised as professional. As we see in Chapter 7, The Professional identity is seductive to teachers because it offers an image of teaching distinct from the historical images of child carers that have held them on the margins of legitimacy in the wider teaching profession (Osgood, 2006).

Despite outlining visions for teachers "who view themselves as professional" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 40) and who have a "trusted position in society" (ECANZ, 2017, inside front cover), the rise of neoliberal forms of governance in ECEC has resulted in teachers who are subject to more demands for accountability and performativity, with the practices and purposes of their work subject to increasing external definitions. This scenario resonates with the picture of the neoliberal subjects Davies and Bansel (2007) claim are "tightly governed and who at the same time define themselves as free" (p. 339) and with Sims and Waniganayake's (2015) warning that increasing neoliberal hegemony in policy reduces spaces for teachers to "engage in professional debate" and instead directs teachers focus to "how best to be compliant" (p. 338). At the least, increasing economic imperatives and the accompanying constructions of teachers make it more difficult for teachers to consider the historical, social or political factors that come to bear on their work with children and families because these considerations fall outside of the boundaries of neoliberal discourse and are more easily excluded from being counted as important to good teaching.

Neoliberal representations of purposes, relationships, and practices in ECEC are only part of the policy story however. They exist alongside other ways of representing ECEC and teachers.

Other discourses are more socially orientated, based in relational and participatory ideas about ECEC with roots in the histories of Aotearoa, and democratic discourse. The coexistence of these discourses, their interanimations and implications for practice and identities are examined next.

The Kaiako

This section presents and discusses findings related to the construction of a teacher identity named here as The Kaiako. The policy analysis traces the construction of The Kaiako from the intersection of two additional prevalent discourses: biculturalism and democratic participation. Kaiako is also the preferred nomenclature, for individuals working in ECEC settings, of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). Nyland and Rockel (2007) point out that discourses are revealed in titles we give to teachers. An additional analytical task in this section is to examine the use of kaiako in the curriculum, to reveal the different ways its use positions teachers, and to consider the implications of this for teacher identities. The following tools, connections, identities, practices, politics and intertextuality, identify key developments in the construction of the teacher identity—The Kaiako. Although The Professional and The Kaiako are presented separately in this chapter, they are not considered entirely dichotomous and it is not suggested that teachers are limited to choosing between one or the other as they negotiate their identities. The layered meanings revealed through the two identities are illustrative of the ways teachers are positioned in multiple and at times contradictory ways across the policies.

Practices Tool: The Kaiako

The practices tool (Table 4.7) focuses on socially and institutionally accepted ways of being by examining the practices that need to enacted to be recognised within a particular kind of identity. Bicultural practices, including developing proficiency in incorporating te reo and tikanga Māori, and affirming and promoting Māori identity, are frequently associated with effective teaching practice. Across policy texts, strong messages about involving Māori, and all whānau, in centre decision making through practices such as listening to whānau, hapu and iwi; encouraging participation; and weaving a local curriculum convey expectations that teachers work in reciprocal ways with families. *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) includes dialogue, developing togetherness, and reciprocity as key teaching practices.

Table 4.7

Practices Tool: The Kaiako

Practices tool: What practices does the document communicate are important for teachers?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
Te reo and tikanga Māori Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori must be incorporated in early childhood services in order to provide the basis for bicultural development and mutual respect. (p. 18)	Bicultural
Partnerships and collaborations with parent/whānau The identifiable characteristics of good quality are: … a partnership between the early childhood service and parents or whānau … a close relationship with the community. (p. 17) Parents should be involved in the design and management of early childhood services—and all early childhood services should operate as a partnership between parents/whānau and the service. (p. 19)	Democratic participation
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
Promoting te reo and ngā tikanga Māori. Establishing connections with hapū and iwi New Zealand is the home of Māori language and culture: curriculum in early childhood settings should promote te reo and ngā tikanga Māori, making them visible and affirming their value for children from all cultural backgrounds. (p. 42) Appropriate connections with iwi and hapū should be established and staff should support tikanga Māori and the use of Māori language. (p. 55)	Bicultural
Participation, collaboration and shared decision making: Culturally appropriate ways of communicating should be fostered, and participation in the early childhood programme by whānau, parents, extended family, and elders in the community should be encouraged. (p. 42)	Democratic participation
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2002)	
Being responsive to Māori needs, competency in te reo Māori, acknowledging Te Tiriti, working in partnership with hapū and iwi Māori children attending mainstream ECE services have their learning and development extended by teachers who are competent in Te Reo, at least being able to pronounce Māori names correctly. These teachers understand and acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori cultural values. They work in partnership with local hapū, iwi and the Māori community generally to deliver effectively to Māori children in their service. (p. 7)	Bicultural Democratic participation
Collaboration for addressing social issues A child's learning and development depend on only the ECE environment they experience, but also on their home and wider social environment. The coming together of children and families in ECE services provides greater opportunities for addressing health and social issues. (p. 7)	Human capital
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
-.	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
Using and valuing te reo Māori, and te Ao Māori It is important that te reo Māori is valued and used in all ECE settings. This may involve for example, using the correct pronunciation, retelling stories, and using Māori symbols, arts and crafts. (p. 41)	Bicultural
Weaving a local curriculum, sharing, togetherness, reciprocity It [the curriculum] provides a framework of principles, stands, goals and learning outcomes that foreground the mana of the child, and the importance of reciprocal and responsive relationships. This framework provides a basis for each setting to weave a local curriculum that reflects its own distinctive character and values. (p. 7)	Democratic participation

The expectation is that Kaiako will work with colleagues, children, parents and whānau to unpack the strands, goals and learning outcomes, interpreting these and setting priorities for the particular ECE settings. (p. 23)
Working together for the common good develops a spirit of sharing, togetherness and reciprocity which is valued by Pasifika and many other countries. (p. 36)

Identities Tool: The Kaiako

The identities tool (Table 4.8) focuses on the ways in which language is used to build or attribute teacher identities in each policy text. Nomenclatures are one way to examine what kind of identities are promoted. The naming of teachers is inconsistent across and within documents and is indicative of the various discourses that shape each document. *Te Whāriki* (1996c) uses the term adults, a collective term that includes teachers, parents in parent-led and whānau-led services, as well as others who contribute to the curriculum. The curriculum does not directly specify the differences in the responsibilities between qualified teachers and other adults in an ECEC centre. The use of the collective nomenclature *adults* projects expectations that developing the centre curriculum will be a collaborative endeavour between all the people who contribute to the centre programme (MoE, 1996c). *Pathways* (2002) uses the term ECE teachers and is clear about the role of "professional" ECEC teachers in delivering effective curriculum and working collaboratively with families. *Agenda* predominately employs the term staff to refer to teachers and others working in ECEC centres. The use of *staff* is consistent with the managerial discourse woven throughout *Agenda* but inconsistent with the document's aim for a "well supported, highly regarded, professional and innovative sector" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 152). *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) moves to the use of the term kaiako. It is not clear who a kaiako is because different definitions of the term are provided within the curriculum document. In the glossary of the document, kaiako is translated simply as teacher (MoE, 2017, p. 66) and appears to refer specifically to teachers throughout. The key responsibilities of a kaiako outlined in the document suggest a range of responsibilities that imply the specialised expertise of a qualified teacher. A different explanation suggests the term is used collectively to mean the range of adults present in an ECEC centre who have a responsibility towards the care and education of children (MoE, 2017, p. 7). This use of the kaiako conflates the work of qualified and unqualified teachers, but also the roles of others present in a setting including parents and whānau. The choice of kaiako is justified because "it conveys the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning, which is valued in this curriculum" (MoE, 2017, p. 7). Teachers are positioned as members of a learning community working alongside others including children. The use of the term kaiako is further problematised in the discussion of these findings.

Table 4.8

Identities Tool: The Kaiako

Identities tool: What identities are attributed to teachers in each document?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
-	
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
Uses the term adults The curriculum is provided by the people, places and things in the children environment: the adults, the other children, the physical environment, and the resources. (p. 11)	Democratic participation
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2002)	
Uses the term ECE teachers The plan places greater requirement on ECE services and teachers to be responsive to the care and education needs of Māori children. Key to this is the effective delivery of *Te Whāriki*, which is an explicitly bicultural curriculum. (p. 13)	Bicultural
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
Uses the term staff Essay 10: Improving Staff Education and Professional Development	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017	
Kaiako as the range of adults in a centre When used in this document … Kaiako includes all teachers, educators and other adults, including parents in parent-led services, who have a responsibility for the care and education of children in an ECE setting … although ECE services use a range of different terms, this document uses Kaiako because it conveys the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning, which is valued in this curriculum. (p. 7) *Kaiako as teachers who facilitate learning and development* Kaiako are the key resource in any ECE service. Their primary responsibility is to facilitate children's learning and development thoughtful and intentional pedagogy …. knowledgeable about children's learning and development … theories that underpin effective pedagogy … play-based curriculum and pedagogy … able to integrate domain knowledge … culturally competent: developing increasing proficiency in the use of te reo and tikanga Māori … able to support cultural and linguistic diversity … engage in dialogue with parents, whānau and the community … attentive to learning and able to make this visible through assessment practices … inclusive … knowledgeable about … alternative ways to support and progress children's learning and development, role models for language and learning … able to establish and maintain relationships … thoughtful and reflective … committed to ongoing professional development. (p. 59)	Bicultural Democratic participation

Sign-Systems and Knowledge Tool: The Kaiako

The sign-systems and knowledge tool (Table 4.9) examines the way that language is used to value particular sign systems, such as a language or way of communicating, as well as particular kinds of knowledge. This tool is closely related to the politics tool because contestation over particular sign systems or knowledge as preferred, privileged or valuable is connected to the notion of social goods. Gee (2014a) explains that "mastery of particular sign systems and ways of knowing the world are, for the people who 'own' them, social goods" (p. 142). Acknowledgement and use of te reo Māori and integration of te ao Māori through the use of

traditional patterns, whakataukī, stories and symbols, as valued sign systems and ways of knowing for teachers, are promoted in *ETBM*, *Pathways* and both iterations of *Te Whāriki*.

Table 4.9

Sign-Systems and Knowledge Tool: The Kaiako

Sign systems and knowledge tool: How does this piece of language privilege or deprivilege specific sign systems or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief? (Gee, 2014b)	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
-	
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
Te reo Māori as well as Māori pedagogy included throughout the document This is the first bicultural curriculum statement developed in New Zealand. It contains curriculum specifically for Māori immersion services in early childhood education and establishes, throughout the document as a whole, the bicultural nature of curriculum for all early childhood services. (p. 7) Adults working with children should have knowledge of Māori definitions of health and wellbeing and an understanding of what these concepts mean in practice. (p. 46)	Bicultural
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2002)	
-	
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
The use of whakataukī, metaphor (the whāriki) and imagery of Māori designs elevates the position of te ao and te reo Māori The cover represents part of the underside of a whāriki or woven mat. The green symbolises new life, growth and potential and references harakeke and pandanus, which are used throughout Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa as materials for weaving.” (Inside cover) Understood in this way, the curriculum or whāriki is a “mat for all to stand on.” Whāriki and raranga have symbolic and spiritual meaning for Māori. Weaving a whāriki takes knowledge, skill and time. It is almost always down collaboratively. (p. 10) *Embedded Māori ways of knowing, doing and being* In Māori tradition the child was a valued member of the Māori worlds before conception, before birth, and before time. They began their journey in Rangiātea, homeland of the gods. Born into this world, the were nurtured like a precious seed to ensure their survival and inculcated with an understanding of their own importance. (p. 6) *Kaupapa Māori theory alongside other named theories* Pedagogies described in *Te Whāriki* are consistent with the four principles. These principles are a synthesis of traditional Māori thinking and sociocultural theorising … *Te Whāriki* draws on the following theories, models and approaches … Bioecological Model … Sociocultural Theories … Kaupapa Māori Theory … Pasifika Approaches … Critical Theories …. Treaty of Waitangi. (p. 60)	Bicultural

Politics Tool: The Kaiako

The politics tool (Table 4.10) examines how each text builds ideas about social goods (what is valuable, to whom and why) and their distribution. Bicultural discourse in policy texts includes reference to a political partnership between Māori and the British Crown through *Te Tiriti o*

Waitangi. All six of the policy texts include stated commitments to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* although how this commitment is interpreted in relation to expectations for teachers is unpacked more explicitly in some texts than others. *ETBM* is explicit in its commitment to the bicultural development of the sector and makes strong statements about Māori self-determination. In *Pathways*, a dual focus on increasing Māori participation and collaboration with Māori whanau includes an expectation that teachers will "understand and acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori culture and values" (MoE, 2002, p. 14). *Agenda* is significantly more vague and includes a single reference to the Treaty of Waitangi. References to the work of teachers include supporting Māori self-determination (tino rangatiratanga); protecting and promoting Māori values, customs, and language; engaging Māori participation in decision making in ECEC; and honouring the principles of the Treaty. These messages are particularly strong in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996c, 2017). Self-determination and education that values and enhances culture and language are signalled as important social goods. The addition of critical theory perspectives amongst the named theories underpinning *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) constructs ECEC as a site for cultural and social justice praxis. Bicultural practice is promoted as the basis for successful ECEC provision for all children and families. Success in ECEC settings for Māori is strongly portrayed as being connected to acknowledging and strengthening cultural identity, and in sharing power for decision making. In both iterations of the curriculum, bicultural practice is the responsibility of teachers supported by centre leadership. Participation in decision making is established as a social good available for all children, and families. For teachers, this results in expectations that they will find ways to share power and facilitate parental and family participation.

Table 4.10

Politics Tool: The Kaiako

Politics tool: How do the documents construct or assume what counts as a social good, and how it should be distributed? (Gee, 2014b) What are the implications of social goods to teachers' work?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
ECEC services support Māori self-determination—tino rangatiratanga. Power sharing and resources We believe it is important to highlight the responsibilities of the new Ministry of Education and the early childhood sector in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi. We expect Ministry and the early childhood sector to honour the promise of the Treaty and recognise its mana, through the implementation of a true partnership between the crown and the Māori people. This will mean equal sharing of power and resources. (p. 7) The importance of Māori self-determination and Māori control over services for their own children needs to be recognised. (p. 32)	Bicultural

ECEC responsive to the needs of the community—collective decision making Community responsiveness is at the heart of our recommendations on funding and decision making … This will mean a great deal more awareness of, and responsibility to, the needs of the community. (p. 51)	Democratic participation
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi—equity The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi will be taken into account in the national guidelines. (p. 31)	Bicultural
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
ECEC addresses bicultural issues to support empowerment and self-worth Particular care should be given to bicultural issues in relation to empowerment. Adults working with children should understand and be willing to address bicultural issues, actively seek Māori contributions to decision making, and ensure that Māori children develop a strong sense of self-worth. (p. 40)	Bicultural
Participation by families and community Culturally appropriate ways of communication should be fostered, and participation in the early childhood programme by whānau, parents, extended family, and elders in the community should be encouraged. (p. 42)	Democratic participation
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2002)	
Participation in ECE as a social good—especially for Māori children and whānau The government is seeking to achieve three specific goals for Māori: to enhance the relationship between the Crown and Māori; to improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of ECE services for Māori; to increase the participation of Māori children and their whanau. (p. 7)	
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
Single reference to Te Tiriti in Agenda Early childhood education system reflects our nations educational needs and aspirations, and is based on Treaty of Waitangi principles. (p. 163)	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
Indigenous rights Located in Aotearoa New Zealand, this vision implies a society that recognises Māori as tangata whenua, assumes a shared obligation for protecting Māori language and culture, and ensures the Māori are able to enjoy educational success as Māori. (p. 6)	Bicultural
Identity as social good—facilitated by responsive kaiako Learner identity is enhanced when children's home languages and cultures are valued in educational settings and when Kaiako are responsive to their cultural ways of knowing and being. For Māori this means Kaiako need understand of a world view that emphasises the child's whakapapa connection to Māori creation, across Te Kore, te pō, to ao mārama, atua Māori and tīpuna. All children should be able to access re reo Māori in their ECE settings as Kaiako weave te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the everyday curriculum. (p. 12) *Local curriculum and participation* The expectation is that each ECE service will use Te Whāriki as a basis for weaving with children, parents and whānau its own local curriculum of valued learning, taking into consideration also the aspirations and learning priorities of hapū, iwi and community. (p. 8)	Bicultural Democratic participation
Critical theories underpin the curriculum design—kaiako must consider issues of social justice and equity Critical theory perspectives challenge disparities, injustices, inequalities, and perceived norms. (p. 62)	

Relationships Tool: The Kaiako

The relationships tool (Table 4.11) draws attention to how language is used to signal the relationship we have or want to have with others. This can include looking at how relationships

between teachers and families are constructed, as well as between teachers and the government, or teachers and their employers. The previous section traced constructions of teachers and families as providers and consumers. An alternative discursive relationship is developed through the use of key terms and concepts such as partnership, and reciprocal and responsive relationships, and through the use of metaphors such as a community of weavers. Taken together, these suggest that teachers engage in a collaborative, reciprocal and ethical relationship with parents, family and whānau in a shared power arrangement.

Table 4.11

Relationships Tool: The Kaiako

Relationships tool: (Gee, 2014b) What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeing to enact with others?	Discourse
Education to Be More (ECCEWG, 1988)	
The identifiable characteristics of good quality are: …a partnership between the early childhood service and the parents or whanau. (p. 17)	Democratic participation
Before Five (Lange, 1988)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996c)	
Curriculum as a collective endeavour Family and Community: The wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum. (p. 14) Participation in the early childhood education programme by whānau, parents, extended family and elders in the community should be encouraged. (p. 42)	Democratic participation
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (MoE, 2002)	
[Teachers] work in partnership with local hapū, iwi and the Māori community in generally. (p. 14)	Bicultural
Support ECE services to be more responsive to the needs of children, parents, families and whānau. (p. 3)	Democratic participation
Agenda for Amazing Children (ECE Taskforce, 2011)	
-	
Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	
Kaiako in ECE settings weave together the principles and strands in collaboration with children, parents, whānau and community, to create a local curriculum for their setting. (p. 10)	Democratic participation

Intertextuality and Assumptions Tool: The Kaiako

Table 4.12 identifies a range of additional documents which further promote bicultural discourse in policy. These demonstrate how deeply established bicultural discourse is in the ECEC policy environment, and highlight the extent to which biculturalism governs identities and practices for ECEC teachers. Successful bicultural practice is the focus of a series of evaluation reports (ERO, 2010b, 2012). Policies such as *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success 2007–2012* (MoE, 2007) and *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (MoE, 2012) seek to establish normative and measurable bicultural relationships, values and practices across the education sector.

Further examination of these documents also reveals the ways in which bicultural discourse intersects with the neoliberal conceptualisations of quality, human capital and social investment. Bicultural teaching practice is defined as a series of measurable competencies in *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) to which teachers are accountable.

Table 4.12

Intertextuality and Assumptions Tool: The Kaiako

Year	Document title and author	Document type and summary
2007	*Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success 2007–2012* (MoE, 2007)	**National Strategic Plan:** Designed to support achievement for Māori at all levels of the education system based on developing educational systems and settings based on Māori language, culture and identity.
2010	*Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2010b).	**National Evaluation Report:** Focuses on the link between bicultural curriculum and learning successes for Māori children, and is concerned with how teachers and centres reflect on and evaluate learning for Māori.
2011	*Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011)	**Teacher Competency Framework:** Describes related behaviours for teachers, working with Māori learners, at different stages of their teaching career. Teachers need to ensure they have the competencies of all stages up to their current level.
2012	*Partnership with Whānau Māori in Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2012).	**National Evaluation Report:** Reports on how well early childhood services and teachers' services understand and value the identity, language and culture of Māori children and their whānau, and the extent to which they worked in partnership with Māori whānau.
2012	*Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (MoE, 2012)	**National Strategic Plan:** The next phase in a strategic plan designed to support Māori achievement in the education system.

Discussion: Constructing The Kaiako

The section begins by examining statements in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) relevant to the use of the nomenclature kaiako. Primarily using the identities, practices and politics tools, I problematise the use of the term kaiako and reveal it to be a contested identity. Next, two further discourses which seek to influence teachers are examined. The first, bicultural discourse, is embedded unevenly across the documents. The ways in which bicultural discourse promotes particular objectives and practices for teachers and seeks to govern identities are critically examined and discussed. The second, democratic and participatory discourse, projects expectations that teachers will act as democratic workers, collaborating with their communities to create a local curriculum, and to address local priorities and issues of inequity. I argue that the prevalence of these two discourses offers a particular way of understanding the work of a kaiako that is additional (and at times counter) to the practices and values of The Professional.

Who is the Kaiako in Te Whāriki?

The identities tool draws attention to the various nomenclatures used for teachers, and the positioning of teachers that results. The 2017 iteration of *Te Whāriki* picks up the nomenclature kaiako to replace “adults” used in the earlier iteration. Various definitions of kaiako are provided in the document. Kaiako is translated in the *Glossary of Māori and Pasifika Words* as “teacher” (MoE, 2017, p. 66). At first glance, such a direct translation might not seem to warrant further examination but the adoption of a Māori term in a sector that is still largely monocultural in its make-up and practices is problematic (ERO, 2017). One danger is that the cultural meanings inherent in the word kaiako may be lost in its adoption by the sector, leaving the inclusion of the term in the curriculum open to criticisms of cultural appropriation or tokenism. Without careful explanation, shared understandings and buy-in from across the sector, kaiako risks being imbued with the same hegemonic neoliberal understandings of teachers and teaching work addressed earlier in the chapter.

Further examination of *Te Whāriki* suggests that kaiako has been adopted to promote particular values and understandings of teaching practice. The use of kaiako is not exclusively applied to teachers (contrary to the suggestion in the glossary) but refers to “all teachers, educators and other adults, including parents in parent-led services, who have a responsibility for the care and education of children in an ECE setting” (MoE, 2017, p. 7). The inclusion of everyone who has responsibility for children in a centre under the umbrella of kaiako signals the collective intent of the curriculum in the same way the term adults is used in the original (MoE, 1996c). The revision of *Te Whāriki* occurred in the context of a considerably more professionalised sector. Teachers are asked to embrace a collective definition of kaiako while navigating their work and identities in a sector that is highly regulated and shaped through market demand. Expectations that teachers focus their energies towards the development of human capital through evidence-based practices, and ongoing evaluation and self-review, occur even though there has not been a sustained policy commitment to a fully qualified teaching sector. In this context, the collective intent of the term kaiako risks conflating the knowledge and skills of qualified teachers and their unqualified colleagues, and obscures the issue of qualifications that has been ongoing in the sector. The different sets of expertise that teachers, parents and whānau bring to an ECEC setting are also downplayed.

The intentional and political choice of the term is further revealed in the statement that explains that the choice of kaiako was based on the “reciprocal nature of teaching and

learning” it conveys “which is valued in this curriculum” (MoE, 2017, p. 7). Ako (kaiako) refers to both teaching and learning, and conceptualises teaching as a reciprocal act that occurs in relationship with the learner. Understandings of the nomenclature kaiako are further nuanced when they are placed alongside the choice of mokopuna (grandchild) to sometimes refer to children. Although the direct translation for children is tamariki, mokopuna is used to emphasise the “intergenerational connectedness” of the child to their whānau and tīpuna (ancestors) (MoE, 2017, p. 66). Together, kaiako, mokopuna and whānau position ECEC teaching practice within the relationships and contexts of the ECEC centre community, and signal the valuing of Māori worldviews. Understood through these statements, the choice to use kaiako in the document is aspirational, connected to the strong bicultural and democratic discourse also woven throughout.

Representations of kaiako in *Te Whāriki* shift again and are uncovered through the use of the practices tool. These findings further complicate the question—who is the kaiako in *Te Whāriki*? The practices tool reveals the kaiako to be a relational professional with recognised expertise and professional knowledge. The *Responsibilities of Kaiako* section in the curriculum document describes a teacher who is knowledgeable about “learning and development … the theories that underpin effective pedagogy … play-based curriculum and pedagogy …[and] … domains of knowledge” (MoE, 2017, p. 59). These statements clearly describe a qualified teacher positioned within Western pedagogical discourse, undermining the collective notion that anyone in a centre can be a kaiako. Kaiako are also “culturally competent: developing proficiency in the use of te reo and tikanga Māori” and “able to form responsive and reciprocal relationships,” an “inclusive environment” and to “engage in dialogue with parents, whānau and family” (MoE, 2017, p. 59). Kaiako are positioned through multiple discourses and practices, each of which seek to shape the identity of a kaiako in particular ways. Kaiako suggests a different position for teachers than “staff,” the preferred and managerial nomenclature of *Agenda*, and opens up different possibilities than the highly professionalised and regulated “ECE teacher” of *Pathways*.

Bicultural Discourse

I have argued that the use of the term kaiako in *Te Whāriki* is aspirational, layered with meaning and connected to the bicultural discourse prevalent across the policy texts analysed. Bicultural discourse includes expectations that teachers engage with Aotearoa’s colonial past/present to promote particular values and practices. Bicultural discourse is threaded

through key policy texts and governs practices and identities by holding teachers accountable for bicultural development and practices. The visibility of bicultural discourse in policy texts is examined in this section.

Bicultural discourse is specific to the historical and political contexts of Aotearoa. Its prevalence in policy texts can be understood by examining the situated meanings which permeate the discourse; these are both historic and contemporary. Bicultural discourse foregrounds partnership arrangements in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed in 1840 between representatives of Māori and the British Crown. Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides the foundation of a partnership between tangata whenua, people of the land (Māori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa) and tangata Tiriti, people who live in Aotearoa now as a result of agreements with the British Crown. The history of Te Tiriti o Waitangi breaches, of colonisation and of contemporary neocolonial practices (significantly expressed through neoliberalism) continue to negatively impact on the overall wellbeing of the Māori people, language, culture and land (Skerrett et al., 2013). Māori currently make up 14.9% of the total population and are overrepresented, for example, in incarceration rates, negative educational and health statistics and material hardship (StatsNZ, n.d.).

Past educational responses to Māori have included assimilation, integration and separatism (Lourie, 2016). The influence of bicultural discourse in ECEC policy texts marks a shift away from these responses. Bicultural discourse confronts and seeks to address historical injustices and the problem of monoculturalism embedded in the education sector. Such a shift is evident in *ETBM*'s statement that ECEC is an important site for "cultural survival and transmission" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 6) and in both versions of *Te Whāriki* which are explicitly political in their intent to assert the rights of Māori to maintain their language and culture, and to determine their own lives. The most visible indicator of this political commitment is in the bicultural structure of *Te Whāriki* which includes parallel curricula in English and te reo Māori. The latter is not a direct translation, although both curricula share principles and strands, and is intended for use in Māori immersion services. The bicultural structure of the document recognises the "distinctive roles of an identifiable Māori curriculum that protects Māori language and tikanga, Māori pedagogy, and the transmitting of Māori knowledge, skills, and attitudes through using Māori language" (MoE, 1996c, p. 12).

The English language version of *Te Whāriki* is intended for use in mainstream ECEC centres and includes many statements that assert the need to address issues of Māori identity, learning, development and wellbeing. Expectations that teachers include Māori whānau in decision making, and promote and affirm Māori culture and language, are frequent throughout. As an example, *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996c) notes that "particular care" should be taken to ensure that adults in ECEC settings "understand" and are "willing to discuss bicultural issues" and "seek Māori contribution to decision making" (MoE, 1996c, p. 40). The revised *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) requires that curriculum design "recognises Māori as tangata whenua, assumes a shared obligation for protecting Māori language and culture, and ensures the Māori are able to enjoy educational success as Māori" (MoE, 2017, p. 6).

ETBM, Pathways and both iterations of *Te Whāriki* include a multitude of statements that outline expectations that teachers incorporate te reo and tikanga Māori into their daily practices, illustrating that this has been a long-established expectation for teachers in ECEC. For example, *ETBM* asserts that "te reo and tikanga Māori must be incorporated in early childhood services in order to provide the basis for bicultural development" (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 6). *Pathways* (MoE, 2002, p. 14) sets out the expectation that teachers be "competent in te reo, at least being able to pronounce Māori names correctly" and that they "understand and acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori cultural values." *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) outlines a "shared obligation to protect Māori language and culture" (p. 6) by "developing increasing proficiency in the use of te reo and tikanga Māori" (p. 59).

Policy texts frequently promote practices that reflect a Māori world view. This expectation is particularly strong in *Te Whāriki*, which is underpinned by a Māori philosophical and conceptual framework most evident in the principles: empowerment/whakamana, holistic development/kotahitanga, family and community/whānau tangata and relationships/ngā hononga. The design and text of the original document makes strong statements about the recognition of Māori children and families in all ECEC settings, the inclusion of Māori whānau, hapū and iwi in decision making, and the promotion and protection of Māori language, values, and culture. *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996c) elevates Māori knowledge including "Māori views of child development and on the role of the family" (p. 41), "Māori definitions of health and wellbeing" (p. 46) and "Māori ways of knowing and making sense of the world" (p. 82). The sign-systems and knowledges tool highlights the strengthened foregrounding of Māori ways of knowing in the 2017 *Te Whāriki*. This includes the frequent use of whakataukī, more elaborate

explanations of Māori ways of knowing, and practices that explicitly highlight Māori considerations. For example, Māori conceptualisations of children are explained:

> In Māori tradition children are seen to be inherently competent, capable and rich; complete and gifted no matter what their age or ability. Descended from lines that stretch back to the beginning of time, they are important living links between the past, present and future, and a reflection of their ancestors. These ideas are fundamental to how Māori understand teaching and learning. (MoE, 2017, p. 12).

An additional feature of the 2017 *Te Whāriki* is the naming of Kaupapa Māori theory (alongside Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, sociocultural theory, Pasifika approaches and critical theories) as a theory that underpins the text. Kaupapa Māori theory "is situated in the land, culture, history and people of Aotearoa" and is a theoretical framework "driven by whānau, hapū, and iwi understandings" (MoE, 2017, p. 49). The addition of Kaupapa Māori theory strengthens claims in the document about the central place of "Māori ways of knowing and being" (MoE, 2017, p. 61).

Te Whāriki has an explicit political goal to disrupt the marginalisation of the Māori worldview, and seeks to normalise Māori frameworks as a way to approach practices and relationships with all families. Through consistently expressed expectations, the use of the Māori language and tikanga become officially sanctioned practices; the acceptable and desirable ways to be a teacher in Aotearoa. The choice of the nomenclature kaiako potentially keeps these expectations to the fore of how teachers organise and understand their practices. The Kaiako teaching identity addressed in this section is representative of these expectations—although as will be discussed, performing the identity of The Kaiako is a significant challenge for teachers, many of whom are not sufficiently culturally competent to do so. The challenge is heightened because teachers' energies are also directed towards compliance with a range of other accountabilities including those outlined in the first part of this chapter.

As a discourse that governs identities and practices, the biculturalism promoted in these policy texts focuses on the activities and priorities of teachers and ECEC centres. Ameliorating historical injustices, addressing the problem of monoculturalism, promoting and protecting Māori cultural identity and ensuring Māori children have the foundations for ongoing success is the responsibility of individual teachers and centres. The intertextuality tool reveals how bicultural discourse in ECEC policy texts is supported in additional documents which outline specific expectations. *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success 2007–2012* (MoE, 2007) and *Ka Hikitia:*

Accelerating Success 2013–2017 (MoE, 2012) are policies which set out to achieve "system shifts in education and support Māori learners and their whānau, hapū and iwi to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes" (MoE, 2020, n.p.). In these documents, bicultural discourse intersects with the discourses of quality, human capital and social investment to focus on defining expectations linked to systems of accountability. *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success 2007–2012*, for example, outlines "two critical factors" that must exist for Māori students to "excel and reach their full potential" (MoE, 2007, p. 6). These are "quality provision, leadership and teaching" and "strong engagement and contribution from parents, whānau, hapū and iwi" (MoE, 2007, p. 6). Investing in these factors ensures that students "grow into confident, successful, culturally intelligent, bilingual adults who will make a positive contribution to New Zealand" (MoE, 2007, p. 6).

The sector's performance in relation to such expectations is evaluated through a series of measures and during centre external reviews. Progress is reported through national evaluation and effective practice reports by the ERO (2010b, 2012). The report *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2010b) examines the extent to which ECEC services are responsive to the aspirations and expectations of the parents and whānau of Māori children. The report adds to a range of other ERO national evaluations (ERO, 2010a) and effective practice reports (ERO, 1996, 1997, 2009a), all of which point to significant gaps in sector practice and commitment. Collectively, they recommend building the capacity of the sector to "implement and evaluate bicultural curriculum … work in partnership with whānau of Māori children" and "support Māori children to demonstrate strong learning foundations that give them the best start possible" (MoE, 2010b, p. 30). The texts presented in the intertextuality tool demonstrate the extent to which bicultural practice has become a performative expectation to which teachers and centre leadership are held accountable. The extent to which teaching practice is governed through bicultural discourse is evident in the development of competency standards for teachers including *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* which "describes related behaviours for teachers at different stages of their teaching career" (ECANZ, 2011, p. 3) in relation to working successfully with Māori children and whānau. The outlined competencies are linked to further policy that governs teachers' work including *Our Code Our Standards* (ECANZ, 2017).

Bicultural discourse establishes normative and measurable values and practices. These are based in ethical commitments to and relationships with Māori, their language, values and ways

of knowing, being and doing (Ritchie et al., 2014). Such commitments are promoted as necessary to repair the previous marginalisation of Māori that has led to inequities. Since bicultural discourse seeks to uphold *Te Tiriti* commitments, it sets out specific expectations that ECEC centres will be sites of bicultural development, and that ECEC teachers will facilitate that development. The presence of bicultural discourse, particularly in *Te Whāriki,* suggests that teachers take up an identity that is localised, grounded in the particular histories and contemporary issues of Aotearoa NZ but also in the unique mix of whānau and community matters in each ECEC setting. A key to this commitment is the inclusion of Māori whānau in dialogue and decision making. This discourse challenges teachers to move beyond their own cultural perspectives and "the hegemonic safe zone of traditional teacher-dominated practices" (Chan & Ritchie, 2016, p. 289). The prevalence of bicultural discourse across the texts suggest that these ways of working are key professional responsibilities for ECEC teachers to which they are held accountable.

Biculturalism poses some significant challenges. In order to have an effect, bicultural discourse needs to be taken up and enacted in ECEC settings and by individual teachers. There is evidence that teaching practices in this country are still largely monocultural and that most ECEC centres "have yet to realise the potential of partnership to provide a bicultural programme that fully supported the language, culture and identity of Māori children and their whānau" (ERO, 2012, p. 15). The ECEC teaching workforce is becoming more diverse, but is still predominantly Pākehā (European New Zealander). In 2019, 65% of ECEC teachers identified as European/Pākehā, 16% as Asian, and 8% as Māori (Education Counts, 2019). These contexts lead Chan and Ritchie (2016) to assert that "a majority of teachers enact static and predominately Western, monocultural ECCE discourses" (p. 290). The contingent nature of policy interpretation and enactment at both a centre and individual teacher level mediates the degree to which bicultural discourse can influence teacher identities (Ortlipp et al., 2011). The expectation that teachers acknowledge the ongoing impact of colonisation is implicit in bicultural discourse but is an issue silenced in future-focused and individualised neoliberal discourses also present in ECEC policy. Bicultural discourse shares some practices and values with a discourse of democratic participation, discussed next.

The Kaiako as a Democratic Worker

Bicultural discourse articulates expectations that teachers will facilitate the inclusion and participation of whānau, hapū and iwi. These expectations are congruent with other messages

about the purposes and priorities of teaching practice identified in the policy texts analysed. The politics and practices tools also uncover the promotion of teaching values that focus on human and citizenry rights, and equity expressed through the practices of inclusion, active participation, dialogue and collective decision making. These values and practices reflect a discourse of democratic participation that is especially prevalent in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996c, 2017). Practices that focus on participation and dialogue position teachers as democratic workers, an identity that aligns with the image of a kaiako expressed in bicultural discourse.

Working in a collective and reciprocal way with all the members of an ECEC community is a long-established expectation for ECEC teachers in Aotearoa. In *ETBM,* practices aligned to the values of democratic participation are found in statements such as “The ability to talk and communicate, share ideas, to interact on the basis of common understandings and trust is the ultimate tie that bonds us all together as a society” (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 15). *ETBM* proposes that teachers and families work in a “close relationship” and “partnership” with one another (ECCEWG, 1988, p. 17). Teachers are expected to take time to “listen seriously to the views of parents and caregivers” and “share decision making with them” (MoE, 1996c, p. 55), and to ensure that “all families feel like they belong and are able to participate in the ECE programme and decision making” (MoE, 1996c, p. 42). In *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), expectations around decision making and participation are more explicit again, repeated throughout the curriculum document in statements such as “Working together for the common good develops a spirit of sharing, togetherness and reciprocity” (MoE, 2017, p. 36) and, “Kaiako in ECE settings weave together the principles and strands in collaboration with children, parents, whānau and community, to create a local curriculum for their setting” (MoE, 2017, p. 10). These messages construct different relationships with families than those promoted through privatisation and quality discourses which position teachers as service providers who respond to consumer demand. In contrast, creating opportunities for dialogue and participation, and creating a welcoming space for all children and families, are discursively produced as core teaching priorities and practices.

Discourses carry values and social practices (Fairclough, 2010). The value is highly evident in the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*. These are heavy with references to reciprocity, participation and relationships. The principle of whānau tangata/family and community, for example, states that “The wider world of family and community is an integral part of early childhood curriculum” (MoE, 2017, p. 20). Ngā hononga/relationships highlights that “children

learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things" (MoE, 2017, p. 21). References to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model and to sociocultural theory position children within their whānau, community, national and global contexts. The addition of Pasifika approaches as an underpinning theory in the revised *Te Whāriki* is another example. Pasifika approaches "view respect and reciprocity as crucial for learning" and "the notion of multiple relationships between people and across time, places" and "shared responsibility for the care of children" (MoE, 2017, p. 62). The high repetition of these messages in the curriculum text promotes discursive truths about the rights and capabilities of children and their connectedness to their families and communities as central ideas in the conceptualisation of teaching work.

Teaching is represented as a co-operative venture, an ongoing engagement with the unique blend of children and families, histories and wider contexts that infuse each community. Therefore, understandings of quality cannot be externally imposed and best practice cannot be universally defined. This discourse produces the purposes of education, and the core responsibilities of teachers, to be about preparing citizens to actively participate in discussions and decision making, honouring children's right and capability to be active participants in their own lives and education as they experience it. These are ideas and practices that have much in common with the value of active democracy which also emphasises participation and collaboration with diverse voices and perspectives in order to come to better understandings of each other (Mitchell, 2019). ECEC settings are constructed as spaces for "encounter, democracy, experimentation and meaningful interaction" (Urban, 2010, p. 2) and the pedagogical work that occurs in them as "always open to different interpretations" and "contestable" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 88). In democratic discourse, understandings about teaching and curriculum are co-constructed in relationship with the members of the ECEC community, including children "in the context of constant debate about a range of critical and ethical questions" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2003, p. 90). Successful democratic practice requires teachers that are in touch with and curious about their centre community, able to facilitate dialogue and participation and "work with others within and beyond their specific ECE context to enact curriculum" (MoE, 2017, p. 62).

These discursive constructions of teaching and teachers suggest a shift in the ways that relationships between teacher, children and families are positioned. Children and families are not individualised consumers of education and teachers are not tasked with responding to

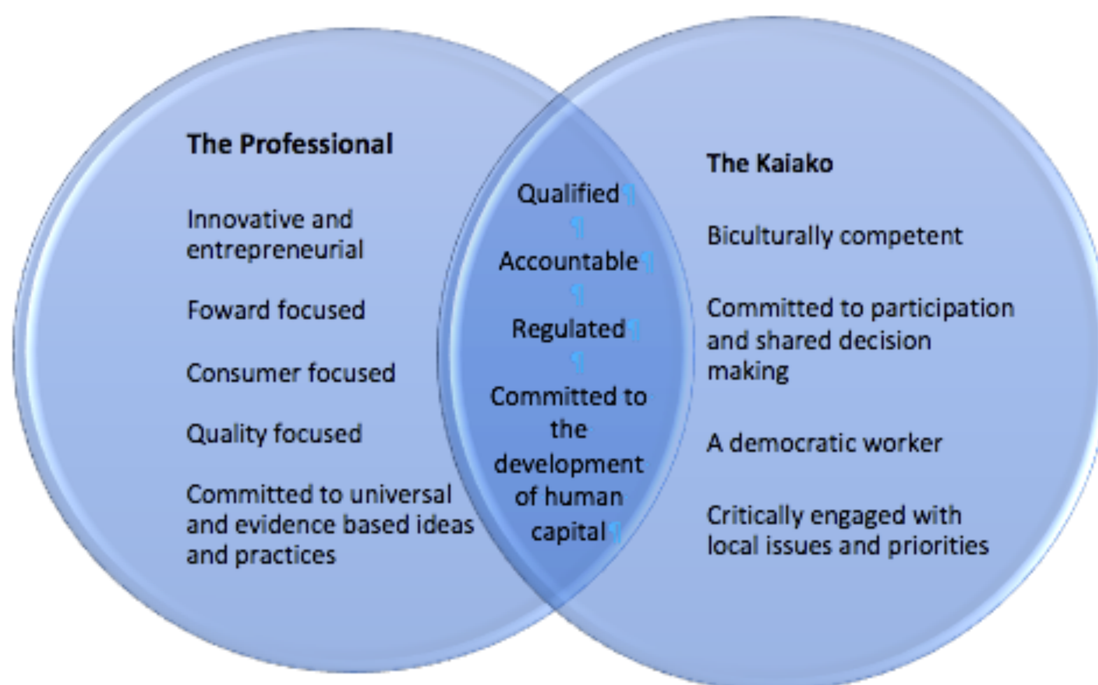
consumer demand. The purposes of ECEC are not restricted to a care service or to externally imposed accountabilities but are instead connected to wider issues related to equity and participation. Teachers are constructed as democratic workers with a responsibility to create collective opportunities for critical engagement on matters of concern determined by the ECEC centre community. This contrasts significantly with the image of technical and accountable professionals uncovered in the first part of this chapter, and suggests high levels of professional trust and autonomy. The promotion of democratic and participatory values and practices sits uncomfortably alongside the construal of teaching as a highly regulated activity, with best practices defined through research and applicable across contexts.

Summary

Policy is an increasingly powerful way to organise and govern contemporary society (Bacchi, 2000, 2014; Hunkin, 2016). Each of the policy texts is an arena "of multiple voices and forces" (Press & Skattebol, 2007, p. 182), resulting in multiple discourses and identities with attempts to classify, order and regulate teachers by defining the norms of conduct that are expected of them. I have argued that ECEC teachers are subjected to multiple, intersecting and sometimes contradictory expectations. These complexities have been discussed by highlighting two prevalent identities: The Professional and The Kaiako. The distinctions and interanimations of these two identities are represented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

The Professional and The Kaiako



The Professional represents the prominence of neoliberal discourse across policy texts that invite teachers to be part of a global policy landscape, in which the primary purpose of ECEC is the development of human capital. Teachers are invited to take up a specific construction of professionalism that encourages them to focus on qualifications, quality, and compliance with imposed accountabilities and consumer demands. The Kaiako is constructed through the prevalence of bicultural discourse and is evidence of a local policy story that imposes additional accountabilities and priorities. Ritchie et al. (2014) point out that consumer autonomy, user-pays and individual enterprise, key constructs in neoliberal discourse, are oppositional to the collective values contained in both bicultural and democratic discourse. Bicultural discourse requires teachers to disrupt the current power relations in which they are embedded, invite partnership and shared decision making with Māori, and advance alternative knowledges. To take up the challenges of bicultural discourse, teachers must be open to considering the ways in which they are vehicles of power and discourse that may contribute to the marginalisation of Māori. The intersection of biculturalism with a discourse of democratic participation offers

teachers an identity that is grounded in local concerns and priorities, and focuses on inviting participation and shared decision making.

I have represented the identities promoted in bicultural and democratic discourses by using the nomenclature The Kaiako; although I acknowledge the problematic way in which kaiako is included in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). The challenges of taking up The Kaiako identity are significant. The sector is still largely monocultural, and Aotearoa continues to grapple with its colonial past. Complications also occur through intersections between biculturalism and neoliberal rhetoric which connect the bicultural agenda to ideas about human capital and social investment and draw bicultural practice into an accountability framework (ECANZ, 2017). The policy analysis reveals that between the push and pull of these intersecting approaches teachers are expected to be accountable to both local and national priorities. The extent to which teachers take up elements of The Kaiako identity or the identity of The Professional are, in part, dependent on their individual commitments, understandings of Aotearoa's histories, and the discursive resources available to them in their places of work.

The findings of this CDA of policy are presented recognising that policy processes are contingent and messy; they are processes of contestation and negotiation. In Aotearoa, this is especially true because ECEC is of interest to a wide number of stakeholders and most policy has been developed with varying degrees of consultation with a diverse ECEC sector (May, 2014). Although policies can be analysed as reflective of a particular government's ideological stance, policy texts are not closed or complete. There is contestation in the ways that they are interpreted and enacted in particular contexts and by individual teachers, creating spaces for a range of identities (Press & Skattebol, 2007). Two suggested identities, illustrative of the ways in which teachers are variously discursively positioned, have provided the structure for this chapter. The identities are presented as nuanced and layered with complexities. It is not suggested that teachers can only take up one or the other, rather teachers' own identities "come about from an active engagement in and negotiation of the discourses in … which they are positioned" (Osgood, 2012, p. 131). It is possible for teachers to innovate, resist, and negotiate between the various discourses and constructions of identity available to them and this is understood to be an ongoing process. The extent to which negotiation is possible is also dependent on teachers' ability to understand their positioning within a range of discourses, to critically engage with the opportunities and challenges each presents. Ortlipp et al. (2011)

explain that “It is possible to be more than one type of person, depending on the discourses to which the individual has access to and chooses to access” (p. 57).

The findings in this chapter contribute to exploring the ways that the research participants negotiate their teacher identities. The following chapters focus on contributing to a fuller account by examining the experiences of teachers whose daily realities are inflected through the discursive constructions of teachers in policy identified here. Chapter 5 demonstrates how some teachers and TEs included elements of The Kaiako in their own identity negotiations by elevating relational and bicultural discourse as they articulate what is important to their work. However, the tensions between the collective values and pedagogies in bicultural discourse and being seen as professional are evident. Chapter 6 turns to examining the impact of increased expectations of accountability through an emphasis on internal and external review and reveals the active engagement with these discourses by some teachers who find significant validation of their own professional status through them.

Chapter 5. Complexities of Care and Teacher Identities

> *I also have a lot of unqualified teachers who are absolutely awesome, who don't have a piece of paper but have a fabulous attitude, have a natural ability with children. They are usually more mature people as well, definitely mothers, some grandmothers amongst them as well.* (Barb, owner/manager, private)

> *Teaching is a very personal thing and it is about relationships. It is a very* Te Whāriki *informed thing*. (Tui, TE)

Overview of the Next Four Chapters

The next four chapters examine the findings from the interviews and focus groups. This includes focus groups with qualified early childhood teachers, individual interviews with qualified centre leaders (head teachers, managers and owners), and individual interviews with TEs. These chapters contribute to answering the research questions: *How do ECEC teachers understand and construct their teacher identities? How do centre leaders and initial teacher educators understand teachers and their work, and how might these understandings enable or constrain teacher identities?*

Teachers and centre leader participants are from teacher-led ECEC centres, including kindergarten, community-based centres and private for-profit centres. TE participants come from a number of different institutions in the Auckland area providing early childhood initial teacher education. (Refer to pages 46, 49 and 51 in Chapter 3 for full descriptions of the participant groups).

In the focus groups, teacher participants were invited to share where they currently worked, the reasons they became early childhood teachers, discuss what they think a good early childhood teacher is, and, the kinds of things that impact on their work as a teacher. Centre leaders were asked similar questions during individual interviews. These included what they think a good early childhood teacher is; what they look for when they employ teachers; the kinds of things that impact on their work, teachers and the sector; and, their perceptions of work conditions in the sector. TEs were asked to comment on their perceptions of what makes a good teacher, the important aspects of their initial teacher education programmes, what issues impact teachers, and how they prepare students for moving into the sector. The responses to these questions, including the discussions that arose in the focus groups, form the

basis of the following chapters. The interview schedules for each of the focus groups and interviews can be found in Appendices D, E, H and L.

All participant transcripts were read and reread. They were then sorted and coded in NVivo using nodes to represent emerging themes and topics. The themes and topics generated from this initial process were further reduced by collapsing the nodes into thematic groups. For example, all nodes related to aspects of teachers' care work were grouped together under the heading: Care. This process generated a number of larger themes. Four of these seemed especially significant because they were strongly supported in the data, and had relevance to the CDA of policies and to the macrodiscourses identified through the literature review. The four themes were: care, professionalisation, kindergarten identities, and private sector identities. A CDA was undertaken on the data in each theme, using nine CDA tools that provided different critical questions and entry points to understanding how language works to privilege some discourses, practices and identities and to marginalise others. The CDA of each theme forms the basis of each of the following four chapters. The four themes were temporary containers for large amounts of textual data. Although there is a theme labelled private sector identities, the aim of the analysis was not to produce a singular narrative about teachers in the private sector kindergarten or to describe a unified teacher identity. As each analysis reveals, teachers formed and reformed their identities in creative and unexpected ways in response to the particular and shifting discursive contexts. Applying the CDA tools to particular participant statements located under each theme revealed the nuances and contradictions in the participants' accounts and these revealed a range of practices, subjectivities and materialities. The analysis enabled these to be located and analysed for their effects on participants' negotiations of their own professional identities. (See page 59 for detailed discussion of interview and focus group analyses.)

This chapter illuminates inconsistent and complex engagements with notions of care in the participants' discussions about teaching work and reveals the discursive investment made by teachers and initial TEs in the relational discourses of *Te Whāriki*. Chapter 6 examines participant narratives about externally defined competencies, standards and processes for review and the growing influence of performative policy expectations on teachers' work and identities. Chapter 7 examines teacher identities in the context of the kindergarten service. Kindergarten teachers were frequently represented as having an enhanced status and a distinct identity shaped by the intersection of the history of kindergarten and contemporary ECEC

politics. Chapter 8 turns to participant discussions about the private sector. The diversity of private provision, and the associated range of opportunities, experiences and identities for teachers is examined.

The chapters follow a similar format to the previous chapter. Each chapter has a findings and analysis section, followed by a discussion. The findings and analysis are organised according to the tools that were the most useful for that set of data. The outcomes of the analysis from each tool are summarised, followed by a table which presents a selection of representative statements. This format makes explicit my process of understanding the data, offers an opportunity to critically evaluate the analysis and opens up possibilities to read the data in different ways. As with the policy analysis, each tool had a different degree of relevance and usefulness to the data in each theme. In each chapter, only findings from the most useful tools are presented. I found the practices, identities and politics tools especially useful and relevant for an examination of teacher identities. These tools focus on the practices teachers need to undertake to be recognised as particular kinds of teachers, the different positioning of teachers in participants' discussions and the ways that things like recognition, status, and respect are created and distributed to some teachers but not others. These three tools feature in every chapter. The remaining six tools feature when they were useful to understanding the range of participant statements that contribute to each chapter. The tools also have degrees of overlap in that they often uncover similar things. This repetition is a strength of the analysis; the more the tools converge the more they support the rigour of the analysis (Gee, 2014a). However, CDA is also attentive to nuances and contradictions. Divergences and layers of meaning in the data are exposed through the application of the different CDA tools. Finally, particular statements build meaning in many ways. Many participant statements could have been presented under a number of tools. To avoid multiple repetitions across the tables, choices needed to be made about where to showcase particular statements. Therefore, each table includes a sample of representative statements relevant to the major findings of each tool, rather than all the statements identified and analysed under that tool. (This choice is also pragmatic, given the word count limitations for the thesis.) The prevalence of each finding is indicated in the summary paragraph that precedes each table. On a few occasions, because of the relationships between ideas in the different chapters, the same statement will appear across different chapters. Following the presentation of the findings and analysis, a discussion of the major findings is included.

Introduction to Complexities of Care and Teacher Identities

This chapter examines the complex ways that ECEC teachers are positioned within discourses of care. Being caring was identified by many participants as a core element of ECEC teaching work. Notions of empathy, compassion, kindness, care and relationships were called on in all participant groups to describe the desirable attributes of ECEC teachers; while listening, being present, understanding, and building relationships were described as important teaching practices. Care was variously, and sometimes simultaneously, mobilised as a concept by participants to represent ECEC teaching work as a "natural ability" (Barb, owner/manager, private) that did not require professional knowledge or expertise and as a relational and ethical orientation that underpins pedagogical understandings. A bifurcation of care and education was evident in some participants' talk, allowing the role of care in the work of teachers to be marginalised. Care is frequently perceived to be prerequisite to learning, exposing a hierarchy of education and care. Many participants demonstrated an awareness that representing their work in educational terms afforded them more status. In addition, what counted as care in participants' talk was not unanimous. TEs and many teachers claimed the importance of relationships to understandings of good teaching practice, bolstered through affiliations with the relational discourse in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). However, while the emotional and relational aspects of care were often elevated, the custodial and bodily aspects of care were largely marginalised. These findings suggest that some caring practices are more privileged than others, and influence the ways in which teachers in different contexts are able to negotiate their identities. The findings and analysis of the care data is presented first, followed by a discussion on the implication of the findings for teacher identities. The ways in which the issues exposed in this chapter are implicated across the chapters that follow is indicated.

Findings and Analysis

This chapter draws on the transcripts of all of the participant groups. The findings that comprise the chapter were coded under the node headings: affective traits of teachers, maternal discourse, care work, the value of qualifications, relationships, relational pedagogy, *Te Whāriki*, care practices, teaching as a vocation, emotional labour, and physical care. The tools used to identify the key findings in this chapter are identities, practices, politics, sign systems and knowledge.

Identities Tool: Care

The identities tool focuses on the ways in which language is used to build, enact or attribute an identity. This might be by speaking or acting in a particular way, or by explicitly comparing or contrasting particular identities to others (Gee, 2014a). The first set of responses are examples of how some participants connected their experiences of being a mother to their decision to become an early childhood teacher. These kinds of discursive connections reveal the influence of maternal discourse in the ways that teacher identities were understood by many participants. In the next set of responses presented in Table 5.1, teachers construct an image of a good ECEC teacher as someone who has a natural ability with children and infer that this cannot be learnt but rather “you’ve either got it, or you haven’t” (Nicole, head teacher, community based). While these responses can be understood to perpetuate the view that teaching young children is largely instinctual, they also reveal a shared belief that teachers need to be genuinely interested in children and that teaching requires some emotional investment (and management). Embedded in these constructions is a rejection of ECEC work as the enactment of technical competencies. In the final examples, portrayals of early childhood teachers as firm, fair, confident and loving and responsible for children’s emotional wellbeing were typical of the kinds of personal attributes and key responsibilities many participants felt were important to ECEC teachers. These comments confirm the importance of affective aspects to participants’ understanding of teaching work. Further, Sian’s comment reveals being a teacher involves the management and containment of emotions.

Table 5.1

Identities Tool: Care

Identities: What socially recognizable identity (or identities) is the speaker trying to enact or to get others to recognise? How does the speaker’s language treat other people’s identities? What sorts of identities does the speaker recognise for others in relationship to his or her own? How is the speaker positioning others? (Gee, 2014b)
Being a mother/ Being a teacher
So when my youngest started school someone suggested to me that I take it further and become a kindergarten teacher and funnily enough it hadn’t really occurred to me until she suggested it. I was saying to her, “Oh I am really going to miss this, those early childhood years, now that my youngest is turning 5” and she said, “Well it doesn’t need to stop now.” (Nicole, head teacher, community based)
The head teacher at [my children’s] kindergarten said to me, because I used to hang around a lot … “You should be doing this. You should be getting paid for it.” (Tahlia, teacher, private)
Having a natural ability to teach
Well, that comes back to what a good teacher is. I can be with a student [teacher] for 10 minutes and well you have either got it, or you haven’t. (Nicole, head teacher, community-based)
I think you are either passionate and you’ve got that teacher thing [or not]. It’s a thing. You can’t really quantify a person who is a teacher. It’s a calling. (Paula, manager, private)

> I was quite young [when I decided I wanted to be a teacher]. You know, Judy would always play with the children when they came around … I don't know, I just seemed to have that natural ability or whatever. (Judy, teacher, private)
>
> I've always loved working with young children. I've found that it came quite naturally to me. It wasn't something I had to think about. (Sian, teacher, private centre)

Kind, firm and calm

> I think they [ECEC teachers] need to be firm but fair. I think they need to be confident. I think they need to be loving because, especially with the hours that we have, these kids need to feel that somebody cares about them. (Paula, manager, private)
>
> KFC—kind, firm and calm [laughs]. That makes a good teacher. Because, I mean, you can put that into everything! And we say to each other, if you see someone starting to get wound up, "KFC."… it's just like a little reminder. (Sian, teacher, private)

Practices Tool: Care

This tool focuses on socially and institutionally normalised ways of being and doing by examining the practices (or activities) that teachers need to enact to be recognised within a particular kind of identity. Many participants, across the participant groups, articulated the importance of practices that reflected relational and ethical engagements in their understandings of being a good teacher. These understandings were translated into practices such as observing, understanding children, listening, building relationships, welcoming, thinking critically and advocating for children. Such statements legitimise attention to relationships in practice and were central to how many participants positioned themselves as teachers. Claiming relational approaches as central to children's learning and to good teaching practice sat in contrast with other statements where caring was portrayed as largely unskilled work. These kinds of statements elevate the role of relationships and associated relational pedagogies. In contrast the physical/custodial aspects of care, for example, meal routines or changing nappies, were not considered important to good teaching practice and were frequently constituted as necessary but undesirable aspects of the ECEC work. There was one exception to this positioning. Aadilia (teacher, community based) talked about the importance of nappies as an opportunity to "connect." The omission of custodial activities, especially those connected to children's bodies, point to a hierarchy of care, where relational and ethical expressions of care are privileged over the physical aspects of care work.

Table 5.2

Practices Tool: Care

Practices: What practices is the communication building as being important? (Gee, 2014b)
Understanding, listening, observing, welcoming Understanding. Understanding them. Reading them without telling, observing more. Listening more. Definitely, and the wairua [spirit] you can extend, the welcome you can give in their presence. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
Being compassionate, building relationships, practising whakawhanaungatanga[2] I want to say essentially two things that I see. Compassion being one and the second one, ah, being able to build relationships because they are key to early childhood. That whakawhanaungatanga is so important. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
Listening, building relationships To be a good listener. It is also good to be able to build trusting relationships with children. For the way I see it—the real learning only begins once there is trust there. (Georgia, owner/teacher, private)
Relationships, critical thinking, advocating For me, a good early childhood teacher is someone who is relationships focused, is a critical thinker, is an advocate for children. (Jolene, TE)
Custodial aspects of care as opportunities to connect "Oh nappies!" But, …that is a wonderful time to connect with a child. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)

Politics Tool: Care

This tool uncovers the ways in which language is used to establish perceptions about social goods and their distribution. Gee (2014a) simply defines a social good as something people understand to be worth having. Table 5.3 reveals that social goods such as qualifications, status, respect and recognition were consistently identified by the participants as important to their identities, and also as threatened by the lack of understanding of ECEC work. In particular, the lack of validation for the caring aspects of their work was identified by many participants as negatively impacting on their status and respect. The politics tool also focuses on how social goods are given or withheld by examining which identities, behaviours or things are treated as normal, appropriate, worthy, valuable or good. A socially constructed hierarchy of knowledge is evident in many participants' discussions about ECEC. The representation of care as a less intellectual act (one that comes naturally) compounds the lack of status afforded to ECEC teachers and contributes to the perception that ECEC work is not as challenging or important as

[2] Whakawhanaungatanga is the process of establishing connections and reciprocal relationships with others. In the broadest sense whakawhanaungatanga means the process of "establishing links, making connections, and relating to people one meets" (ERO, 2013b, para 9). In educational contexts whakawhanaungatanga requires teachers to focus on the quality on interactions and relationships with children and their families, and implies a shared responsibility for the learning environment.

other teaching in other sectors. These representations of ECEC teachers and ECEC teaching work were acknowledged and resisted by some participants, especially TEs, and but also occasionally perpetuated in their discussions. A tense relationship between care and professional knowledge was evident, in which “having a piece of paper” (Barb, owner/manager, private) was perceived to be less important by some centre owners, allowing them to justify the employment of unqualified teachers and pointing to the possible exploitation of care work.

Table 5.3

Politics Tool: Care

Politics tool: How are words being used to build (construct, assume) what counts as a social good? How does the speaker withhold or distribute social goods to others? How does the speaker build a viewpoint about how social goods are held or distributed? (Gee, 2014b)
Recognition and status: ECEC teachers are not academic
Often, often I believe students apply to be an early childhood teacher because they have been given a message that they are not very academic and so they come here because they don’t think they have to be very good academically. (Cheryl, TE)
When you look at people’s academic transcripts and things, we almost always get people with As, you know Achieved but never with Excellence and if see someone with M, even one Merit I get excited. You know, if you were in medical school and you got even one A you have had it wouldn’t you? You wouldn’t get in. (Tui, TE)[3]
I didn’t really know what to do after school had finished and I was kind of floating around … I grew up [looking after children]. I was the oldest in the family out of all the grandchildren and that that is what you do … and I didn’t have the confidence to go to university because no-one in my family had been to university so I didn’t know what else to do … I went to [polytechnic] because my friend was going. (Marama, teacher, private)
Recognition and status: ECEC teaching is not as challenging as primary teaching
Just the interest in what was going on with my own children and how I can support them, that was the biggest question and when I came I thought I can’t probably pull myself up to primary level so let’s see, starting here [early childhood]. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
I don’t feel valued sometimes at [school’s name] for my knowledge. The perception I get is, “You’re just an early childhood teacher, you just sit over there and be quiet.” (Esther, teacher/ manager, community based)

[3] Tui is referring to New Zealand’s National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NZCEA)—the national qualification for senior secondary school students. Students are assessed against a number of standards across a range of subjects and can earn four kinds of grades: Achieved (A) for a satisfactory performance, Merit (M) for a very good performance, Excellence (E) for outstanding performance, Not achieved (N) indicates a student has not meet the criteria of a standard (https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/).

Bifurcation between care and education—qualifications as a social good
I'm not interested so much in content … I have as many unqualified teachers as I have qualified … A lot of people would disagree with that I know. Yup, people think you need to be a qualified to teacher and I disagree with that … I also have a lot of unqualified teachers who are absolutely awesome. Who don't have a piece of paper, but have a fabulous attitude, have a natural ability with children. They are usually more mature people, as well, definitely mothers, some grandmothers, amongst them as well. All experienced with children and don't have the piece of paper to stay that are qualified teachers. So they know less about theory, I suppose. (Barb, owner/manager, private)
Oh look, I am very strong for qualified [ECEC teachers] however, when one of our qualified teachers resigned at the end of last year, I'm looking at my budget and my salary [budget] is over a million dollars and it's very, very hard … but I have just employed someone full time that is not qualified. The reason I chose her is … she shows a very natural instinct with children. She is a mother herself but she's got a lot of abilities and I am encouraging her next year, um, perhaps, to apply for the diploma. (Mary, manager, community based)
Hierarchies between care and education
I didn't want get into the care side of it with tamariki I really just wanted to be focused on the education side of it. And I push as much of my day into education as I can. (Tom, teacher—kindergarten)
I think it [being a good teacher] has to go deeper than just being with and enjoying [children]. It's about … learning outcomes to quote good old ERO. You know? (Nicole, head teacher, community based)

Sign-Systems and Knowledge Tool: Care

This tool examines how different ways of knowing or believing or different claims to knowledge are privileged (or not) in the use of language. In these examples (Table 5.4), the relational discourses and pedagogies of *Te Whāriki* are privileged through frequent naming of the document, and the emphasis on relationships in it. It is notable that other key messages in *Te Whāriki* (such as, for example, supporting children to explore or develop ways to be creative and expressive) were not mentioned. The repeated discursive connections made between *Te Whāriki* and relationships elevate and give authority to the relational and ethical aspects of ECEC teaching work. The high acceptance of *Te Whāriki* by the participants in this research, and the discursive investments made in the curriculum's relational discourses (especially by TEs), highlight the influence of the document on teacher identities as well as point to opportunities for teachers to legitimate the role of care in their work.

Table 5.4

Sign-Systems and Knowledge Tool: Care

Sign systems and knowledge: How does this piece of language privilege or deprivilege specific sign systems, ways of knowing or valuing, or claims to knowledge? (Gee, 2014b)
Te Whāriki *as a philosophical foundation of relational teaching*
Teaching is a very personal thing and it is about relationships. It is a very *Te Whāriki* informed thing really … the importance of seeing children as people who are navigating through life but they don't do it by themselves. So the importance of relationships … and also that is respectful and responsive. (Tui, TE)
Not everybody has to think the same way, but we are all on the same page and we share the same sort of philosophical intent that will come from *Te Whāriki* in some ways. (Jolene, TE)

> [It is] so much more powerful, I think, to look at *Te Whāriki* as a way of doing, "Who am I? How do I work with others? How do I work with the complex possible things that occur?" (Kelly, TE)

Care as a relationship: Mana, mauri, wairua—Māori philosophical principles in practice

> As a kaiako … being able to look at the mana [status], the mauri [life force], the wairua [spirit] of the person, time, place and navigate through that is really important. If I can't kōrero [talk] with our mātua [parents] … and [build] real trusting relationships with our tamariki [children] then, how can we even know how to build a pathway for their education? (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)

Discussion: Care and Teacher Identities

As the CDA tools show, participants' responses reveal a high frequency of gendered assumptions about who should care for young children and in turn, teacher participants either implied or were explicit about the low value of their care work. Participants' discussions about teaching and care are inconsistent and frequently contradictory. Tui (TE) talks about the perception that a teacher does not need to be very academic: "You know, if you were in medical school and you got even one A you have had it wouldn't you?" Yet, Barb (owner/manager, private) disagrees with the idea that "you need to be a qualified to teach." Mary (manager, community based) equates mothering to being an early childhood teacher while unconsciously revealing an assumption that mothering requires limited skill and ability, saying, "She is a mother herself but she's got a lot of abilities." Esther (manager/ teacher, community based) doesn't "feel valued" and Sian (teacher, private) resists the perception that ECEC teachers are "glorified baby sitters." However, Sian values teaching qualities such as being "kind and calm," in a similar way to Aadilia (teacher, community based) who identifies having "energy and patience" as important. Despite portraying the idea that these qualities "come naturally" Sian also signals the energy and emotional labour required to maintain a caring demeanour as she discusses the reminders her teaching team give each other to stay "kind, firm and calm" in challenging moments. Tom (teacher, kindergarten) is frustrated that "there is no value" to care and suggests that this "keeps workers on a low wage" at the same times as he perpetuates care's marginalised status by saying "he's just not interested in it." Notions of care related to "building trusting relationships" are elevated by Tom and others as important to ECEC work, however, their conversations also reveal a separation of relational and affective care practices from custodial care or care associated with children's bodies. Such separations may be (un)intentionally reinforced by the strong investments in "relationship-based teaching practices" (Cheryl, TE), and the significance afforded to the relational discourse of *Te Whāriki* by many TEs. The prevalence and impact of maternal discourse in participant narratives are

examined and discussed first, followed by an examination of the influence of the relational discourses in *Te Whāriki.*

Maternal Discourse and Care Labour

Maternal discourse, as a macrodiscourse that shapes the sector, was discussed in Chapter 2. It is deeply embedded in representations of ECEC (Langford, 2006) and has been a long-standing focus in the literature (Ailwood, 2007; Cannella, 2002; Davies & Degotardi, 2015; Osgood, 2012; Warren, 2014). Ailwood (2017) explains:

> the word care sits within the language of the early years associated with providing a safe place for children to be supervised and have their emotional needs attended to, an association that raises problematic nostalgia about home and family life where care, mothering, and maternalism are idealised. (p. 5)

As an identity discourse, maternal discourse construes women as instinctively and selflessly devoted to the care and emotional wellbeing of children, connected to their biological capacity to give birth (DiQuinzo, 2005). Ailwood's (2007) summation that the persistence and implications of maternal discourse in ECEC are "difficult and contradictory" (p. 162) fit with the findings of this research.

Both teachers and centre leaders in the research were asked to talk about their decision to become an early childhood teacher. Many participants made positive connections between their choice to work in ECEC and their identities as mothers. Such connections reinforce perceptions about the proximity of ECEC teaching work to mothering, and connect mothering experience with the skills and dispositions needed to be a teacher. Georgia (owner/teacher, private) talks about helping at her daughter's preschool as "the happiest time of my week" leading her to believe that "early childhood would be my place". Maternal discourse is also traced in some centre owners' representations of good ECEC teaching as a "natural ability" (Barb, owner/manager, private) and through persistent discursive connections to mothering: illustrated in Mary's (manager, community based) description of a teacher as showing "a very natural instinct with children. She is a mother herself" and through Barb's assertion that teachers need to be "like second mothers." Comments like this were common throughout the interviews, bearing witness to the pervasiveness of maternal discourse in shaping understandings about ECEC teachers and their work.

The narratives of teachers revealed ongoing tension between claiming care practices as an important part of their teaching identities and navigating the limiting effect of maternal discourse on public perceptions of their work. Many participants struggled to reconcile the value they placed on the affective aspects of their work, their associations between good mothering and good teaching, with their desire to be seen as a skilled professional. These tensions resulted in inconsistent and sometimes contradictory engagements with notions of care in their own identity negotiations. Almost all the teacher participants were frustrated by assumptions outside of ECEC that teaching is perceived as just "glorified babysitting" (Sian, teacher, private) and that the complexities of their work are not widely recognised in the public domain. The lack of status attached to being an ECEC teacher frequently led to feelings of professional inferiority, especially in comparison with other teachers for whom care was a less visible part of their work. For example, Esther's (manager/teacher, community based) centre is located within a school and she resented the lack of acknowledgement from her school-based teaching colleagues, "I don't feel valued sometimes at [school's name] for my knowledge. The perception I get is, 'You're just an early childhood teacher, you just sit over there and be quiet'." Both Cheryl and Kelly, TEs, bemoan and reject gendered assumptions amongst school leavers (and their career advisors) that ECE is suitable for "young women" who have been told "they are not very academic" (Cheryl, TE) or "nice girls with no other options" (Kelly, TE). Assumptions that ECEC work does not require any particular knowledge or skills are sometimes perpetuated by teachers themselves, such as when Sian (teacher, private) explains, "I've always loved working with young children. I've found that it came quite naturally to me. It wasn't something I had to think about."

Simultaneously, positive affective qualities, such as being kind and calm, were widely accepted discursive standards applied to an ideal ECEC teacher identity across participant groups. Participants were committed to these aspects of being a good teacher despite being aware that the naturalisation of these qualities contributes to perceptions of ECEC teaching work as less challenging. Both teachers and centre leaders frequently called on a constellation of affective qualities such as "kind, firm and calm" (Sian, teacher, private) and "firm but fair...and loving" (Paula, manager, private) when asked to describe a good teacher. These findings fit with a range of other studies which also show that teachers focus on the relational and caring elements of their work when asked about their motivations to teach and about their views of good teaching (Dalli, 2006; Davies & Degotardi, 2015; Osgood, 2006; Warren, 2014). A few

participants acknowledged that facilitating consistent caring required more than a nurturing disposition but took skill and critical judgement. In response to the question "what makes a good teacher?" Aadilia (teacher, community based) responds:

> Knowing oneself, what your values are … knowing your strengths and weakness … because when you know yourself … you can give to someone else … and [you have] energy and patience.

In this example, self-awareness, critical reflection and emotional articulacy are emphasised in order to be available to children. Sian (teacher, private) explained how the teachers at her centre say "KFC!" (kind, firm and calm) to each other as a reminder of expected behaviour. Both Aadilia and Sian's examples point to the emotional labour required of early childhood teachers, complicating the perception that care and consistent positive responses to children come easily to women. Earlier in the focus group, in a somewhat contradictory statement, Sian had also claimed that teaching "came naturally" to her. Claims such as these highlight the grip of maternal discourse on the sector and suggest that ECEC teachers can gain recognition through claims that they are naturally good at working with children. However, the skill and energy to maintain positive responses and the effort associated with teachers' emotional labour are largely unacknowledged by maternal discourse in which being kind and calm is taken for granted.

Struggling with the contribution of care work to teacher identities has been a persistent issue in the sector perpetuated by the binary created between care and education in the way the sector is structured. In 2006, Dalli noted that as the sector had become more professionalised, ECEC had become more articulate about the knowledge and skills needed to be considered a professional teacher, but that these articulations had avoided integrating notions of care and care work. Dalli (2006) suggests that this has been intentional, and supported not just in policy but in teacher education and by teachers themselves as a strategy to avoid perpetuating the historically low status of childcare work. At that time, Dalli called for the sector to find a way to "rehabilitate love and care into professional discourse" (p. 7) and to validate the care work that teachers do as important dimensions of their work. The findings of this research show that the sector has not yet found a way to consistently articulate how care and care labour are legitimate forms of professional knowledge. Making the importance of care explicit in ways that enable it to become untangled from the nexus of gender and intuition remains a key

challenge for the sector. The problem of care threads throughout the remaining findings chapters, influencing the identities of teachers in different ECEC settings in different ways.

Fluctuations in policy commitment to qualification levels in the sector have allowed the essentialising impact of maternal discourse to persist. A lack of commitment to a fully qualified sector has meant that unqualified and qualified teachers in ECEC centres (but not in kindergarten) work alongside each other with little to no demarcation of their roles and responsibilities. (How qualifications are explicitly used in kindergarten to include and exclude who can claim an identity as a kindergarten teacher is explored further in Chapter 7.) The interplay between the displacement of care in policy, fluctuating commitments to qualifications, and the prevalence of maternal discourse in the sector are illustrated in the comments of Barb, a private centre owner. Returning to the headline quote of this chapter, Barb draws on maternal discourse to create a space where she is able to justify her employment of unqualified teachers by elevating the maternal qualities of unqualified teachers and marginalising the value of professional qualifications. She adds, “All [my unqualified teachers] are experienced with children and don’t have a piece of paper to say they are qualified teachers. So they know less about theory, I suppose.”

In a different example, Tom (teacher, kindergarten) points to the professional insecurity caused for him by conflicting discourses and fluctuating policy commitments to qualifications in the sector, asking, “Was it [reducing qualification requirements in centres] to keep it at the level where taking care of young children is perceived as *just* taking care of kids? There is no value to it.” Further, Tom connects the undervaluing of care to the potential exploitation of the ECEC workforce when he wonders, “Has it been purposely like that so it can keep workers on a low wage?” The examples of both Tom and Barb point to the possible consequences of undervaluing care labour in professional discourse. Andrew and Newman (2012) argue that constructions of caring teachers through maternal discourse not only marginalise care as a legitimate type of professional knowledge but make it difficult for teachers to defend their professionalism, and to argue for better pay and work conditions. Both Barb and Tom highlight the potential for exploitation when ECEC work is understood through maternal discourse. Such complexities have led scholars to call for understandings of ECEC work and teacher identities to be uncoupled from maternal discourse (Taggart, 2019; Van Laere et al., 2014). When in the same conversation Tom says, “We’ve been working hard to professionalise the sector, and show that education does happen” and, “There is nothing wrong with care, I am just not

interested in it," it is possible to identify both a privileging of education as a key practice associated with professionalism, and the tension between care and status in the work of teachers. Tom resists the undervaluing of care work at the same time as he reaffirms a hierarchy between care and education. Such discursive manoeuvres demonstrate the interplay and tensions inherent as teachers negotiate the role of care in their own identities. The tactical use of discourse is also highlighted. By construing ECEC work as educational, Tom positions himself within a discourse that offers him more status, but at a cost, undermining the ways in which care might be legitimised as a practice linked to professionalism.

In the meantime, caring work has not disappeared from the daily reality of teachers' work, although it is more visible in some contexts than others. Examining such differences reveals political and contextual nuances in how care is used to position teachers, and in how teachers negotiate the experience of care in their work. Tom's concerns about the undervaluing and exploitation of teachers' care work may be more strongly experienced in ECEC settings that have their historical roots in the childcare sector, than in kindergarten that is bolstered by its historical position as an educational setting. Contrasting his experiences in a privately owned ECEC centre and a kindergarten, Tom comments that one of the reasons he chose kindergarten was that "it's about education and not changing nappies" and that at the EC centre "it was more about care than it was actually education."

It may be that Tom, because he is male, is able to sidestep maternal discourse to more easily dismiss the importance of custodial elements to his identity as a teacher. However, the ways in which teachers' every day experiences in different contexts impact on how they understand their identities is also highlighted here. The historical and contextual discourses of kindergarten create a distinct discursive space for kindergarten teachers to construct their identities as more professional, and more educational than other ECEC teachers. Findings related to this are examined in more depth in Chapter 7. Childcare centres are now referred to as education and care centres (EC centres), or early learning services (EL services) in policy as a way to privilege their educational purposes. However, their historical and contemporary position as custodial services for working parents means that care work is still foregrounded in the distinctions between kindergarten and childcare made by many of the participants in this research. When care practices are marginalised, or alternatively when professional knowledge does not include careful articulations about care as professional practice, the effects on teacher identities, particularly for teachers whose work is defined through those activities, can be detrimental,

and, as Tom points out, potentially exploitative. These themes are returned to and expanded on in Chapter 8, which examines the discourses and practices that come to influence the identities of teachers working the private sector. The next section explores the ways in which the relational focus of *Te Whāriki* provided an opportunity for participants to elevate the relational and ethical aspects of their work. Once again, the narratives discussed are not linear, rather they intersect with ideas about curriculum, bicultural identity and pedagogical relationships.

***Claiming a Caring Identity Through the Relational Discourses of* Te Whāriki**

Many participants found opportunities to uncouple from the limiting effects of maternal discourse, and still claim a caring identity in the relational focus of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). *Te Whāriki* promotes understandings of practice and pedagogy grounded in notions of interdependence, reciprocity, wellbeing and relationships. These prevailing values and practices also influence what it means to be a good teacher for a large number of participants and dominated the interviews of TEs. The sign systems and knowledge tool reveals the importance of relationships and *Te Whāriki* to being a teacher. *Te Whāriki* is, therefore, an influential document that shapes what counts as knowledge in the sector. The influence of relational pedagogy on understandings of teacher identities is clearly articulated by Jolene (TE) when she says, “For me, a good early childhood teacher is someone who is relationships focused, is a critical thinker, is an advocate for children.” Jolene further reinforces these as important to claims about good teaching when she declares a “shared philosophical intent” across the sector, underpinned by valuing relationships, that “comes from *Te Whāriki*.” Tui, also a TE, similarly points out that “teaching is … about relationships. It is a very *Te Whāriki* informed thing.” Relational pedagogy as a practice and discourse dominant in the sector is also evident in comments such as from Georgia (owner/teacher, private) that “building trusting relationships” is a prerequisite to learning and in Tom’s (teacher, kindergarten) comment that “whakawhanaungatanga is so important.” Tom draws on the Māori concepts of “mana, mauri and wairua” and the practice of “kōrero with mātua” and “building trusting relationships with tamariki” as important to “building a pathway to their education.” These findings mirror closely the findings of Warren (2014) who identifies a discourse of relational professionalism in her research with newly qualified ECEC teachers which positioned them as “committed to and skilled in maintaining warm, trusting and positive relationships” (p. 130).

These bicultural (Tom) and relational pedagogical expressions align well with the call for further consideration of a feminist ethics of care in conceptualisations of teaching identities. Care is conceptualised as interactions, which require sensitive ethical judgements, embedded in the daily practices and encounters between people in ECEC settings (Barnes, 2019; Langford & White, 2019). Care is not assumed to come naturally to teachers but rather is seen to involve "complex emotional, intellectual, and relational processes" (Langford & White, 2019, p. 64). Both Osgood (2012) and Taggart (2016) promote a view of teachers as critically reflective and emotional professionals engaged in relational teaching work. These ideas are strongly reflected in the constructions of teaching work privileged in participants' comments, especially for TEs. There seems to be high value in taking up relational and ethical orientations that position care as fundamental to ECEC practice and contribute to contesting the bifurcation between care and education. Despite the prevalence of relational discourse, bringing attention to care practices in their work still presented a significant tension for some participants, undermining their sense of a valued teacher identity.

One explanation for this might be in the way care is conceptualised through pedagogical and ethical theories. Paying attention to what is marginalised in relational discourse allows further consideration about the ways in which the positioning of care is embedded in relations of power and inequality (Aslanian, 2015; Langford et al., 2017; Rosen, 2019). CDA also involves examining text data for paradigmatic elements: what might be included in the text but is not (Fairclough, 2003). Rosen (2019) argues for careful attention to what becomes disconnected through the turn to care ethics in ECEC discourse. In particular, in Aotearoa, *Te Whāriki* provides a significant discursive resource through which the relational aspects of care can be valorised as making meaningful contributions to children's learning and wellbeing. However, the messy, menial or repetitive aspects of care, expressed by Josie (owner/manager, private) as including "sleeping them, feeding them, changing their nappies" seem disconnected and discursively excluded from what counts as valued forms of care in many participant discussions. It is possible to trace in Tom's narrative both the privileging of relational discourse and the devaluing of custodial care. This illustrates the ways in which some aspects of care are still positioned as a threat to Tom's and other participants' status as teachers. As the participants talked about their work, relational elements were frequently mentioned across all the participant groups; however, the custodial elements of care were almost never mentioned or were positioned as subordinate to relationships. To illustrate, nappy changing was valued by

Aadilia (teacher, community based) because she saw this time as a "wonderful time to connect to a child."

Rosen (2019) advocates for conceptualisations of care in teachers' work that encompass multifaceted and contradictory sets of care practices "inclusive of those that are affective, fulfilling, messy, menial, and repetitive" (p. 87). Rosen (2019) warns that failing to do so risks privileging teachers whose work is less likely to be associated with custodial care. Hochschild (2012) has similarly pointed out how care consisting of "dirty body work" is afforded less value and is mostly done by "the lowest in the pecking order." Confronting hierarchies in how the sector values care opens up space to consider other difficult conversations in ECEC. In particular, to ask who is doing what sort of work in ECEC, under what conditions and in what ways it is accorded status and value (Andrew & Newman, 2012). These questions are pertinent to considering hierarchies between teachers in the sector and become urgent later in this thesis when identities in specific contexts are examined. The findings of these later chapters revisit the slippage between care as a framework for interactions and pedagogy and highlight the impact of organisational cultures and conditions in which care practices take place. They further reveal the consequences, when care is marginalised, for how some teachers and practices are valued (or not).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has revealed and critically examined some of the ways in which teachers' identities are negotiated through the complex discourses of care. The findings demonstrate that the sector has yet to reconcile and articulate the role and value of care in the work of ECEC teachers. Participants clearly cared about their work, and the children and families they worked with. They saw their work as relationships based: a perspective supported by the relational discourses of *Te Whāriki*. Despite this, the visibility of care, especially custodial and bodily care, was a source of professional insecurity for many participants. Binaries between care and education, and entanglements with the gendered assumptions in maternal discourse, lead to an undervaluing of care, and come at the cost of acknowledging the contributions of care to teachers' work.

Chapter 6. Teacher Identities Under the "Regulatory Gaze"

I think early childhood is ever evolving and with that you have to jump on board or you look like a dead fish because you don't know what you are talking about. (Esther, manager/teacher, community based)

I'm loving all the documents …they are a big part of who we are. (Nicole, head teacher, community based)

Introduction

This chapter examines the influence of performative and regulatory expectations and processes on teacher identities. The contextual backdrop to the chapter is shaped by over 3 decades of intense governmental interest in the social, educational and economic benefits of ECEC and ongoing policy efforts to professionalise and regulate the sector through qualifications, teacher registration processes, competency standards and the processes of internal and external review. As a result, policy attempts to define professionalism for ECEC teachers have focused on performative and managerial notions and processes. These exist in tension with understandings offered in *Te Whāriki* (among an assemblage of messages) and promoted in the scholarship. These focus on professionalism grounded in the localities and cultures specific to where a teacher works (Dalli, 2012a) and include ideas about autonomous, critically engaged and "learning selves" (Duhn, 2010). This chapter illuminates participant responses to an increasing regulatory gaze on their work and identities, revealing the pressure on ECEC teachers to conform and perform to regulatory expectations, and the professional recognition offered to them as a result. Participants show various degrees of compliance and acceptance. The performative expectations are rather uncritically taken up by some teachers and strongly influence their understandings of teacher identities. The kind of professional recognition offered to teachers through the expectations highlighted in this chapter may offer increased status and recognition for their work, but also impinge on their autonomy and ability to negotiate identities in dialogue with each other and their communities.

Findings and Analysis

This chapter draws on the transcripts of all of the participant groups but more heavily on the experiences of teachers in Focus Group 2. Coincidentally, all of the teachers in this group had experienced an ERO review in the few months prior to the focus groups meeting or, for Sian

(teacher, private), between the two focus groups. In particular, Nicole's (head teacher, community based) sense of herself appeared to be strongly wrapped up in successfully meeting the expectations of internal and external review processes and her experiences are examined closely. The findings that comprise the chapter were coded under the node headings: external review/ ERO, internal review, documentation, accountability, development and registration. The identities, practices, politics, and intertextuality tools identify key findings in this chapter.

Identities Tool: The Regulatory Gaze

The identities tool focuses on the ways in which language is used to build, enact or attribute an identity. In Nicole's comment (Table 6.1), two identities are contrasted: someone who likes playing with children and someone who is focused on extending learning outcomes. The first is considered inadequate to the claim of being a good teacher, while the second, whose focus is on extending learning "first and foremost," is considered to be correct. Nicole connects this idea to an external regulatory body—the ERO. It is possible that this connection is made to lend more authority to her stance. Nicole's discursive connection between her own perspective on the priorities of teachers' work and ERO reveals an acceptance of external definitions of professionalism.

Table 6.1

The Identities Tool: The Regulatory Gaze

Identities: What socially recognizable identity (or identities) is the speaker trying to enact or to get others to recognise? How does the speaker's language treat other people's identities? What sorts of identities does the speaker recognise for others in relationship to his or her own? How is the speaker positioning others? (Gee, 2014b)
A good teacher builds relationships, trust and learning I think it [being a good teacher] has to go deeper than just being with and enjoying [children]. It's about … learning outcomes, to quote good old ERO. You know? Extending children's learning outcomes. If you are just there to pass the time of day because you like playing with children, that is not [a good teacher]. You need to understand how to build relationships and trust with the child and get into their world, where they are at, and then recognise what the learning is first and foremost, and then know the child and who they are, and be able to extend. (Nicole, head teacher/teacher, community based).

Practices Tool: The Regulatory Gaze

This tool focuses on socially and institutionally normalised ways of being by highlighting practices important to being recognised as a successful teacher. The reference to "a 4-year [review]" in the first example (Table 6.2) is used to establish the authenticity of Nicole's identity as a good teacher. The recognition garnered through a 4-year review may have increased Nicole's commitment to such processes. ERO reviews are typically every 3 years, but

may be more or less frequent depending on the outcome of the review. A 4-year review indicates a very successful outcome. Nicole connects her successful review with particular practices including collecting evidence and documentation of children's learning, and individual and group planning. In the second example, the frequency of the word "evidence" signals its importance as a practice. The phrase "they've [ERO] got all the evidence they need" reveals the ERO's priority that teachers focus on collecting evidence of the outcomes of their practice, a focus Nicole accepts. The importance of the day-to-day experiences and voices of teachers are downplayed, since these are not included in the "evidence they [ERO] need." In the second example, the continued professionalisation and regulation of teachers through registration and appraisal are highlighted as is the collection of evidence and documentation (preferred to talking to teachers about their experiences). The final three examples came from a conversation about why ERO did not talk to teachers or spend much time observing teaching practice during recent ERO visits. Nicole's comment "It threw me a little bit … but I thought they were very clever" and Judy's comment, "I guess that makes sense" suggest that teachers' expectations about what is important can become reorientated through accountability processes. Their initial understandings, that the experiences and voices of teachers would be important, are undermined. They are encouraged instead to focus on just the technical and measurable aspects of practice such as centre documentation.

Table 6.2

The Practices Tool: The Regulatory Gaze

Practices: What practices is the communication building as being important? What social groups or institutions support and normalise these activities? (Gee, 2014b)
External review: planning, evidence, extending learning outcomes
We got a 4-year [review] … I think that [documentation] had something to do with and the parents were raving about how much the children learn. They [ERO] wanted to see our individual planning. They spend a lot of time looking at our group planning and how we show evidence of actual learning and how we planned to extend those learning outcomes. And we could show them all of that. (Nicole, teacher/head teacher, community based)
Talking about why ERO did not talk to teachers during the evaluation visit
It threw me a little bit because I thought they would talk to [teachers] but I thought they were very clever. Because if you are going to look at mentoring and induction you have got our mentoring policy, they have got all the evidence they need, because they have got the registration folders there, the appraisals are there. I had to walk them through one teacher and 1 year's growth ... and how I had evidence for her growth and how I had evidence of the children's learning outcomes so they could tick so many boxes. (Nicole, teacher/head teacher, community based)
They talked to Ginny [the centre owner] but they didn't really talk to the teachers' experiences of things and they didn't want to come on the walk with us either … which is a huge part of everything we do and they didn't want to see it. (Sian, teacher, private)

> Yeah, it was a lot of talking to the top leaders [during the ERO visit] … I guess that makes sense. They spoke to one teacher who was undergoing registration. They wanted to see her folder. (Judy, teacher, private)

Politics Tool: The Regulatory Gaze

The politics tool focuses on how language is used to convey a perspective on social goods and their distribution. The tool is used to identify claims about what or who is considered to be acceptable, normal, valuable or good; and to examine who gets to make such claims and under what circumstances (Gee, 2014a). In relation to teacher identities, social goods such as what kinds of teachers are considered to be professional and who influences the definitions of this can be examined using the politics tool. In the first example (Table 6.3), teachers are subject to messages about good practice that are externally defined in a range of documents that teachers are required to consider. Measures of good practice are orientated to compliance with competency standards, practices and processes for accountability. The influence of some documents in guiding priorities and practices, rather than on other processes such as team or community dialogue is evident. In the next two statements, the power to define what is considered acceptable or successful teaching practice sits with external agencies—the Ministry of Education and the ERO, which some teacher participants actively or reluctantly accept. These external definitions are accepted as measures of professional currency; to be understood as outside of them is to risk looking “like a dead fish” (Esther, manager/teacher, community based). The final statement, from a TE, presents a contrasting point of view. The validity of the measures and processes of external review are challenged, and considered “soul destroying” for teachers. External review is positioned as an activity that undermines teacher agency and is seen to be imposed on teachers in a process that renders them powerless.

Table 6.3

The Politics Tool: The Regulatory Gaze

Politics: How does the speaker construct what counts as a social good as well as how social goods are distributed, withheld from others? (Gee, 2014b)
Aligning with external definitions of good practice
So all my teachers have a copy of those [*Te Whāriki, He Pou Tātaki, Tātaiako*]. And I say, “These are your core documents. These are what measure [best practice].” You have something specifically tangible where you can say, “Ok, if you are going to do an enquiry on this let’s look it up. What does this document say? Ok, so that is what best practice looks like.” (Nicole, head teacher/teacher, community based)
External review—being accepted by ERO

> It was quite nerve wracking for me…we are a new team and some of our staff only started a few months ago and we are still finding our rhythm … but we are getting there. But I wasn't sure how ERO was going to accept that. (Sian, teacher, private)

Talking about the expectations associated with getting ready for external review

> I think early childhood is ever evolving and with that you have to jump on board or you look like a dead fish because you don't know what you are talking about. (Esther, manager/teacher, community based)

Internal review

> It's going to be good. It's going to be a big project. Lots of work. Focusing on internal evaluation. They have five areas where the ministry has identified … we are not doing amazingly well at, like as a sector as a whole. So you choose one of the five to internally evaluate and then go through the internal evaluation booklet from the ERO and then using *Te Whāriki* in that as well. (Sian, teacher, private)

Contesting quality assurance and regulatory processes

> I would get rid of ERO and I would require universities to work in professional learning domain in ways that would get rid of the need for this kind of quality assurance mechanism that ERO operates that I think everyone is, quite clearly, able to game. It must be so soul destroying for a teacher to go through their first ERO visit in a centre where they see everything is made up for the visit, and then it just reverts back. And it must be soul destroying not to be able to say something … and go, "Guess what? This is what this place looked like 3 weeks ago, and this is how I am being treated." (Kelly, TE)

Intertextuality Tool and Assumptions: The Regulatory Gaze

Intertextuality occurs when a speaker refers or alludes to another text; something that has been said or written by someone else. References to other texts can occur directly by quoting or naming another text, or indirectly or by incorporating the style of language associated with a different text (Gee, 2014a). The intertextuality tool focuses on a closer examination of other voices being incorporated as meaning is built in language. Nicole (head teacher, community based) frequently references the importance of a number of documents to her work by naming them directly and by connecting them to each other. All of the documents she names seek to mandate the purposes and processes of ECEC in some way and are the result of ongoing professionalisation and regulation of the sector. *Te Whāriki*, the national early childhood curriculum, sets out the principles that "guide every aspect of pedagogy and practice" (MoE, 2017, p. 17) as well as strands, goals and learning outcomes, each of which contribute to defining the foci for teachers' work. While *Te Whāriki* emphasises community, relationships and dialogue to provide scope for understandings of teacher identities that are intrinsically local, Nicole understands that "you can't look at *Te Whāriki* in isolation." Therefore, for Nicole at least, the messages in *Te Whāriki* are mediated in relationship to and through other documents that are more directive. *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (ECANZ, 2011) outlines expected "behaviours for teachers at different stages of their teaching career" (p. 2) around working successfully with Māori learners. *He Pou Tātaki: How the ERO Reviews Early Childhood Services* (ERO, 2013a) outlines the ERO external review methodology. This document is clear about its focus on how centres "sustain and improve

outcomes for children" (ERO, 2013a, p. 6) and highlights the importance of centre self-review as evidence that contributes to the external review process. *Effective Internal Evaluation for Improvement* (ERO, 2016, p. 4) also outlines the process of internal review as one that "that drives innovation and improvement."

Table 6.4

Intertextuality Tool and Assumptions: The Regulatory Gaze

Intertextuality: How do words or grammatical structures refer or allude to other texts or styles of language? What other voices are relevant, and have been incorporated? (Gee, 2014b)
I am feeling really excited about how they [documents] all support each other. You can't look at *Te Whāriki* in isolation. It is in conjunction with *He Pou Tātaki*, with *Tātaiako*, and even with the internal evaluation document and how that [internal evaluation] all works … it really excites me. (Nicole, teacher/head teacher, community based)

Discussion: (Post)Performative Identities

The CDA tools highlight the influence of performative and regulatory expectations on how some teacher participants understood their work, and their own success as teachers. When asked about what makes a good teacher, both teacher participants and TEs focused on the affective and relational elements of teaching, and competencies such as "building trusting relationships" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten). Their answers were strongly informed by the relational discourse of *Te Whāriki* with accountability requirements notably absent. However, when the teachers in Focus Group 2 began sharing their experiences with external review, it became clearer that these growing expectations did contribute, in various ways, to their identity negotiations. Sian (teacher, private) found the process of external review "nerve wracking," an acknowledgement that she was invested in a successful outcome. Esther (manager/teacher, community based) felt the pressure "to jump on board" with evolving standards and regulatory requirements, or risk being seen as "a dead fish" revealing that she may be compelled to participate in performative expectations regardless of how she perceives them. Judy (teacher, private) seemed less certain about the value of increased accountability and the logic of processes such as external review, saying "I guess that [such a process] makes sense," although the lack of attention to the daily experiences and practices of teachers during external review was a surprise to a number of participants including Judy. Nicole was fully invested in the competency and accountability documents that are the result of policy moves to professionalise and regulate the sector. She was "excited" by them and felt they gave clear and consistent messages (saying "they all support each other") about "best practice" that she

could use to guide her teaching team. For Nicole, successful engagement with accountability processes and competency standards informed how she understood her own and others professionalism. Teacher participants' responses to competency standards, internal and external review, and the increased requirement for teachers to collect evidence of their practices ranged from slight scepticism to passive acceptance to enthusiastic embrace. Overall, however, there was very little critical engagement with the practices and forms of professionalism communicated through these processes. A singular exception to this was from Kelly (TE), who strongly contested the validity of such processes and their "soul-destroying" impact on teachers.

The policy analysis, presented in Chapter 4, maps a consistent policy agenda to professionalise the ECEC sector through qualifications, registration processes and increased attention to defining professional competencies and standards. Governing bodies such as TECANZ, the MoE, and the ERO have an increasing influence on how professionalism is defined and measured for ECEC teachers. Being seen as professional was important to most participants, promising a status and recognition that is often missing in ECEC. However, the CDA of policy texts highlights investments in a particular form of professionalism, alongside the increasing visibility of an "audit culture" and managerial discourse. As a result, ECEC teachers have become "the objects of increasing surveillance, classification, and regulation" (Gibbons, 2013, p. 502). *Pathways*, for example, includes the goal of "improving the quality of ECEC services" (MoE, 2002, p. 9) through focusing on increased levels of qualified and registered teachers, the application of evidenced-based best practice, and through engagements in self-review processes. In *Agenda,* improving teachers is seen as the key to making the most of government investments in ECEC primarily by focusing on the accountability of teachers and services. *Agenda* repeatedly calls for the "continuous improvement" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 3) of teaching practice through the "identification and evaluation of effective practice" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 106) and through a focus on the "continuous professional development of teachers" (ECE Taskforce, 2011, p. 150). Correspondingly, there has been an explosion of documents focusing on more detailed teacher competencies and standards, such as *Our Code Our Standards* (ECANZ, 2017); *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (ECANZ, 2011); and *Tapasā: Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners (*MoE, 2018). The development of documents that focus on practices and processes for increased accountability and review have also increased, including *He Pou Tātaki: How the ERO Reviews Early Childhood Services* (ERO,

2013a) and *Effective Internal Evaluation for Improvement* (ERO, 2016). The ways in which some teachers engage with these documents and processes to understand and enact their own identities, and to construct the identities of others, are considered below.

The teacher participants' experiences, particularly with internal and external review and the documents that accompany them, reveal the ways in which they are subject to and subjects of policy that focuses on the measurable and performative elements of practice. In this research, teachers negotiate their identities, including their sense of credibility and status, through their active engagement with these aspects of teaching practice. External review foregrounds accountability practices such as documentation of internal review (sometimes referred to as self-review), evidence of continual organisation and professional improvement and planning for, collecting evidence of, and evaluating children's learning. Nicole's (head teacher, community based) successful engagement with accountability practices, and the status this affords her, is clear when she proudly tells her focus group, "We got a 4-year!" and attributes this successful outcome to her ability to produce the right kind of evidence, "I think that [documentation] had something to do with it." Nicole expresses pleasure in her active engagement with the documents, claiming them as important to her own teacher identity saying: "I'm loving all the documents" and, they are "a big part of who we are." Her use of "we" further suggests that she uses the documents as normative frameworks through which she understands good teaching for all teachers, excluding teachers who are just there to "pass the time of day" because they enjoy children (Nicole, head teacher, community based).

The ascent of an audit culture that positions teachers in ever more measurable and manageable ways is linked to the influence of new managerialism in policy (Ball, 2003; Duhn, 2010; Farquhar, 2012; Gibbons, 2013). New managerialism is a mode of governance in which audit culture, performance indicators, competency standards, ongoing evaluation and review are key discursive practices (Thompson, 2016). As such, they seek to normalise and regulate the priorities, values, and purposes of ECEC, and to reposition teachers as "technicists who must be regulated to ensure that practice complies with regulated criteria" (Jovanovic & Fane, 2016, p. 152). Clarke (2013) refers to accountability practices, which increasingly take up teachers' time and energies, as second-order activities. Second-order activities compete with and sometimes overtake the first-order demands of being a teacher in the construction of teacher identities, encouraging teachers to reorientate their values and priorities towards them (Holloway & Brass, 2018).

The ways in which performative technologies such as external review encourage a reorientation of teaching priorities can be seen in some of the teachers' surprise that ERO did not take the time to talk to or observe teachers but rather focused on talking to leadership and reviewing the documented evidence. It is possible that the lack of interest in day-to-day teaching practices and teachers' voices during external review undermines teachers' own understandings about what teaching practices count. For example, the ERO visitors did not participate in the children's daily walk at Sian's (teacher, community based) centre, even though she felt that this was a key expression of the centre's philosophy and "a big part of everything we do." In this case, Sian might have been persuaded that these aspects of her practice are less valuable. This reorientation of priorities and values is evident in Nicole's (head teacher, community based) comment that the ERO's lack of interest in seeing practice and talking to teachers initially threw her but she came to see it as "very clever," covering "all the evidence they need" and "ticking so many boxes". Nicole's uncynical use of managerial language is also evident, suggesting that these are words and ideas that she has accepted as part of how she communicates and positions herself within performative discourse. Further, while Judy (teacher, private centre) seemed less certain about the focus on accountability mechanisms and practices during external review, only saying "I guess that makes sense" she was still obliged to accept them if she wanted to be seen as a successful teacher during the process of external review. The understanding that you need to "jump on board" with the processes and values of external review or "look like a dead fish" is vividly expressed by Esther, the manager of a community-based ECEC centre. The experiences of Judy and Esther illuminate the pressure felt by some teachers to demonstrate externally defined practices and values in order to be recognised as a successful teacher (in the context of external review, at least).

A significant amount of research has focused on the deepening "regulatory gaze" in ECEC in which teachers are positioned as "technicists" whose knowledge and practice are applied in standardised ways, set through external criteria, rather than by teachers within their unique communities and contexts (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Gibson et al., 2015; Jovanovic & Fane, 2016). Nicole, in her role as a head teacher, encourages her team to take up the messages about best practice and images of teachers in the documents, telling them, "These are your core documents. These are how you measure [best practice]." The invitation by Nicole to her team is not to collectively and critically engage with the messages but to embrace and perform them, and to understand themselves as teachers through them. The encouragement of self-

monitoring against external criteria is a key feature of new managerialism that directs teachers' energies to implementing the practices and standards outlined in the documents (Thompson, 2016). In this example, Nicole creates an environment in her centre where being a good teacher is about striving to meet external criteria which are accepted (by Nicole at least) without question. In this context, opportunities for teachers to articulate understandings of good teaching practice that fall outside of the messages in the documents, to reflect on the relevance of messages to their particular families and community, and to critique the standards themselves, may be limited. However, Nicole also points to the importance of "relationships and trust" and "knowing the child and who they are." These additional practices and values provide an insight into how Nicole might negotiate performative expectations alongside less measurable aspects of teaching that are widely valued by ECEC teachers (Delaune, 2018). These may become more difficult to articulate as integral to professional practice as Nicole and her team strive for recognition through successful engagement with review processes.

Although outside of the focus and theoretical framing of this thesis, there is potential to explore the influences of managerial discourses related to the experiences of Nicole and other teachers such as Sian and Judy using the work of Foucault. Specifically, Foucault's ideas about governmentality are an area for future exploration. Foucault identifies governmentality as a process by which people and populations come to be governed through practices that encourage people to want for themselves what is wanted for them by the state (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Dahlberg and Moss (2005) explain:

> These practices work directly on us, steering us towards desired behaviour. But they also work through us, acting on our innermost selves, reaching to the innermost qualities of being human: our spirit, motivations, wishes, desires, beliefs, dispositions, aspirations and attitudes. So though we are directly governed, the most important effect is that we govern ourselves—conduct our own conduct—in ways that conform to the dominant regime. (p. 19)

Regulatory frameworks, competency standards and documents outlining the processes for internal and external review provide categories and norms through which teachers can understand how to be a teacher. Without critical engagement, they may become the internal standards through which teachers construct their identities, especially if they are promoted and reinforced through leadership as is the case with Nicole.

Ball (2003) and others (Clarke, 2013; Holloway & Brass, 2018) have described the "terrors of performativity" experienced by teachers who have been challenged by the escalating influences of managerialism and performativity in their work and who feel a deep tension with their own ethical and relational conceptualisations of teaching. For example, participants in Osgood's (2012) study on the professional identities of nursery teachers in the UK reported a distrust of the measurements of professionalism offered by Ofsted (the external inspection agency) and were suspicious of the value of their intensified workloads associated with compliance and performance measurement. In Osgood's research, the participants wrestled with the "hegemonic discourses and practices designed to assess professional competence" (p. 126). Osgood describes a kind of passive resistance from the teachers in her study who opposed the version of professionalism asserted through neoliberal policy reform but felt powerless to resist it. The terrors of performativity described in the scholarship (Ball, 2003; Clarke, 2013; Osgood, 2012) are reflected in Kelly's (TE) comment that "the kind of quality assurance mechanisms that ERO operate" can be "soul destroying" for teachers who are unable to say "this is how I am being treated." Kelly, a TE, assumes that teachers feel undermined by external review, and points out how review processes fail to attend to the complexities of teachers' experiences, including their potential exploitation. Kelly perceives teachers as in deep tension with the processes of review and powerless to intervene.

In contrast, it was not clear that teachers like Nicole (head teacher, community based) have felt terrorised by neoliberal policy reform. The teacher participants who shared their experiences with ERO did not position these aspects of their work as assaults on their autonomy, as Clarke (2013) and Kelly suggest, but rather accepted them as one mode through which they could come to understand themselves and others as successful teachers. Nicole's comments show that she has embraced accountability mechanisms for their "tangible messages" about "best practice," and that she encourages the teachers in her team to do the same. Her active engagement is rewarded with a successful ERO review that she uses in the focus groups to position herself as a successful teacher. Although Nicole also talks about relationships and trust as being important to her definitions of a good teacher, she did not seem to experience a tension between these understandings of her work in the same ways that Osgood (2012, 2016) and others (Ball, 2013, Clarke, 2013) have reported. Rather, some participants seemed willing to take on board the measures of professionalism offered through policy directives that focus on producing evidence of learning outcomes, ongoing improvement and engagement in review

cycles. They were willing to orientate their understandings of teaching towards them quite uncritically. This is evident in Sian's (teacher, private) comments about looking forward to engaging in professional development in relation to the implementation of the revised *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). The development is based on "five areas where the ministry has identified … we are not doing amazingly well at … as a sector as a whole" rather than emerging from the concerns of the teachers or centre community. Sian feels that, "It's going to be good. It's going to be a big project."

Rather than being seen as a distraction to their work, accountability expectations offer teachers the information they need to know to be able to show a recognisable teacher identity to the world; one which is inflected with neoliberal discourse and being. Almost all of the participants in this research were impacted by the lack of recognition they felt was given to the work of ECEC teachers. As reported in the previous chapter, participants' regularly reported incidents where their work was perceived as "just looking after kids" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten). TE participants frequently commented that ECEC is positioned as a career for girls who are "told they are not very academic" (Tui, TE). Chapter 5 examined the impact of maternal discourse on the sector in undermining the intellectual and complex challenges of being an early childhood teacher. Therefore, performative expectations of teachers may be actively taken up precisely because they serve as an alternative to the limited constructions of teachers as child-minders or nice "ladies" who are good with children, which have historically impacted the sector (Ailwood, 2017). Sims and Waniganayake (2015) propose that the promise of professional status offered through an increased regulatory gaze may further reinforce the pressure to take up the performative identities offered through neoliberal and managerial discourse uncritically:

> There is even a sense that criticism of the quality agenda in early childhood is traitorous: that early childhood has fought so long to be valued that criticising the mechanisms through which professionalism is painfully being born analogous with performing an abortion without anaesthetic. It means we must comply; we must accept a neoliberal identity. (p. 342)

Although teachers like Nicole might appear empowered by taking-up the teacher identities offered through neoliberal and managerial discourse, it is possible that they may unknowingly experience less autonomy in the construction of their own teacher identities. The forms of governmentality experienced by teachers in an era of performativity give the illusion of

freedom through the emphasis on self-governance (Wilkins, 2011). In reality, teaching is "re-professionalised" through the lenses of competency standards, technical and measurable practices (Sims & Waniganayake, 2015). The teachers reported on in this chapter may have willingly engaged in performative technologies because the overt messages seemed sensible and even desirable and the sector has "fought so hard to be seen as professional" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten). However, as Clarke (2013) points out, regardless of their value, technologies such as competency standards are necessarily reductive in orientation. They are likely to fail to capture the multidimensional complexities of teaching and occlude the personal, emotional and political dimensions of teaching work. Further, because they are externally defined in relation to a raft of government agendas, thinking outside of them, to conceptualise teacher identities as something different or to critique them, is difficult.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the influence of a growing regulatory gaze on teachers' identity negotiations. The chapter has focused on participants' experiences with external review including their engagement with documents that set out expectations of review processes. The findings reveal how successful engagements with external expectations offered some participants recognition and professional status. Externally imposed standards and processes were reinforced by centre leadership and became normative frameworks through which teachers were judged. The analysis also highlights an absence of critical engagement with regulatory processes and expectations, and reveals the possibility for these processes to reorientate values, practices and priorities. The chapter ends by pointing out that, despite appearing empowered by the self-governing messages of external review, teachers are at risk of experiencing less agency and autonomy as they negotiate their teacher identities.

Chapter 7. Teacher Identities in Kindergarten

> *I proudly say I work with children, but mind you, I say I'm a kindergarten teacher, so maybe I'm talking my own bias. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)*
>
> *The image of kindergarten teachers is a lot of white faces … some teachers feel like their profile doesn't fit … [because] predominantly the teachers are Pākehā. (Georgia, owner/teacher, private)*

Introduction

Chapter 7 examines teacher identities in the context of the kindergarten service. Both kindergarten and nonkindergarten participants frequently perceived kindergartens to be at the "top of the hierarchy" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten) holding a privileged status in the sector. Participants' understandings of kindergarten teachers were grounded in the historical discourses of the kindergarten movement, the pay and work conditions of kindergarten teachers, and in perceptions about the priorities that shape kindergarten practices. These factors illuminate how kindergarten teachers are positioned differently from teachers in other kinds of ECEC services and suggest a hierarchy of teachers across the sector. Participants also pointed to the changing nature of the kindergarten service, competing with other services in a market-driven sector. The impact of competition and recent changes to one kindergarten association are identified by many participants as eroding the distinctive nature of kindergarten, driving it to "become like a private" service (Tahlia, teacher, private). The distinctive identities of kindergarten teachers have also been challenged as a new generation of teachers, influenced by different discourses and with different experiences, move into kindergarten service. The experiences of Christie (head teacher, kindergarten), new to being a kindergarten teacher, whose previous teaching work had taken place in privately owned centres, are examined in the final part of the chapter. They accentuate the fluid and contingent nature of teacher identity, revealing the ways in which identities are shaped between the colliding discourses of the different contexts, each of which offer teachers different ways of understanding themselves and their work. The experiences of participants like Christie (and others), who negotiate and challenge traditional kindergarten culture, are considered significant because they show how identities are negotiated by individuals within and between contexts.

Findings and Analysis

The findings in this chapter are mostly drawn from the focus groups with ECEC teacher participants and from the individual interviews with centre leaders. Participants in both groups were currently located in a range of different ECEC centres including kindergartens, community-based centres and privately owned EC centres. Significant to this chapter, a number of the participants had worked in both kindergarten and ECEC centres. Some participants such as Christie and Tom had moved from the private sector into kindergarten. Others, such as Nicole, Judy, and Gladis, had previously been kindergarten teachers and had moved away from kindergarten for different reasons. Nicole returned to a leadership position in a faith-based community centre she had previously worked in. Judy and Gladis both owned ECEC centres, seeing these businesses as opportunities to express their own philosophies. The accounts of these participants are particularly useful for examining the impact of context on identity.

At the first meeting of each focus group, the teachers were invited to share where they currently worked, the reasons they became early childhood teachers, to discuss what they thought a good early childhood teacher was, and whether they believed these definitions would be shared across the sector. They were also asked about the kinds of things that impact on their work as a teacher. The status of kindergarten teachers was raised by both groups and was a particularly strong topic of conversation in Focus Group 1, sparked by an initial comment early on in the group's discussion that "the sector is very uneven. Kindergartens being the highest and the rest being just nowhere" (Aadilia, teacher, community based). This was a theme to which the participants in Focus Group 1 continued to return, and, in doing so they explored many aspects of the politics of the sector. During their individual interviews, centre leaders, managers and owners were also asked to define a good early childhood teacher, whether they felt these definitions were shared across the sector, what they look for when they employ teachers in their organisation, and the kinds of things that impact teachers' work. The different positioning of kindergarten and kindergarten teachers also came up in some of the responses to these questions, particularly as this group of participants tried to unpack current inequities between services in the sector.

The many conversations about kindergarten were initially coded under a number of different nodes: kindergarten work conditions, qualifications, kindergarten history, kindergarten association changes, kindergarten practices, kindergarten teachers, kindergarten comparisons,

and then were grouped together to form the theme: teacher identities in kindergarten. The identities, significance, practices, politics, relationships and situated-meanings tools were used to identify the main findings.

Identities Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

The identities tool (Table 7.1) focuses on the ways in which language is used to build, enact or attribute an identity. This might be by speaking or acting in a particular way, or by explicitly comparing or contrasting particular identities to others (Gee, 2014a). The use of the nomenclature "kindergarten teacher" itself is significant and infers a kind of teacher relevant only to the kindergarten context. Many participants made a distinction between teachers who work in kindergarten and teachers who work in other kinds of ECEC services. This was done by claiming their location in kindergarten as central to their identity, or by comparing kindergarten teachers with other kinds of teachers including teachers in ECEC centres and primary school teachers. Christie and Tom both acknowledged the recognition they received by identifying themselves as kindergarten teachers. Participants contrasted kindergarten teachers with "daycare" teachers, and saw similarities with primary school teachers. A few participants also associated the identities of kindergarten teachers with being Pākehā and university educated. Kindergarten teachers also claimed their identities in a relation of difference to unqualified teacher-aides working alongside them, pointing to qualification and divisions in labour. In the final example, two identities are contrasted: a unionist identity, defined as someone who speaks out about proposed changes to kindergarten and "has a bit of a stir-up"; and a teacher who "professionally" is loyal to the kindergarten association ("the company"). In this quote, the reference to age, "she is someone my mother's age," also suggests an identity that may be out of date.

Table 7.1

Identities Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

Identities: What socially recognizable identity (or identities) is the speaker trying to enact or to get others to recognise? How does the speaker's language treat other people's identities? What sorts of identities does the speaker recognise for others in relationship to his or her own? How is the speaker positioning others? (Gee, 2014b)
Kindergarten teachers and other teachers
I proudly say I work with children, but mind you I say I am a kindergarten teacher so maybe I talk my own bias. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
I picture kindergarten teachers being more like primary school teachers. (Laverne, manager, community based)

People ask, “What do you do?” [I answer] “I’m an early childhood teacher” [and they say] “Oh, like daycare?” But when you say, “I’m a kindergarten teacher” people say “Oh! Kindy! Kindy’s great.” (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)

The speakers reveal their perceptions that kindergarten teachers usually fit a certain profile—that includes being Pākehā or white.

The image of kindergarten teachers is a lot of white faces … some teachers feel like their profile doesn’t fit … [because] predominantly the teachers are Pākehā. (Georgia, owner/teacher, private)

It’s all middle-aged white ladies … it’s a very white place. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)

Distinctions between qualified teachers and teacher-aides in kindergarten

You don’t even need to wash a paint-pot [at kindergarten] ... there is a teaching assistant who does the paint pots and the little ... cleaning jobs throughout the day. In daycare ... everybody is the dogsbody but [at kindergarten] we have assistants who do the little things to run smoothly so that we can dedicate ourselves to the children and to the documentation. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)

You need the qualification in kindergarten. One of my very good friends worked as a teacher-aide in kindergarten ... she was very much a dogsbody ... I could see how she was treated differently to how an actual qualified teacher would have been. (Barb, owner/manager, private)

Unionist identities versus being loyal to the company

One of the teachers is a unionist and she’s strongly against it [changes to the kindergarten model] and she was having a bit of stir-up with the parents and telling them her ideas … She’s my mother’s age, and I had to pull her aside … and say professionally your opinion is not welcome. You can tell us after hours but as a spokesperson for the kindergarten and our company as a whole, you are not allowed to go and tell people that you disagree. Like your husband can’t go and tell people that his company is doing something stupid and he doesn’t agree with it. You are a spokesperson and you need to put that image forward.(Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)

Significance Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

The significance tool (Table 7.2) focuses on how language is used to make some things more (or less) significant as a way of signalling how important they are to the speaker. The educational aspects of kindergarten were frequently bought to the fore while other tasks such as changing nappies were downplayed and disconnected in participants’ talk about kindergarten. In the examples below, this occurred through the use of phrases such as “core business” to refer to educational aspects of kindergarten and “every now and then” (Tom, teacher, kindergarten) when talking about care. In the second example, the phrases “most authentic” and “least authentic” suggest a continuum of authenticity across ECEC settings that the speaker connects to learning. The significance of this connection can be further examined by considering what it excludes, for example, care, partnerships, or advocacy. This example also suggests that the differences between kindergarten and “for-profit” centres are felt to be important to the authenticity of the setting. The educational aspects of kindergarten were frequently bought to the fore in discussions about kindergarten.

Table 7.2

Significance Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

Significance: How do the speakers build up or lessen the significance (importance, relevance) for certain things and not others? (Gee, 2014b)
People are choosing to go [to kindergarten] because they made themselves known for what they do … they are quality centres, the ones sitting at the top of the hierarchy. And I see kindergarten there because they are generally not about care, and they are about education … My focus is purely on education. I have to change a nappy every now and then but it's not my core business. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
The most authentic learning is happening somewhere in a group of kindergartens and the least authentic is happening in these centres that are run for profit. (Georgia, owner/teacher, private)

Practices Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

The practices tool (Table 7.3) focuses on how language both reflects and constructs the practices that need to be enacted to be recognised within a particular kind of identity: the socially and institutionally normalised ways of being (Gee, 2014a). It is used here to focus on what practices were pointed to as important to being a kindergarten teacher. As mentioned earlier, educational practices were frequently called on to define the work of kindergarten teachers. Here practices such as "being concerned with learning outcomes," "focusing on education," "working together to plan and discuss and unpack" and "just teaching" as well as "professional conversations," "reflections," "research" and "professional development" are identified as relevant to being a kindergarten teacher. These examples also highlight the collegial activity of working alongside other (qualified) teachers. The time given for teachers to engage in these activities together was frequently mentioned by both kindergarten and nonkindergarten participants. Again, aspects of care work such as feeding, sleeping and nappies are not represented as being practices relevant to kindergarten even though many of these things do happen in kindergarten. These kinds of comments reveal a binary between care and education in kindergarten that impacts on other parts of the sector. In the final example, Aadilia (teacher, community based) points to an absence of care in the ways she perceives that kindergarten teachers understand their work. She challenges the exclusion of care, asserting that although it is not important to the identity of a kindergarten teacher, it is important to her own identity. She claims her difference from kindergarten teachers based on this distinction.

Table 7.3

Practices Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

Practices: What practices is the communication building as being important to being a kindergarten teacher? What social groups or institutions support and normalise these practices? (Gee, 2014b)
Promoting learning and education as key practices
A good kindergarten teacher is probably concerned with learning outcomes. (Laverne, manager, community based)
I really didn't want to focus on the care side of things with tamariki [children]. I really just wanted to focus on the education side of things. And I push as much of my day into education as I can … it's about education and not changing nappies. I want nothing to do with nappies. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
Professional conversations and professional development
As someone who thrives off professional conversations, reflections, and researching and implementing new ideas I think that that side of me as a teacher has room to grow and flourish [in kindergarten]. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)
That professional time for teachers to work together and to plan and discuss and to unpack things and you just can't do it in half an hour a month after general business at a daycare meeting. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)
16, 17, 18 professional developments in my first year as a kindergarten teacher. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
The [kindergarten association] invested a lot of money in my professional development. (Nicole, teacher, community based)
Disconnecting care from kindergarten practice
The only thing I can think of is down there [at the kindergarten] they're not providing care, they are not sleeping and they're not feeding them, they're not changing nappies … so then they [parents] have this impression that, in their head, it is *just* teaching [in kindergarten] whereas we aren't just teaching. (Josie, owner/manager, private)
I went to a conference and I was sitting with kindergarten teachers and they are crying now, because babies are going to be with them. "Oh nappies!" But, … that is a wonderful time to connect with a child. You don't know! You may have read about it but you don't know because you are a kindergarten teacher … They [kindergarten teachers] don't know that (Aadilia, teacher, community based)

Politics Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

The politics tool (Table 7.4) focuses on how language is used to convey a perspective on what is included as a social good and how it is distributed (who gets what). Gee (2014a) explains that social goods are at stake any time the use of language infers something (or someone) is normal or good (or the opposite). Status and recognition are important social goods for many teachers, including the participants in this study. A common perception among participants, whether they worked in kindergarten or not, was that kindergarten teachers enjoyed a higher status than teachers in other parts of the ECEC sector. Other social goods that kindergarten teachers enjoyed, that were not guaranteed for other teachers, but which were felt to contribute to recognition, were things like working in a fully qualified team, positive work conditions and pay parity with primary school teachers. The commitment to only employing qualified teachers is a significant social good supported by the kindergarten associations but often not guaranteed in

other services. The possibility of unqualified teachers in their workplaces contributed to feelings of professional inferiority for teachers not in kindergarten, even when no unqualified teachers were actually present. Qualifications became a way to differentiate between teachers and groups of teachers. Further nuances in the importance of qualifications emerge when some participants related perceptions that equivalent qualifications from different providers held different value. Again, the ways in which kindergarten teaching is constructed as being primarily educational is visible in the comments included here.

Table 7.4

Politics Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

Politics: How does the speaker construct what counts as a social good as well as how social goods are distributed, withheld from others? (Gee, 2014b)
Status
This sector [ECEC] is not very well catered for, or catered for in a very imbalanced way with kindergartens being the highest and the rest being just nowhere. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
There is esteem for the role of the teacher in kindergarten that day-care doesn't have. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)
They are quality centres, the ones sitting at the top of the hierarchy and I see kindergarten sitting there because they are not generally about care. They are about education. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
When I finished my training I thought, actually, I want to learn from what I thought was a very high standard of teaching, which was the [name of a kindergarten association]. (Nicole, teacher, community based)
[In response to a question about whether kindergarten teachers have more status than other ECEC teachers]: Yes! Yes! Definitely! And they look down on us as well! (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
Work conditions
Two of us are fresh from day-care [to kindergarten] and we know this is better professionally. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)
We think they [kindergarten teachers] have it easy. Well, they have it easier because of their hours and their holidays. (Laverne, manager, community based)
They [kindergarten teachers] have pay parity and everything and they get holidays and they just get everything. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
The hours that kindergarten has set aside for teachers' professional time is hugely attractive too … I think kindergarten has a higher standard for teachers by offering them that time to pursue the professional documentation, analytical side of their job. (Christie, kindergarten, head teacher)
We get holidays. Boy, do we get holidays. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
Qualifications
Kindergarten won't even look at you if you're not qualified. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
When the strategic plan happened, I was a kindergarten teacher and when we merged as early childhood teachers and kindergarten teachers [it was so] that all of us would be qualified, so we didn't have that division. But nowadays, that division is getting deeper again. Kindergarten is going one way and early childhood [education and care services] have been going the other way again because of the fact that, at least in kindergarten they are still 100% qualified. (Gladis, owner/manager, private)
An issue, I think, is around if we don't keep pushing for highly qualified teachers then we become [seen as] unqualified again … those things I think mean there is still a division between us and like, kindergarten teachers. (Esther, manager/teacher, community based).

You need the qualification in kindergarten. One of my very good friends worked as a teacher-aide in kindergarten … She was treated very much as a dogsbody … I could see how she was treated differently to how an actual qualified teacher would have been. (Barb, owner/manager, private)
The general feeling from my classmates … were that the ones from university got in [to kindergarten] and that the [name of a kindergarten association] only took the best teachers. They are not taking on polytechnic students and our degree was as good so why this elitist way of being? (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)

Relationships Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

The relationships tool (Table 7.5) is used to examine the ways that language builds, sustains or changes relationships between the speaker and other individuals, groups or institutions (Gee, 2014a). The idea that kindergarten teachers are distinct from other teachers is visible in the use of "them" and "us" in participant's speech. These infer affiliations to and exclusions from particular groups of teachers (kindergarten teachers and "other" teachers). The relationship is represented as hierarchical: kindergarten teachers "look down on" other teachers and "childcare workers" are represented as "a lot less professional."

Table 7.5

Relationships Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

Relationships: How are words or grammatical devices used to build and sustain or change relationships of various sorts among the speaker, other people, social groups, and/or institutions? (Gee, 2014b)
And they [kindergarten teachers] look down on us too! (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
We [kindergarten teachers] were seen, in early childhood, as being teachers and professionals whereas childcare workers were called *workers*. The whole tone of that and the fact that they worked with unqualified teachers and such … seemed a lot less professional. (Gladis, owner/manager, private)

Situated-Meanings Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

The situated-meaning tool (Table 7.6) draws into the analysis an awareness of the contexts in which language is produced, which are often assumed by speakers but provide further meaning to words and phrases. The historical and contemporary contexts of kindergarten shaped participants' discussion and provide a context through which many of the comments can be better understood. Kindergarten teachers' pay and work conditions are a result of collective action and high participation in the kindergarten union. They are also the result of policies that focused on pay parity for kindergarten teachers (with primary teachers) with unfulfilled promises that the rest of the sector would follow. At the time that data was being collected, one of the kindergarten associations was in the midst of a controversial review of its kindergarten network and was signalling significant changes to the weeks and hours offered and fees charged; distinctive features of the traditional kindergarten service. The changing

landscape of kindergarten was a topic of discussion within the focus groups and individual interviews of centre leaders. Many of the participants' comments about kindergarten are understood in the context of these changes, for example, references to the "money end of the business" were probably made assuming that other teachers in the focus group know that kindergarten is a community-based (not-for-profit) organisation.

Table 7.6

Situated-Meanings Tool: Kindergarten Teachers

Situated meaning: What specific meanings need to be attributed to the words and phrases given the context and how the context is construed? (Gee, 2014b)
Talking about kindergarten and big business … it's not big business, because it's not. But talking kindergarten and management because we currently going through a lot of changes with the [name of association] I think the board is relying on the fact that teachers have the heart and will stay and do the mahi [work] and not necessarily agree with what is happening at the money end of the business but they will stay and do what needs to be done. Oh, they are banking on teachers still having the heart to stay. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
And they [kindergarten] try to do this dance between kindergarten and … you know in terms of practice, they are actually, they are early learning centres. It's long days, children need to get sleeps, it is long day care. It gets messy. (Tahlia, teacher, private)
I'm not a kindy person but I'm really unhappy about what's happening … I think they're killing them and it's really sad … it's really heart breaking that they are being pushed into a childcare model and it's not what they're about. (Barb, owner/manager, private)
There is a growing perception out there now that [kindergarten association] is about money. (Nicole, teacher/head teacher, community based)

Discussion: Constructing The Kindergarten Teacher

Kindergartens were consistently perceived across the participant groups as "quality centres ... sitting at the top of the hierarchy" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten), as places where "the most authentic learning is happening" (Georgia, owner/teacher, private) and as "better professionally" (Christie, teacher, kindergarten) than other ECEC services. Positioning kindergarten as different to other EC services created a space for kindergarten teachers to claim a unique identity, summed up in the chapter's headline quote from Tom. For Tom (teacher, kindergarten), and other participants, the designation of *kindergarten teacher* evokes distinct images and discourses. Tom alludes to the idea that kindergarten teachers are afforded a unique and privileged status in the sector, a perception that was widely shared across the participant groups. Christie (head teacher, kindergarten) notes that, "there is esteem for the role of the teacher in kindergarten that day-care doesn't have." Marama (teacher, private) believes that kindergartens "only took the best teachers," a statement mirrored by Nicole's (head teacher, community based) belief that kindergartens maintain "the highest standard of

teaching." Aadilia (teacher, community based) perceives a hierarchy in the sector with "kindergartens being the highest and the rest being just nowhere." When I follow up her comment by asking the focus group if they feel that means kindergarten teachers are afforded more status, Aadilia replies passionately, "Yes! Yes! Definitely! And they look down on us as well!" Participants' conversations about kindergarten and kindergarten teachers reveal a discourse constituted through the history, politics, practices, relationships, and identities of kindergarten that were used to position themselves and each other in the sector; sometimes with exclusionary effect.

Qualifications

The situated-meanings and politics tools contribute to illuminating how the historical and sociopolitical positioning of kindergarten and childcare contribute to the ways in which teachers negotiate their identities. Historically, kindergartens have been positioned as the "flagship" ECEC service because of the recognition and support they have received from the government (Duncan, 2007; May, 2019). As outlined in Chapter 1, kindergarten's distinct history is grounded in both philanthropic and educational discourse. Duncan (2007) notes that traditional kindergarten culture has been to maintain an accessible and high-quality ECEC service. A long-standing commitment to qualified teachers continues to be a key element of this and provides a foundation for many of the claims about kindergarten and kindergarten teachers made by participants; clearly illustrated in the comments of Gladis, an ex-kindergarten teacher who now owns her own centre:

> We [kindergarten teachers] were seen in early childhood as being teachers and professionals whereas childcare workers were called childcare workers. The whole tone of that and the fact that they worked with unqualified teachers and such ... seemed a lot less professional.

Qualifications have been a key policy strategy for professionalising the sector. It is not surprising that professional privilege is claimed by teachers with qualifications; however, teacher participants' comments show that qualifications alone do not provide the basis of a secure sense of professional identity. While kindergarten has maintained its commitment to qualified teachers, others parts of the sector, subject to their own historical legacies and hampered by wavering policy commitments to a fully qualified sector, have not. This has contributed to participants' perceptions about kindergarten teachers. Participants frequently refer to a "division" between kindergarten teachers and other teachers. Gladis recalls that the

intention of the *Pathways,* for all teachers to be qualified, promised to reduce the division between kindergarten and childcare but that "nowadays, that division is getting deeper again. Kindergarten is going one way and early childhood education has been going the other way again because ... at least in kindergarten they are still 100% qualified." Laverne (manager, community based) also identifies a "division between us [teachers in ECEC centres] and … kindergarten teachers" based on wavering commitments to qualifications in policy and in ECEC centres saying, "If we don't keep pushing for qualified teachers then we become [seen as] unqualified again." As discussed in Chapter 5, the value of qualifications is not always recognised by ECEC centre owners and managers, especially when they draw on maternal discourse. It is notable that all of the teachers in the focus groups, regardless of service type, work in centres committed to employing qualified teachers. However, the possibility of working alongside unqualified teachers without clear differentiation between their responsibilities undermines the importance of their qualifications. The insecurity this causes is reflected in Laverne's statement above and possibly contributes to Aadilia's comment that kindergarten teachers "look down on" other teachers.

Unqualified adults are present in kindergarten as teacher-aides. However, these staff members are not normally designated as teachers. Instead, their work and responsibilities are clearly differentiated. The clear distinction between unqualified teacher-aides and qualified teachers is unique to kindergarten and is highlighted by several participants who outline the division of labour and differences in status. Christie (head teacher, kindergarten) talks about how she has "a teaching assistant who does the paint pots and little cleaning jobs" leaving her space to dedicate herself "to the children and to the documentation." Barb perceives the division in labour to be inequitable, believing that teacher-aides are treated as "dogsbodies" and "differently to an actual qualified teacher." In both examples, the identities of kindergarten teachers are construed through particular social goods (qualifications) and discursive practices. These include valuing the relational aspects of ECEC work such as "being with children," and professional tasks such as "documentation" but exclude the more menial tasks that are part of the territory of ECEC, such as "washing paint points." As Tom (teacher, kindergarten) points out, his work as a kindergarten teacher is "about education and not changing nappies." These clear demarcations demonstrate the ways that identities are negotiated within the power relations that circulate across the sector and within each context. The effect is exclusionary, not just for the unqualified teacher-aides within the context of kindergarten (who in another

context could claim an identity as teachers), but also for qualified teachers in other parts of sector for whom custodial care, cleaning and tidying, are a part of the daily reality of working with young children. The negative effect on status and identities when some aspects of teaching work are valued and others are marginalised is reflected in Christie's comment, "At daycare ... everybody is the dogsbody."

Education Not Care?

Gee's (2014a) practices tool focuses on an examination of the kinds of practices that are privileged, and come to govern, in this instance, how to be a kindergarten teacher. The tool can also expose what kinds of practices are marginalised, excluded from being counted as valuable work in kindergarten. Participants consistently associated kindergarten teaching with a focus on educational and learning goals, and with "*just* teaching" (Josie, owner/manager, private). Esther (manager/teacher, community based) notes that a "good kindergarten teacher is probably concerned with learning outcomes" while Tom (teacher, kindergarten) tries to "push as much of my day into education as I can." Christie identifies "professional conversations, reflections, and researching and implementing new ideas" as key practices in her kindergarten work. The focus on these practices is supported by the organisation arrangements of kindergarten, and aligns with constructions of professionalism and quality in policy. The CDA presented in this chapter illuminates the valued practices of kindergarten, revealing that these are also subject to discourses of professionalism in policy including elevating educational priorities in teaching work. These are reinforced through the historical discourses of kindergarten that have also prioritised educational imperatives and commitments to qualified teachers. The intersection of history and policy contribute to the ways in which kindergarten teachers can position themselves in the sector.

The exclusion of care practices from kindergarten reinforces differences and, as participants have pointed out above, divisions between teachers in different parts of the sector. This is vividly illustrated by Tom's (teacher, kindergarten) assertion that families choose kindergarten because "they have made themselves known for what they do" and are "at the top of the hierarchy." Tom attributes this perception to the idea that "kindergarten[s] … are generally not about care. They are about education." The invisibility of care work as a part of the discourse of kindergarten is reflected in comments by centre owners and managers as they navigate the differences in perception between their services and kindergarten. For example, Josie relays the following experience with one of the families at her centre:

> When they [children] turn 3, she [a parent at the centre] takes them out and takes them to kindy and I'm like, "Do you not realise that my teachers are qualified the same as *those* teachers and we teach the *same* curriculum?" The only thing I can think of is that down there [at kindergarten] they're not providing care. They are not sleeping and they're not feeding them, they're not changing nappies ... so then they [parents] have this impression that ... it's *just* teaching whereas we aren't *just* teaching. (Josie, owner/manager, private)

Paula (manager, private) shares similar frustration that parents transition their children to kindergarten at a certain age "because they want them to learn" noting, "that is how it always was historically" and that many parents still think of kindergarten as "for their education" and childcare as "just care." Some participants are disdainful of the care practices and routines that are highly visible in their own work when they compare themselves to kindergarten teachers. Being able to claim an educational focus is seen as a privilege, rather than an issue related to the undervaluing of care. Others, such as Aadilia, do contest the undervaluing of care routines in the kindergarten context, claiming that "kindergarten teachers don't know" that "nappies are a wonderful time to connect." Aadilia recognises the importance of these routines to children's wellbeing and, by implication, desires a stronger valuing of these practices in her own work and in the context of kindergarten.

Pay and Work Conditions

The politics tool also highlights how things such as qualifications and the material conditions of work in kindergarten contribute to perceptions about kindergarten teachers. Pay parity, noncontact time, holidays and support for professional development were identified across the participant groups as significant social goods associated with being a kindergarten teacher. Aadilia (teacher, community based) enviously points out that kindergarten teachers "get pay parity and everything ... holidays and they just get everything." Laverne (manager, community based) sounds envious when she portrays kindergarten teachers' work conditions as "cushy" because of their "holidays and hours." Christie contrasts her work conditions in a private ECEC setting with her recent experiences in kindergarten. She points to the "professional time for teachers to work together and to plan, and to discuss and to unpack" noting that "you just can't do that in half an hour a month after the general business at a daycare meeting."

In kindergarten, the work conditions and pay have been hard won through ongoing collective negotiations. Kamenarac (2019) writes that political action through their union has been an

aspect of traditional kindergarten culture that continues to impact on the identities of teachers there. In this research, the outcomes of collective action contribute to perceptions that kindergarten teachers are better recognised and valued. However, it is also possible that commitment to collective action is becoming less important to some kindergarten teachers. Participation in collective action and advocacy for their profession are not identified as important practices or values that contribute to the identities of kindergarten teachers such as Tom, Christie, and Nicole (an ex-kindergarten teacher). These teachers all qualified in the 2000s around the time that *Pathways*, a policy embedded in neoliberal discourse and strongly focused on professionalisation, was significantly impacting the sector. The kindergarten teachers in both Duncan (2004, 2007) and Kamenarac's (2019) research were experienced kindergarten teachers, entrenched in traditional kindergarten culture and with a longer history in the sector. Traditional kindergarten culture, as identified by scholars such as Duncan (2004, 2007) and more recently Kamenarac (2019) is shifting possibly as traditional kindergarten teachers retire. The shifting discourse of kindergarten, as it adapts to an increasingly competitive private sector, and the impact of this on teacher identities, are examined in more detail later in the chapter.

Who Gets to be a Kindergarten Teacher?

Another way that kindergarten teacher identities are constructed across the transcripts is by evoking images of typical kindergarten teachers as Pākehā and university educated. The identities tool is useful in illuminating some of the embedded ideas about who a kindergarten teacher is. A number of assumptions (and biases) are revealed during a conversation in Focus Group 1 which explored who could become a kindergarten teacher, and who might be excluded and why. Both Tom (teacher, kindergarten) and Aadilia (teacher, community based) agree that university teaching qualifications are held in higher regard by the kindergarten associations than degrees from polytechnics or private providers. Tom notes that many of his classmates at a polytechnic "were so scared" to apply for a kindergarten job because there was a shared perception that "that only the ones from university got in." Kindergarten associations "only took the best teachers" and "are not taking on polytechnic students" (Tom, teacher, community based). The basis for such assumptions can be located in this history of the sector. Early in the history of kindergarten, kindergarten teachers undertook a 2-year qualification in separate kindergarten colleges. These were integrated in the state Teachers' Colleges in the 1970s which eventually amalgamated with universities (May, 2019). The implementation of 3-

year training to bring kindergarten training into line with primary training followed, meaning kindergarten qualifications have a historical association with universities. Kindergarten and childcare training became one qualification in the 1980s and the demand was picked up by polytechnics and private providers who saw an opportunity in the push to qualify the sector, including the many individuals who had been working in childcare for a long time without qualifications.

Aadilia (teacher, community based) feels exclusions occur on the basis of ethnicity. She comments, “I have never even tried to get in ... I felt like I would not be accepted ... they are biased I felt ... they already have a teacher in mind.” Although Aadilia does not mention ethnicity explicitly, Georgia (owner/teacher, private), an ex-kindergarten teacher, responds to her by agreeing that, “Many teachers feel their profile doesn’t fit ... predominately the teachers [at kindergarten] are Pākehā ... and the culture of kindergarten is a lot of white faces.” The image of kindergarten teachers as predominantly Pākehā occurs in Christie’s (head teacher, kindergarten) interview when she draws on ethnicity as she tries to explain the higher status of kindergarten, saying “maybe it’s to do with the teachers because look at the [name of kindergarten association] … it’s all middle-aged white ladies … everyone is European.” Christie contrasts her experience of kindergarten as “a very white place” with other services saying “you go to some daycares … one of my practicum placements there were seven Indian teachers there.” Christies suggests that when parents “see the accent” and the care practices like “wiping noses” they make negative assumptions. Drawing on markers of difference, including ethnicity and accent, and connecting these with undervalued practices, Christie’s comments are problematic and exclusionary. Christie goes onto propose that “the perception of quality is to do with what teachers look like, and sound like as well … I do wonder if that is part of the reason why kindy is esteemed.”

The image of kindergarten teachers as predominantly Pākehā reflects a reality in the sector overall. In teacher-led ECEC services, 65% of teaching staff identify as European/Pākehā (Education Counts, 2019c). However, these images also echo the historical legacy of kindergarten as a suitable career choice for middle-class girls before marriage (May, 2019) and are part of the discourse of kindergarten for some participants. Christie’s comments make for uncomfortable reading. They demonstrate the ways in which privilege and status are constructed across locations in a diverse sector, as well as the ways that teachers take up various positionings to understand themselves and their place in the sector. Discourses

function by asserting particular ways of being (identities) as the norm, claimed partially in a relation of difference, resulting in the capacity to include and exclude others (Gee, 2018). Kindergarten teachers are repeatedly positioned through their differences to other teachers. Here, status is afforded (or diminished) based on differences such as ethnicity, accent and education. The complex and political nature of identity construction is brought to the fore in Christie's comment. It reveals the ways that teachers navigate their understandings of themselves through a complex web of societal power relations that materialise at an institutional and personal level through ideas about valued practices, ethnicities and educational capital (university qualifications). Weedon (1997, 2004) and Butler (2005) also write about issues of inclusion, exclusion and power within discourse, although from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. Explorations of their work on power, discourse and identity and how these align to the structural perspectives of CDA presented by Gee are possibilities for further exploration following on from this thesis.

These same power relations are further examined in the next chapter in the context of the private sector. They are used strategically in both contexts to construct identities and to exclude. The exclusionary effect for Aadilia and others resulted in feelings of inferiority and professional insecurity. Reflecting on these conversations in the focus groups, Tom (teacher, kindergarten) admits he finds the idea that kindergarten teachers have "an elitist image" to be "prickly." However, it may be in the interest of kindergarten teachers to continue to distinguish themselves from other teachers in order to maintain their integrity and status. There is certainly evidence that Tom and Christie both resist and perpetuate the differences; and, both clearly position themselves as kindergarten teachers. Previous research on kindergarten teachers argues that they felt "misplaced in their service and overtaken in their work" by policy reforms in the 1980s and beyond (Duncan, 2004, p. 172). These aimed for greater equity in funding and status across the sector, but occurred at a cost to kindergarten standards and had impacts on kindergarten teachers' subjectivities. Continuing to reiterate aspects of the historical discourse of kindergarten and taking up the discursive practices of professional discourse in policy, kindergarten teachers can maintain an integrity that is lacking in other parts of the sector which are more deeply implicated by discourses of care, consumer choice and competition. (Issues that are explored in the next chapter.)

Challenging issues surface in the teachers' discussions. Osgood (2012) and Andrew (2015a) address issues of gender, class and ethnicity in their work about ECEC teachers. While issues of

gender are well rehearsed in the literature, Andrew (2015a) points to a “habitual silence” (p. 307) in the literature in addressing aspects of class and ethnicity. Osgood (2014) argues that such issues should not be ignored because teacher identities are shaped by “subjective, lifelong experiences of class, gender, ‘race’ and so on” (p.111). Andrew (2015a) claims that so far attempts to professionalise the sector have misunderstood “historical schemes of value that operate to classify some sorts of people as less valuable than others, whatever the work they do” (p. 307). The findings of this chapter support such a claim. Kindergarten teachers and other ECEC teachers are not distinguished from each other in policy, and often have equivalent qualifications and expectations of professional practice, and yet, as we see here, they can be positioned in inequitable ways. This chapter (and the following) attempts to engage with such issues, by illuminating the ways in which discourses and their resultant discursive practices work to constrain how professional status is afforded and who can claim it. Such conversations are challenging, especially in a sector whose practices are shaped by democratic discourses and commitments to equity.

The participants in the research are clear that kindergarten teachers can claim a status that is not as readily available to other ECEC teachers. The inequity of this is acknowledged by participants, even though some benefit from the recognition afforded to kindergarten. Other participants feel resentful of the gap between kindergarten teachers and other teachers, and excluded. Andrew and Newman (2012) argue that discussions about teacher status tend to occur within two separate discourses. The most dominant of these links quality to professionalism. In this discourse, improving the status of teachers is linked to qualification levels and further regulation of quality practices. Such a discourse was strongly identified in the policy analysis presented in Chapter 4. The current chapter illustrates how kindergarten teachers have been better able to capitalise on these policy directions because of alignments with the historical discourses of kindergarten. A subordinate discourse in relation to status includes consideration of pay and work conditions (Andrew & Newman, 2012). The two discourses sometimes intersect through research and commentary which focuses on pay and work conditions as indicators of quality. It is assumed that increased qualifications and professional practices will lead to increased status and then to improved work conditions and pay. Such an assumption is visible in *Agenda*, which states the ECE Taskforce’s (2011) vision for “a well-paid, well qualified, and highly respected early childhood education profession” (p. 150) achieved by focusing on teacher education and improving professional development. However,

Andrew (2015b) disputes this logic, suggesting that those who are well paid and valued will more likely have the energy and desire to provide high-quality ECEC services. It is evident from these findings that qualifications, professional practices, pay and work conditions are *all* important to perceptions of status and professionalism of kindergarten teachers. Such findings suggest that further attention should be paid to the subordinate discourse of pay and work conditions in policy conversations about quality and equity across the sector.

Overall, these findings show that there is still a “deep and clear fault line” between kindergarten and other teacher-led ECEC services, and reveal a bifurcated workforce (Moss, 2006, p. 31). Currently, the fault line between the two workforces is not recognised in policy and therefore the political effects, in terms of the kind of identities teachers can claim through status, work conditions and pay, are largely silenced in policy solutions. Issues with a bifurcated workforce in ECEC have been a focus of the international literature, but have not been well attended to in the scholarship from this country. In 2006, Moss wrote about a deeply embedded conceptual and structural divide between childcare for working parents and preschool for children over 3, resulting in not only different workforces but strikingly different material conditions and status between the two. At that time, Moss (2006) pointed to Aotearoa as an example of how this fault line might be addressed, applauding the move to integrate the care and education sectors and the commitment to an integrated qualification system. Even though, in policy, the conceptual divide between kindergarten and childcare has been resolved, the findings of this research suggest that the divide has merely been papered over, and is still deeply experienced by teachers in both settings. The next section examines participant narratives that address the changing nature of the kindergarten service and kindergarten teacher identities by focusing on kindergarten’s location in a competitive and market-based arena.

A Constant Evolution. Changes to Discourse and Identities in Kindergarten.

This section discusses the contingent nature of professional identities for kindergarten teachers in a service responding and adapting to a competitive marketplace. The kindergarten service has been impacted by neoliberal government policy since the late 1980s (Scrivens, 2000). Several scholars have examined how a rapidly changing policy environment has encroached on the traditional values and practices of kindergarten, and how kindergarten teachers have variously resisted and adapted to these changes (Duncan, 2004; Scrivens, 2000). At the time the focus groups were taking place, kindergarten services were again in the throes of change.

To provide some context to the participant comments below, one particular kindergarten association was in the midst of a controversial review of its structure. While the traditional kindergarten model was sessional (split between mornings and afternoons) and term-based, many kindergartens had already moved to offer school-based hours and a new proposal would see them open for an hour longer each day and during the school holidays. The suggestion to remove voluntary donations for families and to charge hourly fees was particularly controversial because it challenged the long-standing tradition of free kindergarten. The proposed changes were framed in a series of letters to families as a necessary evolution in order to fit with economic and social changes and to adapt to an increasingly competitive and fast-changing landscape. The review was controversial, garnering plenty of media attention, driven by a small but vocal body of parents (supported by teachers) resistant to the changes (Martin, 2017). Resistance centred around the perception that the traditional kindergarten model as a choice for families was becoming childcare by stealth and that extended opening times would erode work conditions for teachers (O'Callaghan, 2017), all leading to a loss of the factors that have been identified here as contributing significantly to the professional recognition of kindergarten teachers. Data collection for this project occurred in the middle of the review and before the kindergarten board eventually resolved to halt the changes. Participants were not asked directly about the changes to the kindergarten service. However, the subject frequently came up as differences across the sector were discussed. The proposed changes were interpreted by almost all participants as the kindergarten service moving to becoming "like a private" (Tahlia, teacher, private) and were widely perceived to be detrimental to the traditional values and identity of kindergarten.

Christie, a head teacher new to the kindergarten service, frequently compares her experiences at a large for-profit private service and with those at kindergarten. She feels that for-profit models put "pressure on teachers to be more worried about money than they are about quality" and adds that "kindy is obviously becoming susceptible to this too." Christie notes that the kindergarten collective contract offered teachers conditions "which can give a positive return to children in the sense that teachers are well cared for" but feels uncertain about how these conditions would be maintained with the changes, "I now question whether the differences will be so stark between daycare and kindergarten." Christie's comments suggest that she is sceptical of the changes proposed in the review; however, she also demonstrates a restricted agency to speak out against them, seeing this as disloyal to the kindergarten

association saying “as a spokesperson for the kindergarten and our company as a whole, you are not allowed to go and tell people that you disagree … You are a spokesperson and you put that image forward.” Christie contrasts her understanding of her professional responsibilities with another (more experienced) teacher at the kindergarten who was discussing the changes with parents and advocating her point of view. Christie describes her colleague as “a unionist … my mother’s age” and strongly disagrees with her approach saying, “I had to pull her aside … and say, ‘Professionally, your opinion is not welcome.’”

Previously, kindergarten teachers had a strong collective voice, advocating for work conditions and recognition through their union. Kamenarac (2019) suggests that an advocate-activist identity has historically been important for kindergarten teachers and continues to shape their work. While Christie acknowledges that the collective contract contributes positively to her work, she identifies that union values, including collective advocacy, are out of step (and perhaps considered out of date) with her own understandings of professionalism. These appear to be informed by entrepreneurial and managerial discourse which emphasises company loyalty and competes with ideas about advocacy for the profession (Sims & Waniganayake, 2015; Stuart, 2018). Her framing of the kindergarten association as “our company” signals a possible new identity for kindergarten teachers who, experiencing their entire careers in a sector entrenched in neoliberal discourse, are increasingly distant from the history of activism and advocacy in the kindergarten service.

Gee (2018) emphasises the contingent and fluid nature of identities which change over time as groups change their values and norms and are influenced by different discourses. As teachers are shaped by, but also contribute to, the discourses that circulate in the sector, new possibilities for identities emerge. In Christie’s case, managerial and market-based discourse has travelled through kindergarten leadership at an association level, but also with Christie herself as she negotiates her identity across a number of contexts.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has highlighted a distinct identity for kindergarten teachers constructed through the history and politics of the service, its positioning in the sector, and the priorities and practices identified by participants as important to the kindergarten context. The bifurcation of care and education is evident in participants’ perceptions of kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers’ qualifications, pay and work conditions all contribute to a widely shared perception

that kindergarten teachers are afforded more recognition and status. This chapter reveals exclusions based on perceptions that kindergarten teachers are usually Pākehā and university educated. The findings also demonstrate that the traditional discourses and identities of kindergarten may be changing as kindergarten leadership introduces increasing managerial and competitive discourses into organisational changes, and a new generation of teachers with a lifetime of entrenchment in neoliberal discourse move into the service. While this chapter has examined the identities in the context of kindergarten, the chapter that follows traces the impact for those on the other side of the divide, for whom the effects of neoliberal discourse have been even more pernicious.

Chapter 8. Teacher Identities in the Private Sector

You just feel squished, and your mana is trampled all over, and you are just a "yes Ma'am" kind of a person. (Sian, teacher, private)

I have an interest in it [the business] doing well, but I am still an employee of the business and my role as an employee is to develop the business. (Mandy, manager, private)

Lots of immigrants in those [private centres]. Lots of immigrants. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)

Introduction

Teachers in the private sector negotiate their identities in an uneven work terrain. Participant experiences in private ECEC centres revealed a continuum from centres which are entirely profit-driven and "only concerned with the bottom line" (Georgia, owner/teacher, private), to being understood as both businesses and "communities of learning" (Gladis, owner/manager, private). The Compliant Employee and The Entrepreneur are two key identities revealed in the findings from this chapter. In some profit-driven and "factory-like" centres (Aadilia, teacher, community based), teachers felt their positioning as "workers" painfully—pointing to the impact of managerial practices that dominate the work, poor work conditions and consumer/provider relationships. In these environments, teachers talked about being "commodities" (Georgia, owner/teacher, private) within an ECEC business where expectations of compliance position them as "Yes Ma'am" (Sian, teacher, private) kinds of people. In other contexts, participants reported that a centre commitment to particular philosophies and pedagogies, and to supportive work conditions, enabled teachers to take up identities that were more empowering and complex. As Sian suggests (teacher, private) "it is all so dependent on who you work for, and that impacts on the kind of teacher you are." Aware of their different positioning across ECEC centres, teachers enact highly individualised and limited forms of agency by making strategic decisions about where they work. Leveraging qualifications, experiences and professional knowledge, teachers "look out for themselves" (Mandy, manager, owner), becoming entrepreneurs of their own teaching careers. Opportunities for collective advocacy are limited as teachers are compelled to differentiate between each other. The result is a "pecking order" of teachers in which differences such as ethnicity, language, socioeconomic

status and qualifications are brought to the fore. In this chapter, the tactical and individualistic nature of identity negotiations, which occur in a competitive and uneven landscape, as a series of inclusions and exclusions, are revealed.

Findings and Analysis

The findings in this chapter are mostly drawn from the focus groups with ECEC teachers and from the individual interviews with centre leaders. Interviews with TEs are also drawn on. A full description of the participant groups is included in Chapter 3 (pp. 46, 49, and 51). All participants, including centre managers and owners, are qualified teachers. Teachers and centre leaders are located in a range of different ECEC settings including kindergartens, privately owned ECEC centres and community-based (not-for-profit) centres. While all of the teacher participants have worked in the private sector at some point in their careers, four have only ever been employed in private ECEC centres. Four participants from the individual interviews are private centre owners and three are managers in private centres. Participants drew on their experiences across different parts of the sector during the focus groups and interviews. Their reflections about their experiences in different contexts contribute to rich and sometimes contentious statements about perceived differences between services and teachers across the sector. The findings that comprise this chapter were coded under the node headings: private centres, privatisation, corporate ECEC, work conditions, childcare workers, impact of competition, care work, factory work. The identities, practices, politics, relationships, sign-systems and knowledge, and intertextuality and assumption tools identify key findings in this chapter.

Identities Tool: Private Sector Teachers

The identities tool focuses on how teacher identities in the private sector are constructed in participants' discussions. The first set of statements (Table 8.1) are illustrative of how managers and teachers in ECEC businesses are positioned (and identify themselves) as employees of the business. For some participants, such as Mandy (manager, private), this positioning was congruent with her priority to do well for the business but for others, such as Paula (manager, private), the positioning as an employee exists alongside (and in tension with) her identity as a teacher with conflicting priorities that pull her in different directions. Jolene (TE) raises the possibility that sometimes these two roles (employee and teacher) are conflated, and the boundaries between the two can become blurred so that in some contexts doing well for the business becomes an important measure of professionalism. In the next set

of statements, participants highlight managerial practices and discourses to portray images of compliant employees with little autonomy or professional voice. The final set of statements focuses on differences in ethnicity, language, dress, accent and socioeconomic status. In many participant statements, these differences were connected to a lack of autonomy and status. The effect is exclusionary with some groups of teachers being positioned as less professional, with less recognition and status. Themes from Chapter 7 are again evident here as Christie raises the differences between the identities of teachers in kindergarten and private childcare.

Table 8.1

Identities Tool: Private Sector Teachers

Identities: What socially recognisable identity (or identities) is the speaker trying to enact or to get others to recognise? How does the speaker's language treat other people's identities? What sorts of identities does the speaker recognise for others in relationship to his or her own? How is the speaker positioning others? (Gee, 2014b)
Employees of an ECEC business
I have an interest in it [the business] doing well, but I am still an employee of the business and my role as an employee is to develop the business. (Mandy, manager, private)
Or do they conflate those two things? [Loyalty to the profession and loyalty to the business] And I think sometimes they do. They [teachers] actually see the provider [their employer] as early childhood as a whole, and I do think there is definitely a feeling that you don't question your employer … and that has bewildered me at times. (Jolene, TE)
Split identities: Business manager and advocate
So, my loyalty is kind of split I guess because I want it to work for them [the centre owners] but then, again, I also want to make sure that our families and the teachers are being looked after and given the best, which financially is not always easy. (Paula, manager, private)
Managers and teachers as compliant employees—lack autonomy
And to some extent, managers' hands are tied by the corporation's rules and policies, about what they can and can't do. There is very little autonomy ... The centres I have worked in where there was a centre manager and then a head office ... the centre manager had so little power to do anything ... They always had to refer back to someone higher above them who doesn't know the family, doesn't know the child ... so the answer is going to be no a lot of time. (Barb, owner/manager, private)
It was a franchise and it was one of those centres where there are the exact same rules for all the centres regardless ... I didn't really feel like management had any trust [in teachers] to do anything themselves. They were just to do as they were told ... all of a sudden, I had to keep my voice calm and quiet and I wasn't allowed to question [the] things she asked me to do, and you just feel squished, and your mana is trampled all over, and you are just a "yes Ma'am" kind of person. (Sian, teacher, private)
I think that we will find in a lot of big businesses, it's about having kaiako that are there rather than kaiako that are great. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
Constructions of difference in the private sector—culturally and linguistically diverse teachers
On one of my practicum placements [in] the whole 2-year-old room there were seven Indian teachers ... So, I wonder, if some of the perception of quality [in kindergarten] is to do with what the teachers look like and what they sound like as well … people come in and they see the accent and they see them wiping their [children's] noses and doing these kinds of roles. I do wonder if that is part of the reason why kindy is esteemed, is that they look and see that they are white middle-aged ladies that are generally well dressed. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)

Practices Tool: Private Sector Teachers

The practices tool focuses on the socially and institutionally normalised practices communicated as being important to claiming an identity. The analysis focuses on what these practices are in private ECEC and how these constitute ways of doing teaching and being a teacher in these settings. The first set of responses (Table 8.2) reflects the dual practices that were commonly identified as governing work in the private sector: “making money” and “providing quality.” Use of words and phrases such as “however” and “we still *try*” (in Josie’s comment) reveal the tension between the two priorities. The ordering of priorities here may also suggest a hierarchy: making money often precedes providing quality in participant statements. For example, Paula’s use of the phrase “*and then* look after teachers” suggests that meeting ministry priorities and balancing books come first. A business focus introduces new roles and practices for centre owners, managers and, in turn, new relationships for teachers. These include finding ways to market the centre, compete with other centres, and build the centre brand. Teacher participants sometimes perceive that the priority to attract parent customers and make money leads to a focus on the aspects of ECEC that are visible to parents, such as centre entrance ways and signage but ultimately mislead parents who are unable to see the lack of resources and poor work conditions for teachers. The next set of statements highlights managerial practices that dominate in some private centres including hierarchies of decision making, a focus on economic efficiency and accountability practices and limited teacher autonomy.

Table 8.2

Practices Tool: Private Sector Teachers

Practices: What practices is the communication building as being important? What social groups or institutions support and norm these? (Gee, 2014b)
Making money and providing quality as competing practices
Because we are private, at the end of the day we are a business, we are trying to make money; however, we still try and provide quality. (Josie, owner/manager, private)
A lot of centres are being owned by corporations who are worried about the bottom line more than anything else, ... It’s a lot more about making money than about providing quality care. (Barb, owner/manager, private)
I think from a management perspective it’s hard because we’re in that balancing position of trying to meet the ministry requirements and trying to balance the books and then look after our teachers, and the families and the children. I think that’s the biggest issue that we face. (Paula, manager, private)
Branding and marketing as practices
It’s an image that you project, so I think this is what we took into consideration here as well and to the owners as well, it’s funny because when we opened everyone was dressed up and they had nice black tunics and beautiful scarves as well and we looked like a flight crew [laughs] but it’s very comfortable as well but also teachers feel proud to wear it. (Anna, manager, private)

Pursuit of profit—misleading parent consumers and constraining teachers

> Just the private centres ... making everything else seem pretty and perfect but ... they really want to give the basic minimum ... not really looking at it [teaching work] like a profession but just like caretaking. But parents don't really know so they don't mind. They just see the neatness and cleanliness, like a show ... and they don't mind. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)
>
> The least authentic learning is happening in these centres that are run for profit … or are ... showcase. They are all a facade and there is nothing really inside. (Georgia, owner/teacher, private)

Managerial practices

> She's [the centre manager] reporting to two different managers and then they're reporting above them ... then she had to make sure all her team leaders were ticking all the forms and doing all these forms, and they had to make sure their teachers do it so it [she] became someone who would oblige. (Josie, owner/manager, private)
>
> My experience was the communication breakdown ... where it doesn't seem to be working because of the owners, [decision making is] top-down. There is not a pathway for [teachers to say] what needs to happen ... It's disheartening to see broken teachers. (Tahlia, teacher, private)
>
> Teachers were actually, expected to do everything. The cleaning, bathrooms and toilets, and vacuuming. So, children were herded into one corner and then [a teacher did the] vacuuming and then another corner. Actually, I didn't like it and I left after a month but I used to have 15 toddlers in the sandpit, just me, while the other teacher was inside doing the vacuuming and then after 3 o'clock that area was shut off, and then the nappy changes were just one after the other. Bring the child, change, back out. Bring the child. Like a factory ... And also, I was told not to use any more wipes to wipe the bottoms. Rather, just use three wipes maximum ... I was questioned, "Why am I using more?" ... Every little bit can be squeezed out. (Aadilia, teacher, community based.

Politics Tool: Private Sector Identities

The politics tool (Table 8.3) looks at how language is used to build, distribute or withdraw social goods. Gee (2014a) considers social goods to be anything someone considers worth having. In this research, recognition and status were commonly discussed social goods. Parent choice is another social good, frequently identified in policy and by participants, which comes to shape teachers' experiences in the sector. For some participants, parental choice is considered an important measure of quality and professional success, based on assumptions that parents will demand and purchase the right kind of care and education for their children. Sometimes, parental choice is valued to the point that it discounts other measures and voices such as teachers' pedagogical expertise. For others, competition between centres is understood to be disruptive and detrimental to quality and to teachers' work. Work conditions, a social good identified as important by many participants, are felt to be unequal and inequitable as a result of competition in the sector. Competition between ECEC centres means that teachers frequently feel regarded as commodities of the business. The negative impact of this positioning on their feelings of professionalism, practice and work conditions is significant. The next set of statements highlights how teachers are expected to pursue employment opportunities that best suit their needs and are blamed when work conditions or relationships in centres do not work out. In these statements there is an embedded assumption that

successful ECEC careers emerge out of highly individualised negotiation in each ECEC context. In the final set of statements university qualifications and commitments to particular philosophical approaches are considered social goods that teachers can leverage to negotiate better employment opportunities for themselves. The perception that university qualifications are somehow more desirable or recognised than equivalent qualifications from other institutions was also raised in Chapter 7.

Table 8.3

Politics Tool: Private Sector Identities

Politics tool: How are words being used to build (construct, assume) what counts as a social good? How does the speaker withhold or distribute social goods to others? How does the speaker build a viewpoint about how social goods are held or distributed? (Gee, 2014b)
Market forces/choice/competition—as creating good ECEC
It is so easy to say if you are making money [then] it must be bad ... if you are making money you want to be *damn* sure it is good because your parents are your customers ... private providers have an interest in making sure they are good so they have bums on seats and are making money. (Mandy, manager, private)
We've always said if we do it right the money will flow that was our philosophy from Day 1 ... If we do the right things the money will flow. We've got to feel good about what we do. That's really important. (Barb, owner/manager, private)
Competition as disrupting quality
The way that centres operate in competition with each other. Totally disruptive. And the way that centre mangers, well not just centre managers but the whole kind of corporate juggernaut, treats teachers to, you know, in relation to their knowledge and their sharing of knowledge. (Kelly, TE)
I'm concerned about the amount of money that can be made in early childhood [and] whether it is ethical or not. And if your focus is on making money rather than giving your best that you can for children, and teachers, and whanau. I think that is a problem. (Laverne, manager, community based)
We've just had another one [ECEC centre] open a month ago, there's now nine in [name of area] which is ridiculous and nobody is full, and so then that puts the pressure on the owners to cut costs because they're trying to get kids in so they're doing all these things to try and get them in, they're offering cheaper fees, they're doing things to bring them in, and then they can't afford to have lower numbers, it's just this big steamroller thing and I think that early childhood has been slowly degraded over the years it's just been pushed down and the standards are not where they should be. (Paula, manager, private)
Impact of competition on teachers
It's a commodity. Teachers become a commodity. Children become a commodity. It's all about numbers. Absolutely. Yeah. That's what larger corporations—you know I've been to owners/ managers conferences and that's what they are all talking about. They are talking about the figures. (Georgia, owner/teacher, private).
My experience was the communication breakdown ... where it doesn't seem to be working because of the owners, [decision making is] top-down. There is not a pathway for [teachers to say] what needs to happen ... It's disheartening to see broken teachers. (Tahlia, teacher, private)
Impact on work conditions
With [space for] twenty 4-year-olds and she [the centre manager] had 27 in there every day, and it was a very small room and parents started to complain ... but she was being told from above. She had two teachers in that room with 27 children ... There were spaces down the hallway in the 2-year-old room but essentially the preschool was stuffed to capacity which bottlenecked her centre. And, how can you action your planning meaningfully when there is one teacher inside and one teacher outside and 27

children mingling back and forth? … and we felt like we might not be of value anywhere else because we were slowly being burnt out from the stress. (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten)

Choice and self-responsibility as social goods for teachers

If you're not going to move forward ... as an employer of those people, why should I move you forward ... I've contributed to my own career because I've not been scared to say this environment is not right for me. I am going to move ... and I think if people apply that approach to their work they will do really well. (Mandy, manager, private)

And I think that sometimes that ... people are a bit silly because they haven't done their research or they haven't read their contracts properly and so sometimes I don't feel sorry for people because they put themselves in that situation. (Esther, manager/teacher, community based)

I think they [the private sector] are getting worse. I think they are demanding more and more of teachers and giving them less and less ... and I think a lot of younger teachers get manipulated into doing things they shouldn't be doing or if they looked at the rules and regulations a bit more, they would realise they shouldn't be doing that. (Gladis, owner/manager, private)

University qualifications, and philosophical commitment—social goods teachers leverage to negotiate better employment opportunities

Especially coming from the university … and getting so much theoretical knowledge and reading so much about RIE and all that ... so I went on searching for a centre that had a good philosophy and I ended up in a RIE [based centre] so that was good. (Aadilia, teacher, community based)

Again, I will come back to Reggio. You know Reggio holds the teacher as very important in terms of you know the documentation you put up and that kind of conversation and you know it's really communicated to our families and community. And we do a huge amount of professional development as well as that sits really well with me because it's about staying on top of what we are doing and being intentional and being engaged with what we are all doing so yeah. It sits very well. (Tahlia, teacher, private)

Relationships Tool: Private Sector Teachers

The relationships tool (Table 8.4) reveals how relationships between groups are built in participants' speech. The discourses of competition and choice are used to construct a consumer/ provider relationship between ECEC centres and parents. This particular relationship can devalue the professional expertise of teachers. Gladis (owner/manager, private) suggests that teachers are perceived as "just there" to "provide a service" like a "supermarket," while Aadilia (teacher, community based) notes that parents can demand she find lost shoes because they are "spending money" to undertake such tasks. The tense relationship, based on perceived differences in values and priorities, between corporate employers (which Tom associates with "boards and shareholders") and teachers is evident in the final statement.

Table 8.4

Relationships Tool: Private Sector Identities

Relationships tool: How are words or grammatical devices used to build and sustain or change relationships, of various sorts, among the speaker, and other people, social groups, and/or institutions? (Gee, 2014b)

Consumer/ provider relationships:
[There is] a perception in some parents that you are there to provide a service and you're just there. It's just like you go the supermarket to get food and you get to choose what you are going to buy. (Gladis, owner/manager, private)
Parents! I worked in an area ... and they would come and say "Where's my child's shoes?" (laughs) You know that kind of thing and ... "I don't want my child to be in water, we are spending money on you." (Aadilia, teacher—community based)
Priorities of teachers versus priorities of corporate ECEC (us and them)
You start to talk to corporate ECE around belonging or exploration or wellbeing and how they link in with the curriculum and they look at us sideways they would go, "Well, it's the numbers." We [teachers] are designed to be the ones who are considering that [curriculum] whereas boards and shareholders are designed to the ones who care about money. (Tom, teacher -kindergarten)

Intertextuality and Assumptions Tool: Private Sector Teachers

The intertextuality and assumptions tool is used here to focus on the embedded assumptions about what kind of teacher identities are preferred and which are considered inappropriate. In the quote below (Table 8.4), assumptions about the preferred (and unwelcome) language, ethnicity, accent and qualifications are illuminated along with the exclusionary effect for some teachers. The next set of statements reveals assumptions about the teachers who stay working in compliance- and profit-orientated settings. Assumptions about priorities (job security, financial security, residency status) and abilities (language) are made by participants, along with assumptions that these differences result in a lack of agency.

Table 8.5

Intertextuality and Assumptions Tool: Private Sector Identities

Intertextuality and assumptions tool: What is taken for granted in the text? What kind of assumptions are being made—existential, propositional or value-based? What teacher identities are being served a result? (Gee, 2014b)
You'll see teachers with English as a second or third language in a baby room, and in fact, all the international research tells us that the best speakers of the native tongue should be in there … 4-year-olds might be able to cope with a heavily accented Indian or Asian, or whatever accent. Polish or whatever. But babies shouldn't have to, and often that is what you see in these [profit-driven centres] … so it is a concern. And I guess there is an increasing number of apparently Asian and Indian centre owners that perhaps employ from their own ethnic group. I'm not sure of the quality of training of some of them … How do they get registered? Who's signing them off? (Lucy, owner/manager, private)
Teachers in commercial, profit-driven ECEC services as "other"
When I think of those people, that work in those centres. They obviously need the money, or there is something holding them there. (Tom, teacher, kindergarten)
Lots of immigrants in those [private centres]. Lots of immigrants. Indians and could be the Chinese as well. And maybe unqualified. The ones who are ... not having a job or job permits or are looking for some support to get immigration ... I think they are hesitant with the language. Most of them probably have difficulty speaking English … Secondly what I feel is that they don't know their own rights ... If you don't have a job, you don't pay your bills…(Aadilia, teacher, community based)

Discussion: Constructing Private Sector Teachers

The private sector currently makes up 61% of the overall teacher-led sector and 71% of all ECEC services (teacher-led services excluding kindergartens) (Education Counts, 2019b). Therefore, the majority of ECEC teachers in Aotearoa work in some form of privately owned ECEC service. Understanding how teacher identities are negotiated in such a landscape was a motivating factor for undertaking this research. Drawing on the findings, the following discussion is organised in four sections. The first examines the influence of market discourse in the private sector, showing that although private centres can be markedly different in their priorities and organisational structures, they are subject to the practices, priorities and relationships constructed in a competitive market place. The second section highlights the construction of a compliant employee identity by examining how priorities, practices, and work conditions are governed by managerial and market-driven discourses in many private ECEC centres. This identity is strongly critiqued by many participants who felt constrained by the lack of autonomy and professionalism. Teachers' narratives of resistance and agency, albeit limited and individualised, are examined. The next section examines expectations that teachers, navigating opportunities in a competitive sector, make highly individualised and responsibilised decisions about where they work, who they work for and what each environment can offer. Such expectations are shaped by neoliberal discourse in which individuals are expected to be entrepreneurs of their own careers and lives. The lack of opportunity for collective advocacy within such a positioning is examined. The final section examines how, compelled to differentiate between each other in an uneven employment landscape, participants categorise and pathologise each other as more (or less) legitimate and professional. The discriminatory and exclusionary effect for ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers are revealed.

Market Discourse in a Diverse Private Sector

The CDA reveals the extent to which the priorities, practices, and relationships in the private sector are shaped through privatisation discourse. The findings speak to Ball's (2012a) concern that privatisation reconfigures the subjects, purposes, and relationships in educational institutions. This particular discourse promotes the idea that the quality of ECEC will go up as services compete with each other and as parents make informed and rational choices about the type of service best for them and their child (K. Smith et al., 2016). This section establishes the pervasive influence of this discourse on how the ECEC sector is organised by examining how the global "story of markets" including "commodification, competition, and (individual) choice"

(Moss, 2014, p. 5) is significant in shaping ECEC services and the identities of teachers. The private sector's heterogeneity is discussed first, followed by a critical examination of how marketplace values create new practices, priorities, and relationships for those working in the private sector.

"One Man Bands" and "Corporate Juggernauts"—A Diverse Private Sector

Participants created categories of private ECEC services as they shared their experiences in the private sector. Participants across all the groups recognised that not all private ECEC services were the same and that different contexts offered different opportunities and constraints to teachers. Most participants were careful to distinguish between ECEC services which are "about money" and those which try to find a balance between business priorities and "quality early childhood education" (Josie, owner/manager, private). The centre owners interviewed in this research were mostly owners of independent/stand-alone centres. The two exceptions were Josie who owned two centres, and Mandy, who was the manager of a small chain of centres across the country. Centre owners and managers strongly resisted "grouping all private organisations into one thing" (Gladis, owner/manager, private). They made clear distinctions between what Gladis calls "one-man bands" (small or independently owned centres) and "corporate juggernauts" (Kelly, TE). Corporate settings were commonly portrayed as "on the edge of being unethical" (Gladis, owner/manager, private) and "ready to do anything" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten) to make a profit. Teacher educators also acknowledged the complexity of a private sector where "some really good private centres absolutely have children and families at the heart of what they do" (Peta, TE) and some are just "baby factories … chasing the dollar" (Cheryl, TE).

Most private centre owners and managers interviewed did not view profit as the driving motive for their decision making. Autonomy and independence were common motivators, and most felt their "bottom line was doing the best for children and families" (Lucy, owner/manager, private). A market-based approach to the provision of ECEC has allowed many teachers to have a business in which they can utilise their professional knowledge and express a particular philosophy. In these centres, social and educational goals sit alongside and compete with economic goals, a demonstration of how neoliberal market discourse blurs the boundaries between the social, political and economic (Moss, 2008). This tension is plainly articulated by Josie (owner/manager, private) who admits that "at the end of the day we are a business, we

are trying to make money" but that "we still try and provide quality." Other participants are more open about profit motives, justifying them using market logic:

> It is so easy to say if you are making money, it must be bad ... if you are making money you want to be damn sure it is good because your parents are your customers ... private providers have an interest in making sure they are good so they have bums on seats and are making money. (Mandy, manager, private)

For these participants, a good ECEC service is defined by appealing to families who can pay and measured in terms of profit. This perspective is articulated by Barb (owner/manager, private) whose "philosophy from Day 1" has been that "if we do it right, the money will flow." Apart from Mandy, the perspectives of the corporate sector are missing. However, many participants had experiences in this part of the sector and strong ideas about the detrimental impact of corporate ECEC on teachers. The categories of private provision evident in participant narratives are important to the findings. Contextual differences are influential in shaping teacher identities, as we have already seen in Chapter 7, which examined identities in the contexts of kindergarten. In this chapter, distinctions between private contexts and the various discursive positions constructed within and between them are again a way to "define and defend borders between teachers" (Moss, 2014, p. 38).

Competition, Innovation and Consumer Choice in the Creation of Neoliberal Identities

The politics tool highlights how deeply the neoliberal values of competition, innovation, and consumer choice pervade the sector, inescapably shaping participants' experiences and positioning, including in centres which strongly reject profit as a motive. Market-based approaches to the sector and competition between centres work to orientate the practices of centre owners and managers towards entrepreneurial activities. The practices tool reveals how remaining competitive in a crowded sector has become an additional priority and new normality for many owners and managers who frequently describe how they try to create a "point of difference" (Gladis, owner/manager, private) for their centre. Illustrative of this, Paula (manager, private) provides a list of offerings that include swimming lessons and visiting music and sports specialists. An essential benefit of these offerings is "that we've now got kids that have come to us from other centres," suggesting that the purpose of such activities is, at least in part, about attracting enrolments. A second example demonstrates how ECEC managers and leaders' efforts are sometimes directed to "projecting a certain image" to families such as

when Anna (manager, private) opened her centre with "everyone dressed up" in "nice black tunics and beautiful scarves ... like a flight crew."

Business practices, such as marketing and sales, have become normalised and inevitable responsibilities of ECEC teachers stepping into management positions. Managerial expectations shape these new identities and roles so that contributing to the financial success of the business becomes a key measure of professionalism. Paula and Anna (both managers, private) are keenly aware of representing their centre well and keeping a "good relationship with the centre owner" (Paula). There is a sense of pride in how they talk about their management responsibilities. Although wary of the impact of competition between centres (as we shall see later), market discourse has provided them with new challenges and an opportunity for professional recognition that has historically been hard to come by as an ECEC teacher. However, it is a recognition that comes out of entirely different values and discursive practices than those that have traditionally influenced teachers. Kamenarac (2019) suggests that such recognition engenders a sense of loyalty "first to the principles and priorities set by their business owners and then to the ECEC profession" (p. 271). However, Jolene (TE) wonders if teachers conflate loyalty to their ECEC company with loyalty to the profession, saying, "I think sometimes they do. They actually see the provider [their employer] as early childhood as a whole, and I do think there is definitely a feeling that you don't question your employer."

The discourses of privatisation regulate relationships and position individuals (owners, managers, teachers and parents) as powerful or powerless as a result (Moss, 2014). In a market-based sector, parents are positioned as consumers and ECEC services and teachers as providers. The relationships tool illuminates the complex and uneven relationships and power dynamics between teachers, parents, and providers through such positioning. The role of the parent consumer is based on the assumption that all parents can demand and obtain quality services. Arguments problematising this premise are presented in Chapter 2. These include questioning the assumption that the needs of children and parents are the same and pointing out difficulties for parents, who are not the end users of the service, in fully understanding how the service is experienced by their child (Ball & Vincent, 2005; Meagher & Cortis, 2009).

K. Smith et al. (2016) also argue that assumptions about empowered consumers overlook how factors including "socio-economic and cultural background, their social capital, their migrant status, gender or other factors" (p. 129) impact on families' ability to make informed demands.

Many participants voiced these concerns. Aadilia (teacher, community based) noted that "parents don't really know" what happens in centres and that many centres put on a "show" or, as Georgia (owner/teacher, private) proposes, a "façade" that plays to commercial expectations rather than pedagogical excellence. Such reports suggest that the idea of empowered parent consumers is more illusion than reality and speaks to the concern that neoliberal ideology intensifies inequities while at the same time purporting to create opportunities through the freedom of choice (K. Smith et al., 2016). Nicole's (head teacher, community based) criticism that some centres have "flash entrance ways" but "stressed-out teachers" is supported by scholarship. Meagher and Cortis (2009) warn of the potential for exploitation of parent consumers through their "inability to accurately access quality by enhancing superficial aspects of quality in attempts to lower-cost" (p. 9). In this scenario, the "snotty realities of working conditions and working with children" (Kelly, TE) are purposely hidden, creating a more distant relationship between teachers and families (Osgood, 2012). Aadilia's (teacher, community based) experience in a corporate centre frequently reminded her of her paid service role. Parents restricted their interactions to: "Where's my child's shoes? ... and that kind of thing" and reminded her, "We are spending money on you." Such experiences are evidence of how discourse can devalue particular voices, in this case the teachers', and speak to Osgood's (2012) concern that teachers, positioned in consumer/provider relationships, can easily become "dehumanised and obscured from parental view" (p. 108).

A related concern is the conflation of consumer demand with quality (Press et al., 2018) and the potential of this to undermine teacher expertise and scholarship (Barraclough & Smith, 2002; Moss, 2014). The displacement of professional expertise is evident in Barb's (owner/manager, private) description of how she has created a structured transition-to-school programme. This includes teachers and children working in a "mock-up of a new entrants' classroom" in ways that are "pretty similar to what you might find in a primary school." While transition-to-school scholars vigorously contest the notion that ECEC should be more like school (Peters et al., 2009), this practice is justified by Barb because "families love it" and they want to see more "formal learning" happening. While Barb seems to take up her positioning as a service provider (likely because it serves her interests as a business owner), Gladis (owner/manager, private) struggles with it. She expresses frustration with the emphasis on parental choice in a consumer/provider paradigm, complaining: "[There is] a perception in some parents that you are there to provide a service … It's just like you go the supermarket to

get food and you get to choose what you are going to buy." It is a compromise to her identity as a qualified teacher which she reluctantly accepts is an outcome of a market-driven approach to the provision of ECEC.

These narratives reveal competing priorities for teachers. Paula (manager, private) describes a "split loyalty" between being a good employee and advocating for work conditions and practices which acknowledge professional expertise. It is a juggling act that has a disciplinary effect on teachers who may feel they have to acquiesce to parental demands even when these do not align with their own knowledge about good practice. They may restrict their requests and decision making to within what will work for the business (Kamenarac, 2019). Opportunities to advocate for different work conditions or enact pedagogical expertise varied considerably between centres. Participants located in a privatised and managerial landscape are left to negotiate their positioning individually, variously accepting, resisting or innovating between the different opportunities, discourses and practices in each context. In some private centres, working in teams of qualified teachers with a strong focus on pedagogy, participants describe spaces for developing a "strong learning community" (Tahlia, teacher, private) where they feel valued. In these centres, teachers play an important role in bringing to the fore values and practices from the educational sphere. Others report experiences in profit-driven centres where teachers are not encouraged to "question practices" (Sian, teacher, private) and are subject to poor work conditions, expectations of loyalty and compliance. The construction of teachers as compliant employees is examined in more depth later in the chapter.

Competition shapes the contexts and conditions of teachers' work, leaving most (but not all) sceptical that competition raises quality. A market approach to provision has allowed ECEC providers to open centres and receive government funding without sufficient attention to the needs and preferences of particular communities or the future sustainability of the centre. This approach has led to oversupply and undersupply in different areas; a consequence of market-based provision that has been repeated and well documented internationally (Cleveland et al, 2007; Mitchell, 2019). For instance, Paula is the manager in one of nine private ECEC centres operating nearby each other. Three are located on the same street; none are full. Heated competition between the centres has resulted in a focus on looking for ways to "bring kids in," "offer cheaper fees" and "cut costs" (Paula, manager, private). Paula's assessment that competition functions like a "big steam roller" that has "degraded" quality is upheld by other participants who acknowledge "sacrifices" (Josie, owner/manager, private) to well-established

structural features of quality to remain competitive. These included “cutting corners” (Mary, manager, community based) on aspects such as qualified staff, small group sizes, low adult-to-child ratios, professional development and other work conditions. These experiences add to a growing chorus of voices that doubt the virtue of ECEC markets and the ability of competition to deliver good ECEC for children and families (Kamenarac, 2019; Moss, 2015; Mitchell, 2019; Press & Woodrow, 2009) and point to the resultant impact on teachers’ positioning and the conditions of their work.

Teacher educators such as Kelly (TE) shared concerns that competition was “totally disruptive” to “sharing knowledge” and “creating connections across communities ... [and] ... institutions.” ECEC policy has pointed to the need for more collaborative relationships within and across services (MoE, 2002) and for reciprocity, dialogue and collective decision making between teachers and families (MoE, 2017). However, when these values intersect with discourse about consumer choice, they are undermined and possibly reconfigured in ways that leave teachers out of decision making altogether and impact on their conditions of work. Difficulties with private provision were experienced by the majority of participants in this research, and yet not well acknowledged in ECEC policy. Government policy cultivates a convincing discursive truth that different kinds of services can only be provided through a market-based approach; it has become difficult to imagine how centres might be responsive to a range of needs without privatisation. For example, in *Te Whāriki*, the diverse range of services and their “wider range of ownership and governance structures” (MoE, 2017, p. 8) is positively correlated with parents’ ability to choose “based on their needs and preferences” (MoE, 2017, p. 8). The enactment of partnership with parents, an expectation of all ECEC centres, is distorted when the focus on parents’ “needs and preferences” takes precedence over a range of voices, including those of teachers. The findings of the CDA suggest that neither teachers nor parents are positioned in powerful ways when discourse about diverse provision, competition, and consumer choice intersect; and the relationships between them become strained. Tensions between the messages and discourses in *Te Whāriki* are evident. When decisions in ECEC centres are driven by the need to maintain a sustainable ECEC business, and by consumer demand, the collective and participatory goals of *Te Whāriki* may be little more than idealistic rhetoric.

A key finding in this research relates to contextual specificity and its critical role in identity construction. This section has set out the heterogeneity of the private sector. Opportunities for

teachers to participate in decision making with centre leadership and families, to co-construct the purposes and practices of ECEC, or to enact approaches underpinned by pedagogical expertise varied considerably between centres. Despite differences between private ECEC centres, marketisation discourse introduces new norms and practices that impact on teachers in all private centre contexts.

The Compliant Employee

This section focuses on the construction of some teachers as compliant employees and workers in commercial and profit-driven centres. As mentioned earlier, the CDA reveals categories of private ECEC services constructed by participants. Participants' comments tended to focus on corporate provision, although they also provided examples of exploitative work environments in some single/owner-operator centres. Their discussions suggest that privatisation issues are not restricted to corporate ECEC services but are associated with the work conditions, values and practices of a service. These are, in turn, strongly influenced by market-orientated, managerial and performative discourse.

The first part of this section outlines the activities and work conditions associated with profit-driven centres, showing how these govern teacher identities. They also produce and maintain divisions and hierarchies between teachers, constructing some teachers and groups as less professional, and less legitimate. The identities tool focuses on positioning in discourse. The positioning of teachers in profit-driven ECEC centres as "commodities of the service" (Georgia, owner/teacher, private) repeatedly occurred in participant discussions. Josie (owner/manager, private) felt that corporate ECEC services were "looking for a number a lot of the time" to meet the requirements for qualified teachers and "because it's about money… they are just a warm body literally." Similarly, Tom (teacher, kindergarten) felt that corporate ECEC providers were "looking for kaiako that are there, rather than kaiako that are great."

Teacher identities are conceptualised in relation to the organisational structures of their workplaces (Arndt et al., 2018). In participant narratives, these structures materialise as work conditions, recognition and professional autonomy, and are frequently dehumanising. They provide little space to recognise the qualifications and expertise of teachers and suggest that they have very little autonomy. The politics and practices tools illuminate poor work conditions and the repetitive and custodial aspects of childcare work in some centres. Aadilia (teacher, community based) described her work in a corporate centre that was "like a factory" as

"caretaking" evoking an image of janitorial work. Her descriptions of her day reveal a routine dominated by the clock and repetitive work tasks. For instance, she describes how she would be, "inside doing the vacuuming and then at 3 o'clock that area was shut off, and then it was nappies. Just one after the other. Bring the child. Change. Back out."

Other participants agreed that such work was more "crowd control" than teaching. Adding to the picture of teachers as workers, Tahlia's (teacher, private) perception that in many profit-driven centres "there is not a pathway for teachers to say what needs to happen," leading to "broken teachers," was typical. Without opportunities for open dialogue, Nicole (head teacher, community based) noticed how quickly "a culture of 'this is what we do' can become scarily normalised." Profit-driven centres are portrayed across the participant groups as having hierarchical organisation structures and low-trust, low-autonomy environments. They produce conditions for what Sims and Waniganayake (2015) call the de-professionalisation of ECEC teachers and the creation of compliant employees. These are elements of managerial culture on the rise in education due to the intersection and growing influence of markets and managerialism: key neoliberal technologies (Ball, 2007). Sian (teacher, private) shared an experience in her focus group of working in a corporate franchise where "there were the exact same rules for all centres regardless" and "management didn't have any trust [in teachers] … they were just to do as they were told." Sian's feeling that she was "being squished," her "mana trampled all over" resulted in a perceived lack of agency. An image of a compliant employee is also evident in Josie's (owner/manager, private) emphasis on "ticking all the forms and doing all these forms;" managerial tasks that resulted in teachers becoming "someone who will oblige."

Sian's resistance to the idea of becoming a "'Yes Ma'am!' kind of a person" is evidence of how identity and meaning are negotiated in a struggle with the structural and discursive limitations of centres (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). The owner of Sian's centre had installed a strict routine for children that included rotating between preplanned table-top activities—a practice that Sian admits "went against everything I learnt at [initial teacher education institution]." However, the owner was only there 3 days a week, and Sian laughs telling the group, "on the other days we did what we wanted to do!" Sian and her colleagues resist the compliant identity being imposed on them through managerial practices. Their acts of rebellion are made possible through the alternative identities on offer to them through their qualifications and professional knowledge. They are likely to have made a difference to children at the centre, and to their

own sense of wellbeing as teachers. Finding opportunities to negotiate alternative identities for themselves, they enact a form of political resistance of which Ball and Olmedo (2013) write:

> By acting "irresponsibly," these teachers take "responsibility" for the care of their selves and in doing so make clear that social reality is not as inevitable as it may seem. This is not strategic action in the normal political sense. Rather it is a process of struggle against mundane, quotidian neoliberalisations, that creates the possibility of thinking about education and ourselves differently. (p. 85)

For Tesar (2015), such acts can provide space for others to follow and contribute to upsetting the balance of power. However, since these are hidden resistances that are not shared widely outside of each centre, the extent to which they can upset the balance of power in a broader political sense seems limited. It is an agency bounded by the discursive limitations of boss/employee relations, that discourages open dialogue or collective action. As a form of resistance, it can help teachers to survive but does not create space for them to thrive. Ball and Olmedo (2013) acknowledge that such acts come at a cost "of constant vigilance, the costs of a commitment to a kind of 'permanent agonism'" (p. 94) that may eventually lead to the "broken" (Tahlia, teacher, private) and "burnt-out" (Christie, head teacher, kindergarten) teachers described so often across the participant groups.

TEs were asked about how they prepare student-teachers for the realities of the sector, including the different work environments they might find themselves in. Jolene (TE) points to the importance of "critical reflection" and "critical dialogue" between teachers and hopes that they would look for places where they could "work collaboratively in democratic teams." A focus on critical reflection including "questioning their own belief systems and their own attitudes" (Tui, TE) was commonly raised as a strategy that they hope would support students to "get in there and raise the bar by questioning practices" (Cheryl, TE). Critical reflection leading to critical dialogue is identified by Sims and Waniganayake (2015) as the first step towards "identifying the impact of neoliberalism and debating alternatives" (p. 340). The findings raise the question about the extent to which critical dialogue is possible in some environments, and whether self-reflection is enough. Critical self-reflection without open discussion may encourage students to grapple with the personal without making connections to how their identities are implicated by the political, including how privatisation discourse positions them and others in powerful or powerless ways. A focus on self-reflection without supporting student-teachers to engage with the structural conditions of the sector may be

insufficient in equipping teachers to challenge embedded discourses and practices, take up new positions, and create space for debate and contestation (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

Narratives portraying teachers as compliant employees and workers, at the bottom of a management hierarchy, highlight how marketisation and managerialism provide “insufficient infrastructure” (Farquhar, 2012, p. 294) for the development of valued and collective teacher identities. A focus on managerial practice and consumer/provider relations devalues teachers’ voices and makes it difficult for teachers to insert alternative priorities and values. There is little room, for example, to include the nonhierarchical, collaborative and dialogical ways of working together evident in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) and preferred by TEs. Although a few participants note moments of resistance, overall, these findings give substance to the concerns of scholars that managerial discourse infuses social relations, “militates against open, considered debate and dialogue” (Farquhar, 2012, p. 295), excludes teachers from decision making in centres (Duhn, 2010) and isolates teachers from each other, keeping them busy with repetitive routines and practices and in work conditions that are “stressful” and “demeaning” (Christie, teacher, kindergarten). The fallibility of neoliberal logic, that an emphasis on consumer choice, competition and heightened individualism will be better for families and teachers, is revealed. Instead, the ways that individuals (both teachers and parents) can be exploited in a competitive ECEC market are highlighted.

In Chapter 4, I outlined how ECEC policy has focused on the creation of a professionalised and more regulated teaching workforce through the use of performative technologies. I argue that these policy moves aspire to construct a professional teacher that is qualified, quality-focused and accountable. The findings above suggest that, when the priorities of private ECEC businesses take precedence, teachers experience a lack of professional trust ultimately leading to deprofessionalisation. The Compliant Employee may be an unintended consequence of ECEC policy that has not yet adequately confronted the work conditions of teachers, the different experiences of teachers across the sector, and the ways these impact on identities. Therefore, policy concerned with the quality of teaching work, and teacher status, must also attend to work conditions including opportunities for teachers to experience professional trust and autonomy (Andrew & Newman, 2012; Arndt et al., 2021). In the previous chapter, the perceived work conditions and identities of kindergarten teachers, a legacy of collective negotiation, contributed to their status. In the private sector, teaching contracts are mostly negotiated in individual agreements, making opportunities for collective action difficult and

leaving teachers to navigate unfavourable work conditions on their own. As a result, the experience of being a teacher in the current landscape of ECEC includes choosing between centres to find the best conditions for employment. These acts of individual negotiation influence teacher identities and are discussed next.

The Entrepreneur

This section presents and examines an alternative identity—The Entrepreneur. The identity of an entrepreneurial teacher is raised in comments such as, "I've contributed to my own career because I have not been scared to say this environment is not for me" (Mandy, manager, private) and from Esther (manager/teacher, community based) who proposes that some teachers in compliance-orientated centres are "a bit silly" and "put themselves in these situations" because they "haven't done their research." Both comments reveal an expectation that teachers are individually responsible for their status and positioning in the sector. I propose that such expectations further reflect the encroachment of neoliberal ideas onto teachers' identity negotiations. Teachers are compelled to take up their positioning as homo economicus, "rational utility maximisers in constant pursuit of self-interest" (Moss, 2014, p. 65) as they navigate an uneven and competitive sector. The key features of The Entrepreneur teacher identity are the expectation that teachers are responsible for their own employment situations and career development, the leveraging of social and cultural capital to enact this responsibility, and the creation of hierarchies of teachers through the pathologising of some teachers as "other." The findings examined in this section build on the previous chapter that examined how identities, privilege and status are constructed across the sector, partly through processes of inclusion and exclusion, in relation to the context of kindergarten. In this chapter, teachers enact their role as "self-entrepreneurs" (Attick, 2017, p. 38) as they navigate between employment opportunities. Later in the chapter, I address how these negotiations include acts of exclusion that occur between teachers in different parts of the private sector, resulting in some teachers being positioned as less legitimate and less professional.

Many participants strongly rejected the identity of a loyal and compliant employee offered to them through managerial discourses and practices in some profit-driven centres. However, resistance from within was unsustainable. An alternative course of action is to search for something better. Stories of centre-hopping were common in the focus group data as participants sought out more satisfactory employment situations for themselves. Sian (teacher, private) "only lasted 2 weeks" in one centre, while Nicole (head teacher, community based)

shared her experience of a centre in which “not one person on the entire team was the same” within 6 months. Tom and Christie moved from the private sector into kindergarten, and enjoyed the recognition this afforded them. Centre-hopping is recognised in this research as an expression of agency in which teachers exercise choice to pursue opportunities that are best for them. Agency is understood to be an individual’s ability to recognise their positioning in discourse and challenge it, in this case by choosing from options that offer them different subject positions (Davies, 2004). The Compliant Employee is one way teachers are positioned in neoliberal managerial discourse; however, another subject position is that of The Entrepreneur. When entrepreneurial discourses intersect with professionalising discourse from the education sphere, which uphold pedagogical and curriculum expertise, new opportunities for identities arise. These are explored below.

The politics tool illuminates the ways in which participants leverage forms of cultural capital to move around the centre and to negotiate their identities. These include qualifications (and where they got them) and commitments to particular philosophies and pedagogies. Aadilia (teacher, community based) draws attention to “coming from the university” and knowing “so much theoretical knowledge” to reject her positioning as a worker, while Sian (teacher, private) also looked for “somewhere I could use my qualifications.” Centre switching is way to reject the limited positioning offered in some profit-driven centres with poor work conditions. This high teacher turnover, which is potentially destabilising for the sector, has unknown impacts on children and whānau and does not resolve the issues of compliance, professional recognition and work conditions. Centre switching is an example of neoliberal free choice. Teachers seem “free to act, free to choose” but only within the confines of a marketised and highly competitive sector that “acts as both arena and ideology” (Attick, 2017, p. 38). Teachers’ negotiations are highly individualised, lacking in collective advocacy for their colleagues or for the children and whānau they leave behind. Such negotiations are reflective of Attick’s (2017) concern that neoliberal citizens strategise for themselves “among the various social, political and economic options” and do not “strive with others to alter or organise these options” (p. 41). Individualised and strategic identity negotiations undermine opportunities for collective action and obscure the structural injustices that impinge on teachers’ work (Osgood, 2012; Press et al. 2018). The responsibility for limiting organisational arrangements is shifted away from ECEC businesses, and from ECEC policy, to individual teachers enacting agency by becoming entrepreneurs of their own careers.

Philosophical Commitments and Neoliberal Resistance

Participants highlighted alignments to particular philosophies and pedagogies to create a discursive space from which to reject marginalising discourses of managerialism and privatisation. For instance, Tahlia (teacher, private) found her place in a privately owned centre "inspired by a Reggio perspective" that included a view of "the teacher as very important." As a result, the centre valued dialogue between teachers and took their work seriously. Tahlia felt "totally respected" by centre families. Scholars grappling with the hegemony of neoliberalism and its impact on teacher identities see the potential for philosophical commitments such as Reggio Emilia to upset the balance of power (Sims & Waniganayake, 2015; Tesar, 2015). Such philosophies may create spaces for teachers to uphold pedagogical, as well as ethical and political, commitments as core elements of their identities. Reggio Emilia, for example, envisions education spaces as democratic meeting places where the purposes are "not merely pedagogical but … political, social and cultural … [a] reverse way of thinking" (Göthson, 2019, p. 11) to that of neoliberalism. Similar possibilities also occur in democratic and participatory discourse of *Te Whāriki* (although I have previously discussed how *Te Whāriki* is inscribed with multiple and competing messages that weaken the potential of these ideals). As we saw in Chapter 5, participants sometimes used the principles of *Te Whāriki* to elevate commitments such as "whakawhanaungatanga" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten) and relationship-based practices. However, a question remains about the disciplinary effect of market discourse as it intersects with alternative narratives and the tendency of neoliberalism to co-opt alternate discourses for its own purpose. Göthson (2019) also points out that Reggio Emilia has become a good marketing label, something to sell to both teachers and parents, reduced to everyday methods with no real connection to the political or democratic aims that underpin its inception. A very similar criticism could be made of *Te Whāriki*, the language of which has become taken for granted in the sector, possibly at the expense of shared critical dialogue about the challenges that democratic and participatory discourse poses to practices, relationships and identities (Gould & Matapo, 2016). It is clear that being in a "Reggio inspired centre" gave Tahlia a sense of value and purpose within her immediate context. What is less clear is the extent to which this has allowed her engage with the broader politics of the sector, including the tensions between Reggio Emilia, *Te Whāriki* and the practices and subjectivities of neoliberalism. The final section in this chapter examines how the tactical and individualistic nature of identity negotiations, occurring in a neoliberal landscape, intensifies differences between teachers and leads to the pathologising of some teachers and identities.

The "Other" Teachers

The previous sections have focused on teachers' positioning, and the individualistic and tactical processes of identity negotiation that occur as participants take up or resist available identity constructions. As discussed, many participants' resistance to their positioning as compliant employees was primarily enacted by moving around the sector, exercising choice about where to work, and taking up an identity as an entrepreneur. Through these processes, participants are compelled to differentiate among themselves. This section highlights the processes of inclusion and exclusion that occur as a part of identity negotiations (de Fina et al., 2006; Gee, 2018) by demonstrating how participants categorise and pathologise each other as good, normal, professional, or otherwise, and highlighting the discriminatory effects for those who are marked "other." The findings reveal how differences between teachers are intensified and called to the surface more readily when teachers must strategise in individualistic ways to "do well for themselves" (Mandy, manager, private) undermining opportunities for collegial and collective identities.

Some participants (teachers, centre owners and managers) deployed signifiers of difference as they talked about teachers in different parts of the sector. These included ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status and qualifications. Ethnicity and language were frequently highlighted in participant narratives. A combination of CDA tools (identities, practices, politics and assumptions) draws attention to what kinds of identities, knowledge and practices are constructed as legitimate, valuable and worthwhile (or not). The assumptions tool reveals embedded beliefs about groups of teachers and desirable identities in some participant narratives. To illustrate:

> You'll see teachers with English as a second or third language in a baby room, and in fact, all the international literature tells us that the best speakers of the native tongue should be in there … 4-year-olds might be able to cope with a heavily accented Indian or Asian, or whatever accent. Polish or whatever. But babies shouldn't have to, and often that is what you see in these [profit-driven centres] … so it is a concern. (Lucy, owner/manager, private)

Lucy weaves together several assumptions to question the legitimacy of some teachers and to construe their identities and knowledges as inappropriate and undesirable. Teachers are expected to support children's home literacies, languages and cultures, as well as children's encounters with each other (MoE, 2017). These messages are strengthened in the most recent

iteration of *Te Whāriki* that acknowledges Aotearoa's growing cultural and ethnic diversity. Despite this, Lucy overlooks the value and potential contributions of being a bilingual or multilingual teacher, discounting the knowledge and experiences that Indian, Asian, Polish "or whatever" teachers might contribute to an ECEC centre. She assumes that the "native tongue" of all babies is English, revealing a belief that having English as a first language is the normal and desirable way to be a teacher, and that having an accent is not. Several scholars address the paradox of celebrating diversity in ECEC practices but ignoring the experience of diversity among teachers (Arndt, 2015; Shuker & Cherrington, 2016). As we see, the failure to attend to the experience of difference between teachers can have an alienating effect.

While cultural and language diversity is celebrated for children and their families (in official discourse at least), it appears that, for teachers, cultural otherness is not welcome. Still referring to teachers with English as an additional language, Lucy calls into question "the training of some them" by asking, "How do they get registered? Who is signing these people off?" Lucy's use of "them" and "these people" is jarring, and along with her assertion that some qualifications are better than others, contributes to the exclusion and delegitimation of ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers. Another illustration of these dividing processes occurs when Lucy points to "Indian and Asian centre owners" who "employ from their own ethnic group." In this case, employing teachers who are the same ethnicity is perceived as problematic seemingly only because of their ethnic otherness. It seems unlikely that Lucy would have perceived (or even recognised) a Pākehā centre owner employing Pākehā teachers as problematic in the same way.

In other narratives, ethnic and language differences are connected to issues of immigration and economic status, creating a concoction of bias in which compliance is assumed. Again, the identities of teachers belonging to diverse ethnic and linguistic groups are positioned as unprofessional. For instance, Aadilia (teacher, community based) assumes that teachers who remain working in profit-driven centres are often "immigrants … Indians and could be Chinese as well" and that their priorities are economic rather than pedagogical. They are "looking to get support for immigration" and "hesitant with the language" and "have difficulty speaking English." In these narratives, an economic priority to be in work cannot coexist with identifying as a teacher. These teachers are not perceived to be invested in the correct discourses of professionalism and are not counted as legitimate teachers. They are assumed to be compliant employees, who have failed (or are perceived to be unable) to take up the preferred

entrepreneurial identity. Stella (manager, community based) talked about the "high immigrant population in Auckland" which is "understandably frightened, they don't want to lose their jobs." When she asked, "are they ever going to fight? Or are they just going to go, 'This is our lot. We had better shush'" she revealed her assumptions about their compliance and lack of agency. As a result, some participants assumed that these teachers take up identities as compliant employees in unsafe and managerial work environments because "they fear speaking up … they fear losing their jobs" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten) and therefore lack an appetite for advocacy.

Cultural diversity in the teaching population is constructed as problematic by many participants, most of whom were Pākehā, reflecting the wider ECEC population (Education Counts, 2019c). "They" and "them" is commonly used when gender neutral pronouns are called for. However, participants' use of "them" and "they" as language devices excludes and others the motivations, knowledges and contributions of "those teachers" (Tom, teacher, kindergarten) and even their qualifications are discounted. The findings in this chapter suggest perceived differences between each other powerfully shape the experience of being a teacher. A complex landscape of policy and discourse contributes to the marginalisation of culturally and ethnically diverse teachers. These include the individualising and managerial discourses, and diverse ECEC settings already addressed. Arndt (2015) further points to contradictions between policies that offer incentives for ECEC teachers to immigrate, listing ECEC teachers in the "skills shortage" category, and also attempt to homogenise understandings of good teaching practice. These make space for indigenous Māori and Western pedagogy but intentionally or unintentionally limit spaces for other perspectives. Such complexities diminish messages that purport to value diversity. Instead, there is an urgent need for the sector to confront how subjective encounters and assumptions between teachers delegitimise the experiences and contributions of some teachers; and, how a neoliberal sociopolitical landscape, shaped by pervasive individualising discourse, further intensifies these processes.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 8 has focused on teacher identities in the private sector. This part of the ECEC sector is highly diverse and teachers negotiate their identities within and between ECEC contexts that offer very different ways to be teacher. The findings presented in this chapter have revealed the prevalence of neoliberal discourses, including the values of competition and consumer

choice, and the expectation that individuals act as homo economicus in their own lives. These discourses have a strong influence on the processes of teachers' identity construction. Teachers are simultaneously constructed as compliant employees in ECEC businesses influenced by managerial discourse and practice, and as entrepreneurs of their own careers. The latter offers opportunities for better valuing of their professional expertise, professional standing and work conditions. However, opportunities for open dialogue about the purposes and politics of ECEC, and collective advocacy with and for other teachers, children, and families, are significantly impacted. Teachers' identity negotiations across the private sector are contingent on context, individualistic, and strategic.

The chapter has also illuminated the discrimination and exclusion that occurs for ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers and points to the paradox of these experiences in a sector that purports to celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity for children and their families. It illuminates a mix of bias and assumptions in which ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers are frequently misconstrued as inappropriate and unprofessional: their languages, knowledges and experiences discounted. The potent cocktail of homo economicus, managerialism and exclusion raises serious questions about the experiences of being a teacher and constructing a teaching identity in a sector where teachers are compelled to differentiate between each other, and where some teacher identities are afforded more value than others.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and Implications

The aim of the research was to examine how ECEC teachers in Aotearoa form their teacher identities and to consider the implications of this, guided by the main research question: *How do ECEC teachers understand and construct their teacher identities?* The findings reveal that there is no collective agreement about what it means to be an ECEC teacher in Aotearoa. ECEC teachers form their identities in ongoing negotiations undertaken in an uneven sector shaped by multiple and complex discourses. The intersections and interanimations among neoliberal discourse, bicultural and democratic discourses, the historic discourses of kindergarten and childcare, and the ongoing bifurcation of care and education, are illuminated. These provide the current context for continuous constructions of multiple, shifting teacher identities. Key concerns evident in this research relate to the divisions and hierarchies that emerged between ECEC teachers in different contexts, resulting in the exclusion of some teachers, and a lack of collective agency and advocacy. This concluding chapter highlights key findings, contributions of the research to the scholarship, and implications for policy, teacher education, and future research.

Reflecting on my own history in the sector, the changes and challenges I have witnessed, and my work with student-teachers who, upon graduation, step into a diverse and competitive ECEC landscape, led me to ask how teachers come to understand themselves and their work in such complex contexts. Urban (2010) argues that teachers' epistemologies are reciprocally linked to professional practice, suggesting a profound connection between identity and practice. Teachers' identities encompass their perceptions about the purposes of their work, their commitments and priorities, the practices they privilege and their relationships to those around them. Each of these factors is influenced by the discursive resources available globally, nationally and in teachers' immediate work contexts. In this research, teacher participants variously, and sometimes simultaneously, identified their commitments to children and families, ECEC businesses, specific philosophies and approaches, and particular conceptualisations of professionalism promoted in government policy. These diverse commitments are imbued with different ethics, relationships, purposes and practices. They provide different ways to be a teacher.

The research literature has generally not attended to teachers' experiences in different ECEC contexts, despite the fact that market-based approaches to provision have given rise to diverse

ECEC settings. To my knowledge, only one other study has set out to examine the identities of ECEC teachers with a focus on the influences of policy and the experiences of teachers in different ECEC contexts (Kamenarac, 2019). Other scholars have examined aspects of teacher identity in kindergarten (Dalli, 2012a; Duncan, 2004, 2007; Scrivens, 2000) for newly qualified teachers (Warren, 2014) and for culturally and linguistically diverse student-teachers (Arndt, 2015; Dolan, 2017). Ignoring the experiences of teachers and the implications of the contexts in which they work leaves us with only a partial understanding of the sector. My research has attempted to address some of the research gaps by including teachers and leaders from across the sector working in a range of ECEC contexts. This research also includes the perspectives of TEs. Including accounts from those working in different contexts contributes to a fuller picture of contemporary ECEC in Aotearoa.

Alongside individual interviews with centre managers, owners, and TEs, a unique aspect of the research design was to bring teachers from across the sector together in focus groups. The focus groups provided a space where individual perspectives could be collectively considered (Osgood, 2012). As a result, identities were explored and formed socially. Participants were able to see and reflect on their own positioning in the sector by hearing and sharing experiences. These conversations, particularly when inequities and differences emerged, were occasionally confronting and have significantly informed the findings. Conversely, teachers also discovered they had experiences and values in common, allowing for moments of solidarity and potentially providing the foundations for collective political engagement.

The concept of discourse, specifically the role that discourse plays in the construction of identities, provided the theoretical framework for the research. The aims of the research, choice of CDA methodology and the methods used are underpinned by an understanding that teacher identities are not innate, essential or fixed, but discursively constituted, fluid and strategic (de Fina et al., 2006; Gee, 2018). Using CDA, I have been able to identify and critically examine some of the ways that teachers with experiences in different ECEC contexts (including policy contexts) perceive and construct their teacher identities. A CDA of key policy texts revealed a number of overlapping discourses that impact on teachers' work and suggested different teacher identities that teachers navigate and negotiate. CDA was also used to examine participant narratives, specifically the way participants use language to position themselves and others, revealing and problematising the ways teachers consciously and unconsciously negotiate their identities in response to discourse. CDA was useful in highlighting

the social and discursive processes, outcomes and effects of identity construction, including how teachers understood themselves and others, what kinds of identities were more (or less) legitimate and valued, and how teachers navigated and managed these processes.

ECEC Teacher Identities in Policy—Opportunities and Limitations

Teachers are positioned in contradictory and competing ways in policy and these were found to shape participants' identity constructions. Two prominent teacher identities emerged from the analyses of key policy documents—The Professional and The Kaiako. Each identity is nuanced, layered with complexity and problematic. Each offers different ways to be a teacher, based on different understandings about the purposes and potential of ECEC. The Professional is influenced by the prevalence of globally dominant neoliberal economic discourse: most prominently HCT and conceptualisations of quality. The Professional identity invites teachers to be forward focused, consumer aware, and committed to high levels of accountability, regulation and innovation in practice. The Kaiako is shaped by the relational focus of *Te Whāriki*, by discourses of biculturalism and democratic participation, and by a local policy story that includes Aotearoa's colonial past/present. Also evident are complex interanimations between the identities such as the ways biculturalism is recontextualised through human capital and social investment discourses, becoming an additional performative criterion against which teachers are judged.

I do not propose that teachers consciously choose to be one or the other or that these are the only identities possible for teachers to take up. Teachers in this research navigated strategically amid the various opportunities and constraints each offered, and in relation to discourses about teachers and teaching in the various places they worked. This research examined the complexity of these movements, identifying the strong influences of a growing audit culture, performance indicators, competency standards, and ongoing external and internal review on participants' identities. Located in the discursive landscape of policy, participants accepted, negotiated and tried to reconcile the different expectations of them as teachers. Successfully taking up The Professional Teacher seemed to offer some participants a status and credibility that has been traditionally hard to access. However, many participants also appeared uncritical (perhaps unaware or even unconcerned) about the limitations of increasingly performative policy expectations, their normalising influence on their own and others' identities, and the amount of time and energy required to demonstrate a successful performance. There was little recognition by teacher participants of the ways in which performative and managerial

expectations in policy limited their own professional autonomy, and rendered the democratic and participatory discourses in *Te Whāriki* more rhetoric than reality. These findings support a key concern from the extant literature about the rise of managerial and performative discourse in policy. Specifically, that the emphasis on self-governance in policy promises empowerment while implicitly aiming to control (Ball, 2003; Clarke, 2013; Holloway & Brass, 2018).

The Kaiako identity, which promotes working in partnership with colleagues and whānau towards equitable outcomes, is resonant with the sector's history of collective activism and commitment to social justice. However, it may be an idealistic aspiration rather than a current reality for the sector. The aspiration that teachers be biculturally competent, work collectively, and share decision making with colleagues, children, families and communities is significantly challenged by findings that highlight issues with the monocultural reality of the ECEC sector, in particular the lack of acceptance of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers, and the intersection of neoliberal discourse found in the emphasis on individualism, consumer choice and representations of consumer/provider relationships across participant narratives.

The research also revealed constraints to critical dialogue in contexts where teachers are expected to demonstrate high levels of compliance with managerial practices. In these contexts, teacher agency was expressed in restricted and individualised ways by moving around the sector in search of centres that enable better opportunities. These individualised movements and resistances are insufficient for contesting how neoliberal policy and discourse limit the construction of collective and democratic teacher identities including The Kaiako identity prevalent in policy.

Reclaiming Care as Important Teaching Work

Inconsistent and contradictory engagements with notions of care in teachers' identity negotiations were illuminated in the research. Care, particularly that related to children's bodies, was not well recognised as a legitimate form of professional knowledge in participant narratives or in policy. Ongoing tensions involved in claiming care and being caring as important aspects of teachers' work demonstrate the limiting effect of gendered and essentialised understandings of care that still pervade the sector. The problem of care, how it is perceived and acknowledged in teaching work and its entanglements with gendered perceptions of women's work, has been a long-standing focus of scholarship (Ailwood, 2017; Davies & Degotardi, 2015; Langford & White, 2019; Van Laere et al, 2014). Many participants

were frustrated that the visibility of care in their work negatively impacted how they were recognised as teachers. Although participants frequently promoted affective qualities such as being kind and calm as discursive standards for an ideal ECEC teacher, these were often positioned as natural dispositions. Only a few participants acknowledged the effort and skill required to maintain such standards and the importance of care to children's learning and wellbeing. These participants desired a stronger valuing of care as an important element of their work. However, the contribution of care to teacher identities was marginalised in some participant narratives where a binary of care and education was evident. In some narratives, care was positioned as a burdensome prerequisite to education, necessary only because of the age and developmental stage of the children. Such findings suggest that the sector has not reconciled the place or importance of care in the work of teachers.

The ongoing divide between kindergarten and other ECEC settings also played out in teachers' different valuing of care. Perceived differences between ECEC settings largely pivoted on differences in the visibility of care work in each context (as well as historical and ongoing commitments to qualifications) and have continued to result in different identities, statuses and material conditions. Complexities in the dynamics of care, conceptualised through consumer/provider relationships, were also evident. When care work was positioned as a service to paying parents, both teachers and parents appeared disempowered, and relationships between them were strained. An undervaluing of care in profit-orientated services contributed to poor work conditions sometimes described by participants as "baby factories."

The importance of care was largely invisible in policies analysed. *Our Code Our Standards*, for example, requires teachers to be highly professional, ethical, respectful, fair, and inclusive (ECANZ, 2017) but the reductive nature of these professional competencies does not account for the different contexts in which teaching occurs and fails to capture the complexity of teaching work including its inherently relational nature. Policy is also silent about the value and skill of care labour involving children's bodies, highly visible in the work of many ECEC teachers. The invisibility of care in policy and in some participants' narratives may be strategic, intentionally elevating educational imperatives (and downplaying care) in order to challenge the ways that ECEC teachers are recognised with the aim of improving their status. Such invisibilities come at a cost to acknowledging how care is an integral component of ECEC (and all) teaching work.

Participants, especially TEs, were invested in the relational discourses of *Te Whāriki*. These provided an influential discursive resource through which the relational aspects of care could be elevated as important to teachers' work. However, custodial and bodily care tasks continued to be excluded and marginalised, with negative implications for the status and identity of teachers whose work is more closely associated. Taggart's (2019) warning, that the invisibility of care in how we articulate practice and ethics puts us "in danger of producing practitioners who do not value or understand the complexity of their own care" (p. 99), is warranted by these findings.

Contextual Influences on Teacher Identities

ECEC in Aotearoa consists of a diverse range of services, including kindergartens, privately owned services and community-based settings. The landscape is, however, increasingly corporate, and this research highlighted the impact of discourses associated with competition and consumer choice shaping provision and relationships in the sector. Different contexts and organisational structures offered teachers significantly different ways to be a teacher. The research uncovers an uneven and inequitable landscape resulting in different opportunities and constraints for identity construction, and materialising in different work conditions and statuses. As a result of important contextual differences, I identified and critically examined three prevalent identities from participant narratives: The Kindergarten Teacher, The Compliant Employee and The Entrepreneur.

An ongoing bifurcation between kindergarten and ECEC centres was evident based on histories, discourses and practices that inflect each service type. A distinct identity for kindergarten teachers emerged from participants' conversations about kindergarten and its unique place in the ECEC landscape. The historical and sociopolitical position of kindergarten, its educational focus, and commitments to qualifications, pay and work conditions, were all drawn on as participants discussed their perception that kindergarten teachers enjoy a status and recognition not available in other settings. Kindergarten teachers and qualified teachers in other ECEC settings are not distinguished from each other in policy, have equivalent qualifications and are subject to equivalent expectations of professional practice. Yet, as is revealed in the research, they can be positioned in inequitable ways. This research found that the professionalisation discourse in policy has supported kindergarten's continued commitment to qualifications and has enabled kindergarten teachers to further the educational focus of their work. Participants noted the clear distinctions in both responsibilities

and status, between qualified and unqualified teachers in kindergarten, that do not often occur in other ECEC settings. Participants frequently pointed to the lack of policy commitment to a fully qualified sector, recognised that this made it more difficult to defend their own professionalism, and saw this as a key difference between kindergarten and other ECEC settings. Successful and ongoing collective advocacy through the union has contributed to work conditions and pay that have shaped participants' perceptions of working in kindergarten. (However, it can also be argued that all ECEC teachers lag behind their compulsory sector counterparts and there is plenty more work to be done in this area including for kindergarten.)

The findings also demonstrate that kindergarten is not immune to the privatisation and managerial discourse that shapes all ECEC services to varying degrees. Participants frequently referenced the changing nature of the kindergarten service including changes to organisational arrangements and teachers' work conditions. There was a strong consensus that the distinctive nature of kindergarten is eroding as kindergarten services try to adapt in a competitive landscape, and kindergarten leadership at the association level is increasingly shaped by managerial discourse. Previous research about kindergarten has involved experienced teachers with long careers in the kindergarten service (Duncan, 2004, 2007; Kamenarac, 2019). Kindergarten participants in this research were comparatively new to the service, with previous experiences in other ECEC settings, including corporate settings. They saw their move into kindergarten as a step up in their careers. However, their identities were shaped by their experiences across the sector. One participant in particular drew on entrepreneurial and managerial discourse in her responses to the changing nature of kindergarten. This included positioning herself as an employee of kindergarten as a company, and identifying company loyalty as a professional priority. She expressed a limited agency to speak out against changes despite strong personal reservations. Such positioning is antithetical to the history of activism and advocacy in kindergarten. These findings demonstrate the contingent nature of identity as individuals are influenced by different discourses, and possibly signals changing ideas about what it means to be a kindergarten teacher.

For some participants, a market-based approach offered new challenges and opportunities for professional recognition, based on doing well for the ECEC business. Taking up entrepreneurial identities, these participants did their best to juggle business priorities with traditional teaching values and practices. Notably, participants frequently reported that opportunities for advocacy and decision making in private centres existed but were limited by what was ultimately good

for business. Some participants described experiences in private centres that strived to balance business, educational and care commitments. In these environments, opportunities to construct identities were generally grounded in commitments to particular philosophies and approaches. Participants also described some private ECEC environments that were highly managerial, in which teachers were treated as commodities, with high expectations of loyalty and compliance and low levels of autonomy. In these environments, opportunities for contesting or challenging limiting subject positions were restricted and difficult.

Many teachers in this research seemed discouraged from critically and collectively engaging with the politics of the sector. Many participants reported that rather than being empowered and agential within their centre, their freedom and agency was best exercised by switching centres, searching for better employment opportunities and alignments with personal philosophies and pedagogies. Although most participants were critical of aspects of the private sector, they were largely uncritical of the reality that their own identity negotiations occurred in the confines of a highly competitive and marketised sector, deeply entrenched in neoliberal discourse and practice. The view, expressed by a range of participants, that teachers are individually responsible for their own work situations reflected a discourse of autonomous individualism. As an effect of this discourse, the responsibility for the limiting organisational arrangements and poor work conditions was shifted away from ECEC businesses and policy and onto individual teachers. Caught in the dilemma of seeking out the best work situations and conditions for themselves, teachers had little opportunity for collective advocacy.

Differences and Exclusions

The research illuminated a lack of a collective ECEC identity and highlighted how ECEC teacher identity negotiations occur through the processes of inclusion and exclusion. The research found differences including ethnicity, language, accent, socioeconomic status and qualifications worked to exclude and delegitimise the contributions of some teachers in the sector. Participants reported experiences of exclusion and felt the alienating effects of hierarchies between teachers. Their narratives revealed how they participated in these processes, perpetuating differences between one another and strategically employing discourse to position themselves as professional. The findings provided many examples of how participants categorised and pathologised one another as more (or less) professional, good, normal or otherwise. A particularly challenging finding is that ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers were frequently seen as less professional. The knowledges and experiences of these teachers

were discredited by some participants. Ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers were frequently portrayed as having different priorities (usually economic rather than educational), lacking in agency and easily exploited—rather than rendering any sense of solidarity and commitment to the other, these teachers were further marked out as other.

Kindergarten teachers were consistently portrayed as more professional, more qualified, holding more status, predominately Pākehā and university educated. Some participants reported feeling excluded from working in kindergarten, believing their ethnicity or qualifications would not be accepted. The result was a "pecking order" in which some teacher identities were perceived to be more valuable than others.

Implications and Future Research

Confronting The (In)Visibility of Care

Two key challenges arise from findings about teachers' care work. The first is the importance of confronting how the (in)visibility of care contributes to the status and work conditions of teachers, reinforced by the bifurcation of care and education across contexts. The second is to find ways to consistently articulate how all forms of care and care labour are legitimate forms of professional knowledge and practice relevant in all ECEC contexts, integral to and not separate from children's learning and wellbeing. This research has demonstrated that there is still work to do to further understand how the multifaceted aspects of care are embedded in relations of power and inequity, to untangle care from maternal discourse, and to conceptualise a pedagogy and ethics of care that is fundamental to all teaching work.

Collective engagement with the role of care may contribute to more equitable relationships, including those between teachers who sit on either side of the care and education divide (Langford et al., 2017). Ethics of care scholars argue for teaching work to be seen as a form of ethical responsiveness situated in caring relationships, which acknowledges the varying degrees to which we are dependent on one another (Barnes, 2019). Conceptualising care as an ethical undertaking recognises the inseparable nature of care and education, the role of care in creating environments conducive to learning and to fostering citizens who care about one another and the world they live in. This perspective of care, which is relevant to all teaching work, rejects the neoliberal ideal of autonomous individualism in which a reliance on care is a seen as a private burden to be resolved as quickly as possible (Sevenhuijsen, 1998). The potential for teaching work to be articulated in this way is diminished by policy that focuses on

measurable competency standards (Taggart, 2019). Further consideration of care ethics in teacher education programmes, policy and teacher forums could provide openings for a debate about care and signal a valuing of care in all its facets as an important to being a teacher. Valuing the contribution of care is particularly salient to the political dimension of teachers' work, especially as society is being challenged to recognise the persistent devaluing of women and care work.

Confronting How Market-Based Approaches Impact on Teachers

The research has examined some of the ways teachers construct their identities in a privatised landscape. Teacher participants in this research were frequently in the position of having to negotiate their identities and careers on their own in a competitive marketplace. The focus on managerial practices, compliance and loyalty in some ECEC businesses raises serious concerns about the potential for these settings to provide teachers with robust and safe environments for collective and critical engagement with the factors that impact their work and identities. These include the impact of managerial and market discourses, competition and consumer provider relationships.

The impact of market discourse in creating inequitable and unsafe work environments for teachers requires urgent attention in policy. The recent strategic plan for ECEC outlines five interdependent objectives and 25 actions "intended to work together to raise quality, improve equity and enable choice of service type" (MoE, 2019, p. 3). The action plan includes a strategy that promises "a mechanism that improves the levels and consistency of teachers' salaries and conditions across the early learning sector" (MoE, 2019, p. 25). The 2020 budget made some movement towards this by reestablishing pay parity for kindergarten teachers, ensuring the starting salaries for degree-qualified teachers are the same as their kindergarten counterparts, and reinstating the 100% qualified funding band. These are positive signposts that some of the inequities that impact on teachers may begin to be resolved. However, as Dalli et al. (2020) point out, these changes only benefit some teachers in some centres and alone will not be enough to ensure equitable workplaces across the sector. Overall, the plan also shows lack of political will to confront problems associated with profit seeking, competition, managerialism and expectations of compliance embedded in the sector. Further and bolder strategies will be needed to unwind the damaging effects of a long-term commitment to privatisation in policy.

Confronting Difference and Exclusion

The processes of exclusion highlighted in the research demonstrate the complex and political nature of identity construction, including how identities are socially constructed through subjective experiences including of: gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and residency status. Differences among teachers surfaced painfully when identity negotiations were individualised. *Te Whāriki* and wider policy documents embrace the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families but make no reference to teachers' cultural otherness (Arndt et al., 2018). This is an omission that could be remedied. The most recent strategic plan includes the objective that "Children and whānau experience environments which promote their wellbeing and support identity, language and culture" (MoE, 2019, p. 16). In light of the findings discussed above, these policy goals might be adapted to aspire to environments that promote the wellbeing and support the identities, languages and cultures of all children, families and teachers. Including teachers in such policy goals would acknowledge the exclusionary experiences and positioning of some teachers, open spaces for conversations about teacher experiences and contributions, and lead to strategies for change.

Findings that have suggested the exclusion and marginalisation of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers also expose a limitation of the research. The majority of participants in this research were Pākehā so the research lacks voices representing ethnically and linguistically diverse teachers. The experiences of these teachers, including how they negotiate their identities, are not well attended to in the scholarship. It is highly possible that this group of teachers would have different perceptions and experiences to share, and may resist the ways that their identities have been interpreted by participants in this research. Further research which includes the experiences and voices of this group of teachers is needed.

Supporting Critical Engagement, Collective Advocacy and Activism

The research has pointed to the various and contradictory representations of professionalism offered to teachers in policy and in different contexts. Critical engagement with the politics of the sector is an important aspect of teaching work constrained in the current context. Fenech and Lotz (2018) argue that critical engagement, advocacy and activism are a part of teachers' responsibilities and commitments to children, families and the profession. Mirroring the findings of this research, they also point out that many of the dominant constructions of professionalism offered to teachers in policy and in business-orientated ECEC settings diminish teachers' undertaking of critical engagement and advocacy. Early childhood teachers and

student-teachers can be encouraged to interrogate and challenge the various definitions of professionalism available to them in different contexts, leading to a better sense of how their own identities are shaped.

Teacher-education programmes can play a significant role in assisting teachers to develop the capacity to participate in this kind of critical examination. TEs were the smallest participant group. Perhaps because of this, their voices feature less often in the findings chapters. What was evident from their interviews was a commitment to bicultural, democratic and participatory teaching practices, strongly aligned with *Te Whāriki.* TEs frequently expressed their desire for students to take up these values and practices as they enter the profession. It would appear that some TEs believed that the bicultural and democratic messages in *Te Whāriki* should be enough to counter other influences on teacher identities such as the performative discourses in policy and the discourses of entrepreneurship and compliance found in many ECEC workplaces.

Teacher education has an important role in assisting teachers to confront the realities of the sector and engaging students in a critical examination of official expectations. This research demonstrated the usefulness of CDA as a theoretical approach to revealing and problematising the complex influences of overlapping discourses both in policy and in different teaching contexts. CDA could also provide a useful approach to support both TEs and students to critically examine and problematise the various ways teachers are positioned in the documents and contexts that shape their work. Undertaking CDA during teacher education could be a way to encourage participation in collective, critical dialogue and the discussion of possible solutions. These activities could encourage students to see themselves as capable of advocacy at a sector level.

Beyond teacher education, spaces for teachers across the sector to come together to engage in critical dialogue are also needed. The research highlighted how neoliberal discourses permeate the sector, separate teachers from each other, and create divisions between services and teachers. There is a need to create opportunities for teachers from across the sector to come together, away from their employment situations, share experiences and critical dialogue, problematise the status quo and work through collective solutions. The need for such opportunities is supported by scholars such as Osgood (2006), who suggests the provision of safe spaces may enable teachers to become agents of change, and M. Rogers et al. (2020) who

identified that participation in peer mentoring communities of practice, mutual learning through critical friends, and cross-sector professional development opportunities supported their teacher participants' feelings of efficacy. Importantly, all of these activities occurred independently from these teachers' immediate work places.

In this research, participation in focus groups appeared to play a productive role in helping teachers to discuss and think together, outside of the complexities of their immediate work contexts. Teachers in each group built rapport and affiliations with one another quickly, and needed very little facilitation to talk about their experiences. Although each group only met twice, their interactions were respectful, empathetic, thoughtful and inquiring. They were also occasionally unsettling and challenging. Scholars have noted the potential for focus groups to act as spaces of community and collective engagement for teachers grappling with the complexities of the sector (Farquhar & Tesar, 2016; Puig & Recchia, 2008). This kind of collective engagement is in keeping with the community consciousness that has informed the development of ECEC in Aotearoa and has the potential to create momentum towards a larger social movement as participating teachers identify common goals and a collective desire for change. However, an ongoing challenge will be to find ways to engage groups of teachers who are less likely to participate. In this research, voices from the corporate sector, and from culturally and linguistically diverse teachers, were missing. I found these groups difficult to access and therefore invite into the research. It is possible that some teachers did not feel safe or have the time, space or interest to participate, and yet their experiences, voices and perspectives are needed in order to understand issues and devise solutions that benefit all teachers.

Final Thoughts

Early childhood teachers work in a sector that expects high levels of professionalism but offers little status or recognition of the complexity of their work. Many participants struggled to preserve a sense of integrity and effectiveness in settings that were highly managerial and compliance orientated.

The naming of early childhood teachers is political, and underlies perceptions about expertise, professionalism and status. Naming is an important aspect of identity because nomenclatures have the power to include, exclude and categorise. It is problematic that there is still no agreed or universal term within the sector for qualified teachers. Confusion about who a teacher is and

what a teacher does is compounded by the presence of unqualified teachers, and the conflation of their roles, responsibilities and titles. In *Te Whāriki*, kaiako is used to collectively refer to all adults, regardless of role or qualification. This detracts from the specific knowledge and expertise qualified teachers bring to centres. This research problematised the adoption of kaiako, specifically the lack of opportunity for debate and for developing shared understandings about the meaning inherent in the word. Other nomenclatures including caregivers, staff and educators are embedded in discourse and meaning that fail to capture the complexity of ECEC teaching work. Further sector-wide discussion and debate about the terms used for teachers, what and who they represent, and the impact of naming on recognition and status, are necessary.

Struggles to define what being an ECEC teacher means shifted dramatically according to context. In some contexts, professionalism was defined through the needs of the ECEC business rather than a broader, shared understanding. This inwards-focused professionalism demonstrates how teachers can become disconnected from each other and from wider sector politics. Historically, childcare and kindergarten have been shaped by strong teacher engagement with advocacy and activism, for the profession as well as for children and families. The strong collective identities that once resulted from such engagements appear diminished. The research found that a lack of opportunity for collective agency is strongly connected to the individualising discourses and practices of neoliberalism.

Previous scholarship has called for more complex and critical conceptualisations of teachers and teaching practice, grounded in the relationships and contextual influences in which the teaching work takes place (Miller et al., 2012). *Te Whāriki* supports the construction of local and contextualised teacher identities by emphasising the development of curriculum guided by local concerns and priorities. However, this research revealed that these messages are frequently contradicted by the emphasis on externally defined standards and competencies, and the influences of consumer choice and competition on teachers' work. The dominance of the global neoliberal narrative in defining what kinds of teachers and teaching practices are valuable and worthy of government investment further exposes the limitations of using *Te Whāriki* as the sole basis for the development of robust, localised teacher identities. Arndt et al. (2021) warn that the emphasis on highly contextualised identity constructions is "largely ignored by powerful agents that shape the field of early childhood" and "enable divide and rule politics" (p. 100). Certainly, this research showed that divisions between teachers have reduced

the likelihood that they will come together to challenge some of the ways they are positioned in the sector. Yet, when teachers did come together in focus groups, the potential for critical engagement and solidarity was glimpsed.

Strategies that promote and support multiple, contextualised *and* collective identities are needed (Arndt et al., 2021). These strategies would enable teachers to ground their priorities and practices in their community contexts, support them to identify the constraints of those contexts, and to collectively respond based on a broader professional consciousness that is political and democratic. The entrenchment of neoliberal discourse in the sector requires different strategies, and "new modes of political and ethical agency" (Braidotti, 2011, cited in Arndt et al., 2021, p. 100) than have been used before. It will be a challenge for the sector, which is largely entrenched in market ideology, to see past market-based approaches as the only solution to provision. However, as this research attests, this challenge needs to be met in order to confront the inequities that have emerged as a result of the long-term policy commitments to market-based solutions, and to acknowledge the ways in which neoliberal policy and discourse undermine teacher identities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Notice ECEC Teachers and Centre Leaders

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

Epsom Campus
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Auckland, New Zealand
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New Zealand

Notice for recruiting early childhood teachers and leaders

Early childhood teacher identities In Aotearoa New Zealand – Participants wanted

Tēnā koutou katoa

My name is Kiri Gould. I am a doctoral student at the University of Auckland, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral research exploring early childhood teacher identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is my research about?

The focus of my research is on how early childhood teachers construct their professional identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research will explore professional identities as they are constructed at a number of levels: in policy, in teacher education, in early childhood services, and at the individual level of the teacher themselves. *A part of this research includes seeking the experiences and perspectives of those currently working in the sector through participation in focus groups or individual interviews.*

What would your participation mean?

I am seeking two groups of participants:

Qualified early childhood teachers: to participate in two one-hour focus groups with other teachers. Each focus group will be made up of a range of teachers working in different kinds of early childhood

services. These will be held after normal working hours on The University of Auckland Epsom Campus approximately four-six weeks apart between June and October 2017. Your participation will be confidential. I hope that teachers in the focus groups will enjoy and benefit from the opportunity to talk about their work with others in the sector.

Centre owners, managers, leaders: to participate in a one hour individual interview after normal working hours at the University of Auckland Epsom Campus. I am seeking individuals in leadership positions from across the sector and from a diverse range of different early childhood services. Your participation will be confidential. I hope that the individual interviews will provide an opportunity for leaders in the sector to articulate and reflect on their own perspectives and experiences with the sector.

If you would like to participate or would like more information:

Please contact me: k.gould@auckland.ac.nz and I will send you a detailed participant information sheet, and will be happy to answer any other questions you have.

Thank you

Kiri Gould

Appendix B: Teacher Participant Information Sheet

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

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Participant Information Sheet – Early Childhood Teachers

Project Title: Early Childhood Teacher Identities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Kiri Gould

Supervisors: Dr Sandy Farquhar/ Dr Angel Chan

Researcher Introduction

Tēnā koutou katoa

My name is Kiri Gould and I am a doctoral student in the University of Auckland, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral research exploring early childhood teacher identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Description of Research

The focus of my research is on how early childhood teachers construct their professional identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research will explore professional identities as they are constructed at a number of levels (in policy, in teacher education, and in early childhood organisations) and is interested in exploring directly with teachers how they negotiate their own teaching identities and what this means for their teaching practices. The research is covered by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC). It does not involve any specific early childhood organization or its operations but rather a diverse group of early childhood teachers recruited through professional organisations.

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in this research because you are currently working as a qualified early childhood teacher. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form to participate in two focus groups with other early childhood teachers. Participants will be taking part as individuals and not as representatives of their respective workplaces.

Risks and Benefits

This research will contribute to understandings about early childhood teacher identity in the current contexts of Aotearoa, and will consider the implications of these findings for teaching practices. It is hoped that participants in the focus group will benefit from conversations with colleagues across the early childhood sector about the work of being a teacher. As participants will be talking about their experiences of being a teacher confidentiality with the focus groups and in any reporting of the findings will be a priority.

The duration of this project is from May to December, 2017. If you agree to participate, your direct involvement will be between June and October, 2017.

Project Procedures

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to contribute to two, one-hour focus groups alongside 6-8 other early childhood teachers. The focus groups will be held after normal working hours, on the University of Auckland Epsom campus. It is anticipated that your total time contribution to the project will be approximately two hours.

This research involves using a digital recorder to record each focus group. This recording will be transcribed by myself and/or a transcriber under a confidentiality agreement.

Transcripts from the first focus group will be distributed to participants in that group to be used as a tool for reflection leading into the second focus group. Information from the focus groups will be kept confidential to participants in the focus groups, the researcher, and the transcriber. Participants in focus groups will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement as a part of informed consent to participate in the research. Pseudonyms will be used on the focus group transcripts.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You should not feel pressured to take part in the study and you may decline this invitation to participate without consequence.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Pseudonyms will be used in any reporting of the data (including on focus group transcripts) and no data that could reveal your identity (or where you work) will be used in any publications. However, given the group nature of focus groups it is possible that other participants may be able to identify anecdotal references to themselves or to each other in subsequent publications. To maintain confidentiality all participants will agree to keep their participation in this research confidential and not to discuss details with any other parties outside of the focus group.

Right to Withdraw Participation

You may withdraw from the study at anytime without explanation. You can also choose not to answer any particular questions and you may leave the room at any time during the focus group. However, given the group nature of focus groups, data may not be withdrawn after the focus group(s) have taken place.

Data Storage

Audio files from digital recordings will be stored on a password protected University of Auckland computer, backed by a server, that only the researcher will have access to. Consent forms and transcripts will be stored separately in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. In keeping with University procedures, all data will be stored for six years and then destroyed. Paper data will be shredded and the audio-files deleted.

Report on Findings

If you participate and would like to receive a report on findings, please provide a contact phone number or email address in the space provided on the consent form.

Researcher and Supervisor Contact Details

If you have questions about the research, please contact me or one of my supervisors using the details below:

Researcher: Kiri Gould	Supervisor: Dr Sandy Farquhar	Supervisor: Dr Angel Chan
k.gould@auckland.ac.nz (09) 373-7599 ext. 4838	s.farquhar@auckland.ac.nz (09) 373-7599 ext. 48270	a.chan@auckland.ac.nz (09) 373-7599 ext. 48884

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (08.05.17) for a period of three years. Reference: **019094.**

Appendix C: Teacher Consent Form

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

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W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Consent Form – Early Childhood Teachers

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Early Childhood Teacher Identities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Kiri Gould
Supervisors: Dr Sandy Farquhar and Dr Angel Chan

I have read the participant information sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- My participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I will be involved in two one-hour focus groups which will be conducted between June 2017 and October 2017.
- I agree to be recorded during the focus groups.
- I understand that transcripts of the audio recordings will be made available to me to provide continuity of discussion, teacher reflection and analyses between each of the

focus groups.

- I consent to having my focus group contributions made available to other people who participate in the focus group through the provision of a transcript.
- I understand that a transcriber may be used to transcribe the focus group recordings, under a signed confidentiality agreement.
- I understand that I may choose not to answer questions and that I may leave the room during a focus group without consequence.
- I understand that I will be given a pseudonym in reports and publications.
- I understand that a pseudonym for my workplace will also be used and that any details that could identify myself or where I work will not be used in any reporting of the research findings.
- I understand that, due to the group nature of this study it is possible that participants may identify themselves and/or others in subsequent publication of research findings therefore anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
- I agree to keep my involvement in this study confidential and not discuss details with any other parties, including centre staff or any other outside parties.
- I understand that the researcher will do her best to preserve the confidentiality of all the participants but cannot fully guarantee that confidentiality will be maintained.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research at any time without consequence or explanation
- I understand that given the group nature of focus groups I will not be able to amend or withdraw data from any focus group once the focus group has taken place.
- I understand that audio files from digital recordings will be stored on a University of Auckland password protected computer, backed by a server that only the researcher will have access to. Transcripts and consent forms will be stored separately in a locked cabinet.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand the findings from the research may be used in future publications and presentations.

- I wish/ do not wish to be provided with a summary of the findings which will be provided to me at this email/ postal address:

Name:______________________ Signature:___________________ Date:

____

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (8.05.2017) for three years. Reference number: **019094.**

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions—First Meeting

Warm Up/ Introductions:

Please introduce yourself. (Who you are, where you work, how long you have been in the sector, why you became a teacher).

Main questions and possible prompts:

1. What makes a good early childhood teacher?

Possible prompts: Could these characteristics describe any teacher? Are early childhood teachers unique from other teachers? Are these characteristics the same across the sector? Would an employer create the same list?

2. What kinds of things impact on your work as a teacher?

Possible prompts: What do you think about the conditions of work for ECEC teachers in NZ? How do you think the status of ec teachers is perceived? How do these things shape how you see yourself as a teacher? What other factors influence how ECEC teachers see themselves?

3. Can you see yourself still teaching in five years time? Why/ Why not?
4. What are the key issues for teachers in the sector at the moment? How should these be addressed?
5. *Te Whāriki* uses the term Kaiako for all adults in early childhood centres. What is your opinion about this?

Appendix E: Focus Group Questions—Second Meeting

I am wondering about the experience of the focus group from our last meeting and what you thought about after you left?

Did reading over the transcript raise any other thoughts that you want to bring to the group?

The discussion touched on the notion of a hierarchy of teachers in terms of status– with kindergarten teachers being at the top, and I have been wondering about this in terms of the idea of teacher identity. Could we talk a bit more about this?

Different experiences in different contexts came up in both groups. Can you tell me about your experiences in different contexts and how this impacted on your work? (eg: Nicole -been a kindy teacher and now back at a community-based)

I was interested, when you were asked to describe a good teacher that you drew mostly on the affective, relational, and even intimate aspects of being a teacher. Are there other things that are important too?

You drew on philosophy and approaches to guide your understanding of teaching like Kaupapa Māori, Montessori, and RIE. Do you think it is important to have this kind of guiding framework in your work? How important is it that it is shared? Could this change be depending on where you were teaching?

From your own experiences how much does workplace culture impact on your teaching practice? What sets a workplace culture? What kinds of things support you to be a good teacher? What kinds of things constrain the work you do?

Beyond the workplace what kind of contextual things affect your work?

Realities of teaching compared the ideal of teaching?

How might you like the sector to change?

Thinking back to your initial teacher education—how has this impacted on your understandings of teaching?

Appendix F: Participant Information Sheet—Centre Leaders

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

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W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet – Early Childhood Leaders

Project Title: Early Childhood Teacher Identities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Kiri Gould

Supervisors: Dr Sandy Farquhar/ Dr Angel Chan

Researcher Introduction

Tēnā koutou katoa

My name is Kiri Gould and I am a doctoral student at the University of Auckland, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral research exploring early childhood teacher identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Description of Research

The focus of my research is on how early childhood teachers construct their professional identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research will explore professional identities as they are constructed at a number of levels (in policy, in initial teacher education, and by individual teachers). As a part of this research I am interested in exploring the construction of teaching identities within early childhood services by interviewing individuals in positions of leadership within a range of different services. The research is covered by University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC). It does not involve any specific early childhood organisation or its operations

but rather a diverse group of early childhood teachers and leaders recruited through professional organisations.

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in this research because you are currently working in a position of leadership within an early childhood service. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form to participate in a one-hour individual interview. Participants will be taking part as individuals and not as representatives of their respective workplaces.

Risks and Benefits

This research will contribute to understandings about the construction of teaching identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa, and will consider the implications of these findings for teaching practices. It is hoped that participants of the individual interviews will benefit from having an opportunity to talk about their work, perspectives and experiences. As participants will be asked to talk about their own perspectives and experiences confidentiality of both the participant and their workplace is a priority.

The duration of this project is from May to December, 2017. If you agree to participate, your direct involvement will be between June and October, 2017.

Project Procedures

Individual interviews will be held after normal working hours, on the University of Auckland Epsom campus. It is anticipated that your total time contribution to the project will one hour.

This research involves using a digital recorder to record each interview. The interview recording will be transcribed by myself and/or a transcriber under a confidentiality agreement. Transcripts will be kept confidential to the research and transcriber.

You will be provided with a transcript of your interview for you to review.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You should not feel pressured to take part in the study and you may decline this invitation to participate without consequence.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Pseudonyms will be used in any reporting of the data and no data that could reveal your identity (or the identity of your work place) will be used in any reporting of the findings.

Right to Withdraw Participation

You may withdraw from the study at anytime without explanation. You can ask for recording of the interview to be stopped at any point. You may amend or withdraw your interview data up to four weeks after the transcript has been provided to you.

Data Storage

Audio files from digital recordings will be stored on a password protected University of Auckland computer, backed by a server, that only the researcher will have access to. Transcripts and consent forms will be stored separately in a locked cabinet. In keeping with University procedures, all data will be stored for six years and then destroyed. Paper data will be shredded and the audio-files deleted.

Report on Findings

If you participate and would like to receive a report on findings, please provide a contact phone number or email address in the space provided on the consent form.

Researcher and Supervisor Contact Details

If you have questions about the research, please contact me or one of my supervisors using the details below:

Researcher: Kiri Gould	Supervisor: Dr Sandy Farquhar	Supervisor: Dr Angel Chan
k.gould@auckland.ac.nz (09) 373-7599 ext. 4838	s.farquhar@auckland.ac.nz (09) 373-7599 ext. 48270	a.chan@auckland.ac.nz (09) 373-7599 ext. 48884

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (08.05.2017) for a period of three years. Reference: **019094.**

Appendix G: Consent Forms–Centre Leaders

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

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Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Consent Forms – Early Childhood Leaders

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Early Childhood Teacher Identities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Kiri Gould
Supervisors: Dr Sandy Farquhar and Dr Angel Chan

I have read the participant information sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- My participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I will be involved in a one-hour individual interview that will be held between June 2017 and October 2017.
- I agree to be recorded during the interview.
- I understand that a transcript of the audio recording will be made available to me to review and amend.

- I understand that a transcriber may be used to transcribe the interview recordings, under a signed confidentiality agreement.

- I understand that I may choose not to answer questions without penalty.
- I understand that I will be given a pseudonym in reports and publications.
- I understand that a pseudonym for my workplace will also be used and that any details that could identify myself or where I work will not be used in any reporting of the research findings.
- I agree to keep my involvement in this study confidential and not discuss details with any other parties.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research at any time without consequence or explanation.
- I understand that I can amend or withdraw any data from the interview up to four weeks after the interview transcripts have been provided to me.
- I understand that audio files from digital recordings will be stored on a University of Auckland password protected computer, backed by a server that only the researcher will have access to. Transcripts and consent forms will be stored separately in a locked cabinet.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand the findings from the research may be used in future publications and presentations.
- I wish to be provided with a summary of the findings which will be provided to me at this email/ postal address:

  ____

  ____

  Name:________________________

  Signature:____________________ Date: ___________________

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (8.05.17) for three years. Reference number: **019094.**

Appendix H: Interview Schedule–Centre Leaders

Warm Up:

Tell me about your role in the organisation?

Considering your own leadership role, what do you consider to be the most important leadership qualities that you bring?

Main questions:

In what way are these qualities similar or different from teachers in your organisation who lead teaching?

When appointing teachers—what qualities/skills/ attributes do you look for? **Or** What do you think are the key characteristics of a good teacher?

(Are any of these characteristics unique to early childhood teachers or are the shared across sectors? How about within the sector—are there things unique to particular organisations that make a good teacher?)

Te Whāriki uses the term Kaiako for all adults in early childhood centres. What do you think this naming says about the profession?

(Is the work that early childhood teachers do unique from other teachers? In what ways? What does this mean for how early childhood teachers are perceived? Is this the same across the sector?)

Please comment on how you see ec teachers' status is perceived?

Thinking wider than your own organisation, what do you think about the conditions of work for ec teachers in NZ?

How much do you think this impacts/influences teachers' perception of themselves—what other factors influence how ec teachers see themselves?

What are the key issues for teachers in the sector at the moment?
How do you think these should be addressed?

Appendix I: Research Notice—Initial Teacher Educators

EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

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Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Notice for recruiting initial teacher educators

Early childhood teacher identities In Aotearoa New Zealand – Participants wanted

Tēnā koutou katoa

My name is Kiri Gould. I am a doctoral student at the University of Auckland, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral research exploring early childhood teacher identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is my research about?

The focus of my research is on how early childhood teachers construct their professional identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research will explore professional identities as they are constructed at a number of levels: in policy, in initial teacher education, in early childhood services, and at the individual level of the teacher themselves. *A part of this research includes seeking the experiences and perspectives of those currently working as initial teacher educators from a range of initial teacher education providers.*

What would your participation mean?

I am inviting you to participate in two one-hour focus groups with other initial teacher educators. These will be held after normal working hours on the University of Auckland Epsom Campus approximately four-six weeks apart between June and October 2017. Your participation will be confidential. I hope that teacher educators in the focus groups will enjoy and benefit from the opportunity to talk about their experiences and perspectives of initial teacher education.

If you would like to participate or would like more information:

Please contact me: k.gould@auckland.ac.nz and I will send you a detailed participant information sheet, and will be happy to answer any other questions you have.

Thank you

Kiri Gould

Appendix J: Participant Information Sheet—Initial Teacher Educators

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

Epsom Campus
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T +64 9 623 8899
W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet – Initial Teacher Educators

Project Title: Early Childhood Teacher Identities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Kiri Gould

Supervisors: Dr Sandy Farquhar/ Dr Angel Chan

Researcher Introduction

Tēnā koutou katoa

My name is Kiri Gould and I am a doctoral student in the University of Auckland, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice. I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral research exploring early childhood teacher identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Description of Research

The focus of my research is on how early childhood teachers construct their professional identities in the current contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research will explore professional identities as they are constructed at a number of levels (in policy, within early childhood organisations, and by individual teachers) and is interested in exploring the construction of teaching identities within initial teacher education programmes.

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in this research because you are currently working in an initial teacher education programme for early childhood teachers. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form to participate focus groups with other initial teacher educators.

Risks and Benefits

This research will contribute to understandings about early childhood teacher identity in the current contexts of Aotearoa, and will consider the implications of these findings for teaching practices. It is hoped that participants in the focus group will benefit from conversations with colleagues across the initial teacher education sector about how teacher education contributes to teacher identity. As participants will be talking about their experiences as initial teacher educators in their current contexts, confidentiality within the focus groups and in any reporting of the findings will be a priority.

Project Procedures

The duration of this project is from May to December, 2017. If you agree to participate, your direct involvement will be between June and October, 2017.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to contribute to two, one-hour focus groups alongside 6-8 other initial teacher educators. The focus groups will be held after normal working hours, on the University of Auckland Epsom campus. It is anticipated that your total time contribution to the project will be approximately two hours over a four-month period.

This research involves using a digital recorder to record each focus group. This recording will be transcribed by myself and/or a transcriber under a confidentiality agreement.

Transcripts from the first focus group will be distributed to participants in that group to be used as a tool for reflection leading into the second focus group. Information from the focus groups will be kept confidential to participants within the focus group, the researcher, and the transcriber. Participants in focus groups will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement as a part of informed consent to participate in the research. Pseudonyms will be used on the focus group transcripts.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You should not feel pressured to take part in the study and you may decline this invitation to participate without

consequence.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Pseudonyms will be used in any reporting of the data (including on focus group transcripts) and no data that could reveal your identity (or where you work) will be used in any publications. However, given the group nature of focus groups, it is possible that other participants may be able to identify anecdotal references to themselves or to each other in subsequent publications. To maintain confidentiality, all participants will agree to keep their participation in this research confidential and not to discuss details with any other parties outside of the focus group.

Right to Withdraw Participation

You may withdraw from the study at anytime without explanation. You can choose not to answer any particular question and may leave the room at any stage during the focus group recording. However, given the group nature of focus groups, data may not be withdrawn after the focus group(s) have taken place.

Data Storage

Audio files from digital recordings will be stored on a password protected University of Auckland computer, backed by a server that only the researcher will have access to. Consent forms and transcripts will be stored separately in a locked cabinet in the researchers office. In keeping with University procedures, all data will be stored for six years and then destroyed. Paper data will be shredded and the audio-files deleted.

Report on Findings

If you participate and would like to receive a report on findings, please provide a contact phone number or email address in the space provided on the consent form.

Researcher and Supervisor Contact Details

If you have questions about the research, please contact me or one of my supervisors using the details below:

Researcher: Kiri Gould	Supervisor: Dr Sandy Farquhar	Supervisor: Dr Angel Chan

k.gould@auckland.ac.nz	s.farquhar@auckland.ac.nz	a.chan@auckland.ac.nz
(09) 373-7599 ext. 4838	(09) 373-7599 ext. 48270	(09) 373-7599 ext. 48884

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 08.05.2017 for a period of three years. Reference 019094

Appendix K: Consent Form—Initial Teacher Educators

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Learning Development and Professional Practice

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The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Consent Forms – Initial Teacher Educators

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Early Childhood Teacher Identities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Kiri Gould
Supervisors: Dr Sandy Farquhar and Dr Angel Chan

I have read the participant information sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- My participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I will be involved in two one-hour focus groups which will be conducted between June 2017 and October 2017.
- I agree to be recorded during the focus groups.
- I understand that transcripts of the audio recordings will be made available to me to provide continuity of discussion, teacher reflection and analyses between each of the focus groups.

- I consent to having my focus group contributions made available to other people who participate in the focus group through the provision of a transcript.
- I understand that a transcriber may be used to transcribe the focus group recordings, under a signed confidentiality agreement.
- I understand that I may choose not to answer questions and that I may leave the room during a focus group without consequence.
- I understand that I will be given a pseudonym in any reports and publications.
- I understand that, due to the group nature of this study it is possible that participants may identify themselves and/or others in subsequent publication of research findings, therefore anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
- I agree to keep my involvement in this study confidential and not discuss details with any other parties.
- I understand that the researchers will do their best to preserve the confidentiality of all the participants but cannot fully guarantee that confidentiality will be maintained.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research at any time without consequence or explanation
- I understand that given the group nature of focus groups I will not be able to withdraw data from any focus group once the focus group has taken place.
- I understand that audio files from digital recordings will be stored on a University fo Auckland password protected computer, backed by a server that only the researcher will have access to. Transcripts and consent forms will be stored separately in a locked cabinet.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand the findings from the research may be used in future publications and presentations.
- I wish/not wish to be provided with a summary of the findings which will be provided to

me at this email/ postal address:

____

____

Name:________________________

Signature:_____________________ Date: ___________________

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on the 08.05.2017 for three years. Reference number: 019094

Appendix L: Interview Schedule—Teacher Educators

Warm Up:

What do you enjoy most about being a teacher educator?

Thinking about your programme, if there was one aspect you could keep what would it be?
(What do you think students' value most about your programme?)

Main questions:

When selecting students -– what qualities/skills/ attributes do you look for?
(Why are these important?)

What do you think are the key characteristics of a good teacher?
(Are any of these characteristics unique to early childhood teachers or are they shared across sectors? How about within the sector – are there things unique to particular organisations that make a good teacher?)

How well do you feel students are prepared for the realities of the sector? How do you address this in your programme?

What are the key issues for initial teacher education in the sector at the moment? How do you think these should be addressed?

What are the key issues for teachers in the sector at the moment? How do you think these should be addressed?

Appendix M: Tree Map—First Stage Coding in NVivo

PROFESSIONALISM
Competition in Sector
CHILDCARE
Private Sector
Kindergartens
Care Work
politics - private sector
politics - inequities betw...
identities context bound s...
identity - kindergarten tea...
Status of ECE teachers
politics - ownership
indentities passionate
Identities - teachers...
practices - relations...
Identities - teachers ...
Identities - ways of ...
practices - professi...
Identity - being seen...
situated meanings -...
identities - teacher...
practices - team ...
practices - profes...
practices - commu...
leadership
identities teachers ...
work conditions
significance - buis...
significa...
significance...
politics - diff...
identity - co...
practices - re...
practice - te...
Identities - u...
practices c...
practices...
politi...
privilege - ...
indentities ...
privilege - ...
identity - b...
Practices -...
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politics - s...
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Appendix N: University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee [UAHPEC] Approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ehtics and Compliance

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 87830 / 83761
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

08-May-2017

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Sandra Farquhar
Learning,Development&ProfPrac

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 019094): Approved with comment

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **Early Childhood Teacher Identities In Aotearoa New Zealand** .

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years with the following comment(s):

1. The committee would like to thank the applicants for a well written application.

2. Please add to the PIS that focus group participants may withdraw at any time but are unable to withdraw data provided, due to the nature of the focus group.

The expiry date for this approval is 08-May-2020.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: **019094.**

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Learning,Development&ProfPrac
Kiri Gould
Angel Chan

Additional information:

1. Should you need to make any changes to the project, write to the Committee giving full details including revised documentation.

2. Should you require an extension, write to the Committee before the expiry date giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which time you must make a new application.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, you are requested to advise the Committee of its completion.

4. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.

5. Send a copy of this approval letter to the Awards Team at the, Research Office if you have obtained funding other than from UniServices. For UniServices contract, send a copy of the approval letter to: Contract Manager, UniServices.

6. Please note that the Committee may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.