

# Code of ethics in childcare



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## Ethical dilemma

Ethical dilemma is a situation involving issues of *right* and *wrong*, *duties*, or *obligations* that have more than one defensible resolution, each of which can be justified in moral terms. It makes us think to choose what is right and wrong.

Early childhood educators are faced with daily ethical dilemmas and moral conundrums that challenge our view of ourselves and the support we offer. The NZTC Code of Ethics is a tool that urges educators to privilege relationships with children, their families and the communities of which they are a part, and articulate these in terms of children's growth and learning, just as New Zealand Code of Ethics is a tool that guides the educators to find their sense of what they ought to do.

## My 1st reaction

I believe that we should follow the Curriculum. I accept that there is no Maori child in the centre but the children in the centre going to grow up and going for primary and higher studies and the situations in higher schools and colleges never going to be same like our centre. In early age children minds are fresh and accepting the morals and values what we are teaching them.

If we not teaching them according to the curriculum at ECE centre then it going to be hard expecting respect from them for other cultures especially Maori. In respect of making them responsible citizens, I think us not playing our best role by not teaching them Maori at early age.

It's going to be new and hard for children to accept the bi-cultural curriculum at primary school level. They might not happily accept the Maori language in curriculum plus they might not be respectful toward the Maori culture.

I agree that some parents might not be happy with introducing their children with Maori language at centre. But my intention is to introduce the language now to the children rather than they have to struggle in the future. Ethically I try to convince the teachers and parents to stick to the curriculum, which is more important. We all got to understand that Maori is the Native language of New Zealand and we can't avoid it.

Teach and model those positive values which are widely accepted in society and encourage learners to apply them and critically appreciate their significance.

<http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/required/ethics/coe-poster-english.pdf>

### Identifying the stakeholders

1. Teachers who want to implement Te Reo: -Teachers are the main stakeholders in this situation. They are in a situation where it's hard to choose what to do. 1<sup>st</sup> they have to think about the curriculum then about the opinions of staff members and the parents of children they teach. It's more hard when other staff members justifying not to implement Te Reo and tikanga maori.
2. Teachers who justifying don't need to implement Te Reo: -Teachers who are happy not to implement Te Reo. Even though they are right too in doing so in some stages, when they don't have maori child in the

centre. Teachers attend to the needs of children first and put children ahead of their own needs. They putting children ahead then the government agency.

Parents who are happy with current situation: -Those parents who are happy with not teaching maori to their children. Teachers have to consider their interests too when they don't want their children to learn Maori.

Gonzalez-Mena (2002) discusses the differences in individualism and collectivism with regard to early childhood education, and the difficulties that can arise when caregivers and family are at different ends of the continuum (Sarah Hartstone, personal communication Saturday, 23 January 2014, 10: 35 AM)

3. Parents who challenge the situation: -Those parents who want to stick to the curriculum.
4. Ministry of education: -Ministry of education sets up the curriculum for early childhood which is bi-cultural and guide us to implement Te Reo.
5. Children: -Children at early stage learn through what they see. Children at that stage can't make choices what they want to learn and what they don't, especially if we talk about implementation of Te Reo.

They learn about right and wrong not so much by what we say, but by what we do (Freeman, 1997).

Identifying the issues

Personal Morality: -We learned the differences between right and wrong through our life long experiences. We judge the things and situations on our decisions. Our personal moral decisions could be differ from social morality.

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Like in this situation my personal moral opinion is that we should be implementing the Te Reo and Tikanga Maori in centre even though if we don't have maori children in centre.

But the personal opinion of other educators could be totally different. They might don't feel necessary to implement Te Reo when we don't have any Maori child. Their 1<sup>st</sup> preference could be only best care for child and then curriculum or any other government agency is the second most preference.

Ethical issues: -Is it ethically necessary to implement Te Reo in the centre when we don't have any Maori child in the centre? When we answering this question lots of issues comes to our mind like other staff member opinions, parents opinion, curriculum. We might not easily get the right idea what exactly is ethical acceptable.

At this stage we need to follow the code of ethics.

Cultural issues: -The major problem in this situation is cultural issue. Staff members who wants to stick to the curriculum and wants to implement Te reo and tikanga Maori facing the major cultural issue. When they don't have any Maori child in the centre. It's quite pointless for some staff members and parents to teach Maori to non-Maori children.

But if we look at wider picture the children just not going to stay in that centre they are going to explore themselves in further studies. Maori culture is a rich culture and heritage that have lot of moral values which is necessary for our children to learn when they are going to live in New

Zealand. It's important to learn about the history and native language of our country.

Social issues: -We are living in a society with majority of European and Maori in it. If Maori's have learnt the English language then at least we should be knowing little bit of Maori culture and language. Our main responsibilities to make our children responsible citizens. To live with peace and love, it's important that our children should have respect for other culture.

If what we teaching children at home and what we teaching them at pre-school is same, then what is the benefit to send them to pre-schools!!?

Actually we should be making them socially aware by teaching them about the native culture and language of New Zealand.

Brainstorm solutions without evaluating them

1. Early childhood services care for and care about children. The significance of caring and relationship both as an educational goal, and as a fundamental aspect of what the ECS does is recognised.
2. We should stick to the Te Whariki which is bi-cultural and strictly pointing us to teach children both languages.
3. ECS decisions do not conflict with what is in the best and appropriate interests of children and their parents/caregivers.
4. Actions are not taken that could result in harm to any child and family associated with the ECS.
5. A supportive, non-threatening and non-judgemental environment for children and parents/caregivers is provided. The ECS management and staff or contractors are conscious of their own biases and are careful

not to let their personal and cultural views influence how they treat any child, parent, or group of children and families.

6. It is important that our children should have knowledge of New Zealand native culture and language.

7. If we follow the code of ethics even it tells us to teach Maori language in ECE centres.

### Code of Ethics for registered teachers

Application of the Code of Ethics shall take account of the requirements of the law as well as the obligation of the teachers to honour The Treaty of Waitangi by paying particular attention to the rights and aspirations of Maori as tangata whenua.

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So, according to the Code of Ethics it is clarified that we should teach Maori language at centres. Our setting should be same, who knows when a Maori child get enrolled to the centre. We can't say to the parents that sorry we have only European children studying in here. Even we can't immediately start teaching Maori language, then other children going to find it difficult to understand and that why we changing the daily routine.

According to Code of Ethics the professional interactions of teachers are governed by four fundamental principles:

- Autonomy
- Justice
- Responsible Care

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- Truth

Teacher should treat people with honour. They should share and prevent the abuse of power. Need to protect each and every ethnicity. They should be honest with their profession.

As teacher we should be committed to these four code of ethics:

1. COMMITMENT TO LEARNERS
2. COMMITMENT TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND WHANUA
3. COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY
4. COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION

The Sections a, b and c of Code number 3 Commitment to society

a) actively support policies and programmes which promote equality of opportunity for all

b) work collegially to develop schools and centres which model democratic ideals

c) teach and model those positive values which are widely accepted in society and encourage learners to apply them and critically appreciate their significance.

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Help me to find good solutions that we need to promote equality of opportunity for all. We should support democratic ideas. We should be teaching positive values which are widely accepted. However, we have Maori

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children in our centre or not, but we need to stick to the Te Whariki. And we don't know when new Maori child get enrolled to the centre.

## **References**

New Zealand Code of Ethics for registered Teachers (NZTC, 2004)

Freeman, N.(1997, September). Using NAEYC's code of ethics Mama and daddy Taught me Right from Wrong- Isn't that enough?(pp. 65)

Sarah Hartstone (2014, January 23) Te Kea Kaha Day 9/10. (online forum comment) retrieved from Moodle: TEPS 751-14C (NET).

New Zealand Code of Ethics for registered Teachers (NZTC, 2004)