

Learning Support Action Plan 2019–2025

The Learning Support Action Plan will drive progress towards an inclusive education system with a range of learning environments where children and young people with learning support needs, including disabilities, are welcome and where their achievement, progress, wellbeing and participation are valued and supported. This Action Plan builds on the Learning Support Delivery Model.

Drivers for change

This Action Plan brings together what we heard from stakeholders about improvements needed for learning support.

- » 2016 select committee Inquiry into Identification and Support for Students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism Spectrum Disorders
- » 2018 Kōrero Mātauranga Education Conversation
- » Oct 2018 public consultation on the draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan.

Building on current changes, and new investment

This Action Plan builds on:

- » the Learning Support Delivery Model developed on the basis of feedback from parents, whānau, teachers and other educators and disability representatives
- » new services for young children, their parents, whānau and teachers since 2017
- » \$283.8 million in new funding for learning support services (over four years) announced in May 2018.

Working together

- » Each of these priorities will involve further work.
- » Working with Māori to ensure the system will better support Māori learning will be vital.
- » Engaging, collaborating and, in some cases, co-designing with parents and whānau, teachers and other educators, and the disability sector will be essential to achieving these priorities.
- » The priorities must be achieved within available funding, and sequenced and phased in over time.

Priority 1: Learning Support Coordinators

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Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) will work together across a school cluster to ensure children and young people with learning support needs get the help they need. LSCs will work with teachers, school and kura leadership, and within the Learning Support Delivery Model to implement processes that help all children and young people progress, participate and make successful transitions.

We will...	Timing
Design and implement the first tranche in schools and kura.	Apr '19-Dec '21
Monitor/evaluate the implementation of the first tranche of LSCs. Design and implement the second tranche [subject to funding].	Jan '20-Dec '25

Priority 2: Screening and early identification of learning support needs

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Early identification and response to need has long-term benefits for children and young people. We need to be more systematic in how we identify a child's learning support needs, so they get assistance as quickly as possible. We will add a new set of screening tools to assess all children at certain stages, and work with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to ensure these are integrated into a coherent system of measurement with health checks and screening.

We will...	Timing
Develop evidence-based screening tools reflecting Māori concepts and focused on learning needs (rather than diagnosis) [subject to funding]:	
» screening for dyslexia, dyspraxia and gifted	Jul '19-Dec '25
» a consistent set of tools at school entry.	Jul '19-Dec '25
Explore (through MoH initiatives) early childhood measurement (around age three) and teen health screening [subject to funding].	From '20

Priority 3: Strengthening early intervention

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We will identify the volume, mix and additional types of services needed, including information and support for families and whānau, and build on services introduced since 2017. We will work with other agencies to integrate and provide more flexible supports eg with MoH on Mana Whaikaha, and with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust on an awareness campaign.

We will...	Timing
Reduce waiting times for existing early interventions.	Jul '19-Dec '25
Improve early intervention for young children and their whānau.	Jan '19-Dec '25
Improve alignment with MoH, MSD, Oranga Tamariki and other agencies.	Jan '19-Dec '20

Priority 4: Flexible supports for neurodiverse children and young people

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The focus in this priority is on building the understanding and capability of early learning services, schools and kura to teach and respond to neurodiverse children and young people to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.

We will work with the education and disability sectors, parents, whānau, young people and experts to develop new tools and resources for teachers, design new supports for children and young people, and address gaps in specialist services. There will need to be room for innovation and flexibility in the types of support.

We will also have some specific work streams to provide for particular needs, eg dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder.

We will...	Timing
Create a comprehensive set of tools and resources to help parents, teachers and other educators to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children and young people.	Jul '19-Dec '21
Strengthen specialist supports for children and young people with ongoing needs who don't qualify for the highest level of support and resourcing [subject to funding].	May '20-Dec '22
Design improvements with the Resource Teacher: Literacy service. Implement agreed improvements [subject to funding].	Jun '20-Jun '22

Priority 5: Meeting the learning needs of gifted children and young people

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We are working with sector experts to design a group of flexible supports for gifted children and young people. This work will address a current gap in support and provide new tools for teachers and other educators, whānau and their children.

We will...	Timing
Increase access to supports for gifted children and young people by implementing an initial package of support.	Jan-Dec '19
Implement an extended package of support for gifted children and young people.	Nov '19-Dec '20

Priority 6: Improving education for children and young people at risk of disengaging

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We want to prevent disengagement at any stage of a child or young person's educational journey, improve at-risk education provision for those who need it, and ensure better support is available to help children and young people re-engage in learning. Strengthening screening and the early identification of learning support needs will help identify learning difficulties that may lead to disengagement. Providing early additional support will address the needs of children and young people with behavioural needs.

We will...	Timing
Review options, drawing on good practice in NZ and overseas.	Feb-Jul '19
Co-design a more adaptable, flexible system of at-risk provision that better meets individual needs and is integrated with schools.	Feb-Oct '19
Implement new provision, including negotiating new contracts for service provision [subject to funding].	Jul '20-Jan '21
Review the stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsion guidelines.	Feb-Jul '20

The wider changes that improve learning support

This Action Plan identifies aspects of the Government's Education Work Programme working on system-level changes that will also address issues including, Tomorrow's Schools; Curriculum, Progress and Achievement; Education Workforce Strategy; National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA); Early Learning Strategic Plan; refresh of Ka Hikitia; Action Plan for Pacific Education; and Reform of Vocational Education.

Building knowledge on the right to enrol and receive an education

Ensure all trustees and school leaders build knowledge and understanding of the rights of all children and young people to enrol in and receive an education from their local school.

Building teacher confidence and capability

A greater focus on teacher professional learning will improve teaching practice for children and young people with disabilities and learning support needs.

Wellbeing

Feedback from stakeholders confirms the need for more support to provide positive learning environments that promote children and young people's wellbeing and resilience.

Improved data and information sharing

Bringing individual learners' information together in one place to allow an aggregated view of the educational needs of all children and young people.

Getting the network right

Taking a more strategic and community-based approach to identifying needs and sharing resources across schools, kura, specialist and residential schools, satellite units and learning support facilities.

Transitions and pathways out of school

Identify and close any gaps so that support and funding remain uninterrupted.