

## Introduction

EOTC is the term for all learning activities that take place beyond the classroom or early childhood centre building. This may mean a walk down the road or a week camping in the bush, one child listening to sounds in the playground or a group visit to a marae. Primary and secondary school teachers are familiar with the letters EOTC, standing for Education Outside The Classroom. Early childhood centres, however, have groups rather than classes, and the letters EOTC stand just as well for Education Outside The Centre.

Different approaches to EOTC are appropriate for children of different ages. In early childhood centres, supervised indoor and outdoor play is an essential part of everyday learning, and the specific EOTC focus is on excursions. Ideally, these are short and frequent, with a high ratio of adults to children. As children grow and develop, they are increasingly able to organise their own outside activities, but need adult help and advice in going further a field to gain new experience. At most intermediate and secondary schools, in addition to curriculum extension activities and opportunities for personal development, EOTC includes camping and outdoor pursuits such as canoeing and abseiling, which require tutors with specific skills.

Teachers at all levels should be familiar with safety and risk management procedures. All areas of learning are enhanced by EOTC, and individual children benefit from it both personally and socially. EOTC can help children to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need for continuous, lifelong learning, for participating fully in everyday life, and for living and working with other people.

This resource is intended to guide teachers of children at all levels in the use of EOTC. The goals and outcomes of successful EOTC programmes are described on the following pages. The section for policy developers offers advice on charter and policy writing and on programme development, including sample EOTC policy statements for early childhood centres, primary schools, and secondary schools. The section for EOTC coordinators discusses ways in which the person with responsibility for the EOTC development of a school or centre can include colleagues and the local community in developing and implementing programmes. Methods of recording EOTC activities and resources are suggested. The section for teachers contains guidelines for planning and evaluating EOTC experiences and suggests EOTC activities relevant to programmes in each of the essential learning areas. (The essential learning areas referred to are those described in *The National Curriculum of New Zealand: A Discussion Document*, Learning Media, 1991.)

### **EOTC Goals**

EOTC aims to:

- provide learners with relevant and enjoyable experiences which enrich and link all curriculum areas;
- promote appreciation of our heritages -local, national, and global;
- increase learners' awareness and understanding of the traditions and values of their own and other cultural groups, including those of the tangata whenua;
- increase learners' understanding of different perspectives on land, natural resources, and the environment, and of the need for conservation management;
- provide learners with opportunities for enjoyment, adventure, and challenge, both close to home and further away;
- develop in learners the skills needed to move with confidence and safety in urban,

- rural, and wilderness settings;
- help learners develop respect for themselves and others, by providing them with opportunities for personal and social development;
- enable learners to take increased responsibility for their own development, and to regard education as enjoyable, continuous, and lifelong;
- promote equity, by providing all learners with opportunities to develop in many diverse ways.

## **EOTC Outcomes**

In the course of their EOTC experiences, children will gain new knowledge, abilities, and attitudes, as well as building on those they already have.

### ***Knowledge and understandings***

*These include:*

- knowledge of the world,
- knowledge of culture and traditions,
- aesthetic awareness,
- awareness of bicultural issues,
- awareness of environmental issues,
- knowledge of how outdoor activities can benefit personal fitness and health,
- awareness of recreation opportunities,
- awareness that all aspects of learning are inter-related,

as well as more specific new knowledge, for example, knowing the names of some animals after a zoo visit, or how to respond after being welcomed onto a marae.

### ***Skills and abilities***

These include the skills and abilities that enable learners to:

- make decisions,
- solve problems,
- accept responsibility,
- evaluate their own learning,
- apply learning in new situations,
- work as team members,
- maintain good relationships with family, peers, and others,

as well as many more specific skills related to their particular EOTC experiences, for example, climbing a rope ladder, pitching a tent, or giving first aid been hurt in the bush.

### ***Attitudes***

These include:

- enjoying the challenge and excitement of new experiences,
- having self-esteem, and the confidence that comes with it,
- having the motivation to learn,
- being sensitive to, and positive about, bicultural issues,
- being sensitive to, and positive about, environmental issues,
- readiness for major steps – starting school, moving to a new school, and strating work.