

Supporting vulnerable young people in
the transition to secondary school

Oranga Tamariki Seminar Series

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Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

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Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter



A bit about ERO



Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter

- An independent government department established in 1989 as part of the Tomorrow's Schools reforms
- Two core functions:
 1. Review of the quality of pre-tertiary education provision
 2. Evaluation and investigation into aspects of education policy settings and programmes in support of system improvement and identifying what works

Aim to unpack the “Black Box” in terms of programme design, practice and implementation fidelity

Key definitions

Year 8 students are typically aged between 12 and 13 years in their last year at primary or intermediate school

Year 9 students are in their 1st year of secondary school aged 13/14

Year 11 students are typically in their 3rd year at school aged 15/16

Sources:

- Evaluation of Yr9+ Pilot (Gisborne, Wairoa)
- Best practice evaluation of transition from Primary to Secondary school (2012)
- Secondary Schools and Alternative Education
- ERO Insights Magazine (*Term 4 2017*)
- Current work with RTLBs - plus plus

Key differences between primary & secondary school

- Immense change in one's life
- Size differences particularly for students from small rural schools
- Often requirements for greater levels of conformity (eg uniforms, routines)
- Regimented timetable
- Often schools use streaming
- Multiple student - student relationships
- Multiple adult - student relationships (i.e. no single class teacher)
- Loss of key support networks

Who are the most vulnerable in the transition to secondary school?

Transition to secondary school is a rewarding experience for most

But may be particularly challenging for some young people due to:

- Family circumstances / background
- Poor educational track record
- Having additional learning needs
- Low self esteem
- Disability, or high health needs
- Emotional psychological issues.

The transition also coincides with physiological changes and for many the on-set of puberty

Summary of risk factors identified in the literature as contributing to early disengagement from education

Family background

1. Household in a low SES location
2. Primary caregiver with no qualifications
3. Main income of household from a benefit
4. Family with history of CYF or Justice involvement

Early Education

5. Poor oral language/vocabulary development before age 3
6. Preschool health issues, especially around speech and hearing
7. Poor school attendance, getting worse in middle and senior years of primary schooling
8. Transience during primary schooling - attending more than 5 pre-secondary schools

Transition to Year 9

9. Sole child from a small school
10. High anxiety/low self-esteem
11. Academic difficulty in primary school in literacy & numeracy
12. Males of a minority ethnicity group in the new school
13. Chronic illness, disability or mental health issues

Engagement in Year 9

14. Peer issues or problems with bullying
15. No strong relationship with any individual teacher
16. School seen as boring or 'too academic'
17. Early patterns of truancy or stand-down

School-based factors

18. Schools with a concentration of disadvantaged students

The Yr9+ Pilot

- One of a number of place-based initiatives
- 45 schools from Wairoa/Gisborne/ East Coast asked to nominate students that they thought were unlikely to be successful in secondary school
- Providing mentoring support through “Champions” to:
 - 100 at risk students in the transition to secondary school and to support these learners through to completing NCEA L2
- Students were identified for the programme in 2015, and this year will enter Year 11

Nominating criteria used by contributing schools for entry to the Yr9+ Pilot

1. Issues with whānau
2. Needed extra support in Yr8
3. Struggling with literacy & numeracy
4. Likely to fall off the rails at Sec. Sch.
5. High record of truancy or stand downs
6. Challenging & worrying behaviour
7. Judged as likely to leave with no qualifications
8. Sibling with poor secondary school record
9. Might get lost or fall through gaps
10. Social isolates
11. Academically bright but not coping at home

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Ministry determined
predictive risk factors
of not reaching level 2
NCEA

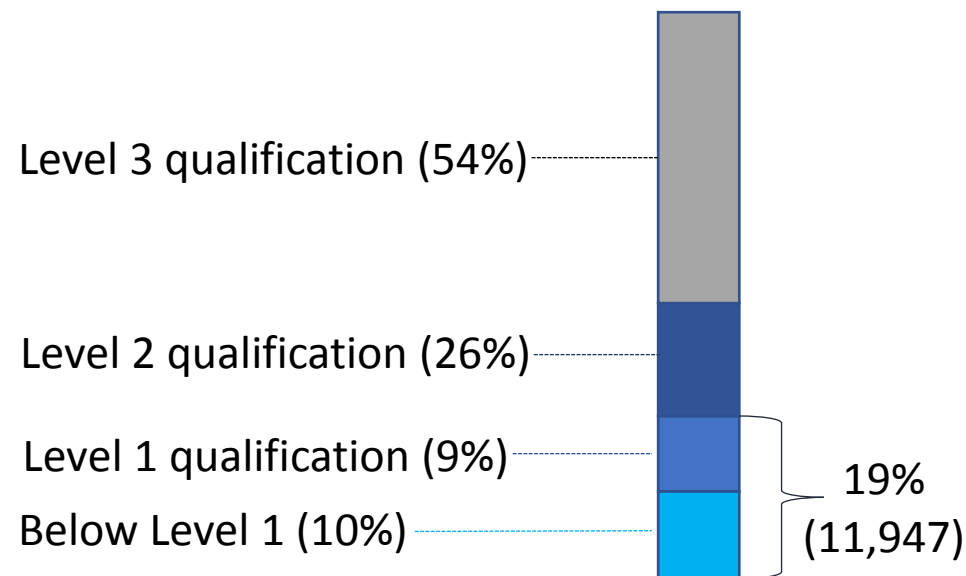
1. Ethnicity
2. Socio-economic context of the school
3. Type of school
4. Stand-down and suspension information
5. Gender
6. Truancy
7. Year level @ age 12

Impact of poor transitions – What we know

- Experiences in the first year of secondary school are important predictors of future learning success
- Poor transitions compound and negatively impact the young person's wellbeing and achievement
 - disproportionately susceptible to peer pressure
 - constantly testing boundaries
 - indulging in risk-taking behaviours
 - high truancy and school absence, and missing classes
 - suspended and stood down
 - becoming withdrawn and isolated
 - early school leaving – “fade out” or “kicked out”.

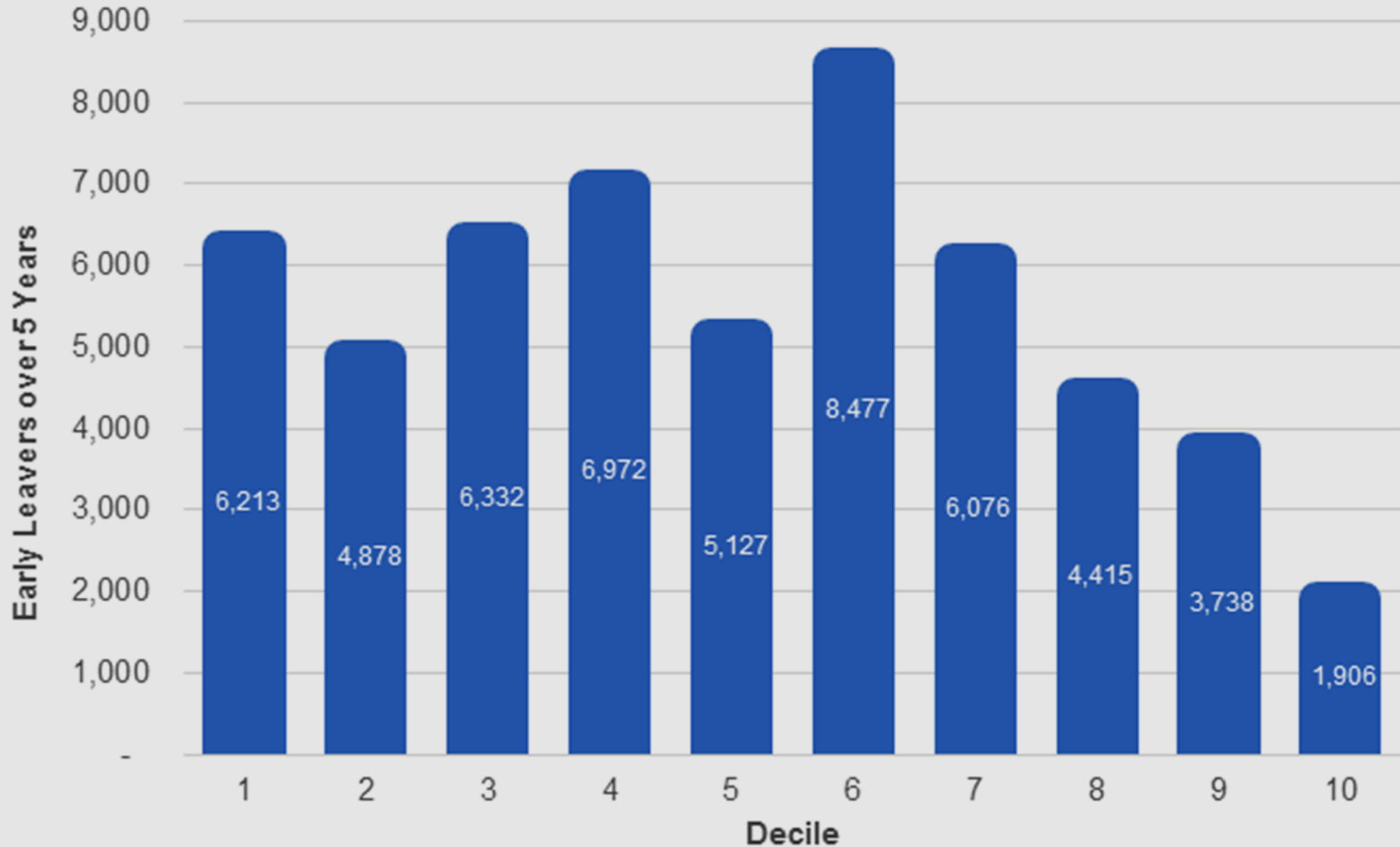
Patterns of early disengagement in Aotearoa

2016 School Leavers

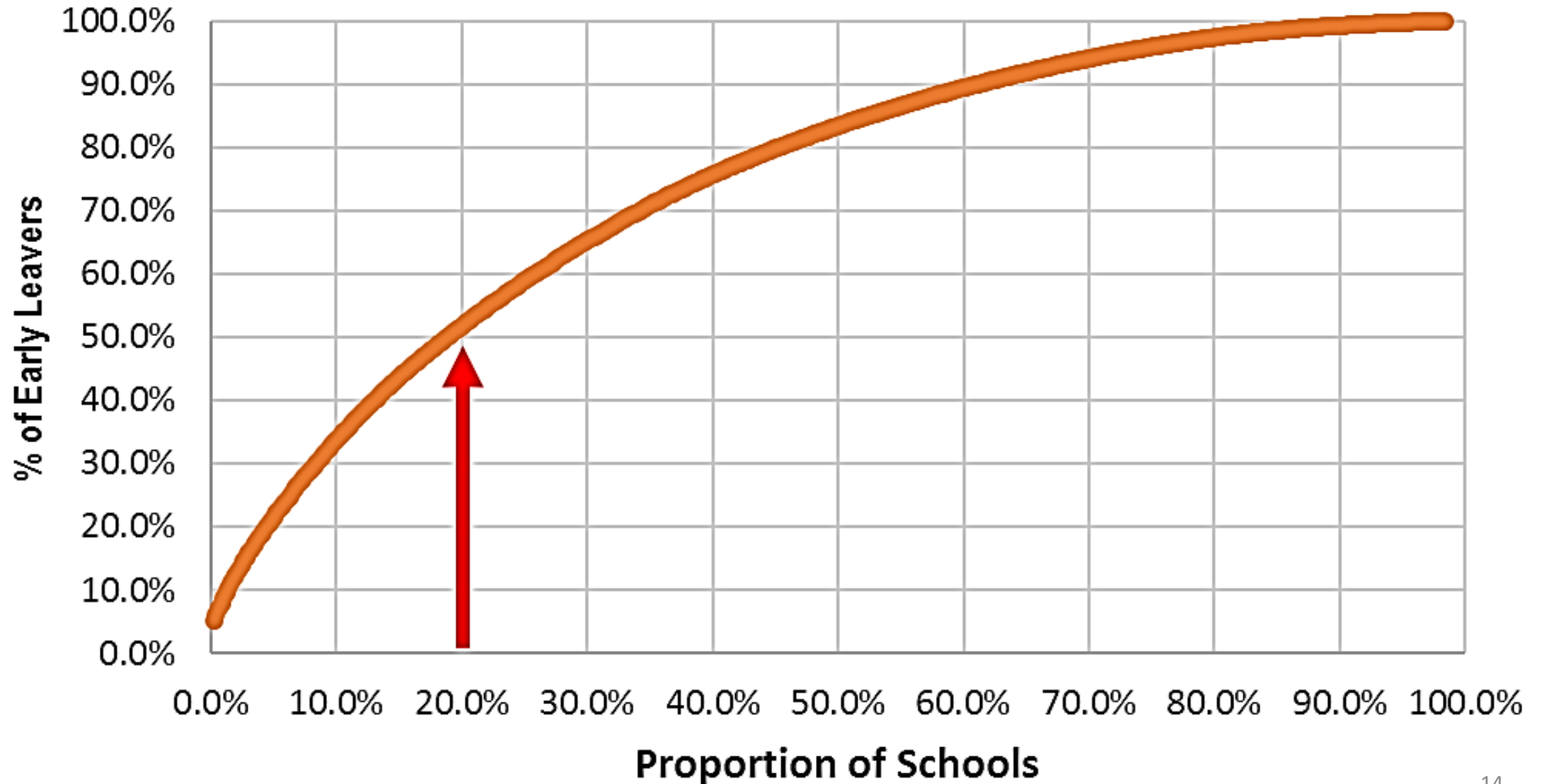


- In the past 5 years, 68,000 young people have left school with less than a level 2 NCEA qualification, and 42,000 of these less than a Level 1 qual.
- 37.4% (25,455) of these leavers were Māori
- Just on 20% of Māori students continue to leave school with less than a Level 1 qualification
- 11,242 students left school in 2016 before they turned 17
- 46.2% of these students were Māori or of Pacific Island ethnicity (by comparison Māori and Pacific students made up 31.1% of all school leavers)

Cumulative Loss of Students from Secondary School with Poor Qualifications by Socio-economic Decile of School 2011-2016



Cumulative Loss of Students from Secondary School with Poor Qualifications 2011-2016



There are high stakes associated with early school leaving & poor attainment

Core work-related skills demand – 2020

World Economic Forum 2016

Cognitive Abilities	15%
System Skills	17%
Complex Problem Solving	35%
Content Skills	10%
Process Skills	18%
Resource Management Skills	19%
Social Skills	13%
Technical Skills	12%
Physical Abilities	4%

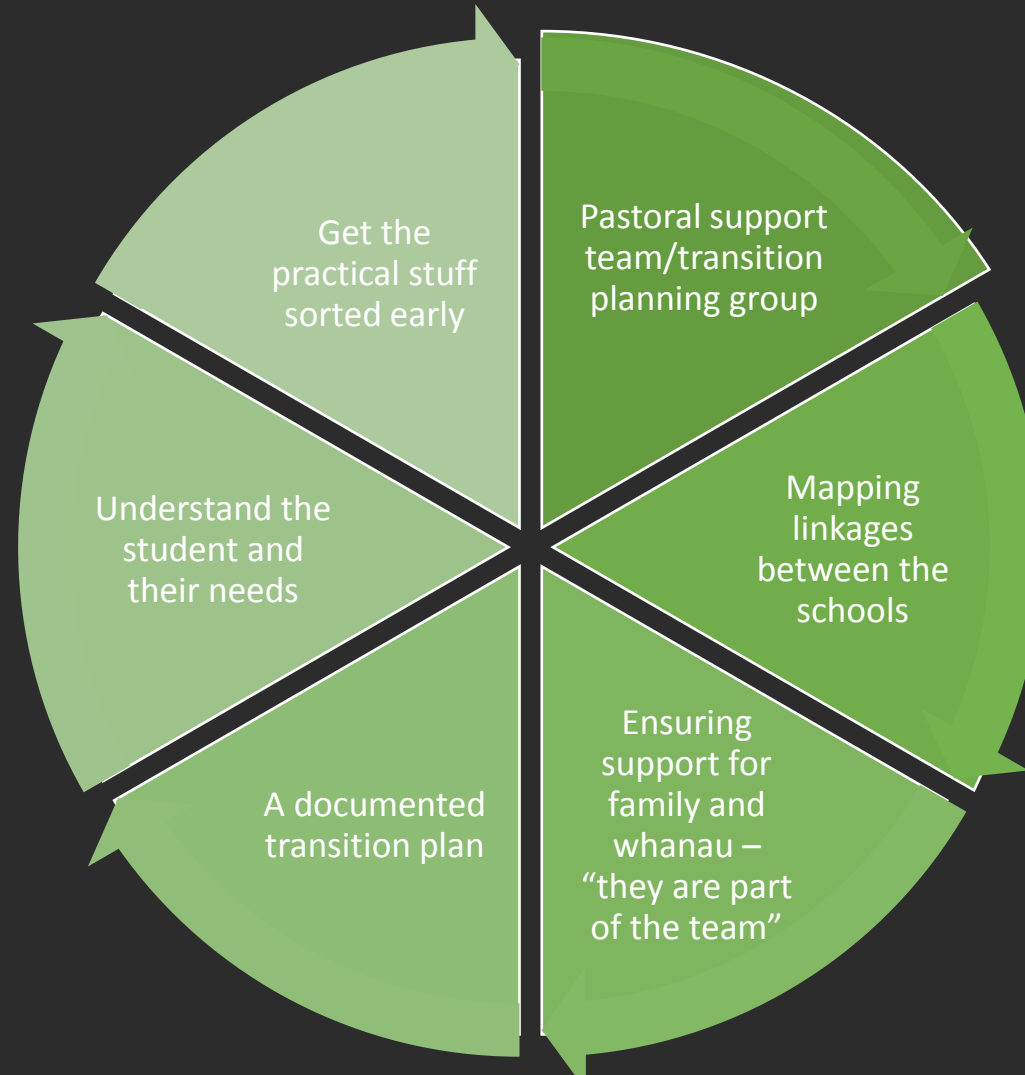
Effective practice - Year 8 preparation for Secondary School

- Year 8 teachers play a significant role in enabling smooth transitions
- Teachers of Year 8 learners tend to know their students well!

Effective practice includes:

- Early liaison with the secondary school
- Sharing achievement & other information so the new school gains an understanding of the needs and interests of learners
- Agree which students require specific supports and clarify strategies and transition plans
- Setting up visits to understand the new requirements, culture, practices and expectations of the secondary school
- Liaising with parents and whanau so they are in the loop and understand how they can support and prepare their child, and how they might engage with the secondary school

Effective practice – Transition support for learners with complex and challenging needs



Effective practice – Secondary schools

Effective identification of at risk learners

Deliberate adoption of practices and responsibilities

Facilitated goal setting and individualised plans

Focus on building positive relationships

Responsive curriculum, differentiated and learner centric teaching strategies

Effective systems to monitor and check in with individual students

High quality pastoral systems

Balancing individualised targeted strategies with whole school systems and culture

Effective Practice:

Keeping a “Watching Brief”

Intervening early and quickly in response to issues and indications of things not going well

Effective practice – Whole School Programmes

High expectations

Whole school programmes PB4L – (Positive Behaviour School)

- Strong evidence base across multiple jurisdictions and cultural contexts
- Its not a programme – it's a framework
- Clear routines, consistency and collective ownership
- A focus on positive behaviours and values with clear expectations of school behaviour
- Understanding of key triggers for behaviour
- Tiered process
 - Tier 1 - Support systems and processes across the whole school
 - Tier 2 – Interventions for students that require additional behaviour support
 - Tier 3 – Intensive, wrap around support for students who experience severe, chronic and challenging behaviour

Effective practice - Mentoring & Therapeutic programmes

Mentoring Programmes

- Peer Mentoring programmes
(some evidence of effectiveness)
- Check & Connect
(strong evidence)
- Year 9+ Pilot
(emerging)
- Alternative education (AE)
(mixed evidence)

Therapeutic programmes

- partnering with parent and teacher training

What doesn't work:

- Group based programmes
- Financial sanctions

Yr9+ Role of the Champions

- Work with the school, attendance services, learning support to ensure student engagement
- Establish positive relationships with each student
- Harness parent and whānau support
- Identify and remove barriers to education participation & engagement
- Coordinate between agencies to address student school and non-school needs
- Respond to emerging issue for the student
- Capture and report process and impact information

Yr9+ Champions

- Selected because of:
 - Local knowledge & networks
 - Ability to work sympathetically with students, parents and whānau
 - Knowledge of the education system
 - A positive attitude and belief in young people and their potential

Yr9+ Student views of factors supporting success 1 Year in

Champion's role

Helped:

- me stay at school
- my attendance
- with my mental wellbeing
- with relations at home
- my whānau connections (as Māori)
- with my homework
- my physical activity – swimming, playing more games
- improve my behaviour
- me do more work or better work at school and showed me how
- with my relationships with teachers
- by feeding us
- checked up and followed up on us
- had a set time to meet and can be relied on
- listened and were always there
- someone extra to talk to
- treated us like whānau
- told whānau about our successes.

Three groups of students emerged from the Yr9+ Pilot : End of Year 1

1. Initial Steps students (most students)	2. Aspirational students	3. Not yet engaging
<p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improving attendance ✓ Staying at school till the end of the year ✓ Improving behaviour in class and at school ✓ Getting on better with peers <p>“Champion dependent”</p>	<p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Taking advantage of new educational opportunities ✓ Getting better grades ✓ Sporting and cultural success ✓ Doing well in a variety of planned school activities <p>“School centric – relying on champions as brokers”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ongoing behavioural issues that required highly specialised support ❖ Finding their Year 9 programme of little relevance ❖ Disliked particular teachers or subjects ❖ Misbehaving in class ❖ Continuing anti-social activity such as drug or alcohol usage ❖ Fighting and verbally aggressive ❖ Feeling suicidal <p>We also found that despite the advocacy of the Champions, barriers for students and whānau to gain better coordinated access to various social services continued as an issue for this group of learners</p>

Take aways:

- The pathway to disengagement starts early
- It is difficult to make up for lost time once a student falls behind
- Numbers , Names , Needs
- Intervention tailored to needs
- Differentiated teaching strategies
- Effective team around the learner
- Deliberate focus on teaching pro-social skills, problem solving, organisational and study skills
- Learner agency
- Specialist supports when required
- Vigilance, rigorous monitoring and follow-up
- Ongoing evaluation



THANK YOU

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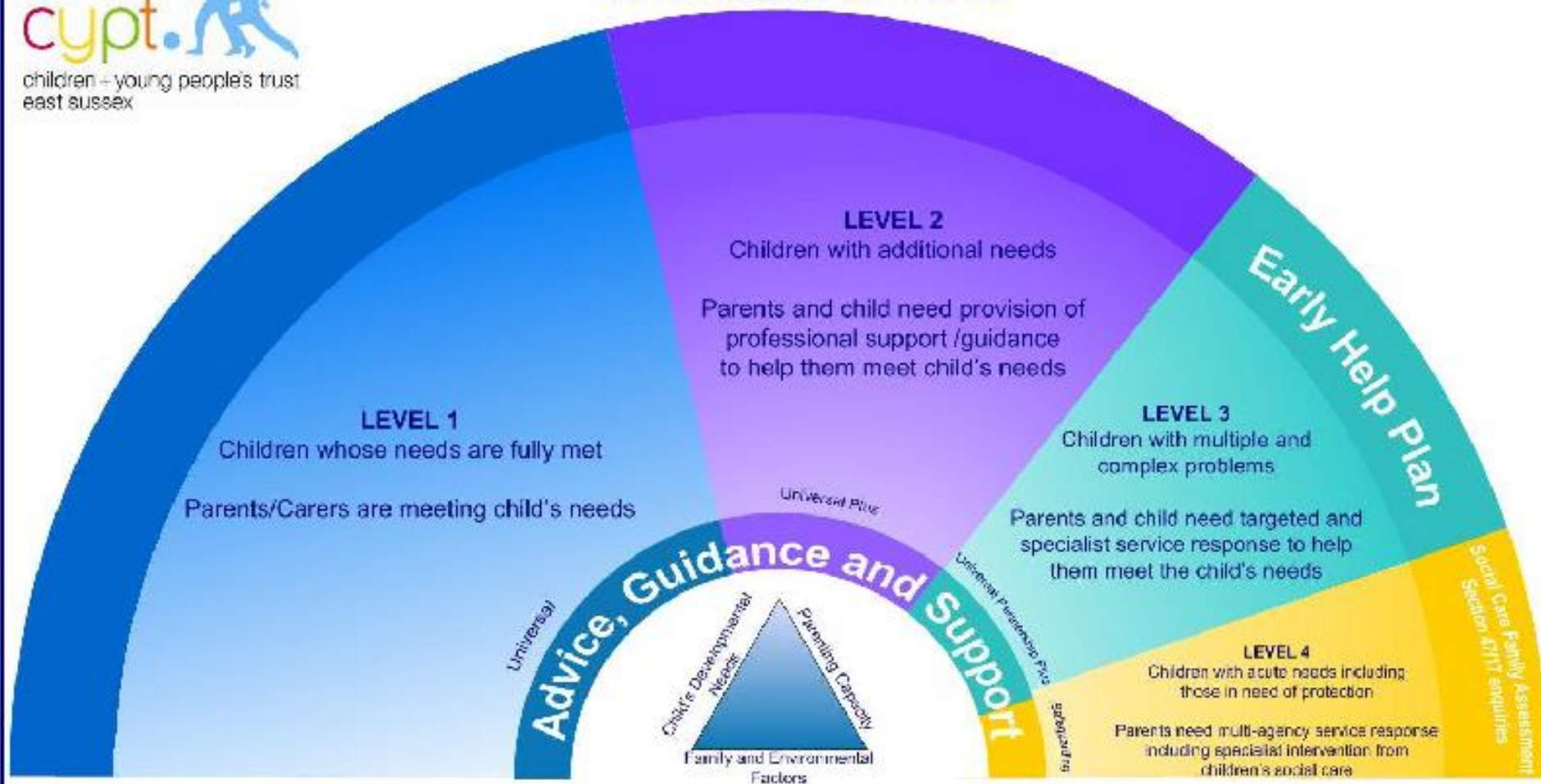
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www.ero.govt.nz/videos/



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Continuum of Need



- The continuum of need is intended to provide practitioners with a shared understanding and common language around needs and risks surrounding children and their families
- It is to be used alongside the continuum of need indicators which provide descriptors of need for each level
- The continuum doesn't replace professional judgement or assessment and planning tools