

Home Education Foundation

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Charities Commission Registration Nbr.: CC24585 G.S.T. Nbr.: 55-380-562

22 April 2014

Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Sirs,

Changes to Parents' Homeschooling Information Pack

We were most concerned recently to see a change to the Key Requirements of the Ministry's information pack for parents interested in homeschooling. The current document inserts the following paragraph under the heading "Key Requirement—Progress and Achievement":

"Remember, you will need to have a record of progress and achievement over time i.e. weekly, termly, annually. This may also be needed when your child goes on to further education or training."

We were amazed that the Ministry of Education would update the key requirements for home education without any reason being given and without either formal or informal consultation with home educators. We are even more concerned that home educators were never notified of the Ministry's new requirement when it was added.

Most of all we are concerned about the impact this new requirement will have on home educators. While some home educators do find it helpful to keep records, they are not schoolteachers and should not be expected to provide a similar bulk of paperwork. Administrative record-keeping for teachers that are involved with many students may be understandable, but no studies indicate that it would improve the education of children who are taught by their own parents. Parents are the best judges of their child's progress and should be able to track their child's progress with or without needing to keep records as they prefer. In our experience, educational outcomes are improved by teaching children, not writing reports about them. Having to set aside valuable time to write reports will only make it that much more difficult for home educators to teach and interact with them.

In July 2009, the Ministry of Education reduced the number of reviews conducted on home educators, saying "This programme is considered to be low risk to the education priorities of the Government." Home educators are getting their job done without being required to keep records. We ask the Ministry of Education not to make it harder for parents to teach their children. Please remove this new paragraph from your requirements.

Yours faithfully,

The Home Education Foundation of New Zealand
per:

Barbara Smith
National Director
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