



2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT

Early Start Project



Atawhaitia nga pepe
Nurture the baby early

November 2023

Address: PO Box 21013, Christchurch 8140 Tel: 0800 378-278 <https://www.earlystart.co.nz>

Message from the Chairperson

Nau mai haere mai, to our 28th Annual Report. Our purpose again this year, is to present our success stories, achievements and challenges in an informal report which mirrors the way we awahi our client whānau.

One of the many strengths of Early Start and perhaps the greatest is the loyalty and dedication of our kaimahi. Our team brings such a wealth of experience, with many having well over a decade of service in their roles. This is reflected across the organization within the administration team, Family Support Worker/Whānau Āwhina, management and the board. This extraordinary group have yet again given their best, contributing to another successful year supporting our whānau and tamariki. A huge thank you to all the team for your tireless commitment across all levels of our organisation.

Early Start works with over 340 whānau in Otautahi and sits strongly within a nationwide community of social service providers who advocate, initiate, and deliver vital support within our communities. This year we faced funding challenges, which were overcome by a ground swell of support from the Family Start community coming together, presenting strong advocacy for our vulnerable whānau. This was a particularly difficult time for management and board to plan, respond and deliver our rejection of the proposed 10% reduction from Oranga Tamariki. Thankfully, with the combined voice of many Family Starts' across the motu, resulting in status quo in funding.

Other challenges throughout the year:

- the continuing effect of Covid on our client whānau and our kaimahi
- cost pressures which have impacted our annual budget
- renewal of 3-year funding contract with Oranga Tamariki offering *no* CPI adjustment
- impending lease renewal for premises with a substantial increase in rent
- maintaining our kaimahi within an environment of awaiting pay parity and pay equity
- managing the ever-present demand of referrals, greater than we have capacity for, is reflecting more and ongoing complex pressures within our client community

At the beginning of the year, we were in the position of finding new premises due to financial constraints. Fortunately, a stellar advocate of Early Start was able to offer premises in Papanui. The team are settled and enjoying our new, light and modern whare. The generosity of this offer has given our team such a boost and we are forever grateful for this opportunity.

Early Start continues to invest resources demonstrating our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and strengthening the cultural competency within all the team. In this way we show respect for the guiding principles of the Te Tiriti. Our journey continues as we endeavor to align operational and governance aspects at Early Start using Te Āo Māori principles. This commitment has been reflected in an increase of Māori whānau receiving service to 40%.

Respect the Mana and Tapu of Mokopuna

This year we have farewelled one board member Elsa Kipa, along with team members Lesley Glenn, Sarah McKinnon, Jenny McPhail, Amelia Wither, Jane Beard and Shelley Martyn. We thank them for their service to Early Start and wish them well in their future endeavours.

My parting note is to acknowledge the leadership and administration teams led by General Manager, Jan Egan, who have all worked tirelessly in keeping Early Start on an even keel amidst the many challenges. Also, I acknowledge the diverse opinions and experience of our board members who continue to govern Early Start in a robust way ensuring the emphasis is always on our client whānau. This years' success, is again due to each and every team members' dedication which underpins Early Start's strength. Ka kite anō

Shelley McCauley
CHAIRPERSON

*He iti tangata, e tipu.
Ke iti toki, he iti tonu iho.
A little child will grow.
A little adze will always remain small*

Vision

A society where children enjoy a supported, positive and happy childhood.

Mission Statement

Early Start encourages and supports Canterbury families to provide each of their children with a positive and enjoyable childhood experience.

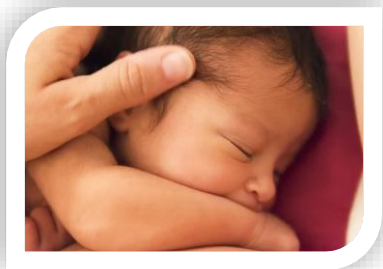
Early Start Board

Early Start Project Ltd is a charitable company and was formed in 1995. It is governed by a board of directors consisting of a consortium of health care professionals and community members:

- Shelley McCauley ~ Chairperson
- Mr Ashley Seaford ~ Deputy Chairperson
- Maria van der Plas
- Dr Lynda Gray
- Emeritus Prof. John Horwood
- Hildegard Grant
- Dale Stephens



*Your words as a parent have great power.
Use them wisely and make sure they come from the heart.*



He rau ringa e oti ai ~ Many hands make light work.

Tēnā koutou,

This year I have begun my message by sharing the words above as they reflect the Early Start Project so well. The Early Start Team is made up of many hands of many people. Some of the work undertaken this year by our Team members is shared within the years Annual Report. The diagram on page 6 identifies some of the many people who have contributed to our mahi this year.

Our multidisciplinary and diverse Early Start Team connect with, and support whānau in so many different ways. The mahi requires specialised skills including those of persistence, perseverance, and kindness. We focus on and foster strengths and connections within the whānau we work alongside. This focus is repeated in our Team where we work interdependently focusing on these supportive elements.

The feedback from Client whānau included in this report is encouraging as there are positive examples of 'How' the connection with Early Start has supported them in their parenting journey.

Over this past year we have continued to work creatively with each whānau we have connected with demonstrating our commitment to building strong and trusting relationships focusing on our guiding principle Atawhaitia nga pepe (Nurture the Baby Early). Examples of the measurable results of this work are provided within this report.

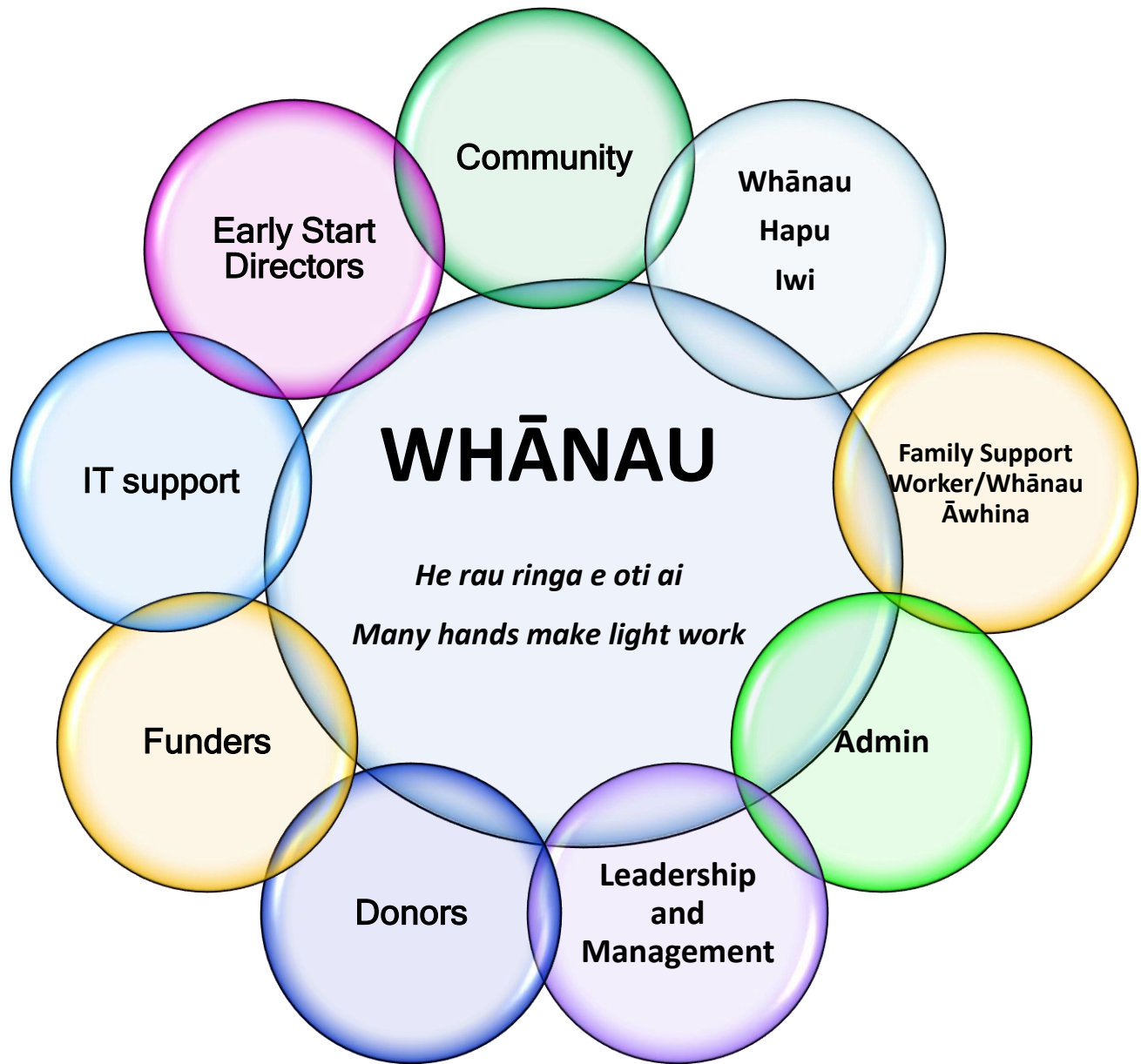
I want to acknowledge and thank the Early Start Team for the creative and skilled work undertaken throughout the agency. Also, for the support of a great admin team and thank you to the Early Start Board Directors, led with passion and skill by Board Chair Shelley McCauley. To our partners, supporters and donors as well as our funding agencies, thank you once again for your continuing support on behalf of the Tamariki and whānau we have connected with over this past year.

Ngā mihi maioha

Jan Egan

GENERAL MANAGER

Haere taka mua, taka muri; kaua e whai ~ be a leader not a follower



Tohea ki te, tohe i te kai.
Persistence and perseverance.



The role of Kai Hapai Mātauranga Māori

Kia ora koutou

The Early Start Waka is in good stead, continuing to ebb and flow alongside the growing number of Māori whānau whom choose to engage with us. Again, it is an honour to be upon this waka, as Kai Hapai Matāuranga Māori, uplifting the growth of the team and organisation as we continue to work steadfastly as allies to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This journey is not easy, nor smooth and in fact the waters our Māori whānau are navigating are often full of debris. However, calm assuredness of the Team who work diligently, patiently and within a growth mindset is proving to be the 'hoe' (steering oar) for many of our whānau and the organisation itself, ensuring we are moving in a direction where we can flourish together.

This year has been about solidifying our knowledge, gaining a depth to it and recognising what it is we are doing in a manner that works for the benefit of Māori pepe. Ka mahi te tawa uho ki te riri (well done, you whose courage is like the heart of the tawa tree).

This is all so positive and it is growing, beyond our KRA's, beyond our Practice Manuals and beyond our personal sense of comfortable.

My role is to awhi all of this, continue to build on what we have and ensure we are doing it all within Te Āo Māori.

He toka tu moana, ara he toa Rongonui (your strength is like a rock standing in the raging waters).

Māuri ora

Tania Gilpin

KAI HAPAI MATĀURANGA MĀORI

Home Visiting

Early Start Core Service Components ~ tailored to meet whānau need

- Family well-being
- Physical, social and emotional well-being of infants and children
- Healthy child development
- Child safety and wellbeing
- Parenting Education
- Encouraging participation in Early Childhood Education Services
- Child and Home Safety
- Smoke Free Home Environment / Smoke cessation
- Maternal/Paternal Depression/Mental Health Support
- Advocacy, Home Skills, Relationship Issues
- Family Harm, Addictions, Strengthening Family Supports
- Support through crisis



If speaking kindly to plants helps them grow, imagine what speaking kindly to kids can do.

Our service area

Early Start provides service to families/whānau living in the greater Christchurch area, Waimakariri, Selwyn and Hurunui.



Poipoia te kakano, kia puāwai ~ Nurture the seed and it will blossom

tākai



It takes a village to raise a child. Whether you're a parent, caregiver, aunt, cuzzie, koro, nan, the local bus driver or the fish and chip shop owner – together we can help tamariki and whānau thrive.

Tākai is a kaupapa that wraps around the awesome people who provide awhi for whānau of our littlest tamariki under-five.

Through rauemi, hononga, ako and pūtea to bring ideas to life – Tākai taps into the energy of the village, weaving threads of traditional storytelling with parenting in the modern world.

And to make sure we're meeting the needs of whānau and the village who support them, we're working with communities across the motu to create new resources and opportunities to play, learn and grow together.

Kia matua rautia.

Standing on the shoulders of many – we are a thriving village raising children together.

We are Tākai.

Tākai is delivered at Early Start Project following our “Service Delivery Plan” ensuring all our valued education topics we have used in the past are continuing to be delivered consistently. We promote the delivery of the Education using our 4-Step Instructional Model.

- 1.** Presentation of the TOPIC and concepts.
- 2.** Demonstrating what good looks like using our Doll and an activity from Tākai that tells us the Why & the How.
- 3.** Giving the parent and child time to replicate what we demonstrated while we observe/ support.
- 4.** Evaluation and Integration: Time to help the parent reflect and for us to affirm, encourage and goal set.

***OUR AIM IS FOR THE PARENT and CHILD TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A SUCCESSFUL,
POSITIVE INTERACTION AT EVERY VISIT.***

Tākai Story

Social and Emotional Development was discussed during a visit, and we discussed concepts such as turn taking, developing language and allowing toddler to be more independent while supporting them. During the play activity which was a play tunnel, mum encouraged her toddler to crawl through the tunnel. This was new and a little scary and baby was hesitant to crawl through. Mum crawled through to reassure baby that it was ok, and after that baby felt confident to try. The game extended to playing peek a boo as they both hid in the tunnel.

Mum's feedback was "She enjoyed crawling through the tunnel. She was hiding and liked to play peek-a-boo with it. She learned to uncover Mommy in the tunnel. She is using more words during play which is good".



Janine – Clinical Supervisor – Tākai Portfolio





Kia ora, I'm Fiona, and I hold the Christchurch Aunties portfolio. Early Start Project has been working with Christchurch Aunties coming up 2 years. Christchurch Aunties are a registered charity which collects and distributes practical donations for women and children in Christchurch, the Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts, who have experienced family harm, are displaced and in immediate need of basic essentials. They have supported many of our Whānau that have been experiencing Whānau harm and needing to start again from scratch.

Christchurch Aunties have been able to help Early Start families/whānau with requests from full kitchen packs to a microwave and towels, to household furniture. The Aunties have also been able to support Early Start with supplies of sanitary products to pass on to families, the cost of which can be prohibitive for women who are struggling financially. All of the items are donated to Christchurch Aunties from across the Canterbury community.

From FSW/WA Jean;

As a Family Support Worker, I want to be able to practically help my clients. Aunties is an organization that has really supported our families with household items. I recently asked them for sheets and towels for a client who had none. She was so excited to get sheets as she is a very clean Mum and sleeping on the bare mattress has been difficult for her. She has started sleeping much better and was very grateful. The same Mum got towels. A very big step up from the 2 she had. Aunties are always quick to supply when we request things and it made my client smile a very wide smile

Christchurch Aunties require that each agency that works with them have one designated kaimahi that they connect with to do this process, Family Support Workers/Whānau Āwhina send through their request via myself, with the client's first name and last initial so there are no double ups with other agencies. I get weekly updates about available supplies from Christchurch Aunties which I send through to each Family Support Workers/Whānau Āwhina. Christchurch Aunties do not work directly with recipients, rather they work in a partnership model with organisations such as Early Start to reach those affected by family harm.

Fiona – Family Support Worker – Christchurch Aunties Portfolio

Facts about Babies

They like to face right: Only 15% of newborns prefer to turn their head left when lying on their back. It seems to be related to a gene, like having dimples. This bias lasts for a few months, and it may help explain why more people are right-handed, too.



They cry without tears: at first babies start crying around 2-3 weeks, but tears don't show up until they're about a month old.

Babies are born with 300 bones: that's 94 more than adults. Where do the extra bones go? They fuse together during development.

Babies grow at an insanely speedy rate: babies double their birth weight by five months and triple it by the first year (approximately).

Smiles are reserved for human babies only: Human infants are the only species that smile at their parents.



Babies are born with the ability to swim: Newborns naturally hold their breath when underwater, and even splash about with their arms and legs. If you take your baby to a swimming class you'll see these innate talents in action!

Babies learn much faster than adults: Even before she was born, your baby learned to recognise your voice, and perhaps even your partner's. Now that she's surrounded by so much stimulation, she's learning all the time. Her brain is forming connections at an incredible rate, as she discovers more about the world around her.



All babies are born with blue eyes: Basically, the pigmentation process in the iris hasn't started working yet – it does kick in though, and your baby's true eye colour usually becomes apparent around six months old.





Storytime Foundation strengthens vulnerable young children and their families by enhancing the bond between parent and child early in life. To date Storytime have delivered over 257,000 books to over 70,000 high need families with newborn and young children.

Early Start has had a relationship with Storytime Foundation for a number of years. We have worked in partnership with them to support books into the homes of our whānau.

'Storytime Foundation is the only agency delivering books and information, free, into New Zealand's most deprived homes through well child providers, to enhance early attachment, build cohesive families and improve social outcomes.'

This year Storytime has reviewed and revised its processes with the application/referral system is now digitalized and simplified. This has made the referral and re-ordering of books much smoother for the team.

STORYTIME books are now available for Antenatal clients and once pepe is born the whānau can be signed up for books to be delivered at set developmental stages right through to 3 years of age.

The books are specifically chosen for age and stage development of our tamariki and have a unique kiwi flavor.

Feedback from the team is they love being able to utilize STORYTIME particularly with whānau that struggle with anxiety or mental health conditions, where finances are tight, where there is a home that doesn't have books in the home and where there is a lack of awareness on the value of books in the early years of a child's life, for attachment and for learning language.

Being able to provide the books when presenting a tākai session on attachment concepts, language development, age and stage child development is a real bonus. The session utilizes the book, sharing ideas and concepts and then the book is then left with the whānau. This is particularly in the case of where whānau have very little in their homes and the understanding of shared positive experiences with books will have a lasting effect on positive attachment and in language development for their tamariki.

I hear many lovely stories of excited children and whānau who have a growing enjoyment of this time together, a love of reading and books, who also have become more connected to local libraries and whānau who value reading to their tamariki.

A SPECIAL
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

Family Services Fund: This fund is used to provide practical support to families/whānau in many ways; i.e., groceries, nappies, safety gates, children's clothing, GP/health fees, car seats, firewood, fire guards, cell phones and top-ups, power costs and other essential items.

Some stories about how with the support from our very generous donors we were able assist families/whānau:

- A family/whānau with four tamariki had no transport and needed to call an ambulance on three occasions to assist with the health and wellbeing of two of the children. Early Start was able to pay for an annual St John Ambulance subscription for this whānau.
- Funding was provided to purchase of a Birth Certificate for a father who had no other form of identification and needed this to open a bank account.
- I work with this whānau and the father has recently lost his job due to a company closure. He shared with me that he had a painful ulcer that was causing him major discomfort. This father had an outstanding account at the GP which Early Start was able to pay so he could make an appointment to get this ulcer checked.
- Mother was living in a Kāinga Ora home and the only heating option is a log burner. This whānau needed a warm home over winter so Early Start purchased firewood. Mum has made plans to save some money for firewood for next year.
- Several baby safety gates have been provided to families to keep their children safe.
- Early Start have funded families who needed: carseats, playpens, groceries, heaters, clothing, GP fees, dental treatment, mobile phones, cot and mattress





Our client whānau/families have told us:

- I would love to say thank you for your service. It's been such an amazing experience and so positive in my life. My FSW/WĀ is such an amazing and beautiful person. I've had other organisations involved before, but it's never worked. From the "get go" my FSW/WĀ made it effortless. She clicked with me instantly and never once judged me from my past. I'm so very sad to say goodbye, but I've got to look at this as a positive thing. Am deeply going to miss her. My FSW/WĀ is one of a kind.
- Just a great system to have in play, really enjoyed learning and growing alongside such great people. Keep up the amazing work. It's appreciated!
- I would just like to say how incredible my FSW/WĀ is. She is a very good communicator. Gentle and full of knowledge. She made me feel I belong here and I have a purpose. No judgement or criticism. Very professional. Thank you very much for this opportunity you have given me and I would also like to thank the whole team of Early Start. I wouldn't be the person I am today without all of your help.
- Our FSW/WĀ always kept us assured and supported whatever the situation. We both felt we could be vulnerable and open with all tasks, no matter the topic. We all loved seeing our FSW/WĀ and she became an enjoyable part of our day to day lives.
- Early Start is something I will be forever grateful for. I've become the adult 17 year old me dreamed of being when we first engaged. FSW/WĀ, thank you so much for everything you've taught me and the boys. For all the support through such tough times, for growing my confidence as a Mum. You've truly made this journey more enjoyable and helped me see so many positives. Keep being you! Sad to say goodbye, however, thankful for all the lifelong lessons and memories.
- My FSW/WĀ helped me to become a more confident parent and helped me with my mental health and that's a first for me to say, but yeah, she was really good.
- I was from far away with no family here and Early Start helped me learn kiwi ways and how to bring up my baby. It helped me not be so lonely. I liked my FSW/WĀ, she is like family to me. My son could have been her grandchild. Thank you for having me at Early Start. It helped me love being a first-time parent and helping me handle my son.

Donation Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge the very generous donors that support the mahi at Early Start. These donated funds support specific programmes that are not covered by the main contract funding from Oranga Tamariki. Therefore, all donated money goes directly into wrap around services to envelop our whānau to encourage growth and development. A very warm *ka nui te mihi* in recognising the amazing impact that your donations make for our enrolled whānau.



- ❖ Oranga Kai Healthy Eating Programme ~ Funded by anonymous donors
- ❖ Family Services Fund ~ Funded by private anonymous donors, the Mauger Charitable Foundation
- ❖ Fire and Emergency NZ ~ supply and fitting of smoke detectors
- ❖ Christchurch Aunties ~ essential supplies for vulnerable families/whānau
- ❖ Good Night Sleep Tight ~ warm bedding for vulnerable families/whānau
- ❖ Storytime ~ books for families/whānau

Photos

- ❖ Thank you to Early Start families/whānau for giving us your permission to share the special moments in the photos included in this report.

NGO/Government Funding

- ❖ Main Family Start contract: Funded by Oranga Tamariki to 369 whānau
- ❖ Early Support to Young Parents 19 years and under: Funded by Te Whatu Ora
- ❖ Incredible Years Toddler: 12 x week Parenting Courses: Funded by Ministry of Education

Financial Summary

Like many organisations, Early Start has felt the pain of increasing cost pressures which has affected our annual budget. At 30 June 2023 Early Start had a net Surplus/(Deficit) of (\$128,865); this includes depreciation of \$20,563. Our main funder, Oranga Tamariki continued to fund the program at the same level as in the past 2 years. This static funding requires the board and management to explore ways of reducing overheads as well as finding ways within our operation model to find efficiencies. However, whilst exploring these options, we are ever mindful of any impacts on our service to whānau. Therefore, our goal is to constantly assess all overheads, keep the team happy and continue our high standards of service delivery to our whānau. This is no easy task!

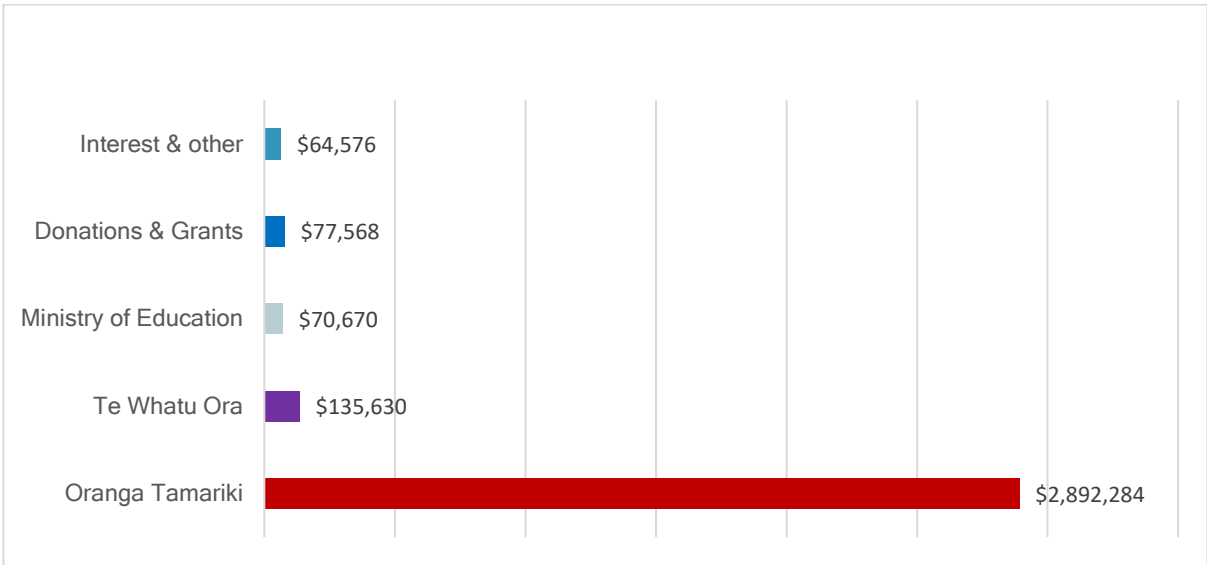
The board placed priority in recognising our kaimahi, offering \$500 vouchers towards the end of 2022 for increased cost of living expenses.

We received a welcome boost from a small group of loyal donors who continue to show their confidence in Early start and provide funds to offer wrap around services such as Oranga Kai, Incredible Years (funded by

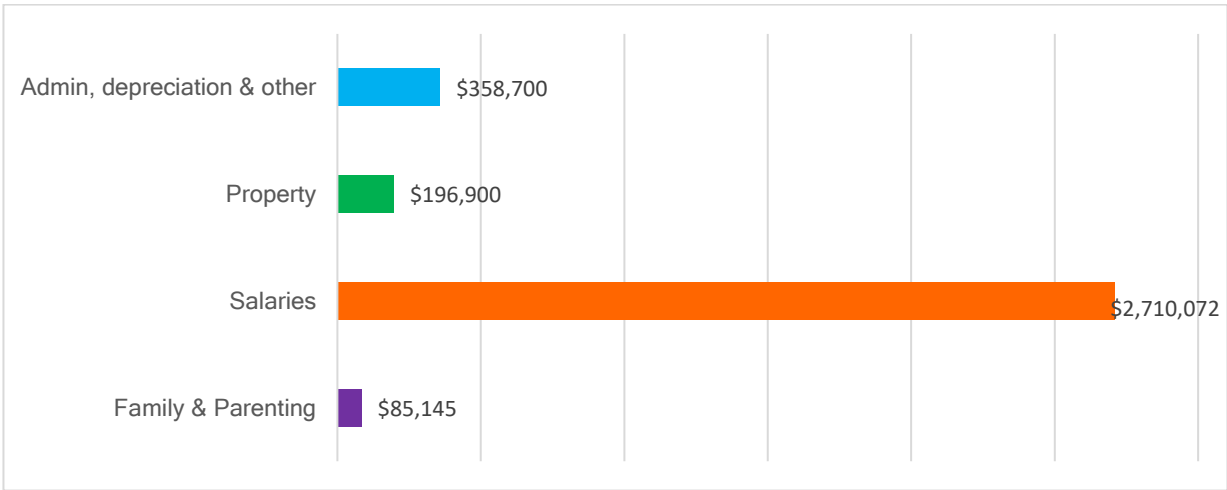
Ministry of Education), and Family Services Fund. We are immensely thankful for their support which provides additional opportunities for our whānau.



REVENUE



EXPENSES



Financial Report to 30-6-2023

Please email the Board Secretary to request a copy of the audited Financial Report: shirley.percasky@earlystart.co.nz

