***Note, this template is an example of how you could structure a letter to the Minister and should be used as a guide. The more you personalise your letter, the more effective it will be!***

***If you don’t want to send a physical letter, you can email the minister at c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz***

**[Date]**

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

Parliament Office

Private Bag 18888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Tēnā koe Minister Hipkins,

We the undersigned parents and teachers at **[service/centre name]** are writing to you regarding the current crisis in early childhood education in Aotearoa.

A chronic shortage of trained teachers and a lack of investment in our services means our children are being short-changed. We know that when early childhood is underfunded, children, parents and teachers all pay the price.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year has only underlined the importance of ECE teaching. Teachers went above and beyond to continue their essential teaching and pastoral work with children and their families and whanau.

A key driver of the crisis continues to be the pay gap of up to 52% between ECE teachers and their school and kindergarten colleagues

As a direct result, our **[service/centre]** has been impacted by

* [Example 1 eg. Struggling to fill a current vacancy or position]
* [Example 2 eg. Struggling to increase teacher pay and therefore to retain staff]
* [Example 3 eg. Struggling to find relievers]

As a community we believe that these years are crucial. Every child should have the right to quality education from the minute it begins, no matter where they live or what their parents earn. Our teachers are skilled people who need the right conditions to be able to provide the best environment they can for our young learners.

Early childhood matters to us. Better funding would mean we can show how our teachers are valued by paying them the same as their colleagues.

If we had better [funding and/ or fair pay] it would enable our centre/service to:

* [Example 1 eg. Show we value our teachers by paying them the same as their colleagues]
* [Example 2 eg Keep fees affordable for our community]
* [Example 3 eg. Invest in our teachers wellbeing and professional development]

Please fund significant steps towards pay parity for all teachers pay parity in Budget 2021 and put forward a plan to fix the pay gap for good.

Ngā mihi,

[Names]