

'Why aren't you the prime minister?' (Dominion Post)

PALOMA MIGONE

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PLAY TIME: Phil Goff and Charles Chauvel at Tawa Central Kindergarten with Nikita O'Brien (3) and Joseph Loughnane (3).

Election 2011

Labour leader Phil Goff got a grilling from a three-year-old boy at Tawa Central Kindergarten this morning.

"Why aren't you the prime minister?" Aari Bhat asked.

Goff didn't stop smiling. He patted Bhat a couple of times on the back, briefly chatted with his mother, and contemplated his blue painting.

"You need some red over that blue," Goff said.

Three-year-old Nikita O'Brien was more welcoming, saying "hi, Phil Goff".

She stuck by him for a while, building him a block of lego before he made his way to a couch where Labour MP Charles Chauvel read him and three other children a book.

After play time, Goff quickly got down to business with the usual campaign talk -- "the children are our future," he said.

"In 20 years time, they'll be in the workforce and if we don't get them the best education they can have ... then it's not only a loss for those children, it's a loss for all of us."

Head teacher Lisa Lyons expressed her discontent with the Government's 80 per cent goal for qualified teachers in ECEs.

"We struggle for funding. We've had our funding slashed," with a \$48,000 cut at the kindergarten, she said.

Goff promised to restore the goal of 100 per cent qualified staff in centres and vowed to give more funding, which would be part of a children's policy package to be announced on Monday.

"What you never want to have is money being an obstacle to accessibility and affordability in education," he said.

Goff then headed back to parliament to reveal Labour's much-talked about "spreadsheet," with detailed costing of its plans.