

Play ideas for Learning

He Korikori Whakaaro

Encouraging our children to become effective learners involves us allowing them to decide what they want to learn and providing the time, space and support for them to explore, experiment and try things out. Providing an environment that offers interesting play materials and opportunities to try new things is a good starting point.



The cultural heritages of both partners in Te Tiriti o Waitangi should be reflected in the programmes of learning we offer our children. *Te Whāriki*, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum, reflects this and our programmes, being based on the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* (through the curriculum framework), should reflect this also. It is important that all children experience general aspects of the traditions that make up Māori culture. Everyone has a role in providing this learning for children.

The **principles/Ngā Kaupapa Whakahaere** and **strands/Ngā Taumata Whakahirahira** of *Te Whāriki* should be evident in everything that occurs at playgroup. The play materials and experiences that are available in the playgroup are the tools that enable the ideas in the principles and strands of the curriculum framework to occur.



Each playgroup will provide equipment and opportunities that best reflect the values, beliefs and interests of their own children and families and the resources available in the setting and local community. While keeping this in mind, the play ideas in this kit can provide playgroups with a starting point to help them provide a wide variety of experiences and opportunities.

For each of the play ideas listed, links to *Te Whāriki* are made, as examples of how play materials can support children's learning in relation to the five strands of:

- Well-being/Mana Atua
- Belonging/Mana Whenua
- Contribution/Mana Tangata
- Communication/Mana Reo
- Exploration/Mana Aotūroa.

It is important to remember that the five strands are interwoven and should not be viewed in isolation.



Play ideas for learning

He Korikori Whakaaro



Children learn when they:

- find things that capture their interest
- get involved and spend time playing around with and exploring objects
- persevere with activities they find difficult or unfamiliar
- test, share and talk about their ideas
- make up new ideas by themselves and with others
- initiate or take responsibility for their own learning.

It is important to remember that new learning or progress in learning is not always immediately noticeable. In addition to providing an array of interesting and stimulating equipment, opportunities and resources, adults should pay attention to what children are doing, how they are doing it, and how their play or exploration is changing over time. *Te Whāriki* is present in a lot of what children are doing. When adults observe children and bring knowledge of *Te Whāriki* to that observation, then they are in a very good place to support that child's future learning.



When parents look at children engaged in learning at the playgroup, they often see different things being learned and developed. When a child is playing at the playdough table, one parent might notice the increasingly different ways the child is moulding and manipulating the dough (Exploration), another parent might notice how the child builds friendships with other children using playdough (Contribution), and yet another parent might notice the way the child is using playdough to act out familiar cultural practices (Communication).

