



# Te Whāriki for Whānau

As a parent, navigating the world of Early Childhood Education can often feel daunting, and at times, it may seem like you're trying to grasp an entirely new language, one that may even differ from centre to centre based on their unique philosophies!

However, there is one common thread among all early learning services in New Zealand: they all follow a bicultural early childhood curriculum called Te Whāriki.

Te Whāriki is internationally known for its unique emphasis on “our bicultural foundation, our multicultural present and the shared future we are creating” (Ministry of Education, 2026). It is a highly regarded and celebrated curriculum that champions an inclusive approach to early learning

## The holistic nature of Te Whāriki

Te Whāriki literally translates to ‘the woven mat’ and this metaphor illustrates how all the components in Te Whāriki are interwoven,

creating a holistic view of children’s learning and development.

## The principles and strands in Te whāriki

Te Whāriki is underpinned by four broad principles:

### ***Kotahitanga | Holistic development***

-Highlights the idea that a child's learning and growth are interconnected.

### ***Whānau tangata | Family, whānau and community***

-Recognises the importance of strong connections between children, their families, and the wider community.

### ***Whakamana | Empowerment***

-Focuses on nurturing children's confidence, independence, and ability to make choices.

### ***Ngā hononga | Relationships***

-Recognises the importance of kaiako building strong, supportive connections with children, their families, and kaiako around them

The principles are then interwoven with five strands to provide a framework that guides kaiako planning and how they plan for individual child's learning alongside whānau. The five strands are:

### **Mana whenua | Belonging**

-Emphasises the importance of children knowing that they have a place where they are accepted and valued.

### **Mana atua | Wellbeing**

-Focuses on ensuring that children are physically and emotionally safe, healthy, and happy.

### **Mana tangata | Contribution**

-Supports children to learn with and alongside others, appreciating diversity and understanding their role in different communities.

### **Mana reo | Communication**

-Focuses on supporting children to develop the skills to express themselves, understand others, and learn new languages and literacies including languages of maths and the arts.

### **Mana aotūroa | Exploration**

-Encourages children to learn about their world through play and discovery.

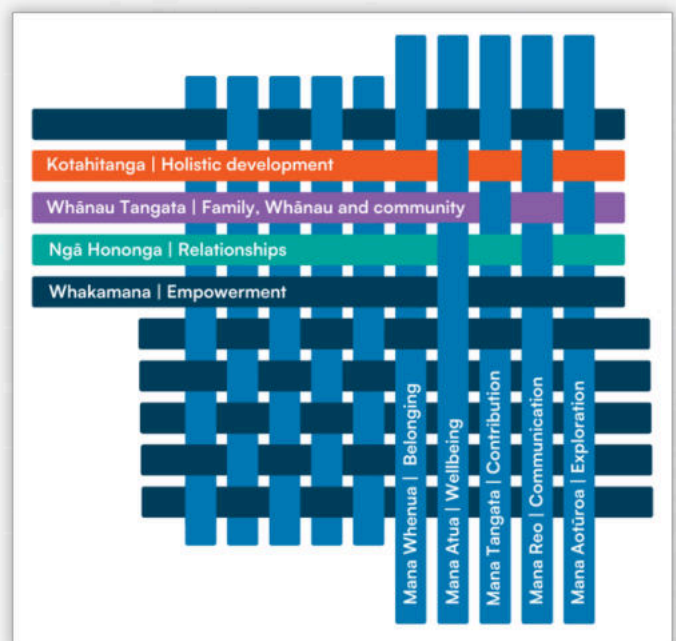
All five of these strands recognise the importance of children's social and emotional learning alongside their physical and intellectual development.

### **How is Te Whāriki used by early learning centres?**

Te Whāriki is not a step by step instruction guide for kaiako, rather it is a framework that encourages them to consider the interests, strengths and needs of each individual child as well as the goals whānau and wider community have for them.

Within each strand of Te Whāriki is a set of broad and flexible learning outcomes. Kaiako use these to analyse, interpret what they are observing and plan for future learning pathways.

Each learning outcome begins with *"over time and with guidance and encouragement, children become increasingly capable of"* which recognises that each child has their own individual learning journey and the role of the kaiako is to help them take the next step.



Te Whāriki also underpins our Evolve Promise, if you would like to know more about the Promise and how we implement Te Whāriki at Evolve please scan the QR code below



# Learning outcomes

In Te Whāriki, the learning outcomes describe the important skills, understandings, and dispositions that children develop as they learn and grow. These outcomes can help kaiako - together with whānau, notice what your child is already showing interest or strength in, and what they may be ready for next.

Below is a simplified version of these outcomes.



Healthy Habits



Managing feelings



Staying safe



Making connections between people, places and things



Caring for their place



Understanding routines and adapting to change



Respect for rules and rights of others



Believing in themselves



Fair and inclusive play



Working with others



Mathematical skills



Sharing ideas creatively



Literacy skills



Using language confidently



Expressing themselves through movement



Enjoying and creating stories



Curious and interested



Problem solving skills



Making sense of the world



Physical confidence