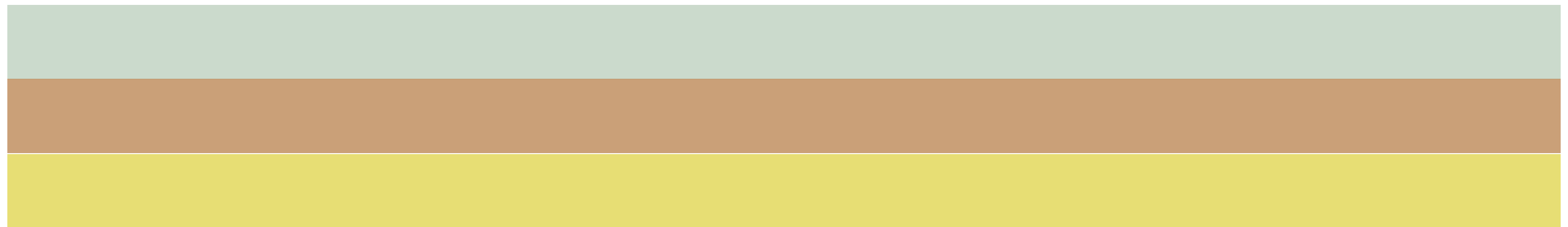


WHĀNAU MANAAKI



2017/18 Annual Report



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WHAKAKITENGA - OUR VISION

To be a respected leader in early childhood education and a strong advocate for children and whānau.

Our vision for He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua is firstly derived from our belief in the importance of quality early childhood education for the children themselves, their whānau, their community and for Aotearoa New Zealand.

It also stems from the knowledge that many children and whānau do not have access to the quality education services they deserve.

Therefore, we seek to be a leader in the provision of high quality early childhood education, and by demonstrating what can be achieved, be seen as advocates for children and whānau and help to improve quality early childhood education throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

NGĀ UARA – OUR VALUES

Nuturing the mana of the child

Quality

Partnership

Integrity

Our Strategic Intentions:

- Improve access for children, their parents and whānau to increasingly relevant services
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of our relationships with our communities
- Innovate and continuously improve teaching and learning
- Strengthen our financial and market positions
- Strengthen our bicultural capacity



Ko wai matou?
Mai Horowhenua, ki Kapiti
Piki ake ki te Upoko o te Ika e
Mai Rimutaka heke iho ki te Wairarapa
Ki te whānau manaaki o Tararua e

Who are we?
From Horowhenua to Kapiti
Climb up the head of the fish (Wellington)
From Rimutaka, descend down to Wairarapa
To the caring family of Tararua.



Nurturing the mana of the child

The aspiration statement in Te Whāriki, the national early childhood education curriculum, states:

(for all children) ... to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society. (Ministry of Education, 2017)

This statement is underpinned by the concept of Mana – that the child is empowered in many ways and which are represented in five domains of mana:

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

Therefore, the mana of the child underpins the values that He Whānau Manaaki uses to guide our decisions and to govern how we work with others.

Kounga - Quality

International research and the depth and breadth of our own teaching and learning experiences over the last 100 years have confirmed that 'quality' in early childhood education makes a critical difference to the long-term outcomes for children.

There is nothing more important than us continuing to demonstrate the truth of this and exemplify how it is best delivered.

Mahi Tahī - Partnership

We are not alone in desiring and contributing to what is best for children. It is important that we act inclusively with others who are motivated like us to achieve the best outcomes.

We will seek to develop strong partnerships with parents and whānau, schools, other government agencies, community groups and all who are positively concerned with nurturing the mana of the child.

Pono - Integrity

Our effectiveness in nurturing the mana of children, in convincing others of the critical importance of quality, and in building strong partnerships ultimately depends on our credibility.

We must maintain integrity in all we do and say, so that our voice is listened to when we advocate for what is best for the developing child.



Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been shown to be influential not just in the early school years, but into the teenage years and beyond.

High quality ECE - like that provided by Whānau Manaaki kindergartens and our Etu Ao home based service - boosts reading, writing, numeracy and problem solving skills until at least the age of 16, regardless of the background children come from.

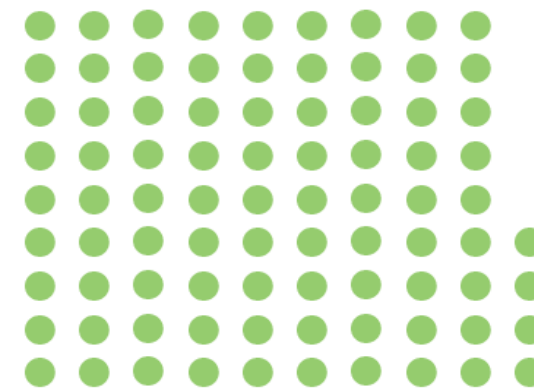
There has been a strong drive to get more children into early childhood services across New Zealand more

regularly, especially those in groups whose participation rates have been lower. We're proud to have contributed to the increase in the participation of children who would not have otherwise attended any ECE before going to school.

A whole raft of factors contribute to making services more welcoming to all and making it easier for children to get to them, including a focus on diversity, cultural appropriateness and community connections.

Living the value of

Nuturing the mana of the child



85 kindergartens and 1 home-based service (Etu Ao) covering the area up to Levin and across to Masterton, excluding central Lower Hutt & Wainuiomata.

FREE ECE

We continue to offer 20 hours free to ALL children (0-5 years)

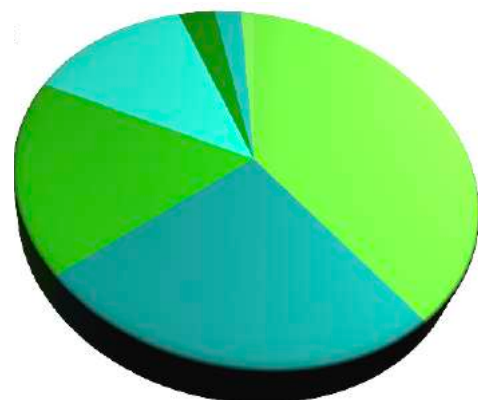
8,000 - 10,000 parents, whānau & caregivers engaged with every day



5024

children attend kindergarten at any one time

The tamariki who access He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua's services come from every type of community, from inner city to rural environments, from established neighbourhoods to new migrant populations, across all demographic sectors.



- NZ EUROPEAN PĀKEHĀ
- MĀORI
- ASIAN
- PASIFIKA
- EUROPEAN
- AFRICAN

Approximate current breakdowns.

There is a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented in the children who attend a Whānau Manaaki service, as shown here. The Association is respectful of this rich heritage and welcomes all these families into our kindergartens.

Since 2013, substantial numbers of new children have been introduced to high quality ECE through the services of Whānau Manaaki.





Helping children regularly get to, and stay in, ECE

Whānau Manaaki is committed to finding new ways to encourage children to take part in kindergarten and quality home based services - especially those whose families might have had trouble getting them there on a regular basis.

As well as making our services welcoming, nurturing and inclusive, we take our commitment a step further with our fleet of 3 vans, which transport around 100 children to kindergarten or home based educators each day.

A team of carefully vetted drivers work with 'runners', who greet children at home, take them into the kindergarten or educator, and then home again at the end of the day. It's a well-orchestrated system that makes sure children who need early childhood education the most, have the best chance of getting it.

While the children and families are the clear beneficiaries of the service, the transport staff say they get so much out of it themselves.

"I still can't believe I get paid to do this job," says Scott McAuley, who has been a driver for Whānau Manaaki for a year. "It's an awesome job. I just wish we had more vans so we could accommodate more kids and do more."

That's a sentiment echoed by Whānau Manaaki Chief Executive, Amanda Coulston, who says the value of the programme is so clear, yet sourcing funding to expand it, is so difficult. Finding the right staff is not an easy task either.

"They do so much more than transporting and 'running', and we are very selective about who we take on," says Ms Coulston. "Applicants are police vetted and interviewed by a senior teacher, and, as for all our positions, nobody is employed by Whānau

Manaaki without running a lens over some key factors - 'do you believe in children? Are you really interested in children? Are you respectful of children?'. It doesn't matter how good a driver they are, if you don't care about children or they don't respect children, you won't be employed by us."

Working in the transport team is a big responsibility, especially when children get to know staff, and close bonds are formed.



"They do get to know us, we are all labelled 'Aunty' or 'Uncle'. That is a privilege... I think it is a privilege to be given those titles. It becomes a little family, really, and we need to earn that trust."

Assistant driver Rita Mita.



Going into peoples' homes means getting to know children, and sometimes their families, well. The van teams soon learn what is important to their young passengers - and to make time for the things that matter them.

"Every time I pick up one particular child from her kindergarten at the end of the day, she grabs her bag and marches over to each teacher and each one of her friends to say goodbye. It puts us out in terms of time, but it doesn't bother us. These are her bonds, and we want to respect that." says Rita.





Giving children of teen parents a better chance

Helping children who might not otherwise get to kindergarten or attend regularly is the aim of our accessibility initiatives. Arohanui Kindergarten, in Levin, makes this possible for 22 children, and in the process, enables their parents to complete their education too.

The kindergarten is attached to He Whare Manaaki Tāngata, at Waiopahu College. Like the school unit, it is custom built to meet the unique needs of this group of parents and their children.

Arohanui benefits two generations at once, providing pathways for young parents to complete their education, which in turn, has a positive outcome for their children doing the same.

This year, 15 children attended Arohanui kindergarten on average, for 32 hours a week.

The positive impact on the lives of the parents and children who are part of it is immeasurable, with potential positive consequences long into their future.



Giving parents options

The traditional kindergarten setting is not for every family, or every child. Perhaps the hours don't suit, the child does better in a smaller group for part of the week, or there's a desire for a more home-like environment. Increasingly, there is also the desire for children to be immersed in, and learn more about, the culture of their family and community.

Developed with these ideas in mind, Etu Ao (which translates to 'morning star'), is Whānau Manaaki's Pasifika home based service. Serving the Porirua area, Etu Ao continues the Pasifika tradition of extended family caring for children within the comfort and culture of the home. Whānau Manaaki Educators work with up to four children, and receive training, teacher oversight, and the support and community of the Whānau Manaaki network.

This year, 47 Etu Ao Educators cared for 140 children. 11 new educators joined the service, and underwent 12 hours of training and supervision. Some children attend both Etu Ao and Whānau Manaaki kindergartens, enabling a richer, more diverse and

child centric educational experience for parents and tamariki alike.

Since the opening in 2012, over 500 children have been enrolled in this innovative service.

500 children enrolled since 2012

Etu Ao began as a Pasifika service but has since extended to engaging refugee families and migrant communities - Burmese and most recently Syrian. Its current makeup is approximately 75% Pasifika 15% Burmese and 8% Māori.





Kindergartens have been at the heart of New Zealand neighbourhoods for over 100 years. Traditionally, they have been the places that children have their first formal educational experiences, and connect with new friends; families meet others in the area and form bonds that can last for many years. Local kindergartens have always provided a place of stability and certainty in difficult times.

Whānau Manaaki provides many important benefits to the 85 kindergartens that make up its network, including quality assurance, innovative programmes, administrative and management support and professional development to local teaching teams. However, it is still the local nature of kindergarten that makes the experience so special for children and families.

“One of the most distinctive things about kindergartens is that they are nestled in their local communities. It is essential that families see themselves represented through our services,” says Jane Braun, Whānau Manaaki’s Deputy Chief Executive. Jane points out that children do not see kindergarten as something different or separate from their whānau, but as something that is part of their family.”

Toru Fetū kindergarten Head Teacher, Trinity Coulston, agrees. She says responsiveness to the needs of communities and whānau is key.

“For our community to have belonging and connection, they need to see themselves reflected here. They have to be able to trust us and know that what we’re doing here is what they want for their children. It is really important that our kindergartens have their own identity and way

Living the value of

Partnership



Assistant Head Teacher at Toru Fetū, Lana Nootai says that it is vital that children connect to their culture and community.

It’s important that children see themselves reflected in their kindergarten and that we are not separate from, but authentically connected to, our communities.

Reflecting culture back into the community



of doing things, but then sit under the Whānau Manaaki umbrella to ensure quality and qualified teachers.”

Trinity talks about the importance of the culture and unique identity of each child, as a key part of their kindergarten experience.

“One thing that really stands out for me is that sometimes the children come here and encourage the family to start learning about their own culture, too. When the child introduces the family back into the culture and creates that cultural connection, that’s a great thing to celebrate.”

Assistant Head Teacher at Toru Fetū, Lana Nootai, agrees. “This is a place for them to make that connection and reconnect to their roots. The

languages are different but the values are all the same, there are similarities in the cultures and the way of being is the same. This is where we have put a lot of our pride, with our own culture and language.”

Seeing each child, each kindergarten, and each community as unique, is very much the kindergarten way.

“It is so important that we just don’t see communities as one amorphous thing,” says Whānau Manaaki Chief Executive, Amanda Coulston. “If we take it from the child’s point of view, their community stands out in their identity. If we are focused in nurturing children’s mana, sense of identity, and worth, then we have to really see what their community is.”



Community links on both sides of the gate

At Doris Nicholson Kindergarten, connections to the local community start at the end of the driveway, where ‘Des the Toyman’ (who has become a well-known local figure) sets himself up each morning. Des greets the parents and their children, many of whom stop to have a chat with the genial 90 year old.

Des turned his focus towards making toys and furniture for children in the workshop at the back of his house after his wife passed away a few years ago. Now he’s found a new home outside the kindergarten, sitting in the back of his car most days.

In fact, he’s become so entrenched in the daily routine he even rings the kindergarten to let them know if he’s taking a sick day or ‘taking leave’, says Jane Hutchinson, Head Teacher.

“It’s about relationships and that people can have a sense of belonging somewhere,’ she says. “I think that’s what Des has here. He knows he belongs here. He can come down to the kindergarten and the children are really keen to see him, we’re really keen to see him... and it’s just a lovely relationship that we’re able to have with him.”

Inside the kindergarten, you’ll find a sturdy ride-on elephant getting plenty of use. It was a toy that Des initially made for his own children back in the 1960’s. Many decades later, with his own kids grown, Des donated it to the kindergarten. Today children line up to take turns on Ellie, unaware of it’s 50 year history. Or the fact it’s just another example of kindergartern connecting to the local community and the people in it.





Katoa Kindergarten in Elsdon, Porirua, is located right in the heart of Ngāti Toa iwi. The kindergarten is close to its local Marae, Takapuwahia, and visits weekly to share stories, sing songs and just hang out.

The connections run much deeper than that, though, as Head Teacher Jess Paea explains.

“Community is at the centre of everything we do. Our goal is to not have that separate, to not have the community separate and then us. We really want to immerse ourselves in it.”

For Jess, that also extends to embracing others in the early childhood community who complement the work of the kindergarten.

“We have an established relationship with the Ngāti Toa Puna. My child goes there - I would have liked her to come to kindy, but she had established relationships there. It was important for us as a family that she continue those relationships.

Supporting the Puna Reo and their goals in the

community is important to us, and likewise, they support the kindergarten.”

We have a student teacher with us at the moment who is a kaiako down at the Puna Reo, and it was really important to me to have her placed here because she has all that knowledge, and that way we can share it. There are also tips and tricks that she is able to pick up from us and take back to their learning nest.”

For Jess, the work of connection doesn't end when the kindergarten day does.

“I also try and attend things locally, like events at the Marae, especially if there's a Tangi there. I'll try to attend at least one of the days and we'll go down and support the whānau in the evenings. It's a way of giving back, but also for us to be seen as part of the community. That's important if their tamariki come here as well, if they can see their teachers contributing to events that are significant in their whānau's lives.”

Being seen outside of the kindergarten setting is an important way to strengthen ties with families.

“I attend the local church here, and that's where the name 'Aunty Jess' has come from, I'm not blood-related to a lot of the tamariki here, but through the church they see me as an aunty, and if the children are comfortable calling me Aunty, and the whānau are, then to me, that's valuable, and I treasure it. Some children choose to call me Jess, and that's ka pai. Some children choose to call me Aunty Jess, and that's also ka pai.”

Being truly supportive of the community means keeping a special eye out for those who might need a bit more help.

“There are also families that have children in their care and I think it's important to support them. If they need immediate care for their children, we try to find that place for them.”



“It's a way of giving back, but also for us to be seen as part of the community. That's important if their tamariki come here as well, if they can see their teachers contributing to events that are significant in their whānau's lives.”

Staying connected

“I think what's really important as part of our leadership mix in the Association,” says Jane Braun, Deputy Chief Executive, “is to have representatives from different parts of our communities. So that might be on our Board, it's our teaching teams, it's part of our Senior Management Team - and that we have an appreciation of diversity and what that means. We deliver things in ways that are appropriate to those communities. So it's about connectedness of people.”

Jane says that these connections are crucial. She adds that Whānau Manaaki is actively “giving opportunities for the whānau who are in each of those different parts of the community to be contributing. To have ways that we're able to hear their voices.”

“On our Board at the moment we are really lucky with the diversity that we have,” agrees Board Member Emma McGregor. “We've got parents, teachers, staff - and I think, particularly at the moment, everybody's skills are complementary. A strong Board makes for a strong association.”



...it's really important to have people on the board who represent different parts of the community.

Board Member, Emma McGregor
on her farm in the Wairarapa

Whānau Manaaki is in the heart of so many communities

Adventure

18 Longitude Place, Whitby 5024

Arohanui

74 Bartholomew Road, Levin

Ascot Park

175 Conclusion Street, Porirua 5024

Awatea

19 Awatea Street, Porirua 5024

Bellevue

50 Link Road, Newlands 6037

Berhampore

3-5 Stanley Street, Berhampore 6023

Betty Montford

46 York Street, Levin 5510

Birchville

12 Amber Grove, Birchville, Upper Hutt 5018

Brian Webb

28 Victory Crescent, Tawa 5028

Brooklyn

62 Todman Street, Brooklyn 6021

Brown Owl

5 Aniseed Grove, Upper Hutt 5018

Campbell

25 Campbell Street, Karori 6012

Carterton

3 Victoria Street, Carterton, 5713

Churton Park

86 Churton Drive, Churton Park 6037

Cottle

117 Thackeray Street, Upper Hutt, 5018

Discovery

3 Pullen Lane, Whitby 5024

Doris Nicholson

1122 Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt, 5018

East Harbour

99 Muritai Road, Eastbourne 5013

Fanau Pasifika

76a Cambridge Street, Levin 5510

Greytown

McMaster Street, Greytown, 5314

Hataitai

8 Taurima Street, Hataitai 6021

Heretaunga

9a Ruru Crescent, Heretaunga, Upper Hutt 5018

Irmgard Ritchie

88a McLeod Street, Upper Hutt, 5018

Island Bay

100 Melbourne Road, Island Bay 6023

Johnsonville

6 Wanaka Street, Johnsonville 6037

Johnsonville West

34a Kipling Street, Johnsonville 6037

Kahurangi

11 Surrey Street, Masterton, 5810

Karori

155 Campbell Street, Karori 6021

Katoa

52 Takapuwahia Drive, P.O. Box 50466

Khandallah

24 Everest Street, Khandallah 6035

Lansdowne

30c Totara Street, Lansdowne, Masterton, 5810

Lyllall Bay

89 Apu Crescent, Lyall Bay 6022

Manaia

53 South Road, Masterton, 5842

Maraeroa

36 Astrolabe Street, Porirua

Martinborough

Roberts Street, Martinborough, 5711

Masterton West

159 Cole Street Extension, Masterton, 5810

Matairangi Community

112-114 Waipapa Road, Hataitai 6021

Matariki

Jepsen Grove, Upper Hutt, 5018

Meta Riddiford

Daniell Street, Featherston, 5710

Miramar Central

32 Para Street, Miramar 6022

Miramar North

20 Whanganui Street, Miramar 6022

Moira Gallagher

24 Hampshire Street, Porirua 5024

Newlands

13 Horokiwi Road West, Newlands 6037

Newtown

9 Hospital Road, Newtown 6021

Ngahina

Ngahina Street, Paraparaumu 5032

Ngaio

65 Ottawa Road, Ngaio 6035

Northland

22 Albemarle Road, Northland 6012

Nuanua

5A Warspite Avenue, P.O. Box 50276, Porirua

Onslow

1a Delhi Crescent, Khandallah 6035

Otaki

68 Waerenga Road, Otaki 5512

Owhiro Bay

96 Happy Valley Road, Owhiro Bay

Papakowhai

5 Yarrow Place, Papakowhai 5024

Paparangi

10 Mark Avenue, Paparangi 6037

Paraparaumu

27 Donovan Road, Paraparaumu 5032

Paremata

51 Paremata Road, Paremata 5024

Parsons Avenue

20 Parsons Avenue, Levin 5370

Petone

10a Tennyson Street, Petone 5012

Petone Beach

20 King Street, Petone 5012

Pikopiko Clyde Quay

Cnr Elizabeth & Brougham Streets,
Mt Victoria 6011

Plimmerton

8a Beach Road, Plimmerton 5026

Pukerua Bay

1 Wairaka Road, Pukerua Bay 5026

Pukerua Bay Pre-School

8a Wairaka Road, Pukerua Bay 5026

Raumati Beach

32 Raumati Road, P.O. Box 2064

Raumati South

45 Tiromoana Road, Raumati South P.O. Box 457

Seatoun

14 Gore Street, Seatoun 6022

Silverstream

51 - 53 Kiln Street, Silverstream,
Upper Hutt, 5019

South End

High Street South, Carterton, 5713

Strathmore Park

50a Strathmore Avenue, Strathmore 6022

Sunshine

21a Sunshine Avenue, Karori 6012

Tai Tamariki (Te Papa)

P.O. Box 467, 55 Cable Street, Wellington

Tairangi

1 Omapere Street, Porirua 5024

Taitoko

36 Kinross Street, Levin 5510

Tawa Central

21 Oxford Street, Tawa 5028

Te Timatanga Hou

19 Wilton Street, Levin

Titahi Bay

48 Herewini Street, Titahi Bay 5022

Toru Fetū

36a Astrolabe Street, Cannons Creek, Porirua

Totara Park

7a Denver Grove, Totara Park, Upper Hutt 5018

Trentham

19a Tawai Street, Trentham, 5018

Tui Park

12b Mexted Terrace, Linden 5028

Una Williams

12 Macara Street, Masterton, 5810

Upper Hutt

14a McParland Street, Upper Hutt 5018

Wadestown

45 Oban Street, Wadestown 6012

Waikanae

Russell Reserve,
Ngaio Road 5036

Waitangirua

4 Kalingo Street, Porirua 5024

Wellington South

103 Owen Street, Newtown 6021

York Street

2 York Street, Masterton, 5810



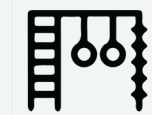
He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua
Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated

Our kindergartens are woven into our neighbourhoods



“Children’s learning and development are fostered if the wellbeing of their family and community is supported; if their family, culture, knowledge and community are respected; and if there is a strong connection and consistency among all the aspects of the child’s world.”

TE WHĀRIKI



Playgroup (PG) and Integrated Service (IS) Kindergartens

- Katoa Kindergarten (PG and IS)
52 Takapuwahia Drive, Takapuwahia, Porirua
- Island Bay Kindergarten (PG)
100 Melbourne Road, Island Bay, Wellington
- Taitoko Kindergarten (PG and IS)
36 Kinross Street, Levin
- Toru Fetū Kindergarten (PG and IS)
36a Astrolabe Street, Cannons Creek, Porirua



Etu Ao Homebased Service
(offered to the Porirua East area)

- Based at Whānau Manaaki Head Office
Unit F, 15 John Seddon Drive, Porirua



YMen Career Development Programme

- Based at Whānau Manaaki Head Office
Unit F, 15 John Seddon Drive, Porirua



Kindergarten Holiday Programme

- Based at Newtown Kindergarten
9 Hospital Road, Newtown, Wellington



English Language Class and Associated Playgroup

- Based at Wellington South Kindergarten
103 Owen Street, Newtown, Wellington



Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens Head Office

- Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Assn Inc
Unit F, 15 John Seddon Drive,



While so many others in the sector are focused on quantity, for Whānau Manaaki, quality remains the primary driver. Current funding models favour larger child care and early childhood centres using unqualified staff. In contrast, our kindergarten tradition, with its not-for-profit roots and commitment to trained and registered teachers, is driven by what is best for tamariki, whānau and the communities they are nestled within.

This commitment extends to our home based arm, Etu Ao, which has 140 children enrolled with 47 educators having oversight from visiting teachers. Quality means staying true to the principles and ideals we were founded on, but also continually innovating to ensure today's learners are equipped to deal with tomorrow's world.

For Whānau Manaaki Board Chair, Amy Weightman, there's another very good reason to continue to

evolve and grow. "If you don't innovate, if you can't be dynamic and agile in the thinking and processes that you use and the way you engage with families, you miss the bus," says Ms Weightman, who adds that the organisation makes conscious, strategic decisions to drive innovation at all levels.

"At organisation-wide events I make a point of telling all our staff, but especially teachers: I know Whānau Manaaki's successes are not accidental. They are deliberate and considered and the result of expertise and experience and dedication and determination. It's recognised by the Board, and it's applauded. It's a significant part of who we are and how we roll."

Living the value of

Quality

Quality and innovation comes from listening to the community and then using drive and creativity to make a difference.



Waikanae Head Teacher Scott Marris says that engaging with parents and whānau means embracing new channels such as Facebook to make that connection.



575 teachers employed

Chief Executive, Amanda Coulston, points to two key, underlying factors that ensure quality is imbued in everything the organisation does.

“The research tells us that there are two types of indicators: process quality indicators and structural indicators of quality. Structural indicators are things like the qualifications of the staff and their exposure to ongoing professional development.

How the teacher engages with children and extends their thinking, how they engage with families, these are process indicators of quality.

The two are interlinked. Having just a qualified registered teacher who isn’t engaging in high quality interactions isn’t enough. The qualifications and the background of the teacher are incredibly important, as are the interactions. You need to have both.”

“We have to go outside of our comfort zones at times to be able to engage with families in ways

that they are comfortable. For example, the children and their parents and whānau are digital natives, so we need to start using those platforms to communicate with them.”

Waikanae Kindergarten is one of many finding new ways to use technology to connect with families, and in turn, spreading the message wider about the difference that trained and experienced teachers can make.

“A lot of our families comment and like our Facebook posts regularly,” says Scott Marris, Head Teacher at Waikanae Kindergarten. “They get to see what we do as professionals, and they get to see how their children are learning through play.

I can put a post up and someone likes it right away. That’s how you know you are reaching people. Showing them what we are, what happens at kindergartens and what we do as professional teachers.”



Financially, it has been a tough few years for kindergarten organisations as they have held their commitment to maintaining a registered, qualified teacher workforce despite government funding cuts.

Kindergarten associations have been left to absorb the additional salary costs, which for Whānau Manaaki, has meant taking a \$5m hit to the bottom line.

Chief Executive, Amanda Coulston, says trained teachers make a proven difference to children, and finding a way to maintain a qualified, registered teacher workforce is a key driver of quality for the organisation.

“The research is very clear that having 100% qualified teachers in regulated positions is so important. It doesn’t mean that other people shouldn’t be contributing to children’s learning. For example, our van drivers runners and the language assistants who are in our services are really important. But the core of regulated staff needs to be 100% qualified, registered teachers and they need to have ongoing professional development and support. The qualification of the teacher is only one element. Ongoing, sustained support through our Senior Teaching Team and our wider team of professionals providing a range of professional development is all part of continuous improvement.”

There are 12 Senior Teachers working for Whānau Manaaki. They regularly visit kindergarten teams to talk about their teaching and learning practice and ensure quality is happening in line with Whānau Manaaki’s Strategic Teaching and Learning Plan and Quality Framework.

The Senior Teaching Team offers a range of professional development opportunities, some delivered by them based on their own diverse experience, others by external experts.

Teachers also have the opportunity to come together for PLD (Professional Learning and Development) to share the practices and innovations from their own kindergarten, for the benefit of the wider network.

“It values our teachers as professionals,” says Senior



Teacher, Tania Jack, “and allows them to express what is really unique about their skills and what has been happening in their kindergartens.”

“Trained, qualified teachers have the opportunity for in-depth professional discussions about best practice with children, best practices in interacting with children and all of that encompasses what quality looks like for Whānau Manaaki.”

Learning Support

Every child learns in their own way, at their own pace. The beauty of kindergarten, with its focus on learning through play with qualified teachers who follow the interests of the child, is that a tailored approach to teaching and learning comes naturally.

Some children also need more, or different assistance. Perhaps they have behavioural issues, or physical differences that make learning harder. Early Intervention Teachers, funded by the Ministry of Education, have extra training and skills to support these children, but there are not enough Early Intervention Teachers to meet demand. This means long waiting times at a very critical juncture in a child's earliest learning years.

It can take up to a year to get to see an Early Intervention Teacher, Whānau Manaaki has started its own initiative to give children extra support in the meantime.

"We've only got two to three years with these children, and we need to be responsive right away," says Whānau Manaaki Head Teacher and Learning Support Teacher, Soreen Scahill. Soreen runs our own Learning Support Programme, which uses the skills and knowledge of Whānau Manaaki teachers who have individual expertise in this area to the benefit of the whole network. The programme provides formal professional development sessions, as well as day-to-day upskilling and on the ground support to teaching teams.

"These children can't wait, and that's why the programme is really important," says Ms Scahill. "This is when development happens, and we can make an impact on it before they go to school. If we don't support them and provide the intervention they need now, they won't progress the way they could."

While the programme makes a difference to the individual lives of children, it is also creating lasting benefits across the network.



"If we are always thinking 'outside services know best', we're not able to take responsibility for the child, and help them make change. Having the capability in the network means the people who know the child best can get them the support they need, faster."

Soreen Scahill, Head Teacher and Learning Support Teacher



Nuturing the mana of the child





As a Waikato university study noted, having a bicultural curriculum can be one of the most important things within a kindergarten community. Not only does it help expand language skills but it allows children to build confidence and become comfortable in their identities as New Zealanders. Being able to watch the haka and understand what it means or singing waiata in a group, are some of the more visible manifestations of a bicultural approach, but there are more, and deeper, benefits.

Biculturalism brings parents and children together, with a new generation of young Kiwis taking their understanding home and engaging the interest of parents.

Importantly, it goes to the heart of New Zealand's history as a nation.



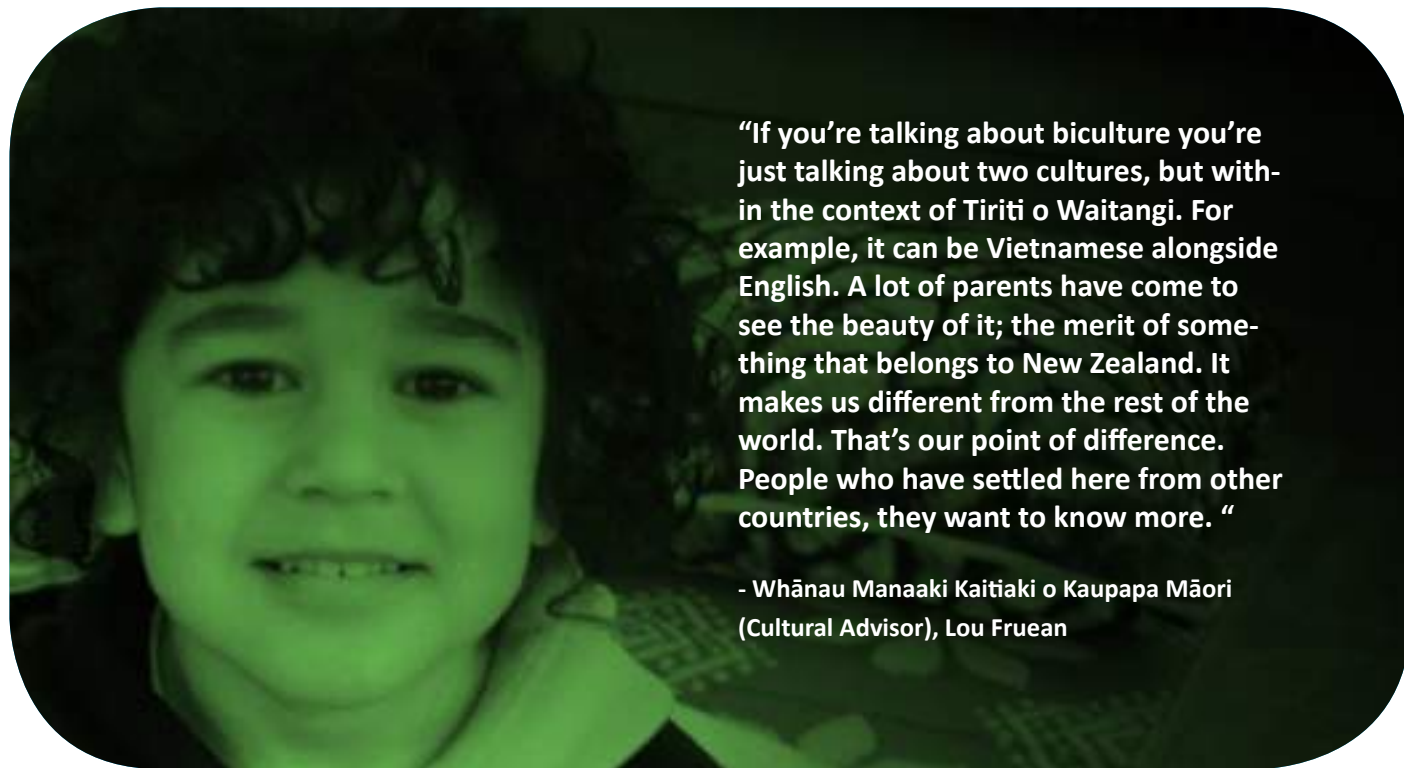
Living the value of

Integrity



At Paraparumu Kindergarten, the tamariki learn about the history of the area and local legends - and how they translate into important values.

It is important for children to have a real sense of who they are, where they are and what values are important to them and their whānau.



“If you’re talking about biculture you’re just talking about two cultures, but within the context of Tiriti o Waitangi. For example, it can be Vietnamese alongside English. A lot of parents have come to see the beauty of it; the merit of something that belongs to New Zealand. It makes us different from the rest of the world. That’s our point of difference. People who have settled here from other countries, they want to know more.”

- Whānau Manaaki Kaitiaki o Kaupapa Māori (Cultural Advisor), Lou Fruean

Whakapapa, or knowing where we have come from, is an important concept in Māori culture.

Our services actively look for ways to reflect their local communities – something that is very visible at Paraparaumu Beach Kindergarten, where an intricate mural tells the story of Kahe Te Rau-o-te-rangi. In the mid 1870’s when Kapiti island came under threat, the young mother made a heroic swim to the mainland with her young daughter on her back to raise reinforcements.

“The mural came from our research around the local community, in a quest to find out more about who we are and where we are,” says teacher, Letitia Ellison.

“Even many of us who have lived here for a long time didn’t know the story. It really resonated with us. It is very significant, in that it represents important values. We wanted it to be a part of who we are, too, with its messages of bravery and choices and children and families working together. That’s the most powerful way we can use it.”

Whānau Manaaki Chair, Amy Weightman, says kindergarten has an important role to play in being a champion for biculturalism.

“For all of New Zealand, biculturalism is a bit of a learning journey. I think there’s trust in our kindergarten experience and how to engage with

the community in a meaningful and genuine way. There needs to be a level of authenticity and it needs to be something that grows. There’s no point in paying lip service to things if you don’t understand the ideas around them.”

Whānau Manaaki Chief Executive, Amanda Coulston, agrees.

“It’s about concepts such as Whanaungatanga, relationships that should be reflected in the kindergartens. Manaakitanga - people should feel welcome, be offered a cup of tea or feel as though they can make a contribution. It’s multiple layers of things – not just a set of poi on the wall, and that’s all there is to it. It’s actually about hearing it, seeing it and it’s about feeling it - those things all have to be in place.”

Amanda emphasises the importance of biculturalism for all.

“It’s not just about meeting the needs of our Māori children and their families, it’s about enhancing the identity of all of our children. Our national curriculum, Te Whāriki is one of the only bicultural curricula in the world. It’s there because it recognises Māori as tangata whenua (people of the land), and that all children in Aotearoa, New Zealand will benefit from accessing Te Ao Māori, kaupapa Māori and Māori ideas and thoughts.”

Bringing biculturalism home

Whānau Manaaki Kaitiaki o Kaupapa Māori (Cultural Advisor), Lou Fruean, sees the inter-generational impact of a focus on biculturalism, and the difference kindergartens are making to whole families.

“Take waiata: the parents will come in and say ‘my children are always singing this while we’re shopping!’ Or I’ve heard lots of instances where parents have said to me that because their children are singing the songs, they want to know them, too. They come back to kindy and ask if they can learn the words. They get the words and now the whole family is singing it!

The kids take it home because they’re using it all the time, and then the parents come back to kindy and ask what it looks like in action.”

Taking te reo out of the classroom and into everyday life is one of the most important ways of making New Zealand truly bicultural. For many young New Zealanders, te reo phrases roll off the tongue as easily as the English language – and unlike some from older generations, they’re not afraid to use it.

“I heard one story of a child coming home and saying ‘Mum! You’re manaakiing dad!’. It’s a phrase we use all the time in our kindergartens, and it means ‘to care for one another’. While the child had it down pat, the parent had to come to us and ask what it meant.”

Lou welcomes every opportunity to answer questions, and in the spirit of Manaaki Manaakitanga, puts those who are curious, at ease.



Lou Fruean
Whānau Manaaki
Māori kaitiaki o kaupapa

Living the value of

Partnership

Not just words, but actions, too

“I work regularly in our kindergartens supporting the implementation of te reo (language) and tikanga (culture), says Lou Fruean.

“I’m seeing all of our kindys incorporating elements of biculturalism.

What they come to understand is that if they don’t articulate it, then it becomes invisible. Say for instance, manaakitanga. Manaakitanga is about caring, respecting. It’s something that you do naturally when new parents come in to the kindergarten. So I get teachers to talk about that. But if they don’t see manaakitanga with the actual practice then it’s not a bicultural curriculum.”

“Every part of the curriculum within the centre is bicultural. For instance, when teachers draw attention to the processes that we have: ‘karakia for kai’ means not stepping over people’s lunch. If they’re having lunch, the kids don’t step over each other’s lunches. Also, no sitting on tables, and all the processes around that is bicultural. The stories impart important ways of being - for instance, when kindergartens are talking about Māui, those dispositions are what we look at. We look at leadership – rangatiratanga – from a bicultural perspective. You can say the word ‘leadership’ in Māori, but it won’t be a bicultural curriculum unless they learn the term with it, that’s really important.”



The value of Kapa Haka

Through the Māori performing arts, people come together, create and perform, and make genuine learning and social connections.

Children gain vital life skills too.

“I’ve seen that the merit of kapa haka is not just pronunciation and learning te reo Māori,” says Lou Fruean. “It’s also the music dynamics, pitch, volume and rhythm, children working together, raising their self-esteem because they’re leading, taking cues from others, the social aspect of doing things together as a group and being able to listen to a guitar and pick up the tune. There are so many dynamics that you use that will carry on into later learning.”

The challenge to step outside of comfort zones goes beyond the children. Lou tells of a teacher who ‘climbed her Everest’ as a result of engaging in kapa haka.

“All the way up to the performance she told me ‘Lou, I don’t know if I can do it.’ And I said: ‘I’m going to let you decide that the day before. You can pull out of course, if you can’t do it, you can’t do it, I’m not going to force you.’ But you know what! She made it. She pushed herself to do it and I watched her because I wanted to manaaki her. She was shaking! Visibly shaking and sweating, and after she’d done it she’d climbed Mount Everest. That was pretty big for me.”

He Whānau Manaaki Kindergarten Kapa Haka group, Te Ara Hou, meets monthly in Porirua, Upper Hutt and in the Wairarapa. It performs each year at the Whānau Manaaki July conference.

The group was formed from Te Wairua o Ngā Māra Tamariki, which began as part of the Wellington Kindergarten Association in 2013.

When the two associations came together, many new members joined, and the new name was chosen in 2015.



Getting ready for school the kiwi way

Whānau choose kindergarten for all sorts of reasons. Its learning through play philosophy, the close ties to community and other neighbourhood families, its bicultural focus and more. One of the key roles kindergarten has had over the years, is in preparing children for school.

Manawai is the grandmother of three current children attending Una Williams kindergarten in Masterton. Manawai has long ties with Una Williams - her now forty year old daughter attended in her pre-school years.

When Manawai wanted to make sure that her mokopuna were ready for school, it was Una Williams that she turned to.

“Three of them came here, and I believe kindergarten academically prepared them for school especially around reading, maths and interacting with other children. I still have two enrolled there.”

One of the very special things about kindergarten is that it mixes learning with fun and follows the interests of each individual child. Whether it’s sand play, building blocks, a bush walk, gardening or cooking, there are so many ways to stimulate interest in learning, that can then be extended by trained teachers.

Takapuwaihia (Manawai’s mokopuna), 3, has been at the kindergarten for a year now.

“He comes home with some really big words, he’ll say ‘this is so delicious’. He can identify food - broccoli, cauliflower. He likes to chop things up when I’m cooking tea - they cook here. There are lot of things that they teach our children.”



Manawai says it’s evident that while the children are having fun, a lot of learning is going on.

“What I love about here is, I come in in the morning and all the kids play stuff is set out on the table. When I come to pick the children up it’s one great mess. That tells me that the kids have had fun and they’ve learned something. I promote the kindergarten hard if I know anyone who has children that need to come here.”

The number of Māori tamariki attending Early Childhood Education has continued to steadily climb over the past eight years, thanks to a concerted effort in the sector to lift participation rates.

The aim is to encourage Māori tamariki to become confident, competent learners who get to experience success as learners, setting them up for the years that follow.





Looking ahead

How money is made, prioritised and spent is different when you are a not-for-profit, and any return goes back to benefit the customer, rather than investors or shareholders. There is still an imperative to return a surplus and ensure a balance between sustainability, innovation and growth, but social responsibility underlies everything.

As Board Chair, Amy Weightman, explains: “You don’t make the money off the people you’re providing the service to. You don’t do it with fees, penalties to parents, hidden costs or exclusionary practices. There are lots of other ways to produce a surplus, and our focus is on exploring those.”

Chief Executive Amanda Coulston sees money as the mechanism to keep children and whānau at the

heart of everything Whānau Manaaki does, without becoming the number one driver.

“Financial viability is incredibly important. You want to be able to create and nurture high quality learning opportunities and environments for children. You need to have funds to be able to do that, but finances should not dictate how things happen. We do what is needed to do the best by children and use the finances to support that.”

Deputy Chief Executive, Jane Braun, says Whānau Manaaki’s strong values-based approach is key to the organisation staying true to its intentions.

“When you have guiding principles and guiding values guiding decision making, the bottom line is not about making a profit but returning money back into the system.”

“I want to be part of creating a country that truly supports babies and children, that truly sees that real investment - not just money, but time, energy, resources and love - is the thing that will make the country strong.

Think how magical this country can be if we focus on and invest in our youngest, and grow our communities through the people around them.”



Still, delivering a quality service is challenging when funding models do not necessarily support the areas that Whānau Manaaki sees as key.

Jane Braun talks about the difficulties that the government's removal of subsidies for a 100% qualified, registered teacher workforce.

Amy Weightman agrees.

"Such a large portion of funding is tied up with one part of our operations - teacher salaries. The thing that has been so frustrating over the past nine years is the cuts to early childhood funding, and the cuts to those of us that maintain 100% qualified teachers in regulated positions."

For Whānau Manaaki, those cuts have meant a funding shortfall of some five million dollars a year. While the organisation remains creative and resourceful in its approach, and has managed to maintain its commitment to quality provision, that's a big hole in the bottom line.

"We haven't been able to innovate to the extent we wanted to in different communities," explains Amanda Coulston. "We haven't been able to extend our services to communities that could bene-

fit hugely by having kindergartens. That's where it's been extremely frustrating." However, Amy Weightman is pleased with how the organisation has weathered this difficult time.

"We didn't just change direction or what we were doing, or tighten our belts or compromise on the quality of what we were doing. We found ways to still be innovative and dynamic, and we found ways to grow."

Ms Weightman remains positive about the organisation's future.

"I'm not worried about our future because I know that the values that are at the core of who we are and what we do will be maintained regardless of what other forces are at play. If the landscape changes we will still have those beliefs and make decisions against that set of values."

An amazing resource of support

Whānau Manaaki provides administrative, management and property management support to 85 kindergartens and educational leadership and professional development for up to 700 teaching staff and home based educators.

An ongoing focus on innovation and educational excellence enables our teachers and educators to provide to the needs of children and families, reducing their administrative load.

The organisation also coordinates local committees and provides training and support to parents/whānau.



He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua owes much of its success to hard-working and skilled support staff, whether they're in the field or at the Association Office.