WHĀNAU MANAAKI

For Whānau, not for profit

Whānau Pānui #9
November, 2026



Featured image: Nuanua Kindergarten, Porirua

Nau mai, haere mai.
Welcome to our Whānau Manaaki Parent & Whānau Pānui | Newsletter

With Election day on 7th November, this edition highlights the importance of having your say and thinking about the future of our tamariki when casting your vote. We have included a guide showing where political parties stand on key issues affecting children, families and early learning. You'll also read about our recent AGM in Taranaki, where we celebrated the dedication of our volunteers.

This pānui is produced by Whānau Manaaki. Although we know you receive regular communication from your child's kindergarten or service, we decided to produce a regular newsletter that is published every 3 months or so, to provide you with information that impacts our network and Early Childhood Education in general.

Previous editions of our pānui can be found on our website.

In this issue we talk about:

- Whānau Manaaki celebrates volunteers
- Think of our tamariki when you vote
- Supporting Tamariki to Thrive: Pathways for Whānau
- Homemade chalk fun

Mō Matou | About Us

Whānau Manaaki Kindergarten Association operates the service that your tamariki attends. Whānau Manaaki pays staff, provides professional and pastoral support, and maintains properties of our kindergartens and home-based services.

We offer high-quality teaching and learning with our 100% qualified teachers and trained educators. We also provide transport, and support from social workers and community workers in some regions.

As you know, Whānau Manaaki tamariki get a great start in a caring community-focused environment.

Each kindergarten offers its own individual programme, based on Te Whāriki - our world leading early childhood curriculum.

We provide up to 20 hours free ECE for all children – regardless of age!

WHĀNAU MANAAKI

Visit us to find out more
www.wmkindergartens.org.nz

Whānau Manaaki Celebrates our Volunteers

On the 22 October, we came together in Taranaki for our Whānau Manaaki AGM.

It was extra special as we celebrated one year since Taranaki made the decision to join our association! A year of coming together, building connections and strengthening our shared commitment to tamariki and whānau.

Congratulations to Rachel Graves, Amy McAteer, and Daniel Wark who were elected as community members on the Whānau Manaaki board. Thank you to those who stood and everyone who voted.

We also took time to celebrate our amazing volunteers and farewell those who have given their time and service to our Board. It was a chance to reflect, share stories and acknowledge the people who make our kaupapa what it is.

Ngā mihi nui to our Taranaki team for hosting us and to everyone who continues to be part of the Whānau Manaaki whānau.







Some of the Volunteer Award Recipients 2026

TOP: Abbie Southcombe (left) with Board member Miranda Zander (right).

CENTRE: Todd Fisher (right) with Board member Kieran McCorkindale.

LEFT: Faye Olliver (left) with Board member Miranda Zander (right).

Here's what our staff have to say about our volunteers:

"Faye is a grandmother of one of our Merrilands tamariki. She brings fresh vegetables, fruit, flowers and preserves for our community to enjoy. Faye always has a smile that brightens all of our days. Faye is amazing."

"Abbie is a parent that goes above and beyond to help our kindergarten. She is always willing to put her hand and get stuck in with whatever needs to be done. We really appreciate her support."

"Todd has been an enormous support for the team at Westown kindergarten, volunteering his time on a number of occasions to help with heavy gardening work, and other jobs. Thank you for your mahi, Todd."

E Tū Kaha

STAND UP STRONG



E Tū Kaha is a Whānau Manaaki campaign that encourages our staff and kaiako to advocate for early childhood education (ECE) as a public good and a right for all tamariki in Aotearoa.

Think of our tamariki when you vote

We encourage everyone to engage in democracy, and to think of children when casting their vote.

Whether we like it or not, politics influences our finances, our services, and the lives of our families.

We have developed a chart that shows where the parties stand on our priorities, relating to qualified teachers, funding that supports affordable services, and health, housing and child poverty.

Every vote counts – make sure you cast yours!

Scan the QR code to link to polling places around the country, with details of the opening hours.

E Tū Kaha
STAND UP STRONG

Policies Impacting Children
- how the parties compare

	National	act	New Zealand First	Labour	Green	Māori	Opportunity
Maintaining kindergarten funding:	WON'T COMMIT	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support moving to 100% qualified teachers in ECE services	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X Moving to 80 per cent
Increased investment to end child poverty	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health and wellbeing – increasing funding for iwi and Pacific primary health care to reduce disparities	No clear YES/ NO answer	No clear YES/ NO answer	No clear YES/ NO answer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free GP visits extended to over 14 year olds	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓ Income tested	✓
Housing A housing strategy to provide affordable appropriate housing for all	No clear YES/ NO answer	No clear YES/ NO answer	No clear YES/ NO answer	No clear YES/ NO answer	✓	✓	✓

Thank you to Tick 4 Kids for providing some of this information.

Teaching and Learning

Supporting Tamariki to Thrive: Pathways for Whānau

Every child grows, learns and develops in their own way with different strengths, interests, identities, cultures, languages, ways of communicating, and experiencing the world.



As parents, caregivers and whānau, you might notice something about your child's learning, communication, play, movement, emotions, sensory experiences or social connections that makes you curious.

If you have questions**,** you do not need to navigate them alone, it can help to talk things through. Depending on what feels right for your whānau, there are several places to seek advice.

You can start with your child's kaiako

A good first step is to kōrero with your child's kaiako. They can share observations about your child's strengths, interests and learning. Together, you can explore what helps your child thrive and any support they may need.

Connect with Whānau Manaaki Learning Support

Whānau Manaaki has a Learning Support team that can work alongside kaiako. Using a strengths-based, mana-enhancing and inclusive approach, the team supports kaiako to strengthen participation, belonging, wellbeing and learning for tamariki. Talk with your kaiako about connecting with the Learning Support team.

Ministry of Education Learning Support Services

The Ministry of Education provides a range of Learning Support services. The Ministry's Early Intervention Service can support tamariki with developmental, communication, social-emotional, sensory or learning needs. This could involve an early intervention teacher, speech-language therapist, psychologist, kaitakawaenga or education support worker. A child does not need a diagnosis, and whānau are involved in decisions. There are additional services in some regions.

Talk with your GP, Well Child Tamariki Ora Provider or Plunket

Your family doctor, nurse, Plunket nurse, or Well Child Tamariki Ora provider can listen, provide guidance and, where appropriate, make referrals to other services. Remember that you know your child best, it is always okay to ask questions and seek support or second opinions.

Whanaungatanga matters

Many families find reassurance, knowledge and strength through connections. Whether through iwi and hapū networks, Pacific providers, community groups, faith communities, parent support groups, or early intervention services, these relationships can provide practical support, advocacy and a sense of belonging. Find out what is available in your area and reach out. It is part of building a strong village around your child, so they can flourish.

Awhi Ngā Mātua

Awhi Ngā Mātua provides support, information, advocacy and connection for parents and whānau of children with diverse learning and support needs. They offer opportunities for whānau to share experiences, ask questions and learn from one another.

Parent to Parent

Parent to Parent connects whānau with trained support parents who have lived experience raising children with disabilities, health conditions or additional needs. Sometimes talking with someone who has walked a similar path can make a big difference.

Trust Your Knowledge of Your Child

You know your tamaiti best, and your questions, observations and aspirations matter. These conversations provide understanding to help find the people, environments and supports that nurture them.

Your whānau voice, culture, language, whakapapa and values are important on that journey. At kindergarten, we encourage whānau to ask questions early and explore options alongside trusted people. Start with a conversation with your kaiako, and together we can consider what best supports your tamaiti and whānau.

Teaching and Learning

Recipe

Homemade Chalk Fun

Looking for a simple activity to enjoy with tamariki?
Making your own coloured chalk is easy, creative and only requires a few ingredients. Once dry, the chalk can be used on concrete for hours of outdoor fun, from drawing pictures and creating obstacle courses to practicing letters, numbers and shapes.

What you'll need:

1 cup Plaster of Paris (dry powder)

¼ cup tempera paint

¾ cup water

Silicone moulds

Disposable cups

Plastic spoons

How to make it:

1. Fill a disposable cup with ¾ cup water and add ¼ cup tempera paint.
2. Stir in 1 cup of Plaster of Paris and mix well.
3. Pour the mixture into silicone moulds.

HINT: For multi-coloured chalk, layer different colours without mixing them together.

4. Leave to dry in the moulds for 24 hours.
5. Carefully remove the chalk from the moulds and allow it to dry for another 24 hours before use.

PLEASE NOTE: Chalk is not edible.



2026 Closing Date

Last day of kindergarten – Fri 18 Dec
(Taranaki kindergartens close on Wed 23 Dec)

2027 Open Dates

Either Tue 05 January

Mon 11 January

Mon 18 January

(Check your individual kindergarten as start dates

Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens Support Whānau with Education and Care Throughout School Holidays!