

Communities of Learning

The

Kindergarten

Offer

Teaching and learning

Te mahi whakaako me te mahi ako

Parents, whānau and communities

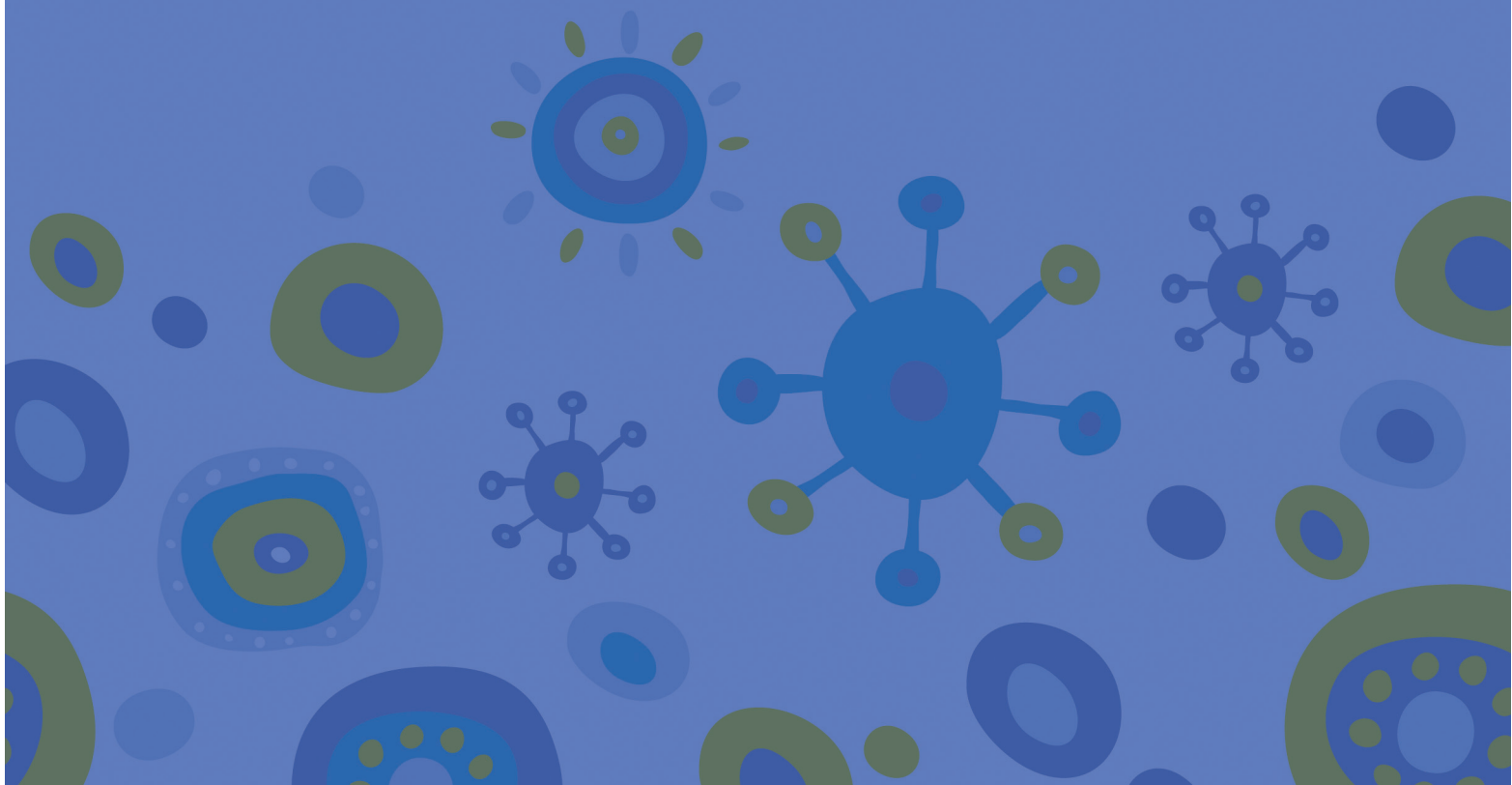
Ngā mātua, te whānau me te hapori whānui

Innovative learning environments

Ngā wāhi ako tangongi

Stewardship

Kaitiakitanga





Whakapuputia mai o manuka,
kia kore ai e whati

Introduction

Communities of Learning (CoL) aim to strengthen collaboration among professional leaders and teachers; and schools, early childhood education (ECE) services and tertiary providers to improve learning outcomes for all children and young people.

The whakatauki above talks about 'clustering the branches of the manuka so they will not break' reflecting strength in unity and shared purpose.

"The best teaching occurs when teachers are able to work together, to learn from each other and to share their subject and practice expertise. During primary school ... [children] could benefit from the expertise of teachers from across a number of schools, while still maintaining a strong relationship with their classroom teacher. They should also benefit from smoother transitions from early childhood education to primary, intermediate, secondary school and beyond, by teachers and educators from those parts of the system working more closely together."¹

¹Retrieved <http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/investing-in-educational-success/faq/>



Kindergarten would have to be the highest quality early education we have on offer. Qualified teachers, extensive curriculum, variety of culture; these all give our children a great start for their future.”

– Parent

CoLs will work together to identify, develop and meet the achievement challenge in that community rather than work independently of each other. They ‘self-identify’ and are generally geographically based, comprised of different numbers of schools and ECE services.

The Ministry of Education sees the primary benefit of ECEs’ involvement in CoLs as strengthening children’s transitions to school. While transitions will be a key focus for CoL discussions, kindergartens can bring additional experience, skills and knowledge to the conversation.


CoLs are being established at a time when parents, caregivers and whānau are being encouraged to be involved in their children’s learning; child agency - teacher inquiry underpins current pedagogy and practice; curriculum advice and expertise is shared across multiple settings; and modern/innovative learning environments and digital technology are changing classroom environments. Teachers in school settings are taking on board these changes in their own workplace at the same time as being encouraged to work collaboratively across schools and ECE services within a learning community.

“I think a lot of what we have to do in the education space right now, which is allowing kids to learn by enquiring and discovering, and drawing inferences, and evaluating, and thinking things through and creating things is what happens routinely in great preschool education, in early education, and in a way we need the folks in that sector to be helping those who’ve been in a more constrained space.”

– Linda Darling-Hammond, Education Council National Leadership Forum 10 June 2016

Kindergarten shares an important component of quality teaching and learning with schools – teaching staff are 100% qualified; they are registered teachers and are covered by the same legislation as teachers in schools.² Kindergartens are in many communities, most being located next to, or within walking distance of, a school.

All these factors are areas of kindergarten experience and expertise that can be shared to strengthen and sustain communities of learning.



Our teaching teams are

100%

qualified

& registered teachers

²State Sector Act 1988

Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou



Te mahi whakaako me te mahi ako

We have expertise in innovative teaching and learning

Our teaching teams are 100% qualified and registered teachers

- our teachers must meet the same Education Council qualification and practising certificate standards and requirements as qualified teachers in schools

All children participate as partners – we weave diverse experiences, knowledge, strengths and interests into learning outcomes for everyone

- our curriculum implementation is inclusive of all children and acknowledges each child's identity, language and culture

Inquiry learning shapes each kindergarten's curriculum – children choose the place, the pace and the focus of their learning

- children are active 21st century learners, using a range of learning spaces, technologies and learning styles to engage in the curriculum
- experiences focus on all essential areas of the curriculum including mathematics, science, literacy and the arts

We strengthen our practice through teaching as inquiry, within teaching teams and across our professional network

- we are reflective practitioners, regularly reviewing our teaching practices and implementing changes to enhance the curriculum and children's learning
- our practice is based on evidence of what works best – locally and from around the world

Our pedagogical leaders work in, and across, our teaching teams

- teachers are supported by in-house pedagogical leadership teams of 'expert teachers' with deep knowledge of the curriculum, assessment and learning outcomes
- pedagogical leaders provide professional development, supporting individual teachers and teaching teams in their practice

We work as a team, combining our knowledge, strengths, expertise and skills across the curriculum

- we work collaboratively, sharing the learning spaces indoors and outside, and facilitating, contributing to and co-ordinating children's learning experiences

We support children's transitions from Te Whāriki to the New Zealand Curriculum and from the kindergarten to the primary school environment

- we support children to develop the skills and knowledge they need to thrive as learners at primary school and throughout life
- we understand children's learning progression and learning strengths, and how these are best shared with parents and whānau, and schools.



As a family we enjoy supporting our local pre-school education option and have found for our five year old that it has provided a great platform for her to enter into school. This has been created through the kindergarten's learning techniques and participation in school activities, allowing the children to build confidence in this setting."

– Parent

Ngā mātua, te whānau me te hapori whānui

We have strong relationships with parents and whānau

Kindergarten may be children's first 'formal' education setting and we form strong relationships with their parents and whānau

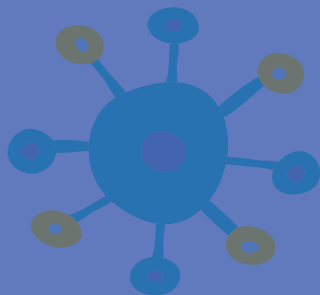
- we recognise children's steps toward learning independence and welcome parents and whānau into the kindergarten environment as often and as long as they want – we get to know each other well

Parents and whānau have an active role in teaching and learning at kindergarten

- parents and whānau contribute to curriculum development, implementation and assessment, and their aspirations are embodied in what their children learn

We are the link between children's homes and their wider communities, including school communities

- kindergarten may be the first place where children and their whānau get involved in community gatherings and activities
- children in the same family attend the local kindergarten and school



We are the

link between homes, schools and the wider community



"Kindergarten is located in my community. The kindergarten has strong community support and is a social place. I feel welcomed and included when I am there. Many of the children my daughter interacts with at kindergarten will be attending her future school and this was a strong factor in my decision to attend kindergarten." – Parent

Nāku te rourou nāu te rourou ka ora ai te iwi

We can help children, parents and whānau make meaningful connections with the school community before children turn five

- kindergartens have transition to school programmes, they aim to develop strong links across teaching teams, and to build a bridge between children's kindergarten experience and their early days at school

We have a deep knowledge of the communities in which we work

- we work with parents and whānau to ensure their children see themselves, their identity, language and culture, reflected in the learning environment
- we know what is happening within the community and understand how that impacts on families

Members of our communities are active in the day-to-day running and governance of our kindergartens

- we have parents and whānau engaged in our whānau groups, on kindergarten committees and on kindergarten association governing boards.



“Because of the fantastic learning environment and quality of teaching, the children develop confidence and become independent, ready for school.” – Parent

Ngā wāhi ako tangongi

We have decades of experience developing modern, innovative learning environments

Kindergarten is a leader in developing flexible indoor and outdoor spaces that provide diverse learning contexts for children

- our fit for purpose learning environments support children’s agency in their own learning, with their friends and as a group
- we support children to broaden and deepen their learning by providing wide ranging experiences within and beyond the kindergarten
- our environments reflect the natural world, using natural materials to enhance children’s learning
- we use technology wisely to enhance learning and support teaching practice

Our management and governance groups are experienced in supporting teaching teams to use innovative learning environments effectively

- we support our teaching teams to further their knowledge of modern learning practices through professional learning and development (PLD) workshops, study, research projects and engagement in professional networks
- our head teachers lead teams to create flexible, collaborative teaching and learning spaces

Kaitiakitanga

We are stewards of education

Kindergarten associations are the regional stewards of kindergarten education

- associations are not-for-profit, incorporated societies and registered charities
- associations have a governance board, employ a management and leadership team and all teaching and support staff, and manage all the properties
- associations receive and manage the expenditure of government funding: all government funding and any parent fees and donations go into providing quality ECE

Our governance boards have a strategic vision for communities and across communities

- we work with communities to weave their aspirations for their children into kindergarten associations’ strategic direction

Our governance boards are practised in keeping focused on the vision and purpose of kindergartens

- we make sure we stay focused on investing for the future, keeping our role separate from the day-to-day running of our kindergartens
- we invest in governance training and professional learning, sharing expertise and building capacity as a governing board

Our governance and management teams operate across multiple settings

- we understand the complexities of planning for, resourcing and supporting large numbers of teaching teams

We collaborate with other ECE services in our communities to enable continuous improvement in teaching practice

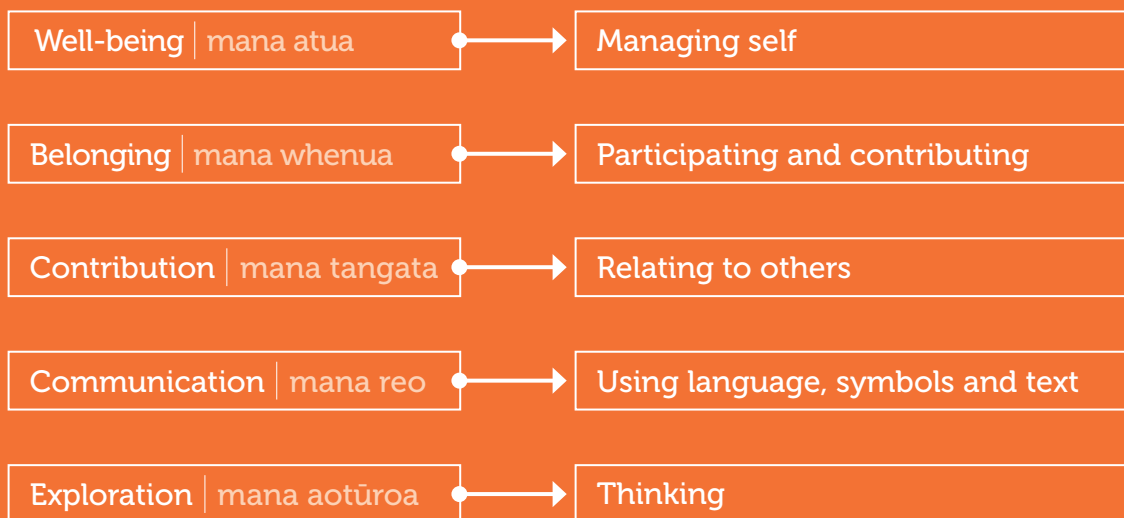
- many of our pedagogical leaders provide professional development to other ECE services.

Ka pū te rūhā, ka hao te

rangatahi



Te Whāriki alignment to the New Zealand Curriculum key competencies



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