



## Te tākaro ki te wai | Water play

Water play allows tamariki opportunities to explore scientific and mathematical concepts, hone gross and fine motor skills, promote language learning and work with and alongside others. Water is versatile, easy to set up and can provide a range of experiences for tamariki, from calm and soothing to active and energising.

### Links to *Te Whāriki*

Playing with water supports the **Exploration | Mana aotūroa** strand, where children gain confidence in and control of their bodies, and where they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking and reasoning. Water play also gives tamariki the opportunity to develop useful social skills as they play alongside other tamariki (**Contribution | Mana tangata**). When tamariki play with water they can learn about the value of water and the importance of kaitiakitanga and conserving water (**Belonging | Mana whenua**).





## Water play can help tamariki to:

- › integrate sensory information e.g. feeling water temperature, texture, and weight, and hearing the sounds it makes when pouring or splashing
- › understand mathematical concepts such as measurement, capacity, and volume
- › understand concepts like heavy/light, float/sink, full/empty, and shallow/deep
- › use scientific thinking e.g. guessing, testing ideas and repeating what they find out
- › learn to concentrate, persist, and solve problems
- › learn to share and cooperate with others
- › respect water as a taonga with spiritual qualities
- › learn the importance of conserving water.

## Adults can support tamariki by:

- › talking with them about what is happening and how they are feeling
- › encouraging them to ask questions, try out their ideas and explore with water
- › creating an awareness of water as a taonga and our role as kaitiaki
- › making sure they are safe
- › protecting them from the sun with hats and sunscreen when they are playing with water outside
- › adding warm water on cold days.

## Providing for water play

Water play works well outside, on a sheltered deck or on a porch. Placing it near a sandpit can make things more interesting for tamariki. A raised trough is ideal as it allows several tamariki to play together at the same time and stops tamariki from climbing in. If the group doesn't have a trough, try using baby baths, storage cubes, or plastic containers. Plastic aprons with sleeves can help tamariki to keep dry.

## Ideas for equipment

- › water trough, tub, or other container to hold water
- › plastic, wood, or metal items that won't break or rust
- › cups, spoons, bottles, colanders, sieves, and funnels
- › sponges, waterwheels, and watering cans
- › squeezable bottles, e.g. shampoo bottles (rinsed well)
- › natural materials, e.g. shells, stones, seaweed, and driftwood.