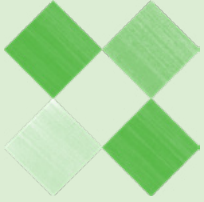




Te Poutāhū
Curriculum Centre

KŌWHITI WHAKAPAE



Oral Language and Literacy



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Contents

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Introduction

Kōwhiri Whakapae is designed to help early learning kaiako strengthen planning, formative assessment, and teaching practice. This diagram shows the framework for Kōwhiri Whakapae and how it aligns with *Te Whāriki*.



Kōwhiri Whakapae is built upon the four foundations shown above. Together these foundations task kaiako with providing equitable opportunities for all mokopuna to thrive within individually and culturally responsive learning environments. For further information, see the book ‘[Using Kōwhiri Whakapae](#)’ or [the Foundations page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online, or watch the ‘About Kōwhiri Whakapae’ video on the [homepage](#).

Kōwhiri Whakapae supports kaiako to recognise children’s capabilities and progress and to respond with effective practices in three areas of learning:

- › Social & emotional learning
- › Oral language & literacy
- › Maths.

These areas are crucial for positive later educational and life outcomes. While children’s progress will vary depending on their individual learning trajectories, typical characteristics and patterns can be observed over time. These characteristics and patterns provide the basis for practices and learning progressions within the three areas of learning.

There are four Kōwhiri Whakapae books in total. Three cover these areas of learning. A fourth book provides more detailed information about the overall Kōwhiri Whakapae

resource, its foundations, and a guide for getting started with it. Using Kōwhiri Whakapae will help you to review and strengthen teaching and learning in these areas across the strands of *Te Whāriki*, understand and respond to children’s progress over time, and support children’s growing identity as learners.

Each area of learning guides you through a four-step process to help you:

1. **Lay the groundwork** to create an enabling environment for all children
2. **Notice and recognise** children’s current capabilities and possible directions for learning
3. **Respond** to scaffold, consolidate, or expand children’s learning over time
4. **Document** children’s learning using the assessment examples as a guide.

Oral language & literacy

Kaiako strengthening children’s knowledge and use of languages and symbols

Tōku reo tōku ohooho, tōku reo tōku māpihi maurea.
My language is my awakening, my language is my treasure.

This book focuses on the area of Oral language & literacy.

What does oral language & literacy refer to?

Oral language and literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that children use to communicate, create, and express meaning using language symbol systems (including first and additional languages), emergent literacy, and various forms and functions of literacy.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

Why are oral language & literacy important?

Developing strong oral language and literacy capabilities in early childhood is associated with children’s later educational success and their ability to contribute positively to their community and society.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How are oral language & literacy approached in Kōwhiri Whakapae?

Four whakataukī/whakatauākī ground and shape oral language and literacy capabilities and related practices. Each highlights elements of oral language and literacy that are significant from te ao Māori world views.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

There are four key sub-areas within Oral language & literacy:

- › Te rere o te reo | Understanding & using language
- › Te pānui me te tuhituhi | Emergent literacy
- › Te āhuatanga o te reo | Forms & functions of literacy
- › Ngā reo | Learning an additional language.

The remainder of this book unpacks each of these areas using the four-step process described above.

Understanding & using language

Children's growing ability to understand what is said to them and to use words, phrases, and sentences to communicate with others

Overview

What does 'te rere o te reo' mean?

'Te rere o te reo' translates as 'flow of language', reflecting the mana of language sounds, words, and gestures that flow from past to present, generation to generation, and person to person, carrying rich cultural meanings, histories, and knowledge.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

What is 'understanding and using language'?

Learning language involves children's growing ability to understand what is said to them and to use words, phrases, and sentences to communicate with others. It includes spoken and non-spoken forms of communication.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How is this area woven through the strands of *Te Whāriki*?

Understanding and using language is integral to all areas of *Te Whāriki*, as each strand involves cognitive processes, communication, and expression that rely on language.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How do the foundations of Kōwhiri Whakapae impact on this area?

Kōwhiri Whakapae is built on four foundations: Te Tiriti o Waitangi; Identity, language, and culture; Inclusion; and the Principles of *Te Whāriki*. Together, these guide teaching and learning about understanding and using language.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.



Lay the groundwork

Practices to whakaritea te pārekereke | prepare the seedbed for all children

Start by working with all the children in your setting. Create an environment that can support children to build skills related to understanding and using language.

- › Consider your current environment and how you could make it better.
- › Talk to others about what you are already doing.
- › Select practices that will be meaningful in your setting.

Encouraging non-spoken communication

Support and encourage children's non-spoken communication.

Why is this practice important?

Modelling the use of non-spoken communication (e.g., the use of facial expression, sign language, body language, intonation, images, and Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems) provides a foundation for children's understanding of how oral language works and what it can achieve.

Non-spoken communication is an important part of becoming proficient in oral language for all cultures. It is particularly important for children whose primary means of communication is not spoken.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Tune in and respond to children's non-spoken communication. Read the context to gain a deeper understanding of what they are communicating.
- b. Think about your body language, intonation, and facial expressions. Are they genuine? Do they encourage positive interactions and responses?
- c. Reflect with your team on how well you foster non-spoken communication with children through interactions, games, movement, storytelling, and reading.
- d. Learn about culturally specific, non-spoken communication forms that may be important to whānau. Apply this knowledge with sensitivity to the diversity that exists within and between cultures.
- e. Connect language to sensory experiences by describing elements such as touch, sound, sight, smell, emotions, and body movements.
- f. Use AAC systems to support children's communication. Have a large, display core board (or the home page of the AAC system used in the centre) easily accessible to all children and adults, inside and outside. Ensure all kaiako are familiar with the location of specific vocabulary on each AAC system. Model key words as you speak, by pointing to specific symbols on the core board or AAC system.
- g. Share waiata, chants, and poems that reflect or contribute to children's differing moods or feelings.
- h. Encourage children to 'listen' to and observe facial expressions, gestures, and the body language of peers and adults in order to understand what is being communicated.

Expanding vocabulary with rich language

Use strategies that support children to enjoy learning new vocabulary and its meaning.

Why is this practice important?

In order to understand, think about, and communicate increasingly complex ideas, children need both receptive vocabulary (words they understand) and expressive vocabulary (words they use to communicate).

The number and variety of words (including less common and technical words) that children learn in their early years is a significant predictor of reading comprehension in the middle and secondary years of schooling and of broader academic and vocational success.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Keep front-of-mind the importance of modelling language and promoting children's vocabulary through reflective practice and curriculum design.
- Connect with whānau to understand what phrases, sayings, and language routines (including non-spoken) are used at home or in the community.
- Encourage children to make connections between words and their meanings. Use specific words and descriptions, rather than general terms (e.g., "Pass me the ball." rather than "Pass it to me." and "You've used red, blue, and green." rather than "That's very colourful.").
- Intentionally support children's growing vocabulary by integrating new words and their meanings as opportunities arise. Use these new words along with their meanings often to aid comprehension. As a team, create and use word webs on a range of topics, including in them a variety of words such as names, actions, descriptors, questions, feelings, and locations.
- Regularly document children's growing language understanding and use. This can be via written, audio, or video records. Draw on these records to inform ongoing assessment, planning, and communication with whānau.
- Combine spoken language with non-spoken communication such as pointing, facial expression, gestures, body movement, sounds, images (including AAC), and textures. Use intonation to draw children's attention to new words as you say them.
- When using an AAC system such as a core board, model key words as you speak by pointing to specific symbols. Ensure children who use AAC systems to communicate have access to them all the time (e.g., if several children are using core boards, kaiako can wear them on straps so that they are easily available around the centre).
- Encourage children to connect meanings across languages by exploring equivalent words in, for example, te reo Māori, NZSL, and their home languages. Build your own understanding of children's home languages.

Variety of language experiences

Provide a range of experiences to support language comprehension and vocabulary expansion for mokopuna.

Why is this practice important?

Varied experiences provide mokopuna with opportunities and motivation to learn new vocabulary and to communicate. They are more likely to retain meaning when words are connected to their lived experiences.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Provide a variety of resources, experiences, and spaces within the everyday learning environment — both inside and out — that reflect the interests, lived experiences, and cultural references of mokopuna.
- Make available a range of books (fiction and non-fiction) that reflect the changing interests and lived experiences of mokopuna, as well as others that offer new topics and ways of seeing the world.
- Include the use of non-spoken communication by sharing photos or story books that contain mokopuna who use sign language or AAC.
- View excursions, visitors, and events as opportunities to introduce and expand children's vocabulary.
- Use music, songs, and chants from heritage and home languages.
- Create books and stories with and for mokopuna about their experiences. Use images to prompt memory and discussion.

Supporting complexity in language use

Provide mokopuna with experiences where learning about the structure and uses of language sparks interest, joy, and engagement.

Why is this practice important?

Learning how words combine in different ways to convey meaning (e.g., via syntax and semantics) helps mokopuna to be and to become confident communicators.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Reflect as a team on how mokopuna learn about how language works and is used to make meaning (e.g., through syntax and semantics) in the context of everyday communication and a play-based curriculum. How confident are kaiako in relation to these concepts? What strategies can be shared about how children learn social words, requesting words, early pronouns, and prepositions?
- Model an enjoyment of rich language use. Share with mokopuna things that interest and excite you about words and languages and their uses. Share whakataukī, poems, waiata, rhymes, and stories that you enjoy.
- Develop relationships with whānau and encourage them to speak their strongest language(s) with their mokopuna at home. Provide information about the benefits of a strong first language and the abilities of mokopuna to learn multiple languages when they have consistent exposure to them.
- Consult hapū or iwi and become familiar with local dialects to integrate kupu, phrases, and sentences into routines and everyday interactions.
- Build kaiako language capability in the languages used by mokopuna. Learn some basic words and phrases in the home languages of mokopuna, and use them meaningfully in daily interactions, such as care routines.
- Expand mokopuna communication attempts by modelling more complex sentences as part of a conversation. Use speech along with expression, intonation, and body language to support your message. Tune into children's non-spoken cues and verbalise these.

- g. Expand the communication of mokopuna who use sign language or Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC). Respond to their non-spoken communication by modelling a sign or word on their AAC system. When they sign or use their AAC system, model back and add on another sign, word, or symbol.

Integrate te reo Māori

Integrate te reo Māori throughout everyday interactions, routines, and regular events, taking into consideration local dialects.

Why is this practice important?

When te reo Māori is integrated into everyday communications, routines, and regular events, mokopuna are supported to learn and appreciate te reo Māori as an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Collaborate with whānau, hapū, and iwi to create goals and a shared vision for te reo Māori and tikanga in your setting.
- b. Reflect and regularly review how you use te reo Māori (including its pronunciation). Check in with whānau to learn how to pronounce mokopuna and whānau Māori names correctly.
- c. Develop individual and team goals to strengthen, extend, and actively use te reo Māori in your setting, with attention to correct pronunciation. Record and celebrate your progress individually and as a team.
- d. Integrate te reo Māori and tikanga meaningfully into everyday routines, play, and experiences. Use a range of transitional and commonly used phrases to build vocabulary and sentences (e.g., “Ko te wā mō te... (it’s time for...) ... kai o te ata (morning tea)/kai o te rānui” (lunch).
- e. Provide plenty of opportunities for mokopuna to experience and learn te reo Māori through waiata and kēmu/games.
- f. Create a language-rich environment by listening to waiata Māori and pūrākau from native Māori speakers, drawing on community and online resources.
- g. Include and review the use of written te reo Māori throughout the learning environment. How and when is it used by kaiako, mokopuna, and whānau?

Communicating with others

Encourage mokopuna to use language to communicate effectively with each other and with kaiako.

Why is this practice important?

Communicating effectively with others is an essential life skill. Social communication has many benefits, including connecting with others, building relationships and friendships, and supporting others to feel valued, respected, and that they belong.

Engaging mokopuna in back-and-forth, ‘serve-and-return’ patterns of communication from birth plays a vital role in building neural pathways for language. It lays foundations for social communication and overall wellbeing.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Model the back-and-forth, serve-and-return patterns of social communication. This involves tuning in to what mokopuna are focussed on, using more comments than questions, and pausing to give mokopuna time to think about what has been said, consider their response, and then reply.
- b. Observe the focus and interests of mokopuna. Engage in conversations that make connections to these.
- c. Provide gentle guidance to support mokopuna to engage in social conversation (spoken or non-spoken) with each other (e.g., “Mari is trying to say something to you. Listen to what she is saying, before you reply ... Do you want to tell Mari what you think?”).
- d. Ensure mokopuna who use sign language or Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) can actively contribute during group experiences. Direct questions and comments to them and then wait expectantly, reminding other mokopuna that they may need extra time to respond.
- e. Praise mokopuna when they use positive communication in their interactions with others.



Notice and recognise

Progress examples to help you notice and recognise a child's progress

Use the phases of progress (outlined below) to help you notice and recognise a child's progress.

- › Draw on what you already know and what you've observed.
- › Have discussions with the child, whānau, and colleagues.
- › Use the practices (in step 3) to respond, based on what you notice.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children are attuned and responsive to communications with others.

- › Children actively communicate using their voice and body. Their vocalisations expand from coos to consonant and vowel 'babbling' that become more varied and increasingly reflect the languages around them.
- › Children increasingly recognise individual words and phrases in their languages, associating them with familiar people, objects, actions, and concepts. They understand more than twice as many words and phrases than they produce. Some children may respond to tactile objects that help them connect words with objects.
- › Children imitate the rhythm, intonation (variations in pitch), and gestures of familiar languages. This helps them to begin using their first recognisable words or short phrases, including two-syllable words with a repeated sound (e.g., 'mama'). Children start to produce signs and sign combinations to communicate with others.
- › Children initiate interactions and respond to others. They engage in back-and-forth, serve-and-return interactions and turn-taking games with familiar people, particularly when given time to respond.

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children establish their understanding and use of language to connect and communicate with others.

- › Children's vocalisations increasingly reflect the sounds of the languages they hear regularly, including consonant and vowel sounds, and gradually the combination of these, forming their first early words. Children make sounds and gestures to get attention, express their needs, or communicate their emotions.
- › Children understand and use a growing number of words and short phrases, including questions. They begin using one- or two-word phrases or sentences, and this is followed by a rapid growth in the number of words used across their languages.
- › Children combine words, building simple phrases that may include subjects, verbs, and objects. They may integrate words from all their languages within phrases.
- › Children start conversations with others with a word, short phrase, and/or gesture. They keep short conversations going with familiar adults or peers, taking short spoken and non-spoken turns.

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children expand their vocabulary and use longer, more complex sentences in a range of situations.

- › Children's communication is understood by familiar people most of the time. Their speech includes vowel sounds with an increasing range of consonant sounds and blends. They may also use longer words with more syllables.
- › Children are increasingly able to express themselves in the languages they are familiar with. Their vocabulary continues to grow rapidly across all their languages and includes conceptual and feeling words. Children can answer 'what', 'where', and 'who' questions and are increasingly able to communicate about the past and things that aren't present.
- › Children use a diverse range of sentences. Their sentences are becoming longer and increasingly more complex.
- › Children use their languages to interact with peers and add complexity to their play. They begin to adjust their language style to suit the context, including exploring which words and phrases to use in different situations. Children with multiple languages may switch language to match the language of who they are talking to.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children confidently apply a variety of more complex language and interpersonal communication abilities in a range of situations.

- › Children's communication is understood by unfamiliar adults nearly all the time. Their speech includes a wider range of sounds including consonants, blends, long vowels, and vowel blends.
- › Children understand and apply language for increasingly complex purposes, including for humour and when discussing abstract concepts such as imagined, future, and past events. They can confidently answer 'when', 'why', and 'how' questions and follow instructions with two or more steps without prompting. Their vocabulary grows daily across all their languages.
- › The diversity and length of children's sentences continue to grow. Their sentences are usually grammatically correct and include more complex personal pronouns and tenses. Those using visual languages demonstrate fluency and accuracy in recognising and using signs or images in a variety of sentence structures.
- › Children use language to engage in sustained complex conversations with others, including to negotiate, express feelings, explain, pretend, joke, and talk about what is important in their lives. They organise their message logically and explain their reasoning to others, adapting their use of language to suit different situations and a wider range of people. Those with multiple languages can translate for others and adapt their choice and level of language for who they are talking to.

3

Respond

Practices to help you respond at different phases of progress

After you have assessed the phases of progress (in the previous step), use these practices to work one-on-one with a child based on what you've noticed.

Talk with others about what these practices might look like in your setting, and test your thinking by looking at adjacent phases.

Note that these practices are not exhaustive, and you might think of others.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children are attuned and responsive to communications with others.

Encouraging non-spoken communication

Support and encourage children's non-spoken communication.

- Ensure at least one kaiako understands, and shares with the wider team, the unique ways each mokopuna communicates, including subtle, non-spoken cues.
- Check your understanding of mokopuna communications by using both spoken language and non-spoken cues.
- Align your non-spoken communication cues with your spoken messages.

Expanding vocabulary with rich language

Use strategies that support children to enjoy learning new vocabulary and its meaning.

- Interpret children's non-spoken communication as if it were spoken, and respond with words and simple sentences.
- Name objects in the environment, using and repeating single words or short phrases.
- Use intonation along with facial expressions and contextual cues to support comprehension when introducing a new word.
- Model enjoyment and a playful disposition in relation to vocabulary through the frequent use of waiata, chants, rhymes, and stories.

Variety of language experiences

Provide a range of experiences to support language comprehension and vocabulary expansion for mokopuna.

- Name and label objects in the environment, using single words or short phrases and repetition.
- Read to mokopuna every day, using stories with pictures that connect to their lived experience and interests.
- Provide a range of sensory resources for mokopuna to explore. Observe and describe or comment on their experiences.

Supporting complexity in language use

Provide mokopuna with experiences where learning about the structure and uses of language sparks interest, joy, and engagement.

- Use clear words and phrases matched with non-spoken cues that reflect your meaning, such as facial expression, tone, gestures, and images.
- Use responses that expand on children's spoken words or short phrases (e.g., a child points and says, "Dog!", and you respond with, "Yes, it is a black and white dog.")
- Regularly share poetry, waiata, stories, oriori, and rhymes that you and/or children are familiar with and enjoy.

Integrate te reo Māori

Integrate te reo Māori throughout everyday interactions, routines, and regular events, taking into consideration local dialects.

- Use a range of te reo Māori kupu and phrases every day with attention paid to accurate pronunciation.
- Combine these phrases with clear and consistent non-spoken cues (e.g., facial expression, intonation, gestures, and images).
- Provide frequent opportunities for children to hear rich te reo Māori, such as in waiata, oriori, pūrākau, and pukapuka.

Communicating with others

Encourage mokopuna to use language to communicate effectively with each other and with kaiako.

- Use a back-and-forth, serve-and-return approach to interactions (spoken and non-spoken). Be mindful of allowing wait-time for mokopuna to think and respond.
- Encourage interactions between mokopuna, providing simple phrases to describe and explain what is happening.
- Sensitively interpret non-spoken communications between mokopuna (e.g., "Elli wants to share with you. Thank you for sharing, Elli.")

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children establish their understanding and use of language to connect and communicate with others.

Encouraging non-spoken communication

Support and encourage children's non-spoken communication.

- Model different ways of communicating, including New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems, body language, and gestures.
- Provide frequent opportunities for mokopuna to watch and participate in drama, dance, music, and storytelling.
- Suggest non-spoken alternatives such as pointing when spoken communication is unclear.

Expanding vocabulary with rich language

Use strategies that support children to enjoy learning new vocabulary and its meaning.

- Use recasting and rephrasing to model new vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar as part of conversations with mokopuna (e.g., if a child points at a car and says, "Tar!" you might respond, "Yes, it is a car. It's a blue car.")
- Encourage mokopuna to use non-spoken language to express their understanding of new words.
- Draw attention to new words and phrases in stories, waiata, chants, and rhymes.

Variety of language experiences

Provide a range of experiences to support language comprehension and vocabulary expansion for mokopuna.

- Observe children's engagement and model rich language by describing or commenting on what they are doing and experiencing.
- Provide short excursions or centre visits, using them to integrate new vocabulary as you talk with children about what they experience.
- Read books that take children into a world beyond their lived experience of home and centre (e.g., books about dinosaurs or zoo animals).

Supporting complexity in language use

Provide mokopuna with experiences where learning about the structure and uses of language sparks interest, joy, and engagement.

- Model short phrases and sentences that are grammatically accurate and will help mokopuna express themselves (e.g., modelling ways to express feelings or make requests).
- Respond to and extend on mokopuna communications, using words from different categories (e.g., pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs) to expand their vocabulary.
- Encourage mokopuna to actively participate in poetry, waiata, stories, oriori, and rhymes by making these a frequent feature of regular routines.

Integrate te reo Māori

Integrate te reo Māori throughout everyday interactions, routines, and regular events, taking into consideration local dialects.

- Repeat kupu and phrases as part of everyday interactions, paying attention to correct pronunciation (e.g., āta mārie (good morning), he aha tēnei? (what's this?), haere mai ki tāku taha (come alongside me), awhi mai ki ahau (help me), me haere tāua (let's go together)).
- Take opportunities to communicate with children solely in te reo Māori, using non-spoken cues (facial expression, gestures, images etc.) to support their understanding.
- Talk about words and phrases in te reo Māori or in English to raise awareness of their origin and show that drawing on multiple languages is valued and useful.

Communicating with others

Encourage mokopuna to use language to communicate effectively with each other and with kaiako.

- Use a conversational style of interaction that includes comments, sharing your ideas and thinking, and open-ended questions. Encourage mokopuna to respond using spoken and non-spoken language.
- Plan and scaffold experiences that will encourage interaction between mokopuna. Acknowledge their positive communication with others.
- Model short phrases that mokopuna can use to enter and exit play (e.g., "You can ask him, 'Can I play too?'; "You can tell her, 'I don't want to play any more.'").

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children expand their vocabulary and use longer, more complex sentences in a range of situations.

Encouraging non-spoken communication

Support and encourage children's non-spoken communication.

- Provide resources that invite mokopuna to communicate their ideas and stories in non-spoken ways through drama, puppetry, dance, and visual arts.
- Encourage mokopuna to 'read' non-spoken communication in images and through games such as charades.
- Talk about the ways we communicate feelings through actions such as touch, expression, and distance.

Expanding vocabulary with rich language

Use strategies that support children to enjoy learning new vocabulary and its meaning.

- Take time to explain new words to extend vocabulary and comprehension. Encourage mokopuna to explain the meanings of words they have encountered.
- Play word games such as 'I spy' and word bingo regularly.
- When selecting books, include those that are likely to introduce new vocabulary to mokopuna.

Variety of language experiences

Provide a range of experiences to support language comprehension and vocabulary expansion for mokopuna.

- Talk with children about connections between new and past experiences (e.g., "Do you remember when ...?", "This reminds me of the time ...").
- Provide a mix of excursions to familiar and new places. Have reciprocal conversations with children about these experiences before, during, and after them.
- Use a range of book and story genres to introduce new topics, to assist children to develop and modify their working theories, and to extend their vocabulary.

Supporting complexity in language use

Provide mokopuna with experiences where learning about the structure and uses of language sparks interest, joy, and engagement.

- Use longer sentences with children as their receptive and expressive language increases.
- Use recasting to model correct grammatical structures (e.g., when a child says, "Him runned away.", respond with, "Yes, he ran away.>").
- Share a wider range of longer poems, waiata, and stories that you are familiar with and enjoy, and that include rich language.

Integrate te reo Māori

Integrate te reo Māori throughout everyday interactions, routines, and regular events, taking into consideration local dialects.

- Create opportunities for mokopuna to use te reo Māori in a range of contexts, including participation in familiar waiata and within tikanga practices such as welcoming visitors.
- Expand the vocabulary you model by building new kupu into familiar phrases.
- Provide frequent opportunities for mokopuna to participate in kēmu reo (language games), kēmu papa (board games), and stories in te reo Māori.

Communicating with others

Encourage mokopuna to use language to communicate effectively with each other and with kaiako.

- Take opportunities to engage in more sustained conversations with children about things that interest them. Use tentative language such as "I wonder", "perhaps", and "maybe", leaving space for children to think and respond.
- Model phrases and sentences that children can use with others to sustain positive conversations (e.g., "I like blue, what do you like?", "How about we try ...?").
- Encourage the frequent use of games and other experiences that rely on social communication between children, such as ball games, group art or construction, interactive circles, and gardening.
- Draw on the languages used at the centre and children's home languages to support interaction and comprehension. In particular, use words or phrases from children's home languages where meanings do not translate easily, taking time to learn correct pronunciation.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children confidently apply a variety of more complex language and interpersonal communication abilities in a range of situations.

Encouraging non-spoken communication

Support and encourage children's non-spoken communication.

- Seek out culturally familiar resources for children to express feelings and ideas through movement, gesture, and mime.
- Encourage children to communicate using images, shapes, visual arts, music, costumes, etc.
- Discuss with children how, for example, images in picture books, hand movements in waiata-ā-ringā, or props in drama help communicate a message or story.

Expanding vocabulary with rich language

Use strategies that support children to enjoy learning new vocabulary and its meaning.

- Draw attention to synonyms and structures such as word stems, prefixes, and suffixes. Talk about how words are related and how related words have different meanings (e.g., 'do' vs 'doing', 'undo', and 'redo').
- Model the use of increasingly sophisticated words, paying particular attention to using descriptive and accurate terms in conversations with children.
- Read a wide range of genres, drawing attention to new words and explaining their meaning.
- Encourage children's understanding of how words and meaning may change across languages.

Variety of language experiences

Provide a range of experiences to support language comprehension and vocabulary expansion for mokopuna.

- Encourage mokopuna to search for information about things that interest them in books and on digital devices.
- Encourage mokopuna to create books and stories about new and familiar experiences. Support them to include images to prompt discussion and expand vocabulary.
- Encourage mokopuna to recall recent experiences and experiences from their past.
- Create opportunities for vocabulary learning, including technical and specialist terms, during experiences, excursions, and centre visits.

Supporting complexity in language use

Provide mokopuna with experiences where learning about the structure and uses of language sparks interest, joy, and engagement.

- Encourage early metalinguistic awareness (the ability to reflect on and evaluate language) through conversations with mokopuna about how language works and how it can be used constructively and creatively.
- Use wondering, open questions and wait-time to encourage fuller responses with more complex sentence structures.
- Share and discuss with mokopuna stories that include similes (e.g., "He was as quiet as a mouse.") and rich descriptions (e.g., "She had a long, shaggy mane of hair.").
- Share whakataukī with meanings that extend beyond their individual words.

Integrate te reo Māori

Integrate te reo Māori throughout everyday interactions, routines, and regular events, taking into consideration local dialects.

- Encourage mokopuna to confidently use te reo Māori, and support peers and adults to also use it.
- Sensitively encourage mokopuna who are confident in te reo Māori to take leading roles in welcoming visitors and reciting karakia kai and pepeha.
- Draw mokopuna attention to and discuss elements of structure and grammar in te reo (e.g., how a macron changes pronunciation or how 'whare' and 'kai' come together to make 'wharekai' – a dining space).

Communicating with others

Encourage mokopuna to use language to communicate effectively with each other and with kaiako.

- Invite mokopuna to explore their ideas, to hypothesise working theories, and to reflect, allowing time for them to think and respond.
- Support sustained, shared conversations by using strategies such as recapping, clarifying ideas, wondering, suggesting, and offering your experiences and alternative views.
- Model ways of describing situations and feelings, resolving conflict, sharing roles and responsibilities, and hearing others' perspectives.
- Draw on languages used in the centre and at home to support communications with mokopuna, using increasingly complex explanations.

4

Document

An example of how you could use Kōwhiri Whakapae to enhance your assessments and communication

In this section, an assessment example illustrates how you can use the information gathered in the previous three steps to enhance your documented assessments and communication. The example describes and tracks a child's learning progress over time in ways that inform ongoing planning. It also highlights the kinds of evidence, such as observations or conversations with whānau, that were used to support judgements and planning decisions. Finally, it shows how documentation can support conversations with children and whānau about a child's learning and progress.

After reading the example, think about how you currently document your planning and assessments and describe learning progress over time. Talk with team members and children's whānau to identify how your assessment documentation might better describe:

- › a child's current capabilities, strengths, and interests, with evidence (Notice)
- › a child's progress and possible directions for their learning (Recognise)
- › how you will support the child to progress over time (Respond).

Assessment example: Billie starts to talk

This series of three stories is about Billie, who has attended an ECE centre for 20 hours a week since he was six months old.

Billie lives with his mother, Kylie, and two nanas – nana Erin and nana Mere - and is part of a large, close-knit whānau. He is of Māori and Irish descent and attends a full-day early learning service. The three stories document Billie's learning journey from 8 to 22 months of age and highlight how kaiako have drawn on the 'Understanding & using language' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae along with *Te Whāriki* to support Billie's ongoing language journey.

As you read the three stories, you will find more information about the connections between their content and kaiako use of Kōwhiri Whakapae. The stories also show how the team understand Billie's learning in relation to *Te Whāriki* and the learning programme they provide.

See Kōwhiri Whakapae online for the [full sequence of learning stories](#).

This assessment illustrates Te rere o te reo | Understanding & using language. To browse the complete suite of examples, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

TE PĀNUI ME TE TUHITUHI

Emergent literacy

Children exploring and using language sounds, concepts of print, story comprehension, and mark-making to create and express meaning

Overview

What does 'te pānui me te tuhituhi' mean?

'Te pānui me te tuhituhi' highlights the knowledge and abilities developed in the early years that lay the groundwork for later reading and writing success.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

What is 'emergent literacy'?

Emergent literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities developed in the early years that lay the foundations for later reading and writing. This includes phonological awareness, concepts of print, story comprehension, mark-making, and emergent writing.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How is this area woven through the strands of *Te Whāriki*?

Emergent literacy is most apparent in Mana reo | Communication. However, the knowledge and skills associated with emergent literacy are evident in other strands too.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How do the foundations of Kōwhiri Whakapae impact on this area?

Kōwhiri Whakapae is built on four foundations: Te Tiriti o Waitangi; Identity, language, and culture; Inclusion; and the Principles of *Te Whāriki*. Together, these guide teaching and learning about emergent literacy.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.



Lay the groundwork

Practices to whakaritea te pārekereke | prepare the seedbed for all children

Start by working with all the children in your setting. Create an environment that can support children to build skills related to emergent literacy.

- › Consider your current environment and how you could make it better.
- › Talk to others about what you are already doing.
- › Select practices that will be meaningful in your setting.

Playing with language sounds

Provide regular opportunities for children to develop phonological awareness through listening and playing with language sounds.

Why is this practice important?

Phonological awareness – the ability to hear and manipulate spoken language – is a strong predictor of later reading and writing success. It begins with close listening and expands to include the ability to distinguish syllables, repeated sound patterns, rhymes, and individual phonemes (small units of sound in words).

Phonological awareness is one of the building blocks children draw on when learning to decode and spell written words at school.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Invite whānau to share rhymes, waiata/songs, poems, and word games, including in their home languages. Share with them the value of these language experiences in their home languages.
- b. Include books and resources that incorporate rhythm (syllables), rhyming words, sound patterns across words (e.g., alliteration and assonance), repeated sounds, and letter sounds.
- c. Share oriori, waiata, stories, poems, nursery rhymes, made-up rhymes, riddles, songs, and poems that highlight a range of sounds of spoken language. Incorporate visual and tactile resources, such as puppets, to support children's engagement and interest.
- d. Use your voice in engaging ways (e.g., varying pitch, tone, and pace) to emphasise language sounds, including rhythm and syllables ('pū-re-re-hu-a re-re ru-nga hau'), similar sounding consonants ('Noke neke nuku, niki naki nū', 'ssslow ssslimy sssnails'), vowels ('we see the leaves'), rhyming words ('one, two, buckle my shoe') and repeated sounds (pakipaki, kanikani, banana).
- e. Play with the rhythm of language using voice, body (e.g., pakipaki/clapping, takahia/ stomping feet), instruments (e.g., pate/a Cook Island drum) and other resources (e.g., piupiu, poi, tī rākau).
- f. Notice, comment on, and enjoy language play using humour, funny noises and voices, and nonsense words and rhymes. Use facial expressions, gestures, movement, and visual and tactile resources to emphasise language sounds and encourage children's engagement.

- g. To support children who use New Zealand Sign Language or AAC in games and experiences, ensure their participation does not rely on a spoken language response. For children who use AAC, offer choices such as objects or pictures that they can select from to indicate their response.

Providing a print-rich environment

Integrate a wide range of print (written-language) resources throughout the indoor and outdoor environment.

Why is this practice important?

A well-planned and integrated print-rich environment helps children learn the features of print and how print works to convey meaning. A learning environment that incorporates print, both inside and outside, also provides many opportunities for them to see how useful literacy is in our everyday lives. A print-rich environment enhances children's sense of belonging when it reflects and affirms their language, identity, and culture.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Use print, in conjunction with visuals, for labels, signs, and simple instructions (e.g., for hand washing and drying). How accessible and easy to see are these for children?
- b. Model the use of print, to record information in everyday routines and activities. Talk to children about what you are writing down and why.
- c. Make print scripts in children's home languages visible on greeting boards and name badges. Where possible, do the same with important instructions for adults to foster inclusion and the value of home languages. Integrate Braille, raised print, and other tactile formats to support children to interact with print using touch.
- d. Offer a variety of picture books including fiction, poetry, reference, and instructional genres. Ensure the range reflects the languages – including te reo Māori – cultures, identities, abilities, and interests of children and their whānau. Develop personalised books that harness children's special interests. Ensure that children's AAC systems are updated with their favourite books and book characters.
- e. Provide books suitable for children to explore both independently and with adults. Change the books on display regularly to encourage interest, while retaining favourites. Position books so that children can see and access them easily. Make comfortable spaces for reading, both inside and outside.

Story comprehension

Provide regular opportunities for children to participate and enjoy stories of their own and other cultures.

Why is this practice important?

Familiarity with narrative structures in stories lays a foundation for children's literacy success. Story comprehension is about interpreting meanings and understanding that stories follow a logical structure and can reflect our own and others' worlds, or invented worlds.

Through stories, children learn about the world, which helps them to understand different perspectives and builds social and emotional competencies such as empathy and cultural understanding.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Talk with whānau about the stories enjoyed at home (including those in their home language). Share information about the value of shared storytelling and book reading. Use your knowledge of children's home lives to select books and stories.
- Model an enjoyment of storying. Share stories and story books daily with children that connect to their lived experiences, interests, identity, language, and culture. Include pūrākau (ancient legends, stories), pakiwaitara (fables), and stories that shine a light on local history and its people, places, and events.
- Take time to become familiar with available books so that you feel comfortable reading them aloud. Consider the use of props (e.g., puppets) and other resources that may support children's engagement with the story. Use a large display core board (or home page of the Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems being used in the centre) to model comments and questions during shared story reading.
- Use strategies such as commenting, wondering, and pausing to help children make connections between stories and their lived experiences and interests. Follow children's lead and respond to elements of the story they are interested in. Highlight connections between aspects of the story and children's experiences, as well as your own.
- Support children's engagement in and understanding of stories by using facial expressions and vocal techniques (e.g., changes in intonation) that reflect the actions and emotions depicted.

Concepts about print

Foster children's understanding of print and how it functions through books and other print texts.

Why is this practice important?

Early concepts of print provide the foundation on which the skills, confidence, and motivation to read and write are built. Learning these during the early years helps set children up for life-long literacy success.

With the active support and guidance of kaiako, a play-based curriculum lends itself well to supporting children's understanding of print concepts, such as directionality and the alphabet principle, in ways that are meaningful, enjoyable, and unpressured.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Identify opportunities to incorporate the meaningful use of print with children as both observers and participants (e.g., daily record keeping, naming personal spaces and belongings, and referring to menus and written instructions).
- Consider how te reo Māori is represented in printed material available to children. Ensure that features such as macrons are included and accurate.

- Incorporate the print scripts of children and their whānau through dual-language picture books, signs, and labels. Highlight similarities and differences in print concepts while being positive and inclusive.
- Read to children often, pointing out and discussing key features of books, including the cover, title, and names of the author and illustrator. Be explicit about how you hold and use a book, and why (e.g., "Here's the front cover. This book is written by Patricia Grace. I need it the right way up so I can read the words."). Make these discussions part of your regular book-reading routine.
- Draw children's attention to print, signs, and labels in the environment. Point out letters, words, and related visual elements, making sure you discuss their meaning and purpose.
- Look for opportunities to read in front of children, modelling your own meaningful engagement with print. Talk about what you are doing and why. Use your finger to track text as you read.

Mark-making and writing

Provide an environment where children have frequent opportunities for mark-making, drawing, and writing.

Why is this practice important?

Early opportunities to experiment with mark-making, drawing, and writing alphabet letters, free from adult expectations, help develop the fine-motor skills required for writing. They also provide a way for children to communicate their thoughts and feelings to others.

When mark-making, drawing, and writing are learned and practised in the context of an open-ended or play-based curriculum, children are more likely to form positive attitudes towards literacy.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Offer a range of media to explore mark-making, including crayons, pens, brushes, surfaces to make marks (e.g., paper and card), and digital devices when appropriate.
- Create mark-making possibilities across all areas, indoors and outdoors – for example, water on concrete, sticks with sand, and kitchen utensils with clay. Ensure that there is a mix of consistently resourced areas along with a variety of temporary experiences.
- Invite and support children's mark-making and writing processes without expectations about how they go about them and what they produce.
- Accept and value children's writing approximations. Take time to discuss the process, invite children to tell you about what they have written, and display or share their creations with others.
- For children with physical access needs, introduce and model a range of alphabet displays as writing tools as early as possible. This may include keyboards, print flipcharts, alphabet boards, and the alphabet in the child's Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems. Encourage children to access these directly using their hands or another body part, or name the letters one by one and write down those the child selects.
- Share with whānau children's mark-making, drawing, and writing, making links to their literacy progress.

2

Notice and recognise

Progress examples to help you notice and recognise a child's progress

Use the phases of progress (outlined below) to help you notice and recognise a child's progress.

- › Draw on what you already know and what you've observed.
- › Have discussions with the child, whānau, and colleagues.
- › Use the practices (in step 3) to respond, based on what you notice.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children are curious about language sounds and print.

- › Children are attuned and responsive to sounds around them, including the pitch, rhythm, tone, and repeated sounds of kōrero/speech, music, waiata, rhymes, and chants.
- › Children enjoy listening to and interacting with simple stories and picture books. They increasingly connect images in picture books (and related objects) with familiar people, animals, things, actions, and events, and they anticipate key elements of familiar stories.
- › Children are curious about print and print-related practices around them. They explore books and print independently and with others through touch, sight, and sound.
- › Children are curious about others' writing. They explore mark-making resources and discover that their movements can create marks on different surfaces.

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children play with language sounds and begin to connect familiar print symbols with their meanings.

- › Children enjoy participating with those around them in rhythm, rhymes, and repeated sounds within kōrero/speech, waiata/songs, and chants.
- › Children playfully engage with short stories and books read with others, showing preferences for favourites. They connect images and elements of stories with familiar people, places, and things and anticipate familiar storylines.
- › Children actively explore and engage with print and print-related practices in their environment. They increasingly understand how books work and the distinction between print and images. They may recognise familiar print (e.g., logos, words, and letters).
- › Children make intentional marks as they explore different mark-making tools and materials, and they are beginning to understand that marks can represent meanings. They show interest in observing and being involved in others' writing.

Te a mārama

Within an enabling environment, children explore language sounds and expand their understanding of print symbols and their meanings.

- › Children explore and find joy in the rhythm, rhyme patterns, syllables, and repeated sounds of their languages. They can identify words that repeat sounds or rhyme, and they explore creating their own words.

- › Children understand that print holds meaning and connect images to the plot in story books. They understand that stories have key characters and follow a logical sequence of events, and they can predict what might happen next. They enjoy exploring connections between aspects of stories and previous learning.
- › Children confidently handle books. They can recognise some letters, including the first letter of their name, and distinguish between individual words and sentences in text. They can identify a range of familiar words, images, and logos in their environment and are developing an understanding of print directionality.
- › Children show increasing control and purpose with their mark-making as they represent their ideas. They may attribute meaning to individual or strings of marks that resemble elements of written letters and words. They may write the first letter of their name and purposely use mark-making in their play.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children innovate with language sounds and print symbols to create and re-create meaning.

- › Children are increasingly aware of and enjoy word play, including with word families (e.g., 'sat', 'cat', 'hat'). They show awareness of the first sound or syllable of familiar words, especially their own name.
- › Children understand that spoken words can be written down and read by others, and that thoughts (both real and imagined) can be represented in print. They have increasingly sophisticated understandings of story features such as a logical sequence, characters, a problem and resolution, plot twists, and underlying messages. They actively seek connections between stories and their previous learning.
- › Children understand many concepts about print, such as punctuation, capital/lower case letters, print direction, and the roles of title, author, and illustrator. They increasingly recognise a range of familiar letters and words in their languages.
- › Children combine detailed drawings and letter-like marks to convey complex messages and ideas, and show a growing interest in writing words for a purpose. They progress towards writing whole words, such as their own name, with increasing accuracy and confidence. With support, they may write a wider range of words and use invented spelling as they map their knowledge of sounds to letters in print.

3

Respond

Practices to help you respond at different phases of progress

After you have assessed the phases of progress (in the previous step), use these practices to work one-on-one with a child based on what you've noticed.

Talk with others about what these practices might look like in your setting, and test your thinking by looking at adjacent phases.

Note that these practices are not exhaustive, and you might think of others.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children are curious about language sounds and print.

Playing with language sounds

Provide regular opportunities for children to develop phonological awareness through listening and playing with language sounds.

- Tune in and to respond to the sounds children are hearing and sensing around them.
- Play back-and-forth, serve-and-return games by mimicking children's sounds and body language and adding variations.
- Introduce a variety of familiar and new language sounds, through kōrero, orioiri, waiata, nursery rhymes, poems, and stories. Include those shared by whānau.
- Encourage children to play with language sounds and rhythms, using visual, tactile and movement cues such as bouncing or clapping to a beat.

Providing a print-rich environment

Integrate a wide range of print (written-language) resources throughout the indoor and outdoor environment.

- Provide books that mokopuna can always access easily and independently. These need to be robust and have clear images and simple texts. Include books that integrate textures and sound.
- Read daily and repeat stories often, so that mokopuna begin to see how print guides the words we read.
- Tell mokopuna when you record things like sleep times, and let them see you do this.

Story comprehension

Provide regular opportunities for children to participate in and enjoy stories of their own and other cultures.

- Share short stories and picture books daily, individually or in small groups. Aim for these experiences to be informal, relaxed, and child-led. Encourage and support repeated sharing of favourite books and stories.
- Follow children's leads, aligning your attention with theirs. Prioritise children's positive engagement over getting to the end of a story.
- Point to and name images in books and connect them to children's experiences (e.g., "Ae, he ngeru tēna. That's a cat. You've got a cat at home, haven't you?").

Concepts about print

Foster children's understanding of print, and how it functions, through books and other print texts.

- Read to mokopuna often, ensuring these book-reading opportunities are relaxing, enjoyable, and child-led.
- Let mokopuna take the lead in turning pages and deciding when to start and finish a book.
- Point out print, signs, symbols, and logos in the environment and talk about their use and meaning.

Mark-making and writing

Provide an environment where children have frequent opportunities for mark-making, drawing, and writing.

- Model using mark-making resources in a range of ways, encouraging curiosity and pleasure (e.g., drawing with chalk, with crayons on card, or with water and big brushes on an outside path).
- Provide regular opportunities and time for mokopuna to experiment with mark-making materials. Comment on their achievements – for example, how their movements create different kinds of marks.
- Provide appropriate mark-making resources so that mokopuna can 'write' with or alongside you as you write notes, observations, shopping lists etc.

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children play with language sounds and begin to connect familiar print symbols with their meanings.

Playing with language sounds

Provide regular opportunities for children to develop phonological awareness through listening and playing with language sounds.

- Repeat nursery rhymes, orioiri, waiata, poems, and stories, so that mokopuna become familiar with them and develop confidence to participate. Include home languages where practical.
- Play guessing games in which mokopuna identify actions and objects through sound alone (e.g., “Close your eyes. Can you guess what makes this sound?”).
- Make up words and phrases that play with language rhythms, syllables, rhyme, and sound repetition (e.g., pakipaki, pikipiki, pekepeke; sqwodgy, squishy, squidgy).
- Model and talk about the use of internal speech with mokopuna. You might ask them if they can hear their own voice in their head without speaking.
- Encourage mokopuna to be playful with their voices and to use actions, expression, pace and tone by modelling these yourself (e.g., moving your head to match syllable breaks or repeated sounds).

Providing a print-rich environment

Integrate a wide range of print (written-language) resources throughout the indoor and outdoor environment.

- Draw children’s attention to printed logos, symbols and words on packaging and signs. Talk about their meaning and purpose (e.g., “That sign tells us that ...”).
- Combine print with images to signal personal spaces and items, such as sleeping spaces and personal lockers. Use home language scripts where possible.
- Point out print conventions that convey meaning as you read stories (e.g., large, printed words or capitals that indicate shouting or urgency). Be sensitive to maintaining the flow and interest in what you are reading.
- Provide print resources that reflect children’s interests and can be incorporated into their play, both inside and out (e.g., recipe cards, suitable packaging, posters, and books about roads or buildings).

Story comprehension

Provide regular opportunities for children to participate and enjoy stories of their own and other cultures.

- Read to mokopuna every day, individually and in small groups. Encourage them to select stories and books, as well as suggesting those they may enjoy.
- Keep story-reading experiences relaxed and informal, including finishing with a story or book before the end if mokopuna have lost interest.
- Comment and wonder out loud about what is happening and what characters are doing in a story, while also being sensitive to maintaining the flow of the story. Give time for mokopuna to respond before continuing.
- Encourage mokopuna to contribute to familiar stories by pausing for them to fill in a gap or finish a sentence (e.g., “It grew bigger, and bigger, and ... bigger!”).

Concepts about print

Foster children’s understanding of print and how it functions through books and other print texts.

- Encourage mokopuna to select and hold books and to turn pages themselves. Follow their lead and pause when reading to discuss elements of interest, while being sensitive to maintaining the flow of the story.
- Point out relationships between words and images. Draw attention to words where the typography itself conveys meaning or emotion (e.g., big, elongated, or wavy type).
- As you write or type, let mokopuna see and hear how you are using print conventions to form words and sentences (e.g., “Now I need a gap, because I am starting a new word.”; “Names always start with a capital letter, so I need to type a big A here.”).
- Make the most of print in the environment to foster understanding of print conventions (e.g., “This is your name, it says Moana.”; “That is an M, it sounds like /m/ for Moana.”). Pause before reading familiar signs, giving children time to show their understandings of them.

Mark-making and writing

Provide an environment where children have frequent opportunities for mark-making, drawing, and writing.

- Encourage mokopuna to create texts such as road signs in their imaginative play, using mark-making and drawing. Take time to listen to their explanations, and observe their developing skills and working theories about writing.
- Invite mokopuna to use both custom-made and found objects to explore their working theories about writing.
- Encourage mokopuna to participate with or alongside you as you write, by providing parallel tools such as sign-in forms and observation notebooks.

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children explore language sounds and expand their understanding of print symbols and their meanings.

Playing with language sounds

Provide regular opportunities for children to develop phonological awareness through listening and playing with language sounds.

- Provide opportunities for mokopuna to use their knowledge of rhyming words and patterns by joining in, adapting, and inventing poems, rhymes, waiata, and stories.
- Include books that play on language, using voice, expression, and actions to emphasise this. Take time to talk with mokopuna about the sounds and words (e.g., those they like or dislike).
- Play language games regularly that focus on syllables and sounds, such as clapping out syllables or finding words that rhyme (e.g., kai/pai; high/sigh). Give children time to respond.
- Talk about the use of internal speech with mokopuna, particularly mokopuna who use AAC (e.g., “Did you know that when I say the word ball, I can also think it? I say it to myself inside my head.”).

Providing a print-rich environment

Integrate a wide range of print (written-language) resources throughout the indoor and outdoor environment.

- Integrate picture books with longer storylines. Include reference and instruction books or posters, positioned where they are useful, both inside and outside. Read familiar books in which mokopuna can begin to anticipate the words on the page.
- Ignite mokopuna interest in the value of print (e.g., words, numbers, and symbols) to record and memorise information. Make charts, plans, and lists with mokopuna, and encourage them to name artworks. Discuss why recording information is helpful.
- Integrate the alphabet throughout the learning environment by including alphabet puzzles, friezes, or posters with pictures that correspond to letter sounds. Include examples of scripts in home languages, in consultation with whānau. Support mokopuna to connect letters with their corresponding sounds.
- Draw attention to print – words, signs, symbols, and logos – within the setting and when out in the community. Talk with mokopuna about its meaning and uses.

Story comprehension

Provide regular opportunities for children to participate and enjoy stories of their own and other cultures.

- Read or tell favourite stories repeatedly. Encourage mokopuna to recite familiar passages with you as you read (e.g., “You can say it along with me as I read: Out of the gate and off for a walk went ...”).

- Provide and encourage the use of props with stories, both purpose-made (e.g., puppets) and improvised (e.g., an item brought from home or found on an excursion).
- Discuss with mokopuna how the author has presented the ideas in a story and how the illustrations help our understanding of the story.
- Comment and wonder about what is happening in stories, connecting to what has already happened, what might happen next, and why.

Concepts about print

Foster children’s understanding of print and how it functions through books and other print texts.

- Foster curiosity and engagement about how print works by being playful with concepts such as directionality and book orientation (e.g., show a familiar book back to front and upside down, asking “Is this where I start?”).
- Trace print as you read, pausing on interesting words and punctuation. Highlight words starting with the same letter and sound. Make connections between the words, illustrations, and plot and the people, places, and things children are familiar with.
- Encourage mokopuna to write or type alphabet letters and words themselves. Comment on the print conventions they understand (e.g., “That gap tells me you have written your first name and your last name there.”; “That looks like a list because the words go down the page.”).
- Take opportunities during excursions to discover and explore signs and symbols (including logos) and what they mean. Draw attention to letters of the alphabet and have fun predicting with mokopuna what the words they make up may mean.

Mark-making and writing

Provide an environment where children have frequent opportunities for mark-making, drawing, and writing.

- Encourage the use of games, both handwritten and digital, that require children to record letters, numbers, words, and/or their own name.
- Encourage children to write their own name for a range of purposes (e.g., naming artworks). Provide written models such as portable name cards for children to refer to if they choose.
- Provide gentle assistance in holding writing tools, ensuring it doesn’t deter children’s willingness to write. Show children how digital media can also be used for writing.
- Together, discuss writing. Invite children to write, using their knowledge of letters and sounds. If needed, offer suggestions on what they might include and which resources to use. Appreciate their efforts, and encourage them to share their writing with others.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children innovate with language sounds and print symbols to create and re-create meaning.

Playing with language sounds

Provide regular opportunities for children to develop phonological awareness through listening and playing with language sounds.

- Make use of everyday interactions to draw attention to sound-letter relationships (e.g., “Whose name begins with /t/, /ch/, or /wh/?”; “I spy something that starts with the sound /p/.”). Talk with mokopuna about language features, including rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and consonant and vowel sounds.
- Encourage mokopuna to make up and share their own games that play on rhyme, syllables, and consonant, vowel and initial sounds (e.g., creating sentences using alliteration (“Tane tip-toed to town.”), or making up words (“apple, bapple, papple”).
- Share silly rhymes, waiata, and jokes that play with rhyme, syllables, consonants, vowels, and alliteration (e.g., “See you later, alligator.”; “How now brown cow?”).
- Model the use of internal speech for mokopuna who use AAC (e.g., “I need to write Wiremu. What sound can I hear at the start of Wiremu? I’ll say it out loud – Wiremu. Now let’s say it inside our heads.”).

Providing a print-rich environment

Integrate a wide range of print (written-language) resources throughout the indoor and outdoor environment.

- Draw children’s attention to printed words and punctuation as you read fiction and non-fiction books (including digital books) on a wide range of topics, ensuring you maintain the flow and interest in what you are reading.
- Provide resources, indoors and outdoors, to support the prediction of letter-sound relationships (e.g., board games and alphabet bingo).
- Encourage children to contribute to a print-rich environment through their own creativity and for the benefit of others (e.g., by initiating signs, writing lists, designing charts and board games, making books and digital stories, or planning a trip to the library). Encourage children who may use written scripts in home languages to use them.
- Provide permanent and movable spaces that support shared and independent reading.

Story comprehension

Provide regular opportunities for children to participate and enjoy stories of their own and other cultures.

- Read to mokopuna every day, individually and in small and larger groups. Incorporate time for planned as well as spontaneous story-reading experiences.

- Explore stories and story books with mokopuna in more depth, using comments and wonderings about who, what, when, where, why, and how. Actively listen to mokopuna ideas and use prompts to help them expand their thinking.
- Encourage mokopuna to take the lead and share favourite stories and books. Use guiding prompts to support their retelling (e.g., wondering what happens next).
- For mokopuna who are already demonstrating the ability to read words, encourage further interest by sensitively inviting and supporting them to read books with peers.

Concepts about print

Foster children’s understanding of print and how it functions through books and other print texts.

- Point out to children the print conventions they have already grasped in their efforts to write signs, messages, lists, instructions for games, etc. Use these experiences as informal teachable moments to scaffold learning of further print concepts.
- Play a range of games and puzzles with children that involve matching alphabet letters with their corresponding sounds (e.g., alphabet bingo and alphabet jump). Include games in te reo Māori and children’s home languages. Discuss the differences between the languages, in how they are spoken (e.g., /wh/ in te reo Māori sounds like /f/ or /ph/ in English) and how they are written (e.g., macrons show long vowels in te reo Māori).
- Talk with children about print directionality, word boundaries, capital letters, and punctuation in books, pamphlets, instruction manuals, signs, and games. Highlight how these conventions play out for different genres and differ in other written languages.
- Encourage children to create and use portable cards in their play to communicate with others (e.g., “Leo’s work – please don’t touch.”; “Give way!”). Use opportunities to highlight the beginning sound in children’s names.

Mark-making and writing

Provide an environment where children have frequent opportunities for mark-making, drawing, and writing.

- Integrate writing and illustration as a regular part of the curriculum, using a range of media (handwritten and digital) for a range of purposes. Work with children’s interests to make writing experiences meaningful and motivating.
- Explore with children the process of writing as they construct written or digital texts (e.g., stories and instructions). Invite them to share their texts with others.
- Encourage children to write whole words, using invented spellings, by connecting their knowledge of language sounds and letters. Scaffold their efforts by sounding out words and allowing them time to identify related letters before making your own suggestions.
- Observe how children use writing implements. Sensitively model and demonstrate how they can hold them to make mark-making easier, if needed.
- Encourage children to write their own names and those of their peers as part of play and every-day happenings (e.g., by adding names to waiting lists).

4

Document

An example of how you could use Kōwhiri Whakapae to enhance your assessments and communication

In this section, an assessment example illustrates how you can use the information gathered in the previous three steps to enhance your documented assessments and communication. The example describes and tracks a child's learning progress over time in ways that inform ongoing planning. It also highlights the kinds of evidence, such as observations or conversations with whānau, that were used to support judgements and planning decisions. Finally, it shows how documentation can support conversations with children and whānau about a child's learning and progress.

After reading the example, think about how you currently document your planning and assessments and describe learning progress over time. Talk with team members and children's whānau to identify how your assessment documentation might better describe:

- › a child's current capabilities, strengths, and interests, with evidence (Notice)
- › a child's progress and possible directions for their learning (Recognise)
- › how you will support the child to progress over time (Respond).

Assessment example: Sadie's writing

This series of four stories follow Sadie, a curious and creative four-year-old.

Sadie lives with her mother, Jo, and school-age brother, Alex, during the week. Most weekends she stays with her dad, Ben, and teenage sister, Ruth. Her mother and father are both Pākehā, of European descent.

Sadie has been attending Playcentre since she was two years old and now attends four days a week, including one day with her mother.

This series of short learning stories tracks Sadie's interest in expressing herself through drawing and her expanding understandings of print and writing her name, from three years and nine months to four years and six months. The stories are written by Playcentre kaiako and Sadie's mother and father.

As you read these four stories, you will find more information about how *Te Whāriki* and the 'Emergent literacy' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae have been drawn on to foster Sadie's learning and to understand and respond to her growing capabilities over time.

See Kōwhiri Whakapae online for the [full sequence of learning stories](#).

This assessment illustrates Te pānui me te tuhituhi | Emergent literacy. To browse the complete suite of examples, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

TE ĀHUATANGA O TE REO

Forms & functions of literacy

Children understanding cultural and social literacy forms and their uses, retelling and creating stories, and critically exploring diverse perspectives in texts

Overview

What does 'te āhuatanga o te reo' mean?

'Te āhuatanga o te reo' emphasises literacy forms and their functions within te ao Māori and the roles they play in strengthening connections to whakapapa, knowledge, history, customs, and wisdom – connecting the past, present, and future.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

What are forms and functions of literacy?

Literacy extends beyond merely reading and writing; it encompasses knowing when and how to use different types and modes of text to participate in modern society. These forms and functions of literacy are culturally and socially determined.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How is this area woven through the strands of *Te Whāriki*?

The forms and functions of literacy contribute to all strands of *Te Whāriki*, providing children with the means to communicate, contribute, explore their world and beyond, and develop wellbeing and a positive sense of identity.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How do the foundations of Kōwhiri Whakapae impact on this area?

Kōwhiri Whakapae is built on four foundations: Te Tiriti o Waitangi; Identity, language and culture; Inclusion; and the Principles of *Te Whāriki*. Together, these guide teaching and learning about the forms and functions of literacy.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.



Lay the groundwork

Practices to whakaritea te pārekereke | prepare the seedbed for all children

Start by working with all the children in your setting. Create an environment that can support children to build skills related to the forms and functions of literacy.

- › Consider your current environment and how you could make it better.
- › Talk to others about what you are already doing.
- › Select practices that will be meaningful in your setting.

Cultural literacy forms and functions

Provide many opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore the forms and functions of cultural literacies.

Why is this practice important?

Through cultural literacies (oral, visual, gestural, textural, and spatial), mokopuna learn how meaning specific to a culture or group is understood and represented. This also helps foster mokopuna empathy and appreciation of diversity.

Learner identity is enhanced when the home languages and cultures of mokopuna are valued and when kaiako are responsive to their cultural ways of knowing and being.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Take time to learn about and respect cultural knowledge – in particular, knowledge associated with literacies. This may require a willingness to view literacy more broadly, including communication and meaning-making in its many forms, not just words and print.
- b. As a team, discuss where and how you will source knowledge about specific cultural literacies. What people, places, and things could help you? What needs to happen in terms of relationships, reciprocity, and authenticity so that people who share their knowledge also maintain their mana? Work closely with whānau and mokopuna to better understand the cultural literacy forms and functions that are important to them and appropriate to integrate within your setting.
- c. Invite whānau and community members to share cultural literacies such as pūrākau, tivaevae, and dance with mokopuna, through visits, events, and excursions. Highlight the meanings and stories that sit within these.
- d. Review cultural literacies within your setting's physical environment and resources. How well do they represent the diverse cultures attending your service? Consider all modes, including print, oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and spatial. Provide plenty of opportunities for mokopuna to engage in open-ended exploration of these resources.
- e. Draw mokopuna attention to cultural literacies, describing and discussing their features and meanings. Discuss how mokopuna can meaningfully participate in these practices.

Social literacy forms and functions

Provide opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore social literacy forms and functions.

Why is this practice important?

Exposure to various types of literacy used in everyday society helps mokopuna understand that literacy comes in many forms and serves many functions in our lives. This includes the ways in which literacy is used to communicate and create meaning, such as traffic signs, videos, emails, advertising, and various kinds of print.

When mokopuna experience what literacy can do for them from an early age, they're more likely to develop positive dispositions important to literacy learning success.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. As a team, reflect on how you use literacy in your everyday lives. Partner with whānau to better understand the range of social literacy forms and functions encountered within their home or community.
- b. Review the physical environment and resources in your setting to identify forms of social literacy available to mokopuna, such as movable 'Stop' and 'Give Way' signs, food packaging, digital devices, recipe books, maps, and greeting cards. Consider how accessible these resources are for all mokopuna.
- c. Model the use of social literacy forms and functions. Describe and discuss what you are doing and why (e.g., recording information, doing reminder notes or observations, reading road signs during an excursion, or reading a recipe). Encourage mokopuna to explore these literacy forms with you.
- d. Foster mokopuna motivation for, and interest in, literacy through open-ended explorations of social literacy forms and their purposes. Observe what mokopuna are doing, and support their deeper understanding and engagement with strategies such as commenting, listening, exploring their plans and goals, and highlighting connections to past experiences.

Retelling and creating stories

Provide regular opportunities for children to actively engage in retelling and creating stories.

Why is this practice important?

Connecting and communicating through storytelling is part of being human. Retelling and creating stories enables children to learn and express their identity, language, and culture.

Discovering the joy of storytelling also has important cognitive, social, and emotional benefits, such as learning about the wider world; sparking imagination, curiosity, and creative expression; and developing reasoning and the ability to focus. These benefits are best experienced at a young age.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Be curious and open to learning from whānau about the stories shared and enjoyed at home (including in their home language).

- b. Invite whānau and community members to visit your setting and share stories using a range of modes, including telling or reading stories using books, props, puppet shows, drama, songs, dance, and music. Encourage the sharing of stories in the languages found in children's home communities, including in te reo Māori.
- c. Share stories with children often, preferably every day. Include pūrākau (ancient legends or stories), pakiwaitara (fiction or fables), and familiar favourites, as well as invented, co-constructed stories.
- d. Promote storytelling using language, sound, movement, art, drama, and props.
- e. Prompt children to think about the key elements of a story, including plot, character motives, sequences of events, and underlying messages. Use comments and questions such as, "I wonder why Māui did that?" and "What do you think will happen next?". Make connections to children's own experiences (e.g., "What would you do if you were Māui?"). Leave time for them to respond and share their own ideas and perspectives.

Thinking critically about texts

Support mokopuna to think critically about texts.

Why is this practice important?

Developing dispositions, knowledge, and skills in relation to critically examining texts fosters an appreciation of diverse perspectives and a sense of social justice, supporting the development of thoughtful and informed citizens.

Critical literacies encourage mokopuna to question and reflect on the content in texts, fostering a habit of critical thinking. In these times of exponential growth and access to information, the need to learn and apply critical thinking has never been greater.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Discuss with colleagues and whānau how the ideas of social justice, fairness, and equity are reflected within your setting's philosophy. Consider how you might draw on these ideas to inform conversations with mokopuna when exploring texts together.
- b. Review the range of literacy forms within your setting (including books, stories, images, videos, waiata, and related resources) and consider how well they reflect the diversity of the people, places, and things in your setting, local community, and wider society.
- c. Ensure that all mokopuna have regular access to a range of texts that positively reflect them and their whānau.
- d. Model reflective strategies such as commenting, questioning, and wondering about perspectives and world views. Explore alternatives with mokopuna when sharing stories or different kinds of texts (e.g., product labels, advertising, and images).
- e. Model strategies for querying and checking the reliability of information – for example, wondering aloud how we know if information is from a reliable source, or discussing the meaning and use of healthy star ratings on food packaging.
- f. Encourage mokopuna to express their own ideas and opinions about the various texts they engage with, and explore transforming the texts and creating alternative versions of them.



Notice and recognise

Progress examples to help you notice and recognise a child's progress

Use the phases of progress (outlined below) to help you notice and recognise a child's progress.

- › Draw on what you already know and what you've observed.
- › Have discussions with the child, whānau, and colleagues.
- › Use the practices (in step 3) to respond, based on what you notice.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children develop awareness and interest in literacy forms and their functions.

- › With support, children attune to different cultural and social literacy forms and how they are used by those around them.
- › Children are curious about stories of their own and other cultures shared by familiar people, and they express their preferences (e.g., when initiating and ending storytelling). They enjoy engaging with short stories shared in a range of modes (oral, visual, gestural, textural, and spatial).
- › Children are curious and express preferences in relation to literacy forms and modes of expression around them, connecting with those that reflect familiar people, places, and things.

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children explore and connect with different literacy forms and their functions.

- › Children connect a range of cultural and social literacy forms with their functions, exploring their understandings about these forms in their play and interactions with people, places, and things.
- › Children enjoy and connect with a range of stories from their own and other cultures – for example, by identifying familiar objects or characters and joining in familiar phrases. They increasingly participate in retelling stories with others, using a range of modes (oral, visual, gestural, textural, and spatial) and exploring key events and actions.
- › Children explore and connect with literacy forms that align with their interests, identity, language, and culture, and they begin to attach meanings to familiar pictures or cultural symbols. They express preferences and points of view in response to various literacy forms and modes of expression.

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children expand their interest and use of a range of literacy forms and their functions.

- › Children explore a variety of cultural and social literacy forms for a range of purposes, including creativity, expression, and discovery. They engage with these literacy forms in ways that align with their identity, language, and culture.

- › Children are familiar with and enjoy an increasing range of stories of their own and other cultures. They retell and adapt familiar stories and create new ones, independently and alongside others and using a range of modes (oral, visual, gestural, textural, and spatial). This may include exploring elements such as the central characters, plots, or feelings in their stories.
- › Children take an interest in meanings within a range of literacy forms and actively compare these with their experiences and understandings. They notice and respond to different views expressed in a variety of literacy forms.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children innovate and communicate using a variety of literacy forms for different purposes.

- › Children use a variety of cultural and social literacy forms innovatively and for a wide range of purposes, including investigating interests, creativity, and the expression of their identity, language, and culture. They use prior knowledge to purposefully select and adapt literacy forms for particular purposes.
- › Children know and enjoy a wide range of stories of their own and other cultures. They are confident and innovative as they retell, adapt, and create new stories using a range of modes (oral, visual, gestural, textural, and spatial). This may include incorporating their own cultural heroes and values or those from popular culture (e.g., movie characters), and recent or imagined events.
- › Children are increasingly inquisitive about the literacy forms they engage with. They express opinions, question, adapt, and compare them with their own experiences and understandings. They can participate in discussions, question, and communicate their own thoughts about the different messages and perspectives they encounter, including issues of social justice, fairness, and equity.



Respond

Practices to help you respond at different phases of progress

After you have assessed the phases of progress (in the previous step), use these practices to work one-on-one with a child based on what you've noticed.

Talk with others about what these practices might look like in your setting, and test your thinking by looking at adjacent phases.

Note that these practices are not exhaustive, and you might think of others.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children develop awareness and interest in literacy forms and their functions.

Cultural literacy forms and functions

Provide many opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore the forms and functions of cultural literacies.

- Model the use of cultural literacies (e.g., in karakia kai, lotu, and mihi/pepeha) during everyday routines and experiences.
- Provide frequent, open-ended opportunities for children to explore cultural literacies (e.g., via kōwhaiwhai patterns and dance traditions), using multiple senses. Tune in to what children are focusing on, and provide descriptive language that reflects their experiences.

Social literacy forms and functions

Provide opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore social literacy forms and functions.

- Let children observe, or participate in their own way, in the social literacy practices required to document routines and experiences (e.g., sleep charts, reading instructions, and signage).
- Draw attention to social literacy forms and functions in the environment (e.g., discuss photos and point to labels and talk about what they say).
- Make connections with children's social literacy experiences at home and in the community. Introduce language and resources that reflect the people, places, and things familiar to each child.

Retelling and creating stories

Provide regular opportunities for children to actively engage in retelling and creating stories.

- Invent stories out of children's everyday experiences (e.g., "It was a rainy day. We slowly put on our coats, hats, and gumboots and went out to splash in puddles. Then, guess what ..."). Match your storytelling to the children and the context. Let children add to the stories you tell in their own way.
- Respond to children's requests for stories, including those that reflect their home and culture. Follow children's lead when selecting stories and deciding when to end a story reading.
- Provide opportunities involving all the senses for children to engage in storytelling (e.g., use puppets and props that integrate speech, sound, movement, sight, and touch).

Thinking critically about texts

Support mokopuna to think critically about texts.

- Offer a range of literacy forms and modes of expression, including photos, picture books, waiata, and supporting tactile resources that reflect familiar people, places, and things.
- Encourage children to make choices about the literacy experiences they engage in. Follow their lead, responding to their focus and decisions about what, how, and how long they engage.
- While reading books or sharing stories, highlight connections and similarities with children's lives and your own (e.g., "Look, Moana is laughing. You like to laugh too, don't you? So do I.").

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children explore and connect with different literacy forms and their functions.

Cultural literacy forms and functions

Provide many opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore the forms and functions of cultural literacies.

- Encourage mokopuna to participate in familiar cultural literacy practices in their own way, both individually and with others. Provide prompts and resources to scaffold participation.
- Build a repertoire of new and familiar cultural literacy practices. Include those shared by visitors or that are part of community events and excursions.

Social literacy forms and functions

Provide opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore social literacy forms and functions.

- Encourage mokopuna to explore social literacy forms and their functions within their play (e.g., using a block as a phone, and pretending to read a story recipe).
- Talk about the ways in which literacy can be used in daily life (e.g., to remember things, share ideas, stay safe, find answers to questions, and learn how to do tasks).
- Go on small-group 'literacy discovery walks' in the local neighbourhood, talking about the meaning and design of the signs and symbols you encounter.

Retelling and creating stories

Provide regular opportunities for children to actively engage in retelling and creating stories.

- Co-construct stories with mokopuna by drawing on their imagination and everyday experiences. Draw children's attention to the elements that make a story work well (e.g., grammar, voice intonation, repetition, and the order of events).
- Encourage mokopuna to tell stories about their lives. Support them with active listening and verbalising non-spoken messages to check meaning.
- Make props and resources available over an extended time, so that mokopuna can experiment and grow in confidence with storytelling, using a range of modes.

Thinking critically about texts

Support mokopuna to think critically about texts.

- Provide resources to represent children's ideas through a range of modes (e.g., drawing, drama, and movement). Include literacy forms that reflect children's interests, identity, language, and culture.
- Demonstrate through story reading and other activities that ideas can be questioned or critiqued.
- Use strategies such as modelling and active listening to encourage children to express their preferences. Give a voice and value to different points of view, using questions and comments such as, "Here's another thought..."

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children expand their interest and use of a range of literacy forms and their functions.

Cultural literacy forms and functions

Provide many opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore the forms and functions of cultural literacies.

- Ensure all children have opportunities and encouragement to express their cultural identities through literacy practices such as song, oration, or performance. Invite children to share their special interests and strengths with their peers.
- Foster children's creativity by offering props and resources associated with cultural forms of artistic expression. Talk about the meaning, values, and significance of these and how they are communicated through elements such as patterns or movements.

Social literacy forms and functions

Provide opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore social literacy forms and functions.

- Prompt mokopuna to draw on literacy forms and functions as part of their play as they create, express, and explore (e.g., by using reference books for ideas, and making signs, lists, plans, and maps).
- Ensure that resources are accessible throughout the setting, both indoors and outdoors, to prompt engagement with diverse literacy forms and functions (e.g., clipboards, paper, and pens near the sandpit or woodwork area for recording plans; recipes, note pads, and pens for use in dramatic play).
- Draw attention to different types of texts and their specific forms and purposes (e.g., how a recipe looks and functions compared with a story in a picture book, or how finding information on a digital device differs from using a book).

Retelling and creating stories

Provide regular opportunities for children to actively engage in retelling and creating stories.

- Encourage mokopuna to create and tell stories to others based on current or recent events, cultural references, favourite movies, and books. Facilitate the use of props, both found and purpose-made.
- Model ways of recording stories using a range of media, including print, art, audio, and still and moving images. Encourage mokopuna to dictate their stories or record them in their own way.
- Incorporate storytelling into regular routines such as group times, so that mokopuna are able to relate their own stories and listen to the stories of others.

Thinking critically about texts

Support mokopuna to think critically about texts.

- Expand the range of literacy forms and resources mokopuna experience to reflect diverse cultures, abilities, gender roles, family structures, feelings, and experiences.
- Allow time for mokopuna to think about the perspectives posed by various texts and to consider alternatives (e.g., how the gender of a story's hero could be different, or how an advertisement's image could be altered to better represent them and their whānau).
- Scaffold mokopuna to check the reliability of information (e.g., "Does that sound right to you?"; "I wonder what other people say about that?"). Model the habit of looking for information from more than one source.
- Encourage mokopuna to share different points of view and different understandings of the media they use in the centre.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children innovate and communicate using a variety of literacy forms for different purposes.

Cultural literacy forms and functions

Provide many opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore the forms and functions of cultural literacies.

- Invite children to take a lead in cultural literacy practices during everyday routines and experiences (e.g., leading karakia kai, or welcoming a visitor).
- Encourage children, individually or collaboratively, to explore and create their own expressions of cultural stories, values, and history through movement, art, and performance. Draw out their thinking through comments, wonderings, and questions.

Social literacy forms and functions

Provide opportunities for mokopuna to experience and explore social literacy forms and functions.

- Provide time, space, and resources for extended collaborative investigations incorporating literacy.
- Provide a variety of media, including digital devices, for children to take a lead in designing and creating texts such as stories, props, and signage. Observe, comment, and offer suggestions and wonderings to validate their efforts and foster ongoing confidence.

- c. Encourage children to reflect on and evaluate their use of literacy forms and functions. For example, use prompts such as photos or videos to revisit the texts that resulted from an investigation.

Retelling and creating stories

Provide regular opportunities for children to actively engage in retelling and creating stories.

- a. Encourage mokopuna to take leadership in retelling stories of cultural significance to small or larger groups.
- b. Use approaches such as storyboarding to help mokopuna plan stories, inviting them to consider key elements such as setting, characters, sequence, and action. Include conversations about the ways in which drama, image, props, music, and movement can add to meaning and audience enjoyment.
- c. Support mokopuna to document and evaluate their story telling using a range of modes and media (e.g., video, art, audio, photography, and print).

Thinking critically about texts

Support mokopuna to think critically about texts.

- a. Use strategies such as active listening, wondering, open-ended questions, commenting, and recapping ideas to help mokopuna explore messages of social justice, fairness, and equity in various literacy forms.
- b. Encourage mokopuna to collaboratively critique, create, and adapt texts such as advertisements, stories, and poems. Support this by scaffolding possibility thinking and listening to each other's ideas.
- c. Provide time and encouragement for mokopuna to ask questions and communicate their thoughts about differences and similarities between their own and others' experiences and understandings of texts.
- d. Encourage mokopuna to consider the accuracy and reliability of information, using questions such as "Who wrote that?", "Is there similar information elsewhere?", and "Does that sound reasonable?".



Document

An example of how you could use Kōwhiri Whakapae to enhance your assessments and communication

In this section, an assessment example illustrates how you can use the information gathered in the previous three steps to enhance your documented assessments and communication. The example describes and tracks a child's learning progress over time in ways that inform ongoing planning. It also highlights the kinds of evidence, such as observations or conversations with whānau, that were used to support judgements and planning decisions. Finally, it shows how documentation can support conversations with children and whānau about a child's learning and progress.

After reading the example, think about how you currently document your planning and assessments and describe learning progress over time. Talk with team members and children's whānau to identify how your assessment documentation might better describe:

- › a child's current capabilities, strengths, and interests, with evidence (Notice)
- › a child's progress and possible directions for their learning (Recognise)
- › how you will support the child to progress over time (Respond).

Assessment example: Maya loves waiata

Maya lives with her mother, Tuli, and father, Suraj, who immigrated to New Zealand from England. They chose Tainui Street Kids early childhood centre because of the multicultural diversity of the centre's mokopuna, whānau, and kaiako. Their aspiration is for Maya to experience and learn about diversity, including learning about Māori culture and language.

As you read the stories, the highlighted comments offer more information about the connections between their content, *Te Whāriki*, and the 'Forms & functions of literacy' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae.

See Kōwhiri Whakapae online for the [full sequence of learning stories](#).

This assessment illustrates Te āhuatanga o te reo | Forms & functions of literacy. To browse the complete suite of examples, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

Learning an additional language

Children expanding and using their whole language repertoire as they learn an additional language

Overview

What does 'ngā reo' mean?

Ngā reo is the understanding of how learning new languages adds to the valuable language and cultural knowledge, strengths, and attitudes that children bring with them.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

What is learning an additional language?

Aotearoa New Zealand is a culturally and linguistically diverse country. Many children will enter early childhood settings speaking a language that is different from the language commonly used in the centre and therefore become learners of an additional language.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How is this area woven through the strands of *Te Whāriki*?

Te Whāriki acknowledges that children entering early childhood services will come from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. While Māori and Pacific children are highlighted, the curriculum advocates for all children who may be learning an additional language in ECE services.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.

How do the foundations of Kōwhiri Whakapae impact on this area?

Kōwhiri Whakapae is built on four foundations: Te Tiriti o Waitangi; Identity, language and culture; Inclusion; and the Principles of *Te Whāriki*. These guide the teaching and learning of additional languages, while placing importance on the preservation of home languages.

For further information, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.



Lay the groundwork

Practices to whakaritea te pārekereke | prepare the seedbed for all children

Start by working with all the children in your setting. Create an environment that can support children to build skills related to learning an additional language.

- › Consider your current environment and how you could make it better.
- › Talk to others about what you are already doing.
- › Select practices that will be meaningful in your setting.

Home language retention

Actively support children's retention of their home language(s) as they learn the language(s) spoken in your early childhood service.

Why is this practice important?

The early childhood years are known as the critical period for language learning – the time when children are most able to acquire more than one language with natural fluency. A strong foundation in the language(s) of the home provides a vital foundation for further language learning and supports children's sense of self, cultural identity, and wellbeing.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- a. Take time to build relationships with whānau. Listen to the cultural and social expectations they may have regarding language and literacy. Seek to understand the aspirations they have for their children, as well as whānau language resources (e.g., which languages are used, when are they used, and who are they used with).
- b. Provide whānau with ongoing reassurance and encouragement to maintain a strong home-language base as their children acquire a new language. This will help build a sense of belonging and well-being for whānau. Access translation services when required, and use images to convey messages in written material.
- c. Invite whānau to provide names of key people in their children's lives and key words and simple phrases in their home languages, to support your communication with their children.
- d. Consider the life changes that children may have experienced (e.g., a new country, culture, and home) and the impact this may be having on their sense of belonging and confidence in communicating and using a new language.
- e. Know which languages are understood and spoken by kaiako in your setting, along with their cultural knowledge. Enable kaiako to guide and lead home language retention and support communication with the children and whānau who speak their languages.
- f. Establish an environment that affirms children's right to use languages other than English or the dominant language of your service. Provide resources, including books and music, that use children's home languages and reflect their cultures.
- g. Reflect on how your attitudes and beliefs about learning a new language might impact on whānau and children's sense of belonging. By showing interest in and curiosity about home languages, you will help all children to see multilingualism as a valued attribute and something to aspire to.

Receptive and expressive language

Foster learning in both the receptive and expressive use of an additional language.

Why is this practice important?

Receptive language (language understanding) generally develops more quickly than expressive language (language production). Distinguishing between the two competencies is important to fully appreciate what children already know in a new language and to avoid describing those who are silent but have understanding as 'having no language'.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- Observe children interacting and communicating in a variety of situations. Assess their levels of receptive and expressive language.
- Build an inclusive and welcoming relationship with whānau. Seek support from available translation services as needed to support communication, and take time to learn about their children's understanding and use of home languages.
- Provide opportunities for new language learners to interact with their peers in ways that are not limited to oral language (e.g., through art, music, and dance). At the same time, encourage those who are more confident in the primary language of the service to use a range of spoken and non-spoken communication, including signs, images, gestures, facial expression, and contextual cues.
- Model language that is descriptive and specific rather than general (e.g., "The brown flax basket goes on the top shelf." instead of "This goes over there."). Pay attention to correct pronunciation and grammar.
- Intentionally 'gift' new words and their meanings to children often and as opportunities arise, to support their growing vocabulary. Repeatedly use these new words in context to help the children remember and understand how they can be used.
- Make use of short, stem-phrases (e.g., "I am ... thirsty/hungry."; "I like ... this one/the colour red") to assist early, expressive language use.
- Use word games and stories based on repetition and playfulness to build vocabulary.
- Acknowledge, encourage, and praise new-language learners' attempts at speaking.
- Refer to the '[Understanding and using language](#)' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae for further practices supportive of receptive and expressive language.

Support translanguaging

Empower mokopuna to make sense of their world and to communicate by drawing on all their language resources.

Why is this practice important?

The close inter-relationship between language and culture means that there are many words and ways of expressing ideas and concepts that are not easily translated from one language to another. Empowering mokopuna to draw on all their language resources (a process called translanguaging) gives them the freedom to 'make meaning' of their world in ways that make most sense to them. They can then draw on their cross-language and cultural knowledge to help them communicate these meanings to others.

How to apply this practice in your setting

- As a team, discuss the value of translanguaging for supporting mokopuna communication and cultural identity, as well as for enhancing communication and cultural understandings for everyone in your setting.
- Continue to connect regularly with whānau, who provide a bridge to understand mokopuna and their cultural and familial ways of communicating.
- Establish a supportive environment that affirms the value of mokopuna, whānau, and kaiako drawing on all their languages to communicate effectively, including home languages, te reo Māori, and New Zealand Sign Language.
- Model translanguaging with mokopuna by drawing on specific terms and forms where meanings don't easily translate across languages. For example, karakia, and whakataukī hold meanings in te reo Māori that can be difficult to explain in English.
- Encourage and support mokopuna to use their home languages to make sense of new ideas and information, and to make choices about how they might use the language(s) of the setting to communicate and gain shared understandings with others. Allow them time to think and to communicate their ideas to others.
- Show respect, delight, and curiosity when mokopuna draw on all their language and cultural funds of knowledge to express their ideas. Be positive and playful.
- Incorporate books, games, appropriate websites, stories, and songs associated with home languages as well as the primary language(s) of your service.
- Invite mokopuna and/or whānau to share, in person or via a recording, an artifact, story, or book using their own linguistic repertoire.
- Recognise that mokopuna may have preferences for one language over another at different times. Respect their choices while encouraging the use of their full range of languages.

2

Notice and recognise

Progress examples to help you notice and recognise a child's progress

Use the phases of progress (outlined below) to help you notice and recognise a child's progress.

- › Draw on what you already know and what you've observed.
- › Have discussions with the child, whānau, and colleagues.
- › Use the practices (in step 3) to respond, based on what you notice.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children are attuned to a new language and finding ways to communicate in a new setting.

- › Supported by their whānau and kaiako, children begin to navigate the new language environment. They may prefer to communicate with one or two adults and peers, particularly those who understand their non-spoken cues or share some of their home language(s).
- › Children increasingly recognise common words and short phrases in the new language, especially when associated with clear non-spoken and environmental cues. They may be silent as they observe and tune in to the new language, including its spoken and non-spoken ways of communicating.
- › Children pause, as they make sense of what is said to them, before responding. They may respond with a relevant action, gesture, or facial expression, and may begin to echo single words and short phrases that they have heard.
- › Children may use their home language(s) expecting others will understand them. They respond positively when spoken to in their home language(s).

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children expand their understanding of a new language to support communication with others.

- › With the support of familiar adults, children communicate with increasing confidence with a small range of familiar adults and peers, and in some group situations.
- › Children understand a growing range of words and short phrases in the new language that connect to actions or things, particularly when paired with non-spoken cues. They may remain silent for much of the time as they continue to listen and observe.
- › Children pause when responding, as they navigate what is said and how to respond. They may use frequently heard words and short or simplified (telegraphic) phrases.
- › Children may integrate words and phrases from their home language(s) to support communication in the new language. They respond positively to interactions that include words or phrases in their home language(s).

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children use their growing knowledge of a new language to communicate with others.

- › Children communicate with increasing confidence during familiar routines and events and with a wider range of adults, peers, and groups.
- › Children understand much of what is being said in the new language and increasingly understand the social and cultural context. They may remain silent, particularly with less familiar people and situations.
- › Children respond with less of a pause as their understanding and confidence in the new language grows. They use their increasing vocabulary and more varied sentences, which may include grammatical errors but rely less on simplified phrases.
- › Children show growing confidence in using both their new and home languages, including using their knowledge of one language to make sense of another language.

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children confidently use their growing knowledge of a new language to effectively communicate in a range of situations.

- › Children communicate confidently in most situations and with a range of adults, peers, and groups.
- › Children can adapt their spoken and non-spoken language use to reflect the social and cultural context. They contribute confidently to centre routines and navigate new experiences.
- › Children respond quickly and use their growing vocabulary in longer, more complete, and more complex sentences that are mostly grammatically correct.
- › Children make confident language choices and can purposely integrate words or phrases from their home language(s) to express their ideas and talk about comparisons across languages. They may translate for others, with or without prompts.

3

Respond

Practices to help you respond at different phases of progress

After you have assessed the phases of progress (in the previous step), use these practices to work one-on-one with a child based on what you've noticed.

Talk with others about what these practices might look like in your setting, and test your thinking by looking at adjacent phases.

Note that these practices are not exhaustive, and you might think of others.

Te korekore

Within an enabling environment, children are attuned to a new language and finding ways to communicate in a new setting.

Home language retention

Actively support children's retention of their home language(s) as they learn the language(s) spoken in your early childhood service.

- Prioritise a sense of belonging by using key words and phrases in children's home languages related to daily needs, routines, and feelings.
- Support children to develop a secure relationship with at least one key kaiako. Where possible, connect children with kaiako who speak the same home language and/or share the same culture.
- Encourage communication between children who speak the same home language and/or share the same culture. Reassure whānau that it is good for children to be speaking their home language at the centre.

Receptive and expressive language

Foster learning in both the receptive and expressive use of an additional language.

- Look for signs of children's understanding (receptive language) as an indication that they are on the pathway to learning the new language.
- Tune in and respond to children's understanding as if they were using spoken language. Use a combination of spoken words, actions, gestures, images, and props to enhance understanding.
- Speak slowly and clearly, keeping spoken language simple. Capitalise on opportunities to repeat useful words and simple phrases often.
- Refer to the '[Understanding and using language](#)' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae for further practices.

Support translanguaging

Empower mokopuna to make sense of their world and to communicate by drawing on all their language resources.

- Combine spoken and non-spoken language and resources to establish communication and trust with children (e.g., create and use cards with key words or phrases in home and setting languages on one side, and a related image on the other).
- Model translanguaging by drawing on words and phrases from children's home languages, to support their understanding and to show that translanguaging is a valued and useful way to make sense of the world and communicate.

Te pō

Within an enabling environment, children expand their understanding of a new language to support communication with others.

Home language retention

Actively support children's retention of their home language(s) as they learn the language(s) spoken in your early childhood service.

- Build language learning on children's funds of knowledge. Help children to connect the new with the familiar.
- Value children's use of their home languages to communicate. Take time to listen and interpret their body language as best you can.
- Encourage children to bring familiar objects from home to use as prompts and scaffolds for their spoken language.

Receptive and expressive language

Foster learning in both the receptive and expressive use of an additional language.

- Recognise mokopuna who are operating in a 'silent period' by modelling conversational language, even though they may not respond verbally.
- Use frequent repetition of games in which mokopuna name items based on images or objects they see.
- Extend receptive language by reading picture books, telling stories, and repeating songs, chants and waiata-a-ringā.
- Refer to the '[Understanding and using language](#)' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae for further practices.

Support translanguageing

Empower mokopuna to make sense of their world and to communicate by drawing on all their language resources.

- Respond positively when mokopuna speak in their home language and/or share aspects of their home culture.
- Use simple word games, activities, and books to meaningfully incorporate home languages alongside your setting's language(s).

Te ao mārama

Within an enabling environment, children use their growing language knowledge to communicate with others.

Home language retention

Actively support children's retention of their home language(s) as they learn the language(s) spoken in your early childhood service.

- Support the retention of home languages through repeated use of music and books in these languages.
- Show mokopuna you value their home languages by taking an interest in how words and written scripts differ, or are similar, from language to language.
- Continue to encourage whānau to use their home languages with their mokopuna as the mokopuna gain confidence in your setting's language(s).

Receptive and expressive language

Foster learning in both the receptive and expressive use of an additional language.

- Encourage mokopuna to speak by commenting or asking open-ended questions and pausing to allow response time. Be mindful of those who may continue to operate in the 'silent period', and tune in to their non-spoken responses.
- Provide small-group experiences that emphasise interactions between participants, both kaiako and mokopuna.
- Scaffold expressive language by using recasting and rephrasing (e.g., when a mokopuna says, "Flower!", a kaiako says, "Yes, it is a flower – a pretty, blue and white flower.").
- Refer to the '[Understanding and using language](#)' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae for further practices.

Support translanguageing

Empower mokopuna to make sense of their world and to communicate by drawing on all their language resources.

- Prioritise children's right to make their own choices in how to communicate by encouraging them to draw on vocabulary, language forms, and print from all their languages to express and communicate their ideas.
- Use strategies such as wondering and commenting about how an idea or concept might be expressed in different languages. Ask children how they would explain or describe things in their home language(s).

Te ao hōu

Within an enabling environment, children confidently use their growing language knowledge to effectively communicate in a range of situations.

Home language retention

Actively support children's retention of their home language(s) as they learn the language(s) spoken in your early childhood service.

- Encourage mokopuna to share their cultural and social knowledge, including through language and written scripts.
- Invite mokopuna to interpret for others who speak the same home language(s) and/or share the same culture. Value their knowledge and help.
- Support whānau to continue using their home languages, including when their mokopuna speak your setting's language(s) at home.

Receptive and expressive language

Foster learning in both the receptive and expressive use of an additional language.

- Continue to 'gift' new words to mokopuna to expand their vocabulary. Pause and explain the meaning of new words, and use them repeatedly in context.
- Encourage mokopuna to engage in conversations with others by designing experiences that require peer interactions.
- Refer to the '[Understanding and using language](#)' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae for further practices.

Support translanguaging

Empower mokopuna to make sense of their world and to communicate by drawing on all their language resources.

- a. Sensitively invite mokopuna to help interpret ideas for others when needed, using both their home language(s) and their new language(s), and show appreciation for this ability.
- b. Encourage mokopuna to draw on all their languages to speak, mark-make and write, sing, dance, or present, by recognising and positively acknowledging when they do so.
- c. Discuss with mokopuna elements of structure and grammar across their languages (metalinguistics) – for example, by comparing word structures (morphology) and word orders (syntax).



Document

An example of how you could use Kōwhiri Whakapae to enhance your assessments and communication

In this section, an assessment example illustrates how you can use the information gathered in the previous three steps to enhance your documented assessments and communication. The example describes and tracks a child's learning progress over time in ways that inform ongoing planning. It also highlights the kinds of evidence, such as observations or conversations with whānau, that were used to support judgements and planning decisions. Finally, it shows how documentation can support conversations with children and whānau about a child's learning and progress.

After reading the example, think about how you currently document your planning and assessments and describe learning progress over time. Talk with team members and children's whānau to identify how your assessment documentation might better describe:

- › a child's current capabilities, strengths and interests, with evidence (Notice)
- › a child's progress and possible directions for their learning (Recognise)
- › how you will support the child to progress over time (Respond).

Assessment example: Nisrine's favourite foods

This sequence of three stories follows three-and-a-half-year-old Nisrine, whose first language is Arabic.

Nisrine (pronounced Nis-ri-ne) and her two-year-old sister Aisha have been attending their local community early childhood centre five mornings a week for the last six months.

Nisrine's family is Syrian. They arrived in New Zealand as refugees when Nisrine was nearly two years old. The family are Sunni Muslim and speak Arabic at home. Nisrine's mother, Maryam, drops off and collects the girls each day and has very little English language. Nisrine's father, Samir, has been learning English and works full-time.

As you read the stories, the highlighted comments provide more information about the connections between their content, *Te Whāriki*, and the 'Learning an additional language' section of Kōwhiri Whakapae.

See Kōwhiri Whakapae online for the [full sequence of learning stories](#).

This assessment illustrates Ngā reo | Learning an additional language. To browse the complete suite of examples, see [this page](#) on Kōwhiri Whakapae online.



Recommended resources

Kaiako guides

Te Kōrerorero | Talking Together

Te Kōrerorero | Talking Together is a suite of resources that promote effective teaching practices so that kaiako and teaching teams can strengthen how they support oral language across children's language pathways.

See *Te Whāriki Online* for the [full resource and its accompanying support materials](#).

Literacy Kaiako Guide

This guide provides a deeper dive into key areas of literacy in early childhood and complements Kōwhiri Whakapae. It covers four topics: Literacy within *Te Whāriki*; Emergent literacy; Creating a print-rich environment; and Using literacy for a range of purposes.

See *Te Whāriki Online* for the [full resource](#).

Whānau guides

Te Kōrerorero - Hei Kōrerorero ki te Kāinga | Talking Together - Learning in the Home

This resource provides practical and effective tools for fostering oral language development in the home. It includes videos, pamphlets, and a poster in a range of languages, including te reo Māori and English.

See *Te Whāriki Online* for the [full set of resources](#).

Mā Kōrua e Tūhura te Reo Matatini | Explore Literacy Together

This resource includes a video and pamphlet in te reo Māori and English to help parents and whānau to support literacy learning in the home.

See *Te Whāriki Online* for the [full set of resources](#).