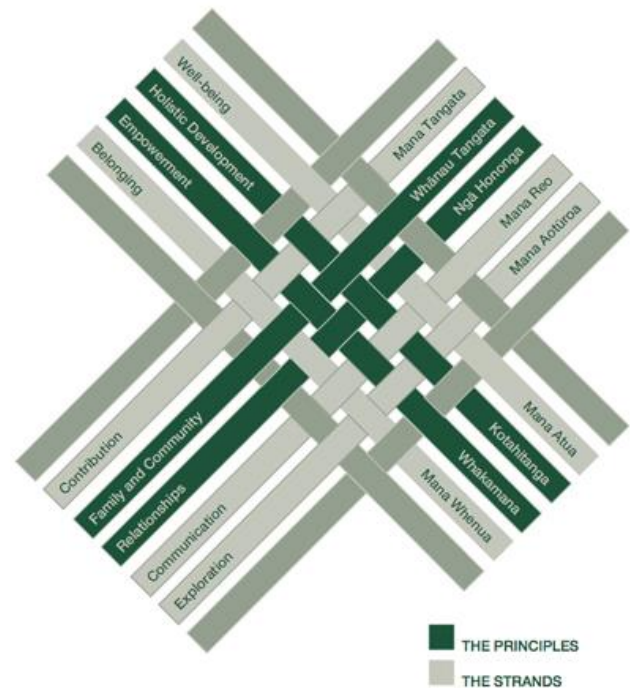


## NZ's National Early Childhood Curriculum: Te Whāriki

**Te Whāriki** is New Zealand's (first) national curriculum policy statement, released in 1996, it is "a framework for providing tamariki/children's early learning and development within a sociocultural context. It emphasises the learning partnership between kaiako/teachers, parents, and whānau/families. Kaiako/teachers weave an holistic curriculum in response to tamariki/children's learning and development in the early childhood setting and the wider context of the child's world." (MinEdu)



**The curriculum is founded on the following aspirations:** for young children "to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society."

**The purpose of the curriculum** is to provide a consistent vision or framework for **all** ECE services in New Zealand. The document takes into account the future (how it may evolve), as well as how it can be applied to a range of different ECE settings and cultures. The document is divided into four sections. It is important, however, that it is read and used as an integrated whole. The principles, strands, and goals are common to all early childhood services. The ways in which they are put into practice, however, may differ from service to service'.

Also, important to the understanding of the curriculum is that both the English and Maori texts are meant to be read together - they parallel and complement each other, thus providing a basis for bicultural early childhood education in New Zealand.

The curriculum is envisaged as a whāriki, or mat, woven from the **principles, strands and goals**, which once again recognise the wide variety of services within New Zealand - in terms of their programmes, philosophies, structures, and environments, which will contribute to the distinctive or unique patterns of the whāriki.

### **For example:**

- cultural perspectives, such as in kòhanga reo or various Pacific Islands early childhood centres;
- structural differences, such as in sessional or full-day programmes;
- organisational differences, such as in kindergartens or child care centres;
- different environments, such as in home-based or centre-based programmes;
- philosophical emphases, such as in Playcentre, Montessori, or Rudolf Steiner programmes;
- different resources which are available in urban and rural settings;
- the ways in which the local community participates;
- the age range of children in the programme.

## **The Principles**

**Empowerment/Whakamana:** The early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow/Mà te whàriki o te kòhanga reo e whakatò te kaha ki roto i te mokopuna, ki te ako, kia pakari ai tana tipu.

**Holistic Development/Kotahitanga:** The early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow/Mà te whàriki o te kòhanga reo e whakaata te kotahitanga o ngà whakahaere katoa mò te ako a te mokopuna, mò te tipu o te mokopuna.

**Family and Community/Whà nau Tangata:** The wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum/Me whiri mai te whà nau, te hapù, te iwi, me tauwi, me ò ràtou wàhi nohonga, ki roto i te whàriki o te kòhanga reo, hei àwhina, hei tautoko i te akoranga, i te whakatipuranga o te mokopuna.

**Relationships/Ngà Hononga:** Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things. Mà roto i ngà piringa, i ngà whakahaere i waenganui o te mokopuna me te katoa, e whakatò te kaha ki roto i te mokopuna ki te ako.

## **Strands and Goals**

These arise from the principles and are essential areas of learning and development. Each strand has several goals.

### **Strand 1: Well-being – Mana Atua**

The health and well-being of the child are protected and nurtured.

#### **Goals**

Children experience an environment where:

- their health is promoted;
- their emotional well-being is nurtured;
- they are kept safe from harm.

### **Strand 2: Belonging – Mana Whenua**

Children and their families feel a sense of belonging.

#### **Goals**

- connecting links with the family and the wider world are affirmed and extended;
- they know that they have a place;
- they feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events;
- they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

### **Strand 3: Contribution – Mana Tangata**

Opportunities for learning are equitable, and each child's contribution is valued.

#### **Goals**

Children experience an environment where:

- there are equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity, or background;
- they are affirmed as individuals;
- they are encouraged to learn with and alongside others.

### **Strand 4: Communication – Mana Reo**

The languages and symbols of their own and other cultures are promoted and protected.

#### **Goals**

Children experience an environment where:

- they develop non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes;
- they develop verbal communication skills for a range of purposes;
- they experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures;
- they discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive.

## **Strand 5: Exploration – Mana Aotūroa**

The child learns through active exploration of the environment.

### **Goals**

Children experience an environment where:

- their play is valued as meaningful learning and the importance of spontaneous play is recognised;
- they gain confidence in and control of their bodies;
- they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking, and reasoning;
- they develop working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical, and material worlds.

For more information visit: <http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/te-whariki/>