

Children who learn in more than one language - Teachers' experiences

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TEACHING & LEARNING
RESEARCH INITIATIVE
NAU I WHATU TE KĀKAHU, HE TĀMIKO TAKU



THE UNIVERSITY
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Te Kura Akoranga o Tāmaki Makaurau
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Early Years TLRI 2013-2015

- The University of Auckland, together with four partnership centres, are engaged in research that includes children and families who speak and learn in more than one language.
- This research celebrates languages and cultures.





Four partner centres

- *Te Puna Kōhungahunga*, a Māori-medium centre, operates on a whānau model.
- *The A'oga Fa'a Samoa* is a Samoan-immersion early childhood centre.
- *Symonds Street Early Childhood Centre* is an English-medium centre with families who speak a wide range of Asian and Pasifika languages.
- *Mangere Bridge Kindergarten* is an English-medium kindergarten with families who speak, in total, around 24 different languages.





Early Years TLRI 2013-2015

The project explores, for children who learn in more than one language:

- the languages used;
- the experiences and learning outcomes valued by parents, teachers, communities, and children.

This presentation focuses mainly on teacher data – questionnaires and reflections.





Credit-based perspectives

Our research is underpinned by credit-based theoretical concepts:

- Additive bilingualism (Cummins, 2009; Garcia, 2009)
- Funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).





Research Design

The research is designed to contribute new findings of benefit to children who learn in their heritage language and/or in more than one language, and their families and teachers.





Research Questions

We are addressing three research questions:

1. What languages do children from participating ECE centres use in their learning in the centre and at home?





Research Questions

2. What experiences and outcomes for children who learn in more than one language in the early years are valued by parents, teachers, and children?





Research Questions

3. How might the opportunities and challenges for children who learn in more than one language be addressed in educational practice?



Research Approaches

The research draws on:

- *qualitative approaches*
 - observations, focus group interviews, teacher reflections; and
- *quantitative approaches*
 - questionnaires, census data.





Auckland Context

Learners in Aotearoa New Zealand are increasingly likely to speak more than one language.

This trend is most evident in the Auckland region.





NZ's top 15 languages spoken Census data 2006 and 2013

Language (top 15)	2006	2013	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	Increase (%)
English	3673623	3819969	91.2	90.1	
Māori	157113	148395	3.9	3.5	
Samoan	85428	86406	2.1	2.0	
Hindi	44589	66312	1.1	1.6	0.46
Mandarin (Chinese)	41394	52263	1.0	1.2	0.20
French	53757	49125	1.3	1.2	
Cantonese (Chinese)	44151	44625	1.1	1.1	
Chinese not further defined	38079	42750	0.9	1.0	0.06
German	37509	36645	0.9	0.9	
Tongan	29499	31839	0.7	0.8	
Tagalog (Philippines)	12483	29016	0.3	0.7	0.37
Afrikaans	21123	27387	0.5	0.6	0.12
Spanish	21642	26979	0.5	0.6	0.10
Korean	26967	26373	0.7	0.6	
New Zealand sign language	24090	20235	0.6	0.5	
Other	231051	258192	5.7	6.1	0.35



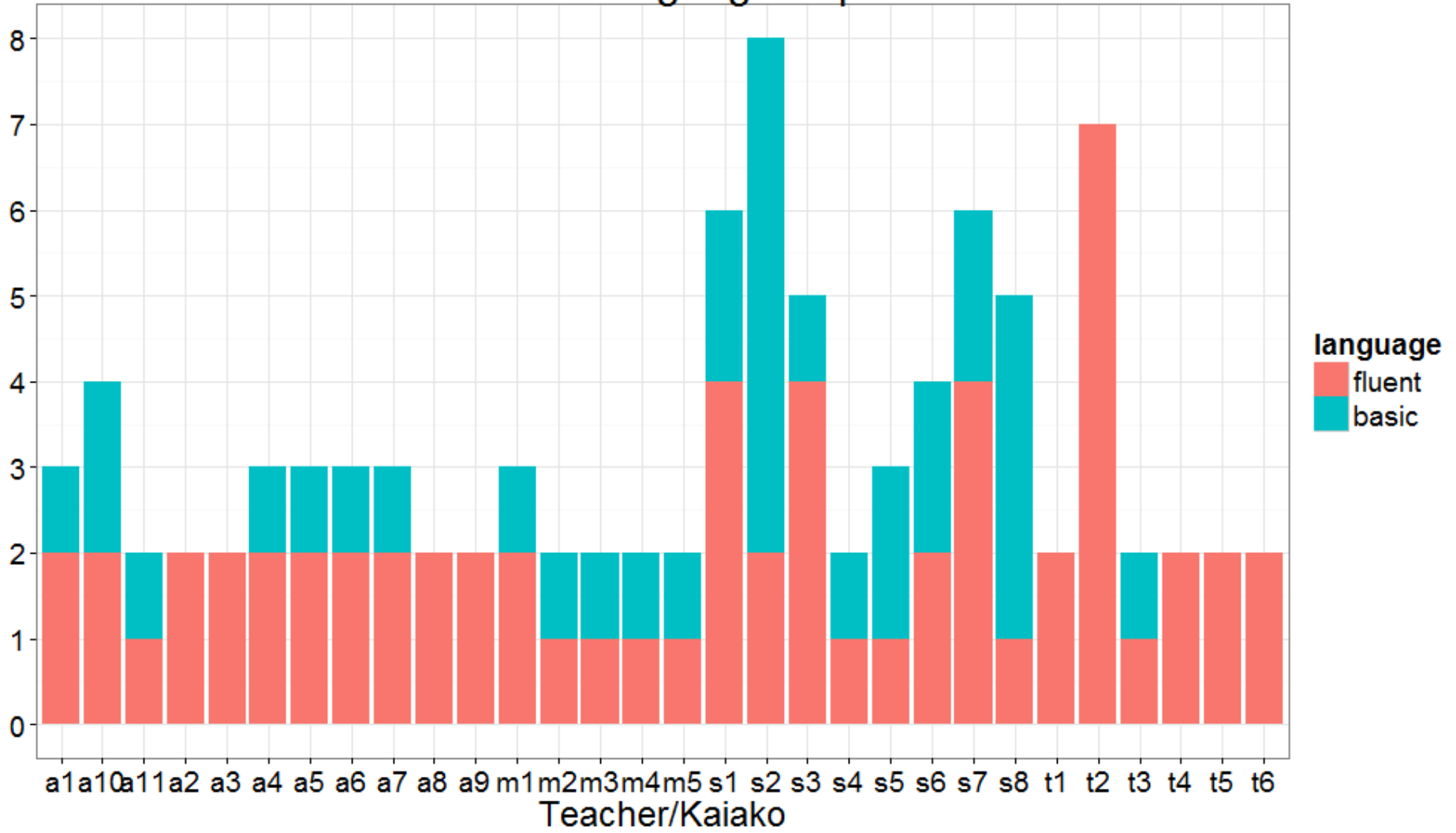
Some languages 2013 census (NI)

2013 Census	English	Māori	Samoan	Other	Other as % of all people
Northland Region	134,811	12,609	405	10,176	0.07
Auckland Region	1,233,633	30,924	58,197	401,919	28.39
Waikato Region	367,689	21,303	2,013	24,282	6.02
Bay of Plenty Region	241,422	21,087	1,035	12,549	4.69
Gisborne Region	38,865	6,243	126	1,422	3.26
Hawke's Bay Region	137,520	9,336	1,932	5,685	3.76
Taranaki Region	38,865	6,243	273	4,149	3.79
Manawatu-Wanganui Region	204,237	10,422	1,719	10,029	4.5
Wellington Region	430,104	15,618	14,691	44,292	9.4
Tasman Region	44,310	672	69	3,783	8.15
Nelson Region	43,179	1,017	147	4,998	10.76
Canterbury Region	498,840	8,643	4,476	37,278	6.91



Kaiako knowledge of languages

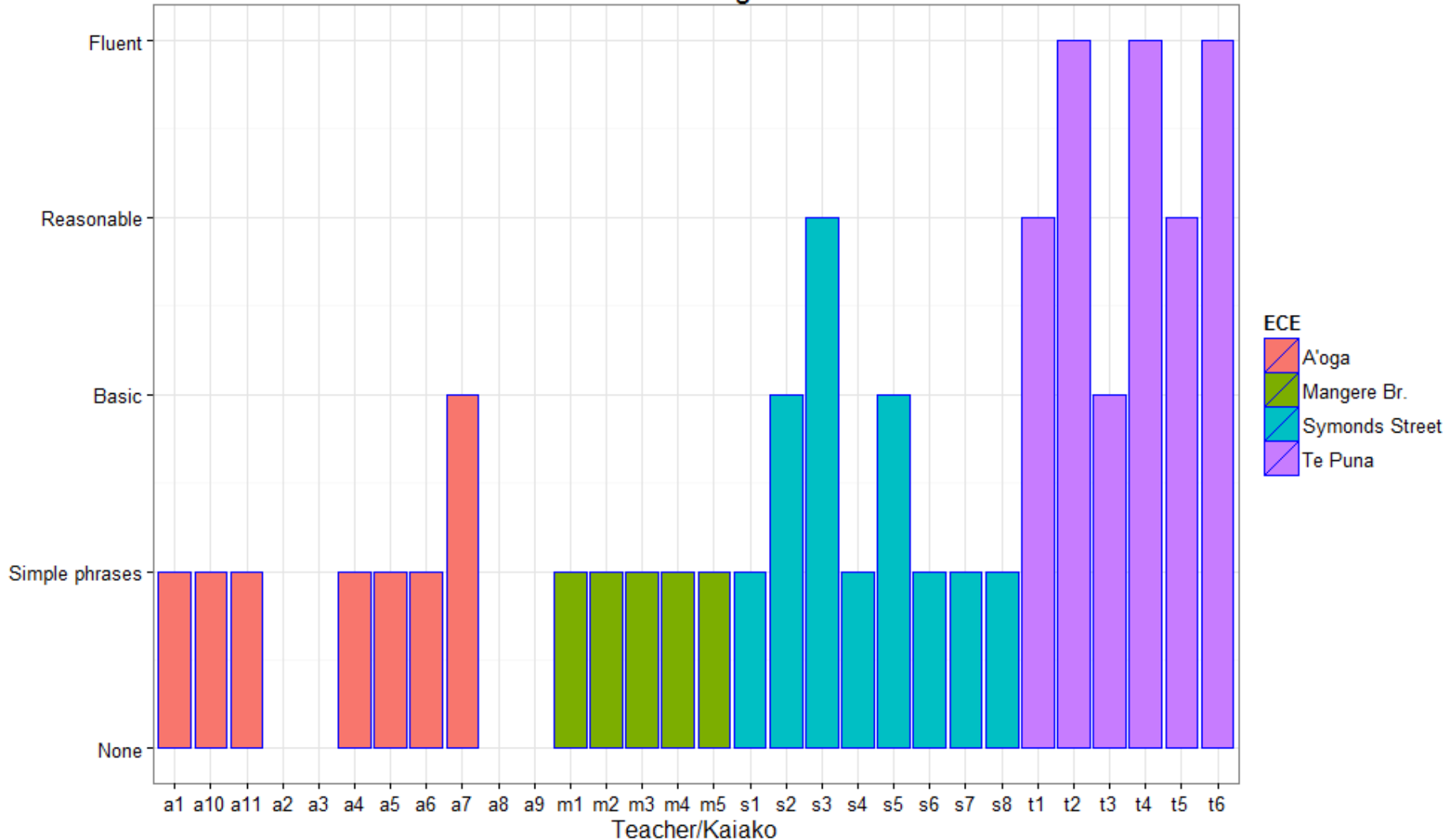
Number of Languages Spoken





Kaiako knowledge of Māori

Teacher/Kaiako Knowledge of Te reo Maori





Te Puna Kōhungahunga





Horopaki (Context)

- Established in 2004 in response to the wishes of the students and staff of Te Puna Wānanga, to have an ECE which followed kaupapa Māori
- Our whānau is a mix of students, staff (all Māori speaking) and community with very strong commitment to kaupapa Māori
- Licensed for 49 tamariki including 15 pēpi (however we cap this at 10) with 8 kaiako, a kaiwhakahaere and a kaiawhina
- Age groups are merged.



Kaupapa Rapunga Whakaaro (Philosophy)

The philosophy of Te Puna Kōhungahunga is encompassed in the following whakataukī...

*Whāngaia te manu
o te ngahere ki te miro
nāna te ngahere.*

*Whangaia te tamaiti
ki te mātauranga,
nōna te Ao!*

*Feed the bird of the
forest with berry,
the forest is his.*

*Feed the child with
knowledge, the
world is his!*



Ngā Whēako me ngā Wero o ā ngā kaiako (Experiences and Challenges)

- Mixed age setting at Te Puna Kōhungahunga means that we have to adapt our teaching strategies (i.e., during wā whāriki) to allow for teina and tuakana learning.
- Allowing more time and focus for tamariki with different learning styles.



Ngā Whēako me ngā Wero o ā ngā kaiako (Experiences and Challenges)

- Some tamariki come infrequently (2-3 times a week), difficult to have quality time.
- Spending quality 1:1 time with all our tamariki.



Ngā Whēako me ngā Āheinga ā ngā kaiako (Opportunities)

- Strong whanaungatanga and really getting to know tamariki via planned 1:1 learning experiences in te reo
- Tamariki all understand te reo – even if they answer in English
- Te Puna Kōhungahunga kaiako have the opportunity to undertake Whakapakari Reo (UoA and MOE).



Whakaaroaro Rangahu ā ngā kaiako (Teachers' Reflections on Research)

- Even though Te Puna Kōhungahunga is a Māori-medium puna, we have whānau who speak German, Spanish and French. All Home languages valued. Kaiako who are able to use these languages as well as te reo.
- Tangatawhenuatanga important, pōwhiri and hīkoi Maungawhau, (te reo used holistically).





Whakaaroaro Rangahau ā ngā kaiako (Teachers' Reflections on Research)

- Tamariki experience other languages than te reo due to manuhiri visiting Puna and kaiako who speak other languages.
- Manaakitanga and whanaungatanga are valued learning outcomes which link directly to our Puna philosophy and pedagogy.





The A'oga Fa'a Samoa





Context

The A'oga Fa'a Samoa began operating in 1984. It was the first licensed and chartered Pacific Island centre (1990) in New Zealand.

The A'oga Fa'a Samoa is a Samoan-language immersion centre located in the grounds of Richmond Rd Primary School.



Philosophy statement: the A'oga Fa'a Samoa will -

- Promote Samoan language and culture, nurturing the positive identity of the children
- Employ trained educators and encourage further training, to provide quality care and education
- Encourage a family atmosphere for parents and children, so children feel secure and loved
- Emphasise enjoyment of learning through the medium of Samoan language.





Commitment to language immersion

Consistent with the centre philosophy, learning is entirely in the Samoan language

- Teachers speak Samoan only
- English-speaking areas were set up
- Documentation is in Samoan
- Parents are encouraged to attend Samoan language programmes/classes
- Development of books/resources in Samoan.





Languages used at home

- The majority of teachers speak Samoan in their homes (first language)
- Greetings: Samoan, Māori, Tongan, Japanese
- Children's languages: most children speak English at home
- All children understand Samoan but often speak English when playing.





Language support for families

- Samoan classes
- Books/DVDs
- Newsletter
- Grandparents/extended families
- Speak Samoan at home
- Community activities
- Family gatherings
- Visits to Samoa for holidays, weddings, funerals.



Cultural practices at the A'oga Fa'a Samoa

- Lotu
- Cultural values e.g., love, respect, sharing, service
- Cultural days e.g., Independence celebrations, Samoan week
- Cultural artifacts
- Myths/legends
- Singing and dancing
- Games



Pedagogical practices

- Parents' involvement in their children's learning
- Teachers breaking down language barriers by using children's other cultural language
- Observations and work closely with children
- Greetings
- Songs
- Encourage parents to speak in their own language



Symonds Street Early Childhood Education Centre





Context

- Our centre (originally “Crèche 2”) located at Wynyard Street along with two other centres.
- University’s restructuring plan - moved to Symonds Street end of 2003
- The centre caters for the children from the age of 2½ to 5 years.
- Services students and staff of the University of Auckland and local community.
- English medium but multi-ethnic centre.
- Team of eight teachers who are bi/multi-lingual



Languages of Children*

Language	No. of Children
Arabic	2
English	12
Farsi (Persian)	1
Bahasa Malay (Indonesian)	3
Japanese	4
Korean	2
Malay (Malaysian)	5
Malayalam (South Indian)	1
Mandarin	1
Māori	2
Russian	1
Singhalese	1
Spanish	1
Swedish	1
Tagalog	1
Urdu	3

*At the time of Data Collection.



Philosophy statement – Symonds Street Early Childhood Education Centre

- We hold dear the belief that each child is unique, a capable and competent learner who has knowledge to share and a sense of wonder with which to inspire.
- We believe in the concept of Ako. Teachers are learners and learners are teachers.
- We hope to influence children's existing intuitive appreciation for Papatuanuku by providing children with real life experiences and natural materials
- We respect and value that Aotearoa/New Zealand is a bi-cultural nation that embraces a diverse and multi-cultural society.



Teachers' experiences - Challenges

Often, the whole family is new to New Zealand and new to the centre. Teachers talked of challenges with supporting each family's orientation to New Zealand and the distinctive ECE philosophy and pedagogies.

Negotiating with parents to get to know each child requires time as we have to ensure a culture of acceptance and empowerment.



Teachers' experiences - Challenges

- The settling in time for children who are learning in more than one language can be challenging for teachers and frustrating and upsetting for children. Unsettled children can create an impact upon the whole environment. Time and well informed strategies are required.
- Our teachers spoke about the challenges of responding to parents concerns about children's acquisition of English in the ECE setting. Several spoke of their need to find ways to ease parents' anxieties and to find a balance between uptake of English and progress in the home language.





Teachers' experiences - Opportunities

We found we are following an additive approach as we try many strategies and work hard using gesture and non-verbal ways to get to a shared meaning when working with children who are bi/multilingual.

We recounted many examples of the ways music/songs/finger plays are a meeting point for the use of home languages and for encouraging children to be expressive.

We noted that we often modelled that "being bilingual" is acceptable.





Teachers' experiences - Opportunities

We do spend time talking *about* languages and the benefits of bilingualism with our families.

Cultural and linguistic differences are responded to through including families and their cultures and languages within everyday experiences through songs, stories, and celebrations of community events.





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NAU I WHATU TE KĀKAHU, HE TĀNIKO TAKU

Indonesian Angklung music experience

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Teachers' reflection on research

- We were surprised and delighted to find out through the research that we had a wealth of experiences as bi/multilingual teachers with linguistically responsive practices. The many languages in the team are a strength in our everyday teaching with a diversity of children and languages.
- We recognised that we work hard to get to know the families' funds of knowledge processes and work to include each child's "special history, and cultural influences to inform our personal and collective knowledge" of the child as a member of a family and community.





Mangere Bridge Kindergarten





Our Kindergarten team

Carol Hartley Head Teacher
Pat Rogers Teacher
Jemma Smith Teacher
Daniel Lovatt Teacher
Avis Wilkinson TLRI Reliever
Sandra Dye TLRI Reliever
Taina Nakaroti Part time teacher
Ingrid Goodfellow Admin Assistant





Our Kindergarten



- Auckland Kindergarten Association (over 100-year-old non-profit organisation)
- 107 kindergartens and 5 early childhood centres
- Our kindergarten built in 1975
- Kindergarten day model... 40 children each day @65 Children total roll
- 4 permanent teachers- all hold Education degrees
- History of action research
- Children aged 3.5-5 years old
- Culturally very diverse
- Mixed socio-economic
- Peninsula between mountain and sea – culturally significant to local Māori
- Children transition to one of two schools.





Philosophy within the inclusion statement (1)

- We believe that inclusion refers to the right of all children to participate fully in the curriculum of a high quality early childhood learning setting in a place of their parents' choosing.
- As a team we have a commitment to welcoming and valuing all children, their families and the wider community.
- We model respectful relationships and work to build relationships with each child.





Philosophy within the inclusion statement (2)

- We have an open door policy. Families and the community are always welcome and we make sure we meet and greet and work to establish warm respectful relationships from the outset.
- We use kindergarten portfolios as tools to get to know the child, their families and whanau and use them as a communication tool between kindergarten and home.
- We believe having a home language other than English or experiencing more than one cultural context are strengths.



In an English-medium centre with all monolingual teachers, how do we negotiate curriculum?


- Recognise the challenge – of the generation that all learned English and that is the situation for the our families
- Work collaboratively – team talk
- Changed look of portfolios
- Changed enrolment information
 - identity and culture
 - parent expectations

Mangere Bridge
Mangere

Identity and Culture

Getting to know you and your child

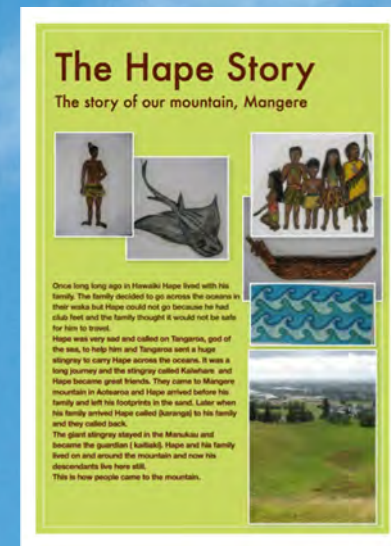
1. How did you choose your child's name?
2. What would you like us to know about your family that we don't already know?
3. Where did your family name come from?





How do we address 24 languages meaningfully?

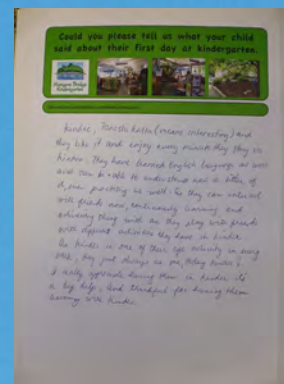
- Go back to Inclusion statement – philosophical approach
- Returned to how we address commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi – Hape story
- Moved to Pasifika greetings and days of the week, then extended to more and more languages





How do we build relationships in a multi-ethnic community?

- Portfolios – we use them to get to know the family
- Respectful and responsive relationships
- All teachers live and are involved in the community – stable and long established team.





Teachers' reflections

Every day there is a “what now?” occasion and we have to talk about how we will deal with it by referring back to our beliefs about family and community in the inclusion statement. There is no set formula for each of these occasions.

We may revisit what already works and then build on it or bring new strategies / ideas / learnings to the table and this influences how we approach the next “what now?”

Relationships are the key.



Overall Summary

Creating an organisational ethos and pedagogical practices within centre communities that value languages for learning (heritage, home, and medium of instruction)

Respectful relationships are at the heart – children, families and whānau/fanau, teachers and communities



Overall Summary

Identity – language embedded as essential element of child’s heritage and contemporary identities

Belonging – sensitivity from personal and professional experiences of sustaining own languages and identities

Inclusion – awareness of diversity coupled with deep commitment to local community and pedagogies of inclusion.



*Every child – strong in identity,
learning and succeeding.*

*Ia tamaiti – he pakari ā-tuakiri, ā-
ako, e eke panuku ana*





Acknowledgements

- Children, families, and teachers in our partner centres
- Funding through the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative
- Auckland Uniservices Ltd
- University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
- Auckland Kindergarten Association Research Access and Ethics Committee