

CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Tunu Kai – Process Cooking

The kaiako and tamariki read the recipe together, taking turns measuring, mixing, and tasting as they go. Tamariki share family baking experiences, teaching kaiako and peers about their home traditions. Ako is expressed through shared discovery, storytelling, and the mutual enjoyment of learning through doing.

Tikanga Practices: Ako can be applied through:

- Sharing recipes in te reo Māori and sharing of family recipes connects tamariki to their ancestral and home ūkaipō, linking learning to whānau identify.
- Respect for ingredients, tools, and shared space reflects care for the resources that sustain one's ūkaipō.
- Preparing and cooking together strengthens bonds and fosters belonging through warmth, laughter, and mutual respect.

Kaiako: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you invite tamariki to share their home and whānau knowledge so their ūkaipō is visible in the service's learning spaces?
2. In what ways do you promote respect and gratitude for the resources that nurture and feed us? This is an important question to reflect on in relation to food used for play and food for sustaining people – what are the underlying principles that we are teaching tamariki?



TOHUTAKA: PARĀOA POKEPOKE Playdough Recipe

Ngā Kīnaki – Ingredients

Puehu Parāoa – Flour; Tote – Salt; Wai – Water;
Noni – Oil; Apiti-muramura – Food colouring

Ngā Tikanga Ine – Measurements

1. E toru ngā kapu puehu parāoa – 3 cups flour
2. Kotahi te kapu tote – 1 cup salt
3. Kotahi te kapu wai – 1 cup water
4. E toru ngā pūnu tēpu noni – 3tbls spoons oil
5. E whā ngā tīpūnu apiti-muramura kōwhai – 3tsp yellow food colouring

Te Hātepe – Process

1. Tapiri atu ngā kīnaki 1-4 ki roto i tētahi rīhi, ipu rānei.
Add 1 to 4 (above) altogether into a bowl.
2. Whakaranutia (he wā poto – e rima ngā miniti).
Mix all together up to five minutes.
3. Tapiri atu 5 me whakaranutia anō.
Now add 5 and mix until the desired colour and dough consistency.



Scan for pronunciation support

Ngā Taonga Whakaako Tikanga Māori – Theory and Practice

Early Childhood Education Contexts



AKO
RECIPROCITY:
TEACHING & LEARNING

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Child Well-being
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Ako
AOTEAROA

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AKO RECIPROCITY: TEACHING & LEARNING

Ako describes a dynamic and reciprocal teaching and learning relationship where both educator and learner actively contribute to, and benefit from, shared knowledge.

It is grounded in the principle of reciprocity, recognising that teaching is not a one-way process, the educator also learns from the child, and the learning journey is enriched by the presence and contribution of *whānau* (family). Ako acknowledges that learners are inseparable from their cultural, familial, and community contexts. While sometimes confused with the *tuakana/teina* (older/younger) relationship in whakapapa, ako is distinct: it is not defined by age, gender, or genealogical position, but by mutual respect, shared responsibility, and collective growth within the learning process.



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these resources



CURRICULUM AREA: Rua Kirikiri – Sandpit

Tamariki and kaiako explore new ways to build tunnels and rivers together, sharing ideas and testing what works. The kaiako learns from the children's creativity and problem-solving, while tamariki gain new vocabulary and techniques. Ako is evident as both Kaiako and tamariki exchange knowledge in playful collaboration.

Tikanga Practices: Ako can be seen through:

- **Whakapapa (Genealogical connections):** Kaiako and tamariki engage in ako by sharing memories, stories, and local knowledge that inform how they design and build their tunnels and rivers, learning with and from one another.
- **Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship):** Through caring for materials and the environment, tamariki experience ako as they come to understand that their creative play is both shaped by, and contributes to, collective guardianship.
- **Aroha (Nurturing relationships):** Kaiako model reciprocal learning and gentle guidance, fostering ako through interactions that build trust, connection, and shared meaning.

Kaiako: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you acknowledge and weave the whakapapa and local stories, pūrākau, and pepeha of the service's place into the creative play of the tamariki in ways that foster ako and shared meaning-making?
2. In what ways do you model care for all the resources and the environment so that tamariki come to understand their roles as tāngata tiaki through ako and reciprocal responsibility?
3. How do your interactions nurture a sense of safety, belonging, and reciprocity so that ako is actively experienced between kaiako and tamariki?

CURRICULUM AREA: Tāpaepae – Jigsaw Puzzles

A tamariki teaches their friend a strategy for fitting tricky pieces, while the kaiako observes and joins in to model thinking aloud. Everyone contributes ideas, learning from each other's problem-solving approaches. Ako is lived as knowledge flows in all directions — between children and between kaiako and tamariki.

Tikanga Practices: Ako is evident through:

- **Shared problem-solving** that respects each child's background and way of thinking, recognising diverse knowledge as central to the service's collective practice of ako.
- **Kaiako nurturing a safe, inclusive space** where tamariki learn with and from one another, strengthening ako as a shared responsibility.
- **Encouragement and patience** that build trust, allowing ideas to flow naturally within reciprocal ako relationships.

Kaiako: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you recognise and value each child's unique ways of knowing as meaningful contributions to the service's shared approaches?
2. What strategies do you use to ensure tamariki feel responsible for supporting one another's learning through reciprocal engagements?
3. How do your words and actions reflect aroha, enabling mutual trust and open sharing in ako-based interactions?

