

Whakamanatia –  
Whakahonotia –  
Whakakahatia

Empowering –  
Connecting –  
Strengthening

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**Mā te ahurei o te tamaiti e ārahi i ā tatou mahi**

**Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work**





# Nurturing and empowering the spirit of the child

2020 Celebrating Northland  
Tamariki Conference

Presented by Frances van Dillen



# Spirit, wairua, energy, sacred, whole child



Te Ira Atua: The Spiritual spark of the child


“Spirituality is embedded within *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum document, so must be valued and reflected in practice if teachers are to meet their curriculum and pedagogical obligations.

More importantly, if recognition is not given to the importance of the spiritual aspect of the child and the world in which they reside, teachers negate a critical dimension of the child’s wellbeing and future development.”

**Lesley Rameka** He Kupu Volume 4, Number 2, October 2015

‘the spiritual unity of the child with the land, with its people, and with the Universe at large is as one” Tilly Reedy 1995

*“A means of connecting people to all things, to nature, to the universe. Spirituality adds to my appreciation of the wonder and mystery in everyday life” (Jane Bone, 2007)*

A person with their arms outstretched, wearing a yellow shirt, against a bright, cloudy sky. The image is framed by an orange border.

**What does it mean to you?**

**Do you have spirit?**

**How do you know?**

**What are some characteristics that you attribute to being spiritual?**

**Discuss with a partner**

# What is spirit?

## **Recognising your own greatness**

**A person who is said to possess greatness stands apart from others in some way, usually by the size or originality of their vision and their ability to manifest that vision.**

**And yet those who recognise that greatness, whether they display it themselves or not, also have greatness within them; otherwise they could not see it in another.**

**Without those people who recognise greatness and move in to support it, even the greatest works of art, the greatest ideas, the greatest movements would remain unborn.**

Mead (2003) says there is a responsibility on parents and early childhood services and teachers to nurture the spiritual aspects of the child. In order for children to realise their potential and blossom into their worlds their spiritual traits must first be recognised, acknowledged and enhanced.

We bring ourselves to the role of teacher

What do you recognise/acknowledge?

In yourself

In others





Spiritual wellbeing can be expressed through beliefs, values, traditions, and practice that support self awareness and identity.

Taha wairua provides a sense of meaning and purpose as well as experiencing a sense of connectedness to self, whanau, community, nature and the sacred.

NZMHF 2020

How your body grows, feels, moves and how you care for it  
Physical activity, healthy eating, sleep and not smoking



Your mind, heart, conscience, thoughts and feelings. Its about how we feel, as well as how we communicate and think

Who makes you feel like you belong. Who cares about you and who you share your life with

The wharenuī's connection with the whenua forms the foundation for the other 4 dimensions

Dr Mason Drurie 1984



## ***Taha Wairua – spiritual***

***He oranga ngakau, he hikinga wairua   When it touches your heart, it lifts your spirit***

### **What is taha wairua?**

Taking notice

Appreciating beauty around us

Rediscovering what makes us feel good/feel awe/ feel hope/strength/unity/connection

Wairua is your relationship to the environment, people and your heritage.

For some – wairua is a faith or higher power

There is no wrong way to think of or experience wairua



### **Why is taha wairua an important way to well being?**

**Feeling comfortable in your identity, your values, and beliefs helps you feel secure in who you are and what you stand for.**

**When you are content with yourself it is easier to cope with challenges, build strong whanau relationships and discover things that up lift you**

New Zealand Mental Health Foundation 2020

## Walking the Camino de Compostela Santiago in Spain



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Lesley Rameka



# Lesley Rameka Te Ira Atua: The Spiritual spark of the child 2015

The whole topic of spirituality within ECE is unarticulated

The inattention to spirit is due to the nature of Western society leaving little room for ideas and beliefs of sacred and spiritual

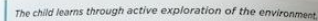
Western science has effectively disconnected spirituality from other aspects of individual and institutional existence

Belief systems that position reason, truth and logic over faith and spirituality

Spirituality can not be proven scientifically, is often viewed as illogical and unsophisticated, and therefore has no place in educational theory and practice



STRAND 5  
Exploration | Mana aotūroa



One strand is about supporting infants, toddlers and young children to explore, learn from, respect and make sense of the world. Their exploration involves all aspects of the environment: natural, social, physical, spiritual and man-made.

Children learn how things work by doing, asking questions, exploring and asking questions, trying them out and by making purposeful use of resources. As they engage in exploration, they begin to develop attitudes and expectations that will help them to influence their learning throughout life.

Diverse ways of being and knowing them the way respect for the environment is demonstrated. Kaiko develop understanding of how children and their whānau make sense of the world and respect and appreciate the natural environment. Children may express their respect for the natural world in terms of respect for Papatūmākorua, Ranginui and atua/whānau. Kaiko/kanaka is integral to this.

For Pasifika children, the skills and knowledge that reside in older, families and communities provide the foundation for their indigenous explorations.

**More active:** Children see themselves as explorers, able to connect with and care for their own and wider worlds

*He purapura i ruia mai i Rangiātea e kore e ngaro.  
A seed sown in Rangiātea will never be lost.*

*Te Whānaki: He whānaki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum (Te Whānaki) sets out the curriculum to be used in New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) settings and provides guidance for its implementation.*

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.

Located in Aotearoa New Zealand, this vision implies a society that recognises Māori as tangata whenua, assumes a shared obligation for protecting Māori language and culture, and ensures that Māori are able to enjoy educational success as Māori.

Each child is on a unique journey. They come into the world eager to learn and into family, whānau or 'āhau that have high hopes for them. Teachers, educators and kaiako in ECE settings work together in partnership with the family to realise these hopes.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP, ORGANISATION AND PRACTICE

A culture is created that values the health and wellbeing of children. Kaiako model positive attitudes towards hauora, healthy eating and activity.

Policies, procedures and practices ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they feel secure in an environment where signs of danger or abuse are promptly recognised. Any suspected harm or abuse is dealt with in association with support agencies and families.

daily routines respond to individual circumstances and needs and allow for frequent outdoor experiences, regular rest times, and a variety of group and individual interactions, with one-to-one attention from adults every day.

also ensure the provision of protected spaces, both indoors and out, to which children retreat for quiet play, either alone or in small groups.

ent communication between all those work with children and whānau ensures consistent, reasoned responses to children's needs and behaviours and sharing of information on health issues, such as nutrition consultations.

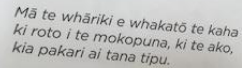
### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

...to use these or their own questions to support reflective practice.

ways might *kalako* work?

to children? ways are individual

*Early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow.*



This principle means that every child will experience an empowering curriculum that recognises and enhances their mana and supports them to enhance the mana of others. Viewed from a Māori perspective, all children are born with mana inherited from their tipuna. Mana is the power of being and must be upheld and enhanced.

To learn and develop to their potential, children must be respected and valued. This means recognising their rights to have their wellbeing promoted and be protected from harm and to experience equitable opportunities for participation and learning and for rest and play.

Kaiako have an important role in encouraging and supporting all children to participate in and contribute to a wide range of enriching experiences. These expand the children's competence and confidence and, over time, enable them to direct their own lives.

In an empowering environment, children have agency to create and act on their own ideas, develop knowledge and skills in areas that interest them and, increasingly, to make decisions and judgments on matters that relate to them. Play and playfulness are valued and kaiako-initiated experiences are inviting and enjoyable.

Perspectives on empowerment are culturally located, hence *kalako* need to seek the input of children and their parents and *whānau* when designing the focal curriculum.

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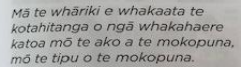
CTIONS FOR REFLECTION

invited to use these or their own questions to support reflective practice

ways might kaiako work to ensure that feeding, toileting, and nappy-changing practices are to children?

ways are individual nutriti

*Early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow.*



Human development can be thought of in terms of cognitive (hinengaro), physical (tinana), emotional (whatumunawa), spiritual (wairua), and social and cultural dimensions, but these dimensions need to be viewed holistically, as closely interwoven and interdependent. For Māori the spiritual dimension is fundamental to holistic development because it connects the other dimensions across time and space.

Because children develop holistically, they need a broad and rich curriculum that enables them to grow their capabilities across all dimensions. When focusing on a particular area of learning, kaiako need to consider how this focus relates to and connects with other aspects of learning and how it builds on the children's strengths.

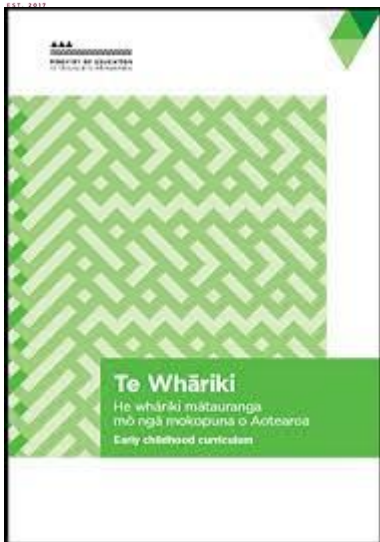
Every aspect of the context - physical surroundings, emotional state, relationships with others and immediate needs - will affect what children learn from any particular experience. A holistic approach sees the child as a person who wants to learn, the task as a meaningful whole and the whole as greater than the sum of its parts.

It is important that kaiako have knowledge and understanding of the holistic way in which children develop and learn. They should also be aware of the different views that the cultures represented in their ECE setting may have of child development and the role of family and whānau.

LINKS TO THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM  
AND TE MARAUTANGA O AOTEAROA

## Strand 1: Wellbeing | Mana atua

LEARNING OUTCOMES	THE WEAVING	EXAM LINK
Over time and with guidance and encouragement, children become increasingly capable of:	Local curriculum design involves a complex weaving of principles and strands (Te Whāriki), values, key competencies and learning areas (The New Zealand Curriculum) as children and young people engage in learning experiences.	Key o For ex the strat Learn Stu of of con Learn Stud peril Recip
Keeping themselves healthy and caring for themselves [to oraŋga nui]		
Managing themselves and expressing their feelings and needs [to whakahaui whakaroa]		
Keeping themselves and others safe from harm [to noho haumanu]		
	<b>THE WEAVING</b>	<b>EXAM LINK</b>
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# Where in our curriculum does it mention spirituality?

Pg 5 Our aspirational statement

Pg 30 Leadership – spirituality

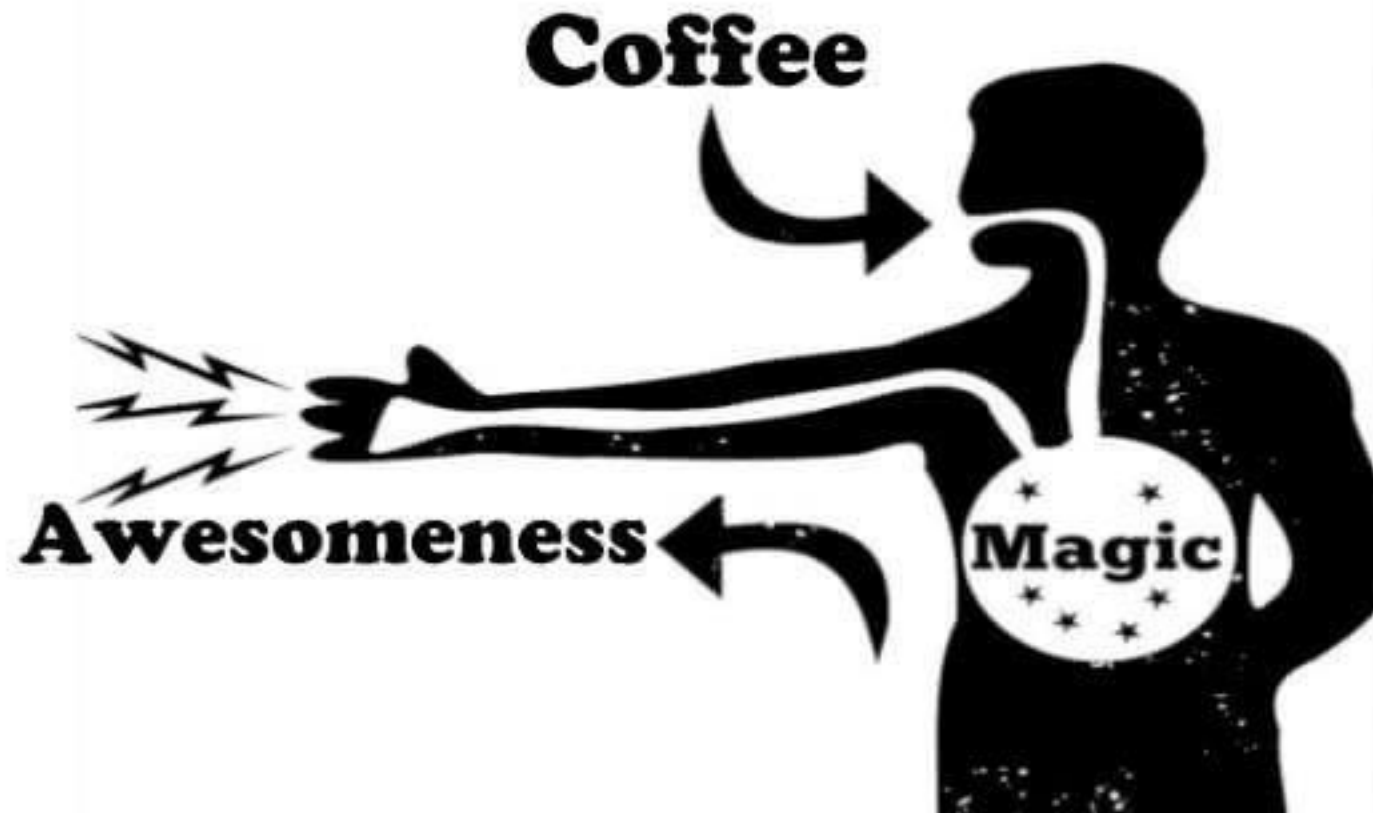
Pg 47 Evidence –spiritual world

Pg 52 pathways – manifest spiritual well being

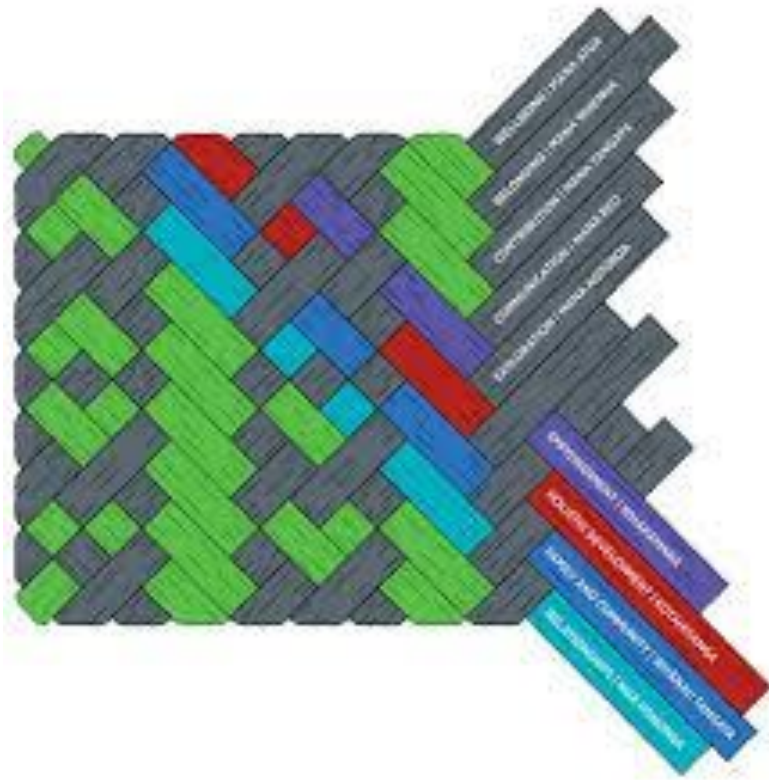
**In what ways do we use the word ‘spirit’ when talking about children?**



# HOW COFFEE WORKS FOR TEACHERS



# Philosophy – pedagogy - practice



**Philosophy:** *WHY learning happens*

**Pedagogy:** *HOW learning happens - the views we have of children and the role of teachers and the interrelationships between them. Pedagogy is how we approach curriculum.*

**Teacher Practice:** *WHAT teachers DO*

**Curriculum :** *the content of the learning – shaped by our view of children ( capable and confident) and whanau/families*

*Curriculum design is the process of planning a curriculum and associated activities, environments and interactions for early childhood based on agreed priorities for children's learning. This will look different in every early childhood setting( local curriculum)*

What matters here? A meaningful, living curriculum. Local curriculum



# The spirit of the child – pedagogy



## How do we view children?

## What are we looking for and noticing?

## How do we recognise and respond to children's spiritual attributes and the importance of these attributes to the child's holistic well being?



# Principles of Te Whāriki

Pg 18 – 21 Pg 60



Whakamana : Empowerment  
empowering the child to learn and grow, and to develop understandings of their worlds, including the spiritual world

Kotahitanga : Holistic

Whānau tangata : Family and Community  
Ngā hononga : Relationships

*How do teachers go about nurturing the spirit of the child in our ECE centres?*

*What practices are suitable in our ECE centres?*

not rushed  
settled and peaceful  
do not interrupt  
patience  
promote inclusiveness  
honour diversity  
ethic of care ( Nel Nodding)  
manaakitanga  
the model is imperative  
physical environment  
daily rituals



What events, festivals or traditions does your centre celebrate?

How do you celebrate?

Why do you celebrate them?

What are the links to spiritual learning  
( appreciation, joy, reflection or interdependence)?

How can these spiritual learning experiences be strengthened?



# Virtues

1. Speak the language
2. Recognise teachable moments
3. Set clear boundaries
4. Honour the spirit
5. Offer the art of spiritual companionship





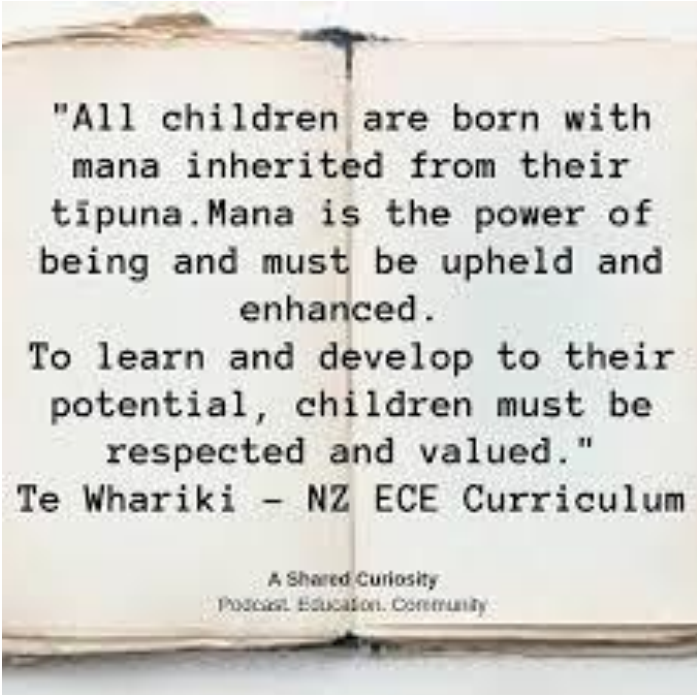


A photograph of two young children sitting in a grassy field. The child on the left is wearing a blue hat with a leopard print band and a denim jacket. The child on the right is wearing an orange hat and a light-colored jacket, holding a black toy microphone to their mouth. A large, semi-transparent green circle is overlaid in the center of the image, containing text.

# Agency

"agency is defined as being able to make choices and decisions to influence events and to have an impact on one's world. Supporting children's agency is about recognising that children have a right to make choices and decisions, and are capable of initiating their own learning."

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority

An open book with a light-colored cover and pages. The text is printed in a black, monospaced font. The book is open to two pages, with the text centered on each page.

"All children are born with  
mana inherited from their  
tipuna. Mana is the power of  
being and must be upheld and  
enhanced.

To learn and develop to their  
potential, children must be  
respected and valued."

Te Whariki - NZ ECE Curriculum

A Shared Curiosity  
Podcast: Education, Community



**Response – where is it evident? Pairs could bring back their thoughts**

Language

Documentation

Environment

Routines

Rituals

Local curriculum

Intentional teaching strategies

Learning stories – narrative assessment

Profiles



# Assessment

Te Whariki – Pg 64

Assessment will be a mana enhancing process for children, parents and whanau conducted in ways that uphold the EMPOWERMENT / WHAKAMANA Principle

Assessment takes account of the whole child – tinana, hinengaro, **wairua** and whatumanawa  
HOLISTIC/KOTAHITANGA Principle

"ONE OF THE MOST  
IMPORTANT  
GIFTS A PARENT  
CAN GIVE A CHILD  
IS THE GIFT OF  
ACCEPTING  
THAT CHILD'S  
UNIQUENESS."

FRED ROGERS





What do we teach by the way we care?

“EDUCATION IS UNDERSTOOD EXCLUSIVELY AS TEACHING MATHEMATICS, READING, WRITING, AND WORKING WITH PUZZLES, WHILE PHYSICAL CARE SUCH AS FEEDING, CLEANING AND HOLDING THE CHILD BELONGS ONLY TO A WELFARE MODEL. THIS CONCEPT COULD NOT BE MORE WRONG. CHILDREN DO NOT SEPARATE BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL AND NON-EDUCATIONAL MOMENTS.”

ETHICS OF LORIS MALAGUZZI, HOYUELOS

**Illuminating Care:**  
**The Pedagogy & Practice of Care**

“We do not become healers.  
We came as healers. We are.  
Some of us are still catching up to what we are

We do not become storytellers.  
We came as carriers of the stories that we and  
our ancestors lived.  
We are.  
Some of us are still catching up to what we  
are.

We do not become artists. We came as artists.  
We are.  
Some of us are still catching up to what we  
are.

We do not become  
writers..dancers..musicians..helpers...  
peacemakers. We came as such.  
We are.  
Some of us are still catching up to what we  
are.

We do not learn to love in this sense. We  
came as Love.  
We are Love.  
Some of us are still catching up to who we  
truly are.”

Clarissa Pinkola Estes





“Do the  
best you  
can until  
you know  
better.  
Then when  
you know  
better, do  
better.”

– *Maya Angelou*

Thank you so much for spending time talking  
about what matters for our Tamariki.

Go well

Take care of  
our children.  
Take care of  
what they  
hear, take care  
of what they  
see, take care  
of what they  
feel. For how  
the children  
grow, so will be  
the shape of  
Aotearoa.

*Dame Whina Cooper  
Photographer: Michael  
Tubberty*

