



Kōwhiti Whakapae: Q&A

Kōwhiti Whakapae: draft practice and progress tools to support competent and confident kaiako and mokopuna

What is Kōwhiti Whakapae?

Kōwhiti Whakapae is a resource to help kaiako strengthen formative assessment and teaching practice within the framework of *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa*. *Kōwhiti Whakapae* is designed to help kaiako attend to individual children's progress in order to identify ways to deepen or strengthen children's learning through effective teacher practice.

Kōwhiti Whakapae is embedded in Te Ao Māori cultural perspectives, at the same time as focusing on key areas of learning and development which have life-course significance for all children. These areas are connected across the principles, strands, and learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*.

Kōwhiti Whakapae is intended as a curriculum support document and its use is optional.

Why has Kōwhiti Whakapae been developed?

Action 4.2 of *He taonga te tamaiti – Every child a taonga: Early learning action plan 2019–2029* (ELAP) is to develop tools to support formative assessment and teaching practice.

Action 4.2 arose because we know that high quality early learning depends on tailored teaching practices that respond to evidence-based judgements about children's progress. Lifecourse research also tells us there are key areas in which children's progress shouldn't be left to chance. Building a clear picture of children's progress over time is important for supporting positive learning trajectories through effective teacher practice, including knowing when to seek additional support that may be needed.

Who developed Kōwhiti Whakapae?

The Ministry of Education worked with a Project Team of experts from Massey University and Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. A Sector Reference Group that included kaiako, early learning services, providers and other stakeholders guided the Ministry and Project Team. Both the Project Team and the Sector Reference Group included people with diverse cultural perspectives. The Project team also carried out initial user testing with kaiako from a range of service types.

What areas of learning will *Kōwhiri Whakapae* cover?

The Ministry intends *Kōwhiri Whakapae* to include a suite of tools in the longer term. The first (draft) tool in this suite focuses on social-emotional learning and development. The second tool will focus on oral language and literacy, with drafts developed by mid-2022. The third tool is likely to be in mathematics.

This suite of tools will take into account areas of learning and development the government's science advisors indicated as most significant to positive educational and life outcomes for children. These areas include self-regulation, sociability, oral language, literacy and mathematics. Depending on the success of the tools, further areas of learning may be added in the future.

How does *Kōwhiri Whakapae* align with *Te Whāriki*?

Kōwhiri Whakapae is designed to support kaiako to implement *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* in ways that promote and enhance children's culture, language and identity and support them to become increasingly capable of achieving the learning outcomes associated with the five strands of *Te Whāriki*.

The tools are designed to show how key aspects of the learning area (e.g., social-emotional learning) connect across the strands of *Te Whāriki* and are reflected in multiple learning outcomes.

How does *Kōwhiri Whakapae* reflect te ao Māori worldviews?

The framework for *Kōwhiri Whakapae* draws on the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to ensure they are culturally responsive and support mokopuna Māori to live, learn and succeed as Māori.

The tools are structured so that each area of learning starts with Te Ao Māori values, concepts or characteristics. From these, specific capabilities for teaching, learning and development are drawn to develop the tools.

Do the tools in *Kōwhiri Whakapae* reflect the holistic way children learn?

Yes, consistent with *Te Whāriki*, the tools take an integrated view of child learning and development and recognise that play-based and routine-based learning opportunities are at the heart of natural and authentic learning opportunities in early childhood.

Do the tools in *Kōwhiri Whakapae* take account of the different rates at which children progress?

Te Whāriki notes that "while all children are different and their learning trajectories are influenced by the social and cultural context there are nevertheless typical characteristics and patterns that can be observed" and "learning and development generally follow a predictable sequence" (2017, p. 13).

The tools in *Kōwhiri Whakapae* recognise that there is, however, variation in the rate, sequence and timing of learning and the ways children apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts. Thus, variation is both expected and desirable.

The tools are designed to help kaiako to recognise patterns in children's progress and to respond to the expected variability across children respectfully and sensitively in consultation with whānau, focusing on what children can do and the ways that kaiako will support them to grow and make progress.

Will use of these tools replace our existing assessment practices?

No. The tools will not deliver a specific assessment methodology and are not intended to replace narrative assessments. Instead, they are designed to help kaiako to strengthen the quality of their

current assessments by supporting ongoing discussion about teaching practice and learning progressions. Use of the tools is optional.

How will the tools support children's transition to school?

The tools will help kaiako support children's ongoing learning journey in areas that life course research suggests can't be left to chance. While early learning and schooling use different curriculum frameworks to design local curricula, the tools will integrate with the curriculum progress map in schools and key aspects of school entry assessment as far as possible.

How are the tools related to the Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025?

The Learning Support Action Plan (LSAP) includes actions that will lead to more systematic approaches to identifying children's learning support needs. These include Learning Support Coordinators who will support transitions from early learning into schools or kura, and the exploration of universal health checks for 3 year-old children (in conjunction with the Ministry of Health). *Kōwhiri Whakapae* complements these actions by helping kaiako recognise when positive learning trajectories may be at risk and when a child may require or could benefit from additional support, but they are not intended to be screening tools for learning or other supports.

Why is the resource called *Kōwhiri Whakapae: Practice and progress tools to support competent and confident kaiako and mokopuna*?

The kōwhiri whakapae whāriki depicted on page 11 of *Te Whāriki* symbolises the "start of a journey that will take the traveller beyond the horizon". *Kōwhiri Whakapae: Practice and progress tools to support competent and confident kaiako and mokopuna* draws on the pattern of *Te Whāriki* and the importance of weaving rich and responsive curriculum experiences for all children. The name also represents the space for conversations (between kaiako and whānau) that are a critical part of formative assessment and evaluation. The sub-title further draws on the aspiration statement from *Te Whāriki* that children are competent and confident learners and expands this aim to include kaiako.

How are the tools being trialled?

The tools were initially tested with users in May-June 2021, across a range of 40 early learning services. Informed by this CORE Education is leading a professional learning and development (PLD) supported trial of these tools from November 2021 to May 2022. The trial will include up to 120 early learning services with some participating in face-to-face PLD and others in online PLD. The purpose of this trial is to evaluate the effectiveness of *Kōwhiri Whakapae* within a programme of professional learning and development.

When will the tools be finalised?

The Ministry has approached this work in phases to allow us to trial and iterate with the sector. We will further develop the tools in response to the evaluation findings at the end of the PLD supported trial in mid-2022 and expect to make them publicly available later in 2022.

How will kaiako be supported to use the tools?

We expect to support implementation with professional learning and development (PLD). In addition, any Ministry funded national programme of PLD for early learning services from early 2021 onwards could take account of the new tools to complement and extend any specific PLD to support the roll out of the tools.

Why don't the tools support assessment within *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo*?

The Ministry will work with Te Kōhanga National Trust to identify their preferred approach to the tools within the framework of *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo*.

How does *Kōwhiri Whakapae* reflect Pacific and other cultural perspectives?

Throughout the design, development and trialling phases of *Kōwhiri Whakapae* the developers engaged with people with the knowledge and expertise needed to ensure that the tools are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

We know that culturally and linguistically sustaining practices support children to develop strong learner identities necessary for ongoing educational success. For this reason, *Kōwhiri Whakapae* has been designed so that kaiako start with a Culture, Language and Identity practice tool before focusing on specific areas of learning (such as social-emotional learning).