

# Te hautū i te awa whiria o ako

## Supporting pathways to lifelong learning for children in English-medium schools

Resources and research by  
**CORE**  
EDUCATION  
Tātai Aho Rau

In partnership with  
 **Rātā**  
Foundation

### **Listening to tamariki and what matters to them**

*Exterior of Rāwhiti school*

#### **Amy Sugrue, Teacher, Ilam School**

So the research project with CORE first started with us asking the children what they liked doing at school. What made them feel happy at school? And from that we then went back to CORE with all our data and the pictures and found from that, there was a huge number of children who enjoyed play at school. And that was something we already knew, but we probably didn't realise the importance and the significance of that for our children, and that they really needed these opportunities to have play experiences at school.

#### **Julia Hinman, Teacher, Ilam School**

We'd noticed that a lot of the children as they arrived at school, were having some separation anxiety with parents. After our research about what makes children happy at school, play was a big part of what they reported back, was what they loved at school. So bringing that into the classroom, to help with that transition.

*Children playing; making a bead necklace, jigsaw puzzle, playground equipment*

#### **Voice of Amy Sugrue, Teacher, Ilam School**

The key changes that we made to the beginning of the day were incorporating play approaches and learning stations, that included various activities that the children were able to engage with at the beginning of the day. And that promoted friendships, that they were able to spend time with their friends, connect with the other children at the beginning of the day. They were able to be settled into the classroom, engaged, you know, the teachers were able to come up and have a conversation with them. It also supported families that were new to Ilam School or new to New Zealand and were really unsure of what was happening in the classroom and what we were doing.

### *Exterior of ILam School*

So they could actually see what the day looked like for their children and come in and talk to us, talk to their children and see what was happening. So it's a nice approach for them to be able to come in, see their friends, talk to their friends, be welcomed by the teacher and not feel so nervous about coming into the classroom.

### **Anna Wylie, Teacher, Ilam School, speaking to the interviewer**

Children could take part in play-focused activities where they were talking to their friends. The learning had already started from the moment they walked in through the door.

### *Children involved in play activities*

Then once children were comfortable, everyone had arrived, then the teacher would quietly call them down to the mat, and children would come down very quietly in their own time and ready to start the day. After introducing our play-focused starts, we had discussions with parents. Parents were quite excited about the fact that they could bring their child to school and their child would walk into the classroom, no problems whatsoever. They'd say goodbye to mom and dad and they get straight into their activities. Mums and dads, the pressure was taken off them. The whole atmosphere of the classroom changed into a more relaxed atmosphere in the mornings.

### **End slide**

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