



Contribution | Mana Tangata

ECE resources

This series of guides on the principles and strands of Te Whāriki offers an overview of the key areas of learning within Aotearoa New Zealand's early childhood curriculum. Each guide provides links to other resources across our website which can help in the implementation of the curriculum.

The **contribution | mana tangata** strand focuses on enabling children to **participate** in and make a **contribution** to their early childhood setting and programme by utilising and building upon children's strengths as well as ensuring **equitable opportunities** for all children. Making a contribution involves children in:

- **Discussing** and explaining ideas
- **Respecting** others, learning to take another perspective, and **empathising** with others
- **Advocating** or standing up for themselves and others
- Developing a **positive learner identity** and awareness of their own strengths

Some particular features of practice are significant for enabling children to develop skills in contribution. These include:

- **Reciprocal, responsive relationships**
- Valuing children's **interests** and enthusiasms
- Finding opportunities for children to contribute to **wider communities**
- Supporting the **collaborative processes** of Māori whānau
- Viewing children and their families **positively**
- Opportunities to think about **social justice**
- Helping children to develop the **emotional literacy skills** that lead to the capacity for empathy
- Supporting children to develop **communication, conversation and verbal language skills**. See [this guide](#) for advice specific to supporting **language development** through play
- Supporting children to develop **social skills**, and **strategies for conflict resolution**
- Encouraging children to take **responsibility** for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, and teaching children different ways in which they can contribute to **group wellbeing**
- Supporting children's **metacognitive skills**, such as their awareness of strategies for contribution, as well as the ability to make links between past, present and future events in order to predict the impact of particular actions

How might provision vary for children at different stages of development?

Infants contribute to the practices and programmes of their early childhood settings when teachers know their **cues**, **recognise and respect their individual preferences**, and provide **culturally appropriate** care that incorporates **families' practices and expectations**. Teachers can encourage children's developing

language skills by **talking with infants** about what they are doing. Infants can develop interests when teachers provide **open-ended sensory play**.

Toddlers are better able to make a contribution when teachers are **culturally responsive** and initiate activities in **small groups** (without any pressure to participate), which is found to be a crucial feature of effective **curriculum design**. It is also important that teachers accept the exuberant and adventurous **risk-taking** behaviour of toddlers (as described [here](#) in the context of outdoor play), and have **appropriate expectations** for toddlers around their capacities for co-operation, sharing, waiting and taking turns, while at the same time **scaffolding children's learning of social skills** and skills for **conflict resolution**.

Older children contribute to the programme and culture of their early childhood setting when they are involved in **longer term projects and investigations** which provide them with opportunities to express and respond to ideas and questions. A **social justice** focus in curricular programmes, in which children discuss bias and learn to challenge discrimination, helps children to contribute to fair and equitable opportunities within the setting. Older children's **contributions to curricular programmes** and the wellbeing of the early childhood group and setting can be supported when children have strongly developed **emotional literacy** and strategies for maintaining **social relationships** and interactions, including social problem-solving strategies.

Other areas that teaching teams may wish to explore in relation to contribution include strategies for **inclusion**, and the **intentional teaching of skills** that enable children's effective **social participation**. It can be useful to employ **culturally responsive practices** to find out the attitudes, aspirations and expectations of community groups in relation to values such as co-operation and independence, as well as behaviours associated with sharing food, crying or making apologies. Teachers might want to consider how to develop a **balance** of whole group, small group and individual experiences that encourage adequate opportunities for **co-operation** and **interaction** while also enabling children's private interests and intentions.

PREPARED FOR THE EDUCATION HUB BY



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