



Strengthening Whānau Engagement

The strategies and practices voiced in this document support an approach to engagement that embraces the principle of inclusion. When education settings value and reflect the diversity in their community, the barriers to engaging parents and whānau are reduced or minimised.

How might you use these prompts to review the practices in your setting and facilitate conversations with learning support teams?

Parents and whānau from diverse communities shared their experiences about their involvement with their children's schools.

You listen to what I have to say by:

- being open and welcoming to all whānau and their tamariki;
- creating opportunities and time for whānau to talk to kaiako about the learning and well-being of their tamariki;
- having interpreters available to support whānau and overcome language barriers; and
- identifying appropriate staff as key contact people for specific groups of whānau.

You acknowledge my intelligence by:

- promoting two-way sharing of information as part of the school's transition processes for new tamariki and their whānau;
- inviting whānau to contribute the knowledge they have about their tamariki to discussions about learning, wellbeing and goal setting; and
- offering ongoing opportunities for sharing information about tamariki.



You want to learn more about my ways by:

- getting to know and working with the different groups of whānau that make up our school community;
- exploring ways to build kaiako knowledge of, and sensitivity to, different cultural values and practices;
- incorporating elements of working with diverse communities in school-wide professional development programmes; and
- actively supporting and fostering cultural groups in the school and the wider community.

You engage me in genuine dialogue by:

- providing opportunities for regular informal and personalised dialogue with all whānau;
- sharing information regularly and in a timely and appropriate way; and
- making opportunities to discuss whānau expectations to learning, and the schools' approach to it.

We make decisions together by:

- using a variety of ways to seek whānau perspectives when planning programmes and responding to the perceived needs of tamariki;
- seeking and valuing the views and beliefs of parents and whānau when planning for tamariki learning and well-being; and
- including the views of all parents and whānau when establishing and reviewing school directions and priorities.



You don't judge me and show this by:

- showing respect for and acknowledging the cultural diversity of this community;
- challenging deficit views held by kaiako about ākongā and their families; and
- accepting and accommodating diversity, even when differences are not fully understood.

You show that my child matters to you by:

- being sensitive to the particular backgrounds and values of diverse groups, and reflecting this in the relationships with parents and whānau;
- asking parents for information about the interests, likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges, and other important information about their tamariki;
- providing resources for cultural performance groups, such as funding, employing instructors from the community, or allocating time for the involvement of appropriate staff members; and
- showing parents and whānau that their input and initiative is not taken for granted, and that diverse cultures are valued in the school.

You include my experience, knowledge and viewpoints with yours by:

- giving priority to acquiring and using resources that reflect the diverse backgrounds of all children in their school;
- incorporating practices inclusive of their diverse community in school activities and events; and
- seeking, whenever possible, to have different groups in the school community represented on the staff and in the composition of the board of trustees.