



## Bowen ECE Centre Philosophy

I konei ko ngā  
tamariki me ngā  
whanau I te tuatahi

Where children and  
families come first

The heart of Bowen Early Childhood Education Centre's philosophy is to embrace relationships through the principle of **whanaungatanga** (the extended family concept). **Aroha** (love) underpins and supports the warm, trusting and reciprocal relationships between kaitiaki (staff) and tamariki (children) and their whānau. This is foundational in fostering **ūkaipōtanga**, as when tamariki, whanau and kaitiaki develop a strong sense of belonging and wellbeing and their identity is nurtured, they can contribute, growing to be confident and capable in what they do.

Infants, toddlers and young children are seen as being capable individuals, already possessing their own set of skills and knowledge that is ready to be challenged and extended on. Kaitiaki work alongside children and in partnerships with whānau, responding to the needs and interests of each infant, toddler and young child, ensuring care in routines, smooth transitions and meaningful learning opportunities.

Providing a safe stimulating environment where learning through play and creativity is valued, infants, toddlers and young children are encouraged to move freely and make choices, contributing to their own and other's learning and development. As they actively participate, tamariki demonstrate and develop essential dispositions for learning, such as curiosity, perseverance, resilience and confidence, contributing to their growing understandings, knowledge and skills.

The unique place of Māori as a Treaty partner is embraced, through the use of te reo and practicing the collective and holistic views Māori hold on teaching and learning, including **manākitanga** (care for one's wellbeing), **kotahitanga** (unity), tikanga (customs), ako (teaching and learning relationship) and whakapapa (relationship with the world, people and life). Showing respect and celebrating the cultures, beliefs, values and views of all is vital to build an inclusive environment where children, whānau and kaitiaki develop a strong sense of self, of where we belong and how we value each other.

Offering a unique geographic location and a mixed age community based centre, kaitiaki continually seek to improve the learning for all tamariki, fostering social competencies and planning a range of learning opportunities including out-of-centre experiences. Kaitiaki recognise the early years as foundational to life-long skills, preparing them for ongoing and formal learning, by supporting tamariki to relate to others, manage themselves and develop thinking, language and literacy skills.

