



Bowen ECE Centre Philosophy

I konei ko ngā
tamariki me ngā
whānau I te tuatahi

Where children and
families come first

(GMA5)

The heart of Bowen Early Childhood Education Centre's philosophy is to embrace relationships through the principle of **whānaungatanga** (the extended whānau concept). **Aroha** (love) underpins and supports the warm, trusting and reciprocal relationships between kaiako (teachers) and tamariki (children) and their whānau (family). This is foundational in fostering **ūkaipōtanga**, as when tamariki, whānau and kaiako 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 tamariki are seen as being capable individuals, already possessing their own set of skills and knowledge that is ready to be challenged and extended on. Kaiako work alongside tamariki and in partnerships with whānau, responding to the needs and interests of each infant, toddler and young tamaiti, 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 tamariki 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 **manaakitanga** (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 tamariki, whānau and kaiako 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, kaiako continually seek to improve the learning for all tamariki, fostering social competencies and planning a range of learning opportunities including out-of-centre experiences. Kaiako recognise the early years as foundational to life-long skills, preparing tamariki for ongoing and formal learning, by supporting them to relate to others, manage themselves and develop thinking, language and literacy skills.

