

Ngā Huia Room Philosophy

The Ngā Huia Room is inspired by the *huia*, a bird revered in Aotearoa for its grace, beauty, and deep cultural significance. For our youngest tamariki, aged 3 months to 1 year, this room serves as a sanctuary of care, calm, and unhurried connection. Here, we nurture trusting relationships, honouring the individuality of each infant and creating an environment where they feel safe, valued, and understood. Our approach is firmly rooted in Te Whāriki and guided by the values of **whanaungatanga**, **manaakitanga**, **aroha**, **whakamana**, and **kotahitanga**. These principles shape the care and learning experiences we offer and reflect our commitment to upholding the Treaty of Waitangi. We embrace our role as kaitiaki, ensuring the wellbeing of tamariki while fostering their connection to this whenua and its cultural heritage.

Trust and Respect for Communication

Kaiako in the Ngā Huia Room trust each infant's ability to communicate their needs through cues and gestures. We respond sensitively and respectfully to signals of distress, hunger, or tiredness, recognising each infant's right to be heard and understood. Gestures, smiles, and signals of pleasure or discomfort are acknowledged and responded to with warmth and care, fostering a sense of trust and security.

Unhurried and Responsive Care

We believe that caregiving moments are opportunities to deepen relationships and support development. Our kaiako ensure caregiving practices are unhurried and guided by the infant's cues and rhythms. Through observation and sensitive interactions, we respect gestures of assent and dissent, engaging infants in ways that honour their autonomy and dignity.

A Calm, Language-Rich Environment

The *huia*'s serene presence inspires the calm and nurturing atmosphere of our room. Language, familiar rhymes, songs, and chants are woven into daily routines to create a language-rich environment that supports early communication and connection. Key words, signs, and routines from home are incorporated into our practice, providing continuity and helping tamariki feel secure and understood.

Respect for Natural Development

In the Ngā Huia Room, we respect each infant's unique physical and motor development, allowing it to unfold naturally and at their own pace. Safe and stimulating objects and furnishings are provided to encourage exploration, movement, and balance. From holding on to balancing and pulling themselves up, tamariki are supported to develop their physical skills in a safe and responsive environment.

Careful Observation and Meaningful Interaction

Kaiako carefully observe tamariki to understand their needs, preferences, and unique ways of communicating. This enables us to respond thoughtfully, building strong, respectful relationships. Words, gestures, and expressions are used to invite engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and participation.

Connection to Te Whāriki and the Treaty of Waitangi

Guided by Te Whāriki, we emphasise relationships, holistic development, family and community, and empowerment. We honour the Treaty of Waitangi through bicultural practices and by fostering tamariki's connection to Aotearoa's heritage. As kaitiaki, we ensure tamariki feel a sense of belonging to this land and its stories, setting the foundation for a lifelong connection to their environment and culture. The *huia* reminds us of the importance of care, respect, and calm. In the Ngā Huia Room, we create a nurturing and unhurried space where infants feel safe to explore, connect, and grow at their own pace, surrounded by aroha and respect.