

# Build reciprocal relationships between kaiako, tamariki, and whānau

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Collaboratively planning a universally designed learning environment' from the Guide: [Collaborative planning for learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Build relational trust
- Have a two-way, open-door policy
- Self-review
- Commit to understanding ākonga
- Reflection questions
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: Collaborative planning for learning

Strategy: Collaboratively planning a universally designed learning environment

Suggestion: Build reciprocal relationships between kaiako, tamariki, and whānau

Date

05 July 2026

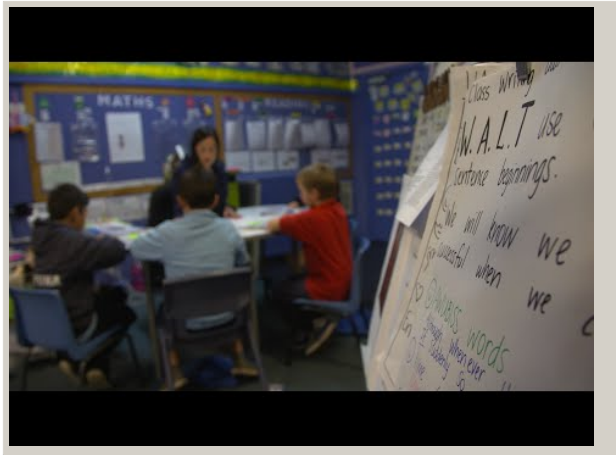
Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/collaborative-planning-for-learning/build-reciprocal-relationships](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/collaborative-planning-for-learning/build-reciprocal-relationships)

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## Build relational trust

The Invercargill Middle School team describe how building trust becomes the foundation for conversations about learning.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/XAasctdC2Ho>  
Closed Captions

Source:

PMEEA New Zealand

<https://youtu.be/XAasctdC2Ho?si=l6L4H-QM8zkxEsUK>

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## Have a two-way, open-door policy

**Kaiako go out the door** into community spaces to learn about what is valued, demonstrate we are interested and care



**Tamariki and whānau are welcomed in the door** and invited to bring with them their culture, language, identity, abilities, knowledge, skills, passions and connections



Source:

Adapted from [An open-door policy that works](#)

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Media-gallery/Community-engagement/An-open-door-policy-that-works#collapsible2>

[View full image \(4.5 MB\)](#)

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## Self-review



Source:

NZ Curriculum Online

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/content/download/168043/1241581/file/Information%20Sharing%20and%20Building%20Learning%20Partnerships.pdf>

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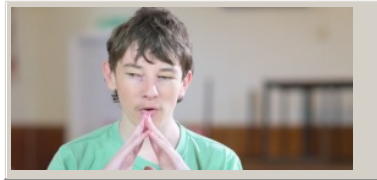
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## Commit to understanding ākonga

Hamish describes the positive impact of being “known” by his teacher.

He also reflects on the impact of being invisible.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/McAgVbOsLnc>

Closed Captions

**Source:**

[Inclusive Education Action Group \(NZ\)](https://ieag.org.nz/voices/videos/)

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## Reflection questions

What does whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and ngākau nui (big heartedness) look like in your learning space?

Consider the following questions:

What opportunities, both formal and informal, are there for whānau and ākonga to meet kaiako and each other?

Do such opportunities take account of the diversity of everyone involved?

How open is your early learning service or school to discussing the beliefs held by staff about engaging with whānau?

How is diversity embraced in your community?

How do you create a sense of full inclusion?

What do you know about the effectiveness of engaging and building relationships with ākonga, whānau, and the wider community?

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## Useful resources



### How cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy build on Māori metaphors

Read time: 2 min

An overview of how the Māori metaphors of whānau, whakapapa, kaupapa, wānanga ako, and mahi ngātahi guide cultural relationships and responsive pedagogy.

Publisher: University of Waikato

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