

# Understand the beliefs, values, and expectations of parents and whānau

A suggestion for implementing the strategy  
'Model a commitment to inclusion' from the  
Guide: [Parents, whānau, and communities](#)

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## **Includes:**

- What true partnership looks like
- Expect different perspectives
- Address common parental concerns
- Involve families in transitions
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Partnering with parents, whānau, and communities](#)

Strategy: [Model a commitment to inclusion](#)

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Date

29 August 2025

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/partnering-with-parents-whanau-and-communities/understand-the-beliefs-values-and-expectations-of-parents-and-whanau](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/partnering-with-parents-whanau-and-communities/understand-the-beliefs-values-and-expectations-of-parents-and-whanau)

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## What true partnership looks like

We are true partners  
when:

- ✓ you listen to what I have to say
- ✓ you acknowledge my intelligence
- ✓ you want to learn more about my ways
- ✓ you don't judge me
- ✓ you engage me in genuine dialogue
- ✓ we make decisions together
- ✓ you show that my child matters to you
- ✓ you include my experience, knowledge, and viewpoints with yours.

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# Expect different perspectives

Parents and whānau will have different perspectives on diversity and inclusion, and different expectations of partnership.

Seek to understand:

- their values and beliefs about disability and inclusion
- their own experiences of learning
- their hopes and dreams for their child
- their fears and anxieties
- their expectations around how their child will be supported in the classroom and in the playground.

Where parent and whānau values and expectations differ from those of your school, be open to learning from them.

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## Address common parental concerns

Parents of children with special education needs found that some schools were not open to working with them, and they felt that they were unwelcome. They struggled with entrenched attitudes by some school staff about their child and his or her learning or behavioural needs. For some parents, labelling their child and themselves, sometimes linked to previous family history with the school, undermined the development of constructive relationships.

**Source:**

[Partners in learning: Parents' voices \(ERO, 2008\)](#)

<https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/partners-in-learning-parents-voices>

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## Involve families in transitions

Find out what approaches and strategies have worked well for their children in their previous school.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/100662366>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education, inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)

<https://vimeo.com/album/2950799>

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## Useful resources

Includes guiding questions, tools, and resources.



### What is important to your community

The NZC includes expectations that schools will seek out and listen to the ideas of students, parent, families, and whānau. This resource includes examples, tools, and resources to support gathering and understanding the values and expectations of our community.

[Visit website](#)

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