



Learning Through Play

At Kaharoa School, we believe that learning through play is a developmentally appropriate approach that supports the growth of essential skills, dispositions and values in our learners. For us, play is fundamental to our children's Hauora.

Play will support and provide an opportunity to:

- Solve problems in imaginative and creative ways
- Expand executive function skills, working memory, inhibitory control, mental flexibility
- Develop fundamental skills such as gross motor, coordination and fine motor
- Grow resilience
- Negotiate, compromise and be flexible
- Build social skills and emotional regulation
- Nurture capable communicators
- Enhance cultural identity, and a sense of self
- Foster learner agency
- Question, ponder, and explore
- Encourage inclusion and collaboration
- Practice and review formal learning in a playful way
- Explore our rural environment
- Give it a go - risk taking



Kaharoa School is dedicated to providing diverse opportunities for students with a focus on learning connected to the rural environment, sporting, and artistic pursuits. All learners explore new things and develop their passions and interests to catch a spark and imagine what the world could be with their contribution.

The Teacher's Role in Learning Through Play

- Provide props and resourcing
- Planning - links to curriculum learning, student needs
- Notice, recognise, respond
- Provoke thinking, gift language, facilitate thinking
- Coach, guide, direct, make connections
- Collaborating with colleagues to share ideas and resources
- Deliberate acts of teaching within play

Notice - observe and record student actions & interactions

Recognise - reflect, make connections to KC's, schemas/urges, dispositions and to NZ curriculum

Respond – plan for needs using provocations, learning through play, deliberate acts of teaching



Continuum of Learning Through Play

CHILD DIRECTED	EDUCATOR GUIDED			EDUCATOR DIRECTED
<p>FREE PLAY</p> <p>Children initiate and direct their own play. Educators observe and facilitate the environment.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Running, jumping, make-believe, drawing, building with materials, reading</p>	<p>INQUIRY PLAY</p> <p>Children ask questions and explore ideas. Educators offer resources and nudge children to go deeper.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Making instruments with elastic bands, investigating how worms move and simple machines work</p>	<p>COLLABORATIVE PLAY</p> <p>Educators co-design play with children and may join their play.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Playing restaurant or grocery store with pretend money</p>	<p>PLAYFUL LEARNING</p> <p>Educators set up experiences that children explore to meet specific learning objectives.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Rehearsing and performing a scripted play, doing a scavenger hunt, baking cookies with a large illustrated recipe poster</p>	<p>LEARNING GAMES</p> <p>Children follow the rules of prescribed learning activities designed by educators to promote specific skills.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Matching and number line games, word bingo, rhyming word games, Simon Says, games using dice</p>

Adapted Pyle & Danniels, 2017

At Kaharoa School teachers use a range of approaches (as described above) for learning through play as they notice, recognise and respond to student needs. During class time, teachers will steer learning through play towards curriculum learning with an emphasis on the contexts of science and health, alongside elements of visual art, dance & drama, technology, and local histories woven in. Free play is encouraged before school and during break times.

In an effective learning through play classroom, the daily timetable includes a significant portion of explicit teaching in numeracy and literacy. These explicit teaching routines will include intentionally selected 'Educator Guided / Educator Directed' learning through play alongside numeracy and literacy follow up activities.

Student agency is fostered by teachers guiding students to understand the difference between free play, and learning through play. The key focus during all class time is LEARNING. Agentic learners seek new learning every day. They learn and practice dispositions, values, skills, knowledge, and concepts.

As students move through the Year levels, the learning through play approach morphs:

- At New Entrant / Year 1 more inquiry play and aspects of free play are used in the transition from ECE into Primary Education.
- At Year 1 – Year 2 educators use a range of Educator Guided, and Educator Directed approaches to enhance literacy and numeracy learning, and to engage students in early curriculum learning.
- At Year 3 – Year 5 there is greater emphasis on explicit teaching routines, alongside learning games, and playful learning approaches. At specific times during the week, learning through play will be used as an inquiry approach to explore curriculum learning with an emphasis on science and health, alongside elements of visual art, dance & drama, technology, and local histories.
- At Year 6-8, learning through play transforms into inquiry learning, discovery time, and project learning.