

te māhuri

From 3 to
5 years



whakatipu

tākai





Te Māhuri is a guide for the journey of whānau and their growing tamariki from 3 to 5 years old. During this stage tamariki are like the young trees of the forest, Te Wao nui a Tāne. They stand tall, and are more independent and actively involved in their whānau. Te Māhuri offers simple whānau tikanga for this stage.

Each section of this pukapuka contains simple and practical ideas to support early brain development. Mātauranga Māori can guide our parenting and provide what tamariki need for healthy development. Like everything that grows well, tamariki need protection and nourishment to reach their full potential and thrive.

Nō reira kia kaha, kia māia!

What's happening at

3 to 4 years

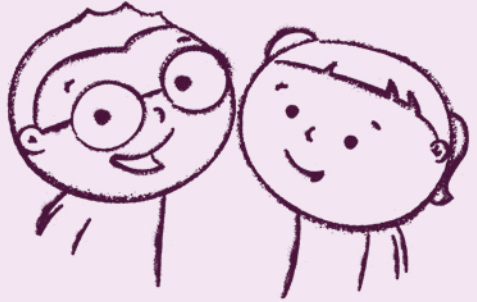
Ko te manu kai i te miro, nōna te ngahere.
Ko te manu kai i te mātauranga nōna te ao.

The bird that feeds on the miro berry, theirs is the forest.
The bird that feeds on the tree of knowledge, theirs is the world.



Tamaiti says

My whānau are having another pēpi. We sing to our pēpi every day.



I like helping in the kitchen and washing the dishes.



I don't know why, but my tarau are all getting shorter!



My whānau says it's alright for me to eat heaps of healthy kai, but not too much sugar.





I have heaps more kupu, and kino kupu too. I know I'm not allowed to say them though.

I like to help around our whare.



I like to ride fast on my bike. I can go faster than you!



Sometimes my whānau talk about how they're feeling. It helps me to understand my feelings too.





Whānau say

Our tamaiti is having amazing growth spurts. We've had to pass on lots of clothes to others.

They're never short of questions – which we try to answer.

Their imagination is so active they sometimes get scared. We try to make sure they know what's happening around them – giving them simple explanations.

They're counting, and chanting the alphabet. It's rote learning at this stage, but it helps build their memory.

When we go visiting, they're taking more notice of where we're going and recognising places we've been before.

Remember whānau, vision and hearing checks are still important!



They can run fast and hardly ever fall over – not a wobbly toddler anymore. They're really confident, but we still keep a close eye on them, because they forget about things like water and road safety.

We didn't think we needed to be as careful now they're older, but accidents still happen. We watch the driveway, drains, containers and ponds because they're interesting but also dangerous.

When our tamariki are pushing the boundaries, we try to remember to keep our energy for important stuff like safety, people's feelings and precious things. It can be hard sometimes. Taking a few deep breaths and counting to five helps.

We make sure to whakanui people and not bad mouth them in front of our tamariki. We're careful about what they see on TV and other screens too.

“Watch what they hear,
watch what they see.”
Dame Whina Cooper



Kaitiaki tamaiti

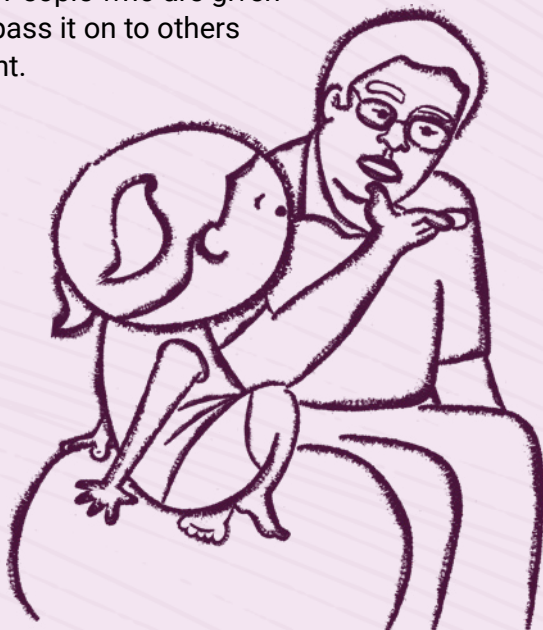
Mātauranga Māori

In the past, Mātauranga Māori meant traditional Māori knowledge – the understanding of human relationships, the world and the universe from an indigenous perspective. It was the domain of tohunga.

Mātauranga Māori was passed down through kōrero or oral traditions and taught at whare wānanga. It was not written down. This is the same way we teach tamariki – through listening, waiata and sharing stories.

Nowadays, Mātauranga Māori is available in many ways for anyone willing to learn and respect the traditional practices, skills and knowledge. People who are given the knowledge are expected to pass it on to others in the same way they were taught.

Mātauranga also means education. Our tamariki are always learning from what they see, hear and experience. They're learning long before they start school, but as a whānau you may be starting to think about what school they'll go to and what their education pathway might look like.





Whare wānanga

Traditionally, whare wānanga were houses of learning for selected people of the iwi. There were many houses of learning which focused on specific topics and helped to keep many practices alive and strong. The selected people would learn tribal history, tikanga and rituals related to their topics. The whare wānanga taught through kōrero, stories, waiata, haka and chants.

Today whare wānanga (Māori universities) are open to anyone wanting to learn. They've become key to reclaiming language, practices and knowledge that were nearly lost because of colonisation.

Whare wānanga are well known and renowned globally for their unique characteristics and ways of keeping indigenous knowledge alive.

Ngā taonga tākaro

Look at all the learning for tamariki when whānau join in the fun.



Playing with playdough

I'm learning:

- to use my eyes and hands together to twist, roll, cut, knead, mould and shape
- to control the small hand muscles used to draw, write and use scissors.

Building huts with blankets, pillows, tables and chairs

I'm learning:

- to solve problems, act and use my imagination
- spatial awareness and resourcefulness.



Looking at books, magazines and photo albums

I'm learning:

- to identify whenua, moana, tangata and kararehe
- to recall and talk about past events.

Playing balloon volleyball with a string between two chairs

I'm learning:

- hand-eye coordination, timing
- large motor skills.



Sorting the cutlery drawer and the whānau washing

I'm learning:

- to sort, match and classify
- pukumahi (to work hard).

Helping in the kitchen

I'm learning maths and science:

- weights, measurement, written instructions (recipes)
- how things change – from raw to cooked
- processes – gathering, preparing, cooking, serving and eating kai!





Dressing up and pretend play

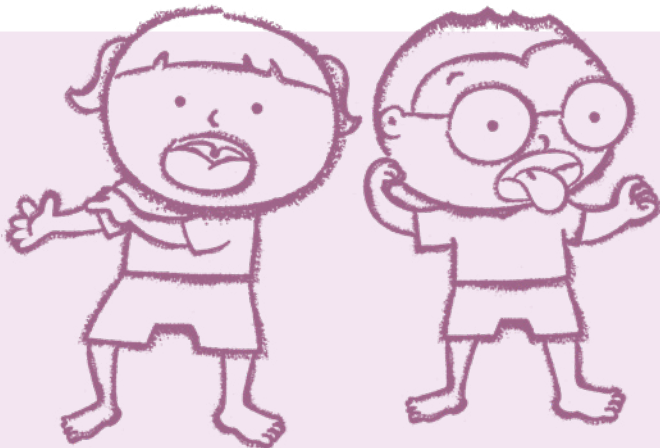
I'm learning:

- to use my imagination and play different characters
- Mātauranga Māori – creativity and cultural practices.

Listening to music and singing waiata

I'm learning:

- kapa haka, poi, ngā mahi a te rēhia – my identity, culture and language
- about people and languages in the world
- timing – joining in, waiting and listening skills
- to use my voice in time, matching and harmonising
- waiata tangi, harikoa and korikori tinana – expressing feelings
- coordination and combining skills – waiata ā-ringa and poi, singing and movement.





Holding a lounge event

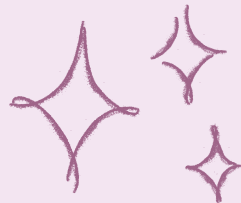
I'm learning:

- to be resourceful, plan and use imagination
- tuhituhi and pāngarau
 - making tickets and counting
- whakangahau, manaakitanga
 - to entertain and serve kai.

Waiata kōhungahunga

Here's a waiata to connect us to the stars.

Tīrama, tīrama ngā whetū
Kei te pēhea rā koutou
Kei runga ake rā
Te taimana tō rite
Tīrama, tīrama ngā whetū
Kei te pēhea rā koutou



(Tune: Twinkle, twinkle little star)



Visit [takai.nz/waiata](https://www.takai.nz/waiata) for more.

Ngā tohu whānau

There are 6 things that promote a strong relationship between parents, whānau and their tamariki. In these months, they might look like this.

Love and warmth

- Make time to do things together with our tamaiti.
- Give them the cuddles and affection they still need even though they're growing more independent.
- Give them positive feedback about what they're doing well.



Talking and listening



- Keep talking with our tamaiti. Include them in whānau conversations.
- Share funny stories, jokes and games with them. It's fun and builds creativity and imagination.
- Listen and respond to their many questions with simple factual answers and explanations.

Guidance and understanding

- Help our tamaiti make friends in our neighbourhood and at the early learning service.
- Talk about what happens when we visit different places so they know what we expect.
- Encourage them to think and talk about their feelings.



You can now have full conversations with your tamaiti and share jokes with each other. They know who most of their whānau are and many in their wider whānau. They know how to behave in different places, like the marae, kōhanga, or visiting the doctor.

They can take on small responsibilities and make independent choices, but they still need structure, routine and whānau rules to guide and help them to feel safe.



Limits and boundaries

- Respect their boundaries – don't expect tamaiti to hug or kiss everyone they meet.
- Ask for their ideas about whānau rules and make sure we all agree.

Consistency and consequences

- Use warnings before consequences, "Keep your scooter on the path or you'll need to walk."
- Give consequences in a calm and reasonable voice – we want them to learn from their mistakes, not pay for them!



A structured and secure world



- Try to stick to our whānau routines as much as we can.
- Balance their days with variety – play and activities indoors/ outdoors, active/calm, noisy/quiet, messy/structured.
- Give our tamaiti more responsibility for themselves and the household.



What's happening at

4 to 5 years

Whiria te tangata.

Weave the people together.



Tamaiti says

Our kōhanga went to visit my new kura. My cousin showed us all where the wharepaku are.



My whānau took me for my B4 School Check. They checked my taringa, my karu and looked at how big I've grown.



The papa tākaro at kura is bigger than the one at kōhanga. If you get lost, the tuākana will help you find your friends.



My whānau think I'm a big help at home. I can make my bed and help set the table for kai. It makes me feel good, when I help my whānau.





At the marae we get ready outside the gate. My mum always has an envelope to put koha in.

We sing and haka at my marae. Sometimes there's loud crying too – that's when we go to a tangi. It makes me want to cry too sometimes. I don't know why, it's a special feeling in my body.



I have lots of friends now – some from kōhanga, some from my sister's rugby team and some who play down at the papa tākaro with me.





Whānau say

We involve our tamariki in our whānau kōrero. It's always good to hear their ideas and thoughts.

A while back we started thinking about kura for our tamaiti. We recently visited kura in our area with the kōhanga. We've now made an appointment to enrol our tamaiti, so the kura can get ready for us.

Our tamariki are really interested in real life events. Pregnancy, birth, illness and death have all come into our kōrero lately. When their koro's dog died they were involved in the burial. Their cousins came over and we had karakia. They could see family pets are loved too.



Sometimes the stories they tell us seem a bit over the top. Their imagination is so active, and they stretch their stories. We can't always be sure how much is tika and how much is imagination. To us the most important thing is that whatever they say won't hurt anyone.

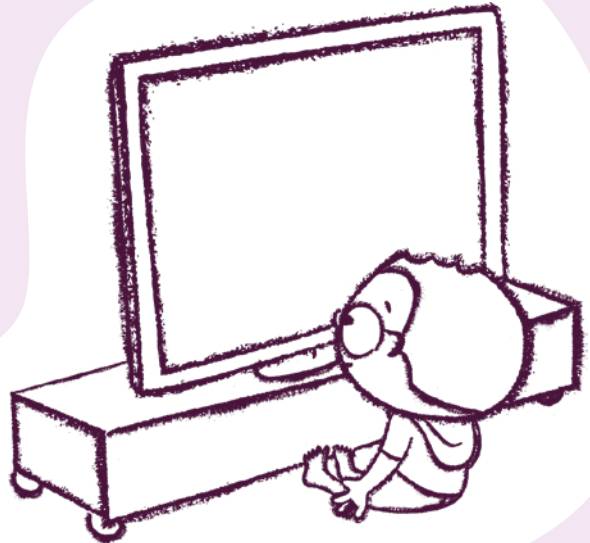
We continue to check how much time we all spend on our devices. We also monitor that what they're watching is okay for them.

We try to find phone or computer apps that encourage them to interact or be creative, rather than just watching the screen all the time.

We let our tamaiti take photos or videos with our phones sometimes. We look at them together again later to make our own stories to share with whānau. Some apps even help us make stories using our photos and voices.

We stick to our routines as much as we can and if we need to make changes we talk with them so they know what's happening too. Being prepared can help them deal with changes more easily.

Our tamaiti is asking "Why?" to many of our instructions – shoes off, don't sit on the table, no running around when koro is doing a whaikōrero! We try to answer all the why-questions clearly.



Kaitiaki tamaiti

Maramataka

Maramataka is a traditional Māori system of time using the sun, moon and stars. It is about connecting with the environment around you to help you see what's going on with the trees, plants, birds, ocean and rivers.

It's also about people's energy and moods and how those are influenced by the moon, seasons and significant events throughout the year.

Whānau could use the maramataka to help them plan special events.



Matariki

Matariki is the Māori name for the small cluster of stars also known as Pleiades. Matariki is a shortened version of Ngā mata o te ariki o Tāwhirimātea – the eyes of Tāwhirimātea.

The Matariki star cluster sets below the horizon sometime in Haratua (May) and rises in the east again between the months of Pipiri and Hōngongoi (June and July) to signal the beginning of the Māori new year.

Matariki celebrations are a significant marker of what's happening in the environment. They are an opportunity to harvest kai before the winter, celebrate time with whānau, and most importantly, carry out rituals to acknowledge the passing of loved ones since Matariki appeared the previous year.

Matariki is a chance for whānau to reflect on the highs and lows of the year gone by and to set goals and aspirations for the year ahead. Many whānau are using the wealth of resources available to plan how they can create or reclaim traditions to celebrate Matariki.



Ngā taonga tākaro

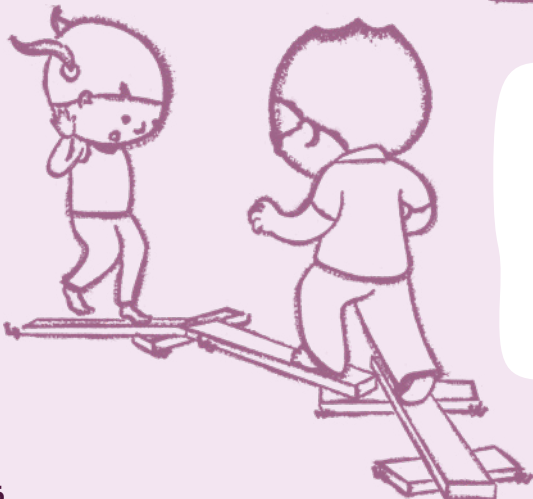
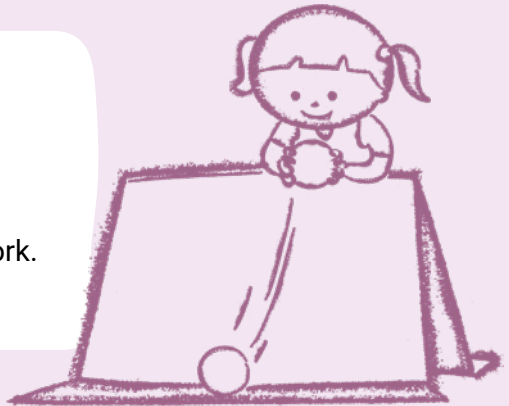
At home playing outside,
I can learn about...

Building huts, ramps and
obstacle courses

- Problem solving, safety, stability and balance.

Playing hide-and-seek,
tug-of-war, ball games
and trolleys

- Cooperation and teamwork.
- Fun for free.



Making things with
planks, boxes, string
and tyres

- Safety and using resources.
- Creativity and originality.

At home with water play, I can learn from...

Using a hose and containers

- Measurement – volume, capacity, depth, weight.
- Flow – speed, dams.
- Change – maroke/mākū (dry/wet), muddy, slippery, light, heavy.
- Tools – funnels, sieves.
- Horoi (washing) – clothing, toys, windows, cars.



Playing in the rain

- Weather – kapua (clouds), puddles, the water cycle, evaporation.
- Language – float, sink, splash, empty, full.



Taking a bath or shower

- Self care.
- Bubbles, pouring and spraying.
- Floating and sinking.

At the papa tākaro,
I can learn about...

Movement and speed

- Tere (fast), tōmuri (slow), tāre (swing).



Height and distance

- Ladders, steps, swing ropes.



Balance

- Balance beam, see-saw, swing bridge.



My strength and agility

- Climbing frame, fire-fighter's pole, spinning wheels.



Imagination and role play

- Waka tinei ahi (fire engine), tractor, pirate ship, mountain climber.



Rules, sharing, helping and taking turns

- Slide, swinging rope, hide and seek.



Waiata kōhungunga

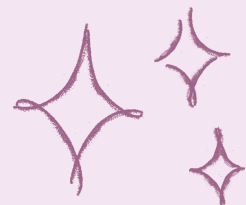
Waitī, Waitā, Waipunarangi

Tupuānuku, Tupuārangi

Ururangi, Pōhutukawa, Hiwa-i-te-rangi

Te whānau o Matariki

(Tune: Macarena)



Visit [takai.nz/waiata](https://www.takai.nz/waiata) for more.

Parenting is easy... yeah right!

Everyone has their own way of parenting their tamariki. Often it comes from the way we were treated when we were growing up.

Look at these three styles of parenting and think about what styles you use and when.



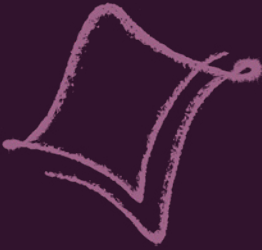
The rock

Rock parents can be inflexible and sometimes way too hard, like a rock. This style uses strict rules and harsh consequences to try get tamariki to behave.

"I'm the boss and I know what's good for you!"

So tamariki might:

- get scared and only react out of fear, not respect
- copy the behaviour, and bully and hit other kids.



The paper

Paper parents can be 'hands-off' or too overprotective. Sometimes this style may give in too easily and crumple, just like a piece of paper.

"I'm not going to tell you again, this is your last, last warning... oh alright then, just have it and stop your grizzling!"

So tamariki might:

- copy the behaviour and give up easily when they have a problem
- have less respect for other people's rights or feelings.



The tree

Somewhere in between is what works best. The tree way is flexible, but strong and steady. This way of parenting watches, explains and encourages.

"It's nearly tea time but let's have another swing while it's still warm outside."

"I know you want another lolly but it's mae time. Āpōpō."

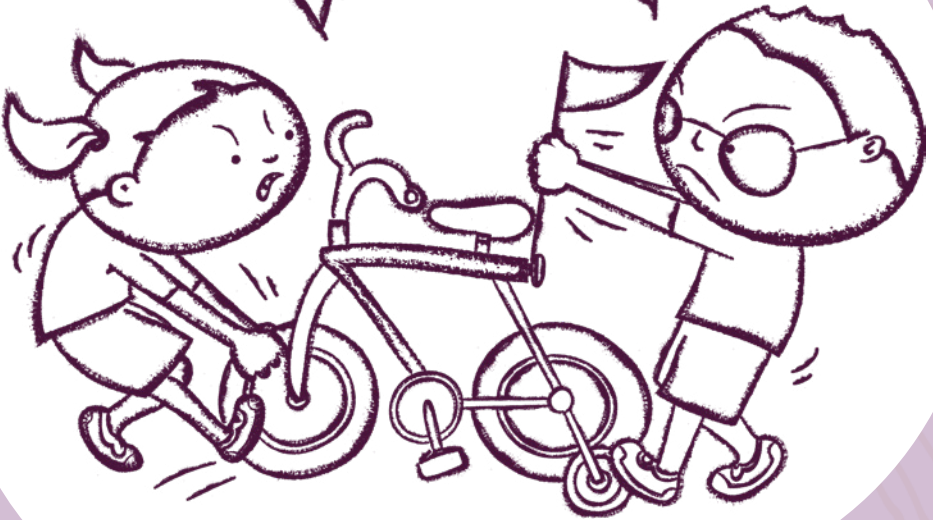
So tamariki are more likely to:

- be confident to offer their ideas
- respect other people's feelings
- learn to solve their own problems.

We are the way we are

It's my turn now! You've had it for ages.

Go away! I haven't finished playing with it yet.



I don't care whose turn it is, you can both go to your rooms. I've had enough of this arguing!



Give them a turn now or you can go to your room. Oh, okay then, have it and just be quiet.



Give them a turn now please. I'll turn on the timer and when it goes off in 5 minutes, you can have another go.





Pakiwaitara

The 3 kete of knowledge

Long ago, Tāne Mahuta decided to climb up to the heavens to seek the baskets of knowledge. His brother Whiro was angry. Whiro thought he had more right to the baskets than Tāne because he was the older brother.

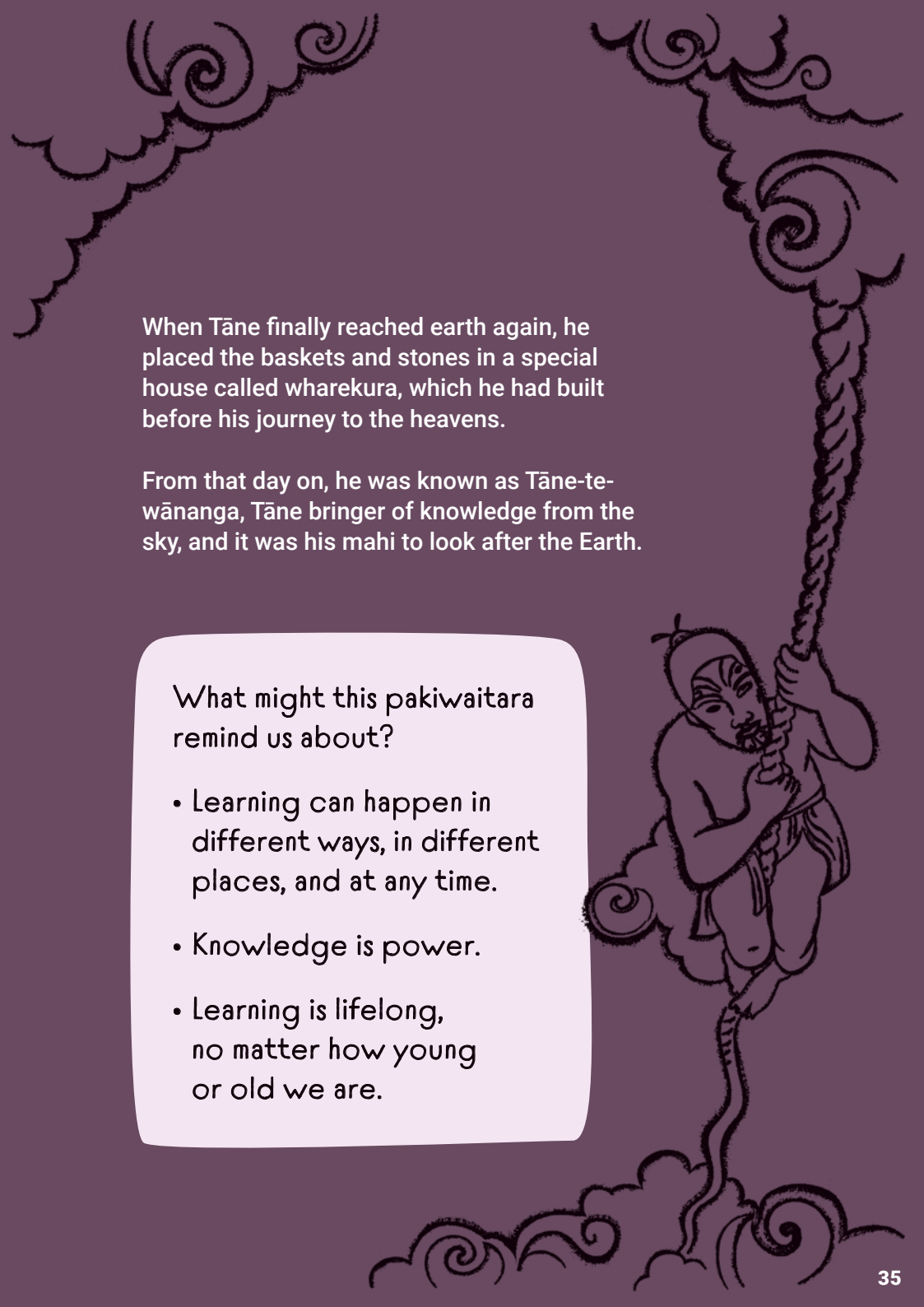
But Tāne, with the help of the winds, was able to climb up until he reached the summit of all the heavens. Here, at Te Toi-o-ngā-rangi, he reached the 3 baskets of knowledge and the 2 sacred stones. The baskets were:

Te kete aronui. This kete held all the knowledge that could help humankind.

Te kete tuauri. This kete held the knowledge of ritual, memory and prayer.

Te kete tuatea. This kete contained the knowledge of mākutu (evil) that was harmful to humans.





When Tāne finally reached earth again, he placed the baskets and stones in a special house called wharekura, which he had built before his journey to the heavens.

From that day on, he was known as Tāne-te-wānanga, Tāne bringer of knowledge from the sky, and it was his mahi to look after the Earth.

What might this pakiwaitara remind us about?

- Learning can happen in different ways, in different places, and at any time.
- Knowledge is power.
- Learning is lifelong, no matter how young or old we are.

Tōku reo, tōku ohooho

My voice, my awakening

Tamaiti says... Tell me a little bit about myself.

Tell me about some of the cheeky things I like to do?

Tell me about some of the clever things I can do by myself?

What do I do when I am sad?

Tamaiti says... Now I want to know how you're doing.

What's one new thing you've learned from being my kaitiaki?

What cracks you up about me?

Who are the people who support you?







The Whakatipu series supports whānau with parenting.

It follows the journey of plant growth – from a seed, to a seedling, to a sapling and then a young tree. The booklets cover pregnancy, birth and child development up to the age of five years. They provide information, activities and tikanga-based learning for all parents and whānau involved in nurturing the growth and development of the next generation.

Order free resources at takai.nz

te 
kākano

From conception
to birth

te 
pihinga

Booklet 1
From birth
to 6 months

Booklet 2
From 7 to
12 months

Booklet 3
From 13 to
18 months

te 
kōhuri

Booklet 1
From 19 months
to 2 years

Booklet 2
From 2 years
to 2 and a half

Booklet 3
From 2 and a half
to 3 years

te 
māhuri

From 3 to
5 years

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