

Science and nature

Pūtaiao



Children are engaged in science whenever they are learning about the world around them. This sort of play allows children to develop a perception of themselves as 'explorers' – competent, confident learners who ask questions and make discoveries.

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Te Whāriki

Science and nature play supports learning across all strands of Te Whāriki. In particular, it supports the **Exploration strand**, where children learn strategies for active exploration, thinking and reasoning and develop working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical and material worlds.



Science and nature can help children to

- learn to question and investigate
- think and act
- discover how nature works
- learn the correct names for animals, plants and nature
- care for the well-being of others, including plants.



Adults can support children by

- nurturing their sense of exploration and curiosity
- creating an environment that promotes observation, exploration and explanation
- asking questions e.g. What do you think might happen? Why do you think that happened? What do you see happening?
- inviting them to describe what they see
- supporting them to touch, taste, listen, see and smell the items
- encouraging them to come up with their own explanations.

Providing for science and nature

Provide a low display table so children can touch, feel and smell the items. Provide a range of items and perhaps try to include a different item each day. Science learning also involves activities such as preparing and cooking food, caring for plants and animals, playing with water and ice, recycling and caring for the environment, or even taking apart old equipment to see how things work inside.

Ideas for equipment:

- non-poisonous plants, flowers, leaves and vegetables
- bones, fur and feathers
- glass, metal and plastic items
- information about nature, animals, electricity and other sciences
- rocks, stones and shells
- magnifying glasses, magnets and books.

