

Whanaungatanga at Te Kuiti Playcentre

I'm lucky enough to be the session facilitator at Te Kuiti Playcentre on both their Monday and Thursday sessions. Te Kuiti, as with many others, have struggled through covid with low numbers but it is now growing. Our current members have been awesome at manaakitanga *creating a friendly and welcoming place* - what an impact each of them have made!

With many whānau new to the area, the first question is Ko wai au? *Who am I?* Nō hea koe? *where are you from?* and why have you moved here? This was the basis of our whānau wall - with a map underneath displaying family photos so we can point out to tamariki where whānau have come from.

The next part of the wall is activities to do in Te Kuiti and the surrounding areas. This has been important at creating whanaungatanga *a sense of belonging*. As part of an internal review, we made a handout of how (future) members can help on session within Playcentre and updated our area cleaning cards too.

We value tamariki learning stories especially recording tamaiti interests. This has been great for encouraging Mana Tangata *contribution* taking notice of what tamariki are learning and guiding our planning and evaluation. An area created by our alumni is our planned education wall – we are happy to report our first member has signed up to do PE1 and other members are encouraged to join. It's great to hear the positive discussions on session for education and our role as best and first teachers of our tamariki.

We plan to continue developing our wall displays to include graduate and life member photos and a snapshot of prior years. Past whānau of Te Kuiti Playcentre have given a lot of aroha to provide current whānau with wonderful resources. It is evident when out and about in Te Kuiti how many people have had a positive experience during their time at Te Kuiti Playcentre.

So, in a nutshell there are so many natural ways Te Kuiti current members and alumni create whanaungatanga at Te Kuiti Playcentre, and they should be celebrated for that. Ka mua, ka muri we talk often and value the whānau of the past providing for our future, as without them we would not be. So as our members find their tūrangawaewae *their part in this special place* holding the doors open to continue the warm welcome for future members. It would be amazing to thank our present members of Te Kuiti Playcentre with morning tea. Ngā mihi, Leigh.

