

“To provide a supportive, respectful, and inclusive environment where all children are valued as individuals. We work in partnership with parents/whānau and other professionals to ensure children reach their full potential”.

Our preschool philosophy was developed in consultation with our whānau.

Ko Taku Reo Preschool, Auckland is a bilingual, multicultural, specialist centre that caters for the needs of Deaf/hard of hearing children and hearing children. While the needs of these children are diverse and unique, similarities can be identified.

Teaching and learning bilingually at Preschool means:

- During group or mat times:
 - When the whole group is together, or the group has a mix of those who use NZSL and spoken language, we present in both NZSL and spoken language using one language at a time (e.g., NZSL first by one person, then spoken language by another). NZSL is to be used at the front, and the person speaking is positioned behind the children.
 - All staff are present at the mat-time (if possible) to support good mat-time practices and behaviours.
 - We hold separate groups/individualised learning based on needs and preferences (e.g., language, behaviour, focus, topic, learning) to reinforce good routines and attention.
- When working alongside children during their play/learning:
 - We know all children's preferred mode of communication and we match their communication preference as much as we can.
 - We ask others to support us if we are not able to be a communication match.
 - We use NZSL as much as we can to make the environment as accessible as possible for all, including role modeling and incidental language access to create a language rich environment.
- At all times:
 - We model Deaf cultural practices: strategies for getting attention; voice off times; asking questions; clarifying from adults and children; eye-contact; body language.
 - We ask children to model good NZSL and Deaf cultural practices (e.g., karakia before kai time)
 - We make sure we know our children well, including their cultural and language heritage, and use this knowledge in our work with them.
 - We engage in ongoing professional learning, communication, and language upskilling so we can continue to best meet the needs of the children.

We work alongside family and interprofessional colleagues to provide the best educational experience for DHH children.

We believe that children can:

Learn alongside their peers to create a sense of community, belonging and identity.

Communicate and learn in their preferred language including te reo and home languages.

Learn and participate in Deaf culture and community.

Access a programme based on the national Early Childhood Education curriculum pathway

Te Ara Whānui.

We believe that children thrive in an environment that:

- Provides a strong focus on language development, English and NZSL, in natural and meaningful interactions.
- Responds to individual strengths, interests, and abilities.
- Provides children with choices and encourages growth through play and targeted activities.
- Provides positive adult role models for children, both Deaf and hearing
- Encourages independence and supports children’s rights to make choices within the programme.
- Provides opportunities to develop relationships with children, adults, and the wider community.
- Is safe, inclusive, nurturing, and fun.
- Promotes a sense of belonging.

We believe that parents:

1. know their child best and they are always welcome to spend time in the preschool alongside their children and staff. We actively seek information about children’s experiences outside the preschool to understand them as individuals.
2. are partners in their child’s education and they are encouraged to participate in the daily programme.
3. benefit from meeting other families to share their experiences of parenthood and promote this with social media, preschool family community and regular family events at preschool.
4. require a wide range of information from professionals to make informed choices for their children.
5. benefit from meeting Deaf adults in the preschool to experience the Deaf community and culture as part of their child’s identity.

As a team we believe that:

1. Communication is key to working successfully as a team with parents and other professionals to achieve educational success for children.
2. Identifying, valuing and sharing the individual interests, skills or expertise of staff will enhance our programme and service.
3. Reflection and evaluation are essential to improving our service and practices.
4. We require a wide range of information from professionals to make informed choices for learnings programmes.

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Reviewed | February 2024 |
| Review partners | Lead Teacher, Staff, Parents |
| Next review date | February 2025 |
| Signed: | |
| Preschool Lead | Susan Swolfs |