



“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 and hearing children. While the needs of these children are diverse and unique, similarities can be identified. Providing access to signed and visual language is our priority.

Teaching and learning bilingually at Preschool means:

- During group or mat times:
 - Mat times will be an example of when we use Translanguaging- meaning both NZSL and English will be used separately while giving visual priority to NZSL.
 - 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 will use a mixture of NZSL and English to encourage acquisition (using each language to communicate naturally)
 - We ask others to support us if we cannot be a communication match for specific children.
 - 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:
 - Adults will model Deaf cultural practices: strategies for getting attention; voice off times; asking questions; clarifying from adults and children; eye-contact; body language.
 - We support children to learn and utilize appropriate NZSL and Deaf/Turi cultural practices (e.g., Karakia before kai time, shoulder tapping with appropriate force)
 - 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.
- At Mealtimes:
 - We will use immersion in NZSL. Children can use their preferred communication method, but all adults will be ‘voice off’ and use only NZSL or other visual communication tools to communicate during mealtimes.

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, NZSL and English, 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. This includes children's ability to choose when to wear their hearing devices. We will not force or use withholding techniques to persuade children to wear their devices.
- 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:

- know their child best and are always welcome in the preschool alongside their children and staff. We actively seek information about children's experiences outside the preschool to understand them as individuals.
- are partners in their child's education and they are encouraged to participate in the daily programme.
- benefit from meeting other families to share their experiences of parenthood and we promote connection through our social media, preschool community and regular family events.
- require a wide range of information from professionals to make informed choices for their children.
- 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:

- Communication is key to working successfully with parents and other professionals to achieve educational success for children.
- Identifying, valuing and sharing the individual interests, skills or expertise of staff will enhance our programme and service.
- Reflection and evaluation are essential to improving our service and practices.
- We require a wide range of information from professionals to make informed choices for learnings programmes.
- All Deaf children have a right to a signed language. National signed languages are the only fully accessible language for Deaf children from birth onwards. (Article 2 of the Declaration on the Rights of Deaf Children)

Reviewed	February 2025
Review partners	Lead Teacher, Staff, Parents
Next review date	February 2026
Signed:	
Preschool Lead	Susan Swolfs