



**sport**waikato  
*out there and active*

# KIWIPRESCHOOLER

**START EARLY AND BE ACTIVE FOR LIFE**

A simple guide to a beneficial, suitable and safe  
movement programme for three to five year olds



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# The Active Preschooler

The physical activity needs of young children are very different from adults and older children. The first seven years of life are the most influential in establishing active movement habits and setting the foundation for continued learning throughout life.

Early childhood experiences must allow the developing child to acquire physical skills and enjoy moving, as they learn about their body and their environment. Preschoolers play and are active for sheer enjoyment, not for the good it is doing them.

It is essential our children are able to grow, move and develop as they were intended to do.

"To grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society".<sup>1</sup>

All play involves active movement that develops and strengthens the body and brain as we grow through childhood. Establishing active routines at an early age helps children to successfully develop both the body and mind as they learn about their world.

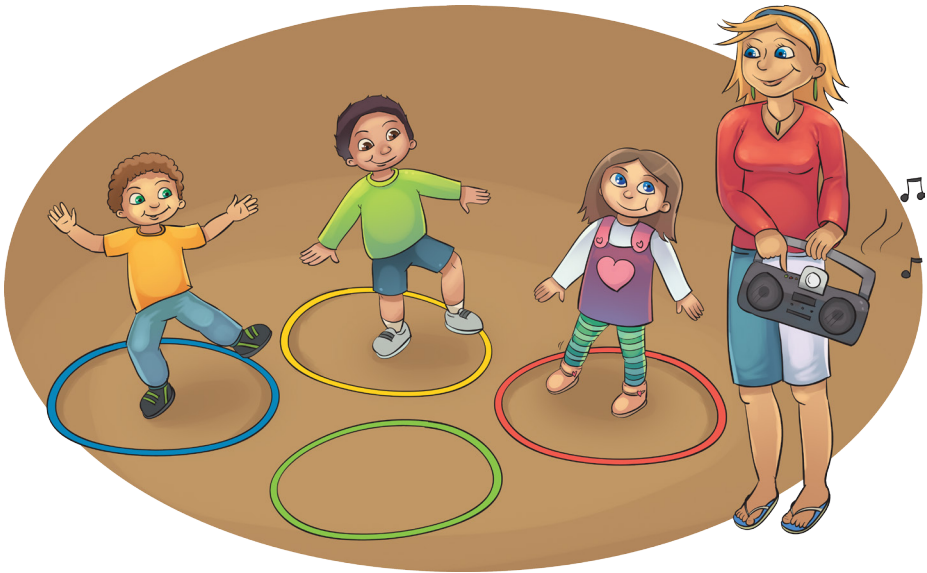
KiwiPreschooler™ introduces play activities and ideas appropriate to the child's development. This allows enjoyment and different skills involving thinking, moving, communicating, socialising and imitating to be introduced, practiced and acquired.

<sup>1</sup> Te Whariki He Whariki Matauranga Mōngā Mōkōpuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum.



It is important for parents and caregivers to be active with their children, not only as role models, but also to ensure their own health and vitality. This provides the foundation for an active life for the whole family, and encourages an appreciation of physical activities, sport and exercise (kori tinana) as leisure time pursuits.

KiwiPreschooler promotes parents and caregivers as the children's first and most important teachers. It promotes their roles in developing and reinforcing movement experiences through play. It provides parents and children with ideas for play that can be further developed through imaginative and creative thinking.



The KiwiPreschooler manual continues on from KiwiBaby™ and KiwiToddler™, starting baby and toddler along the pathway of being active and learning right from day one. If your preschooler missed KiwiBaby or KiwiToddler he or she can still begin with KiwiPreschooler. It is never too late to start being active.

Note: For ease of reading and in order not to show any preference, the use of his and her alternates throughout this manual.

# Benefits of the Kiwipreschooler Manual

## Ngā hua o roto

This manual -

- Encourages you to establish daily routines with your preschooler.
- Encourages you as parents and caregivers to become your child's first teachers.
- Encourages your preschooler's enjoyment of being active (kōri tinana) which will lead to a healthier life.
- Develops body awareness and promotes the development of good patterns of movement.
- Provides a range of activities to develop locomotion, stability, manipulation and body awareness. These are the foundation movement skills.
- Provides activities that use the senses of taste, smell, hearing, vision and touch, as well as the vestibular and the proprioceptive senses (body awareness).
- Promotes the value of finding playmates for your preschoolers, they learn to interact and think about others.
- Encourages communication through talking and listening.
- Stimulates your preschooler's curiosity, imagination, and creativity.
- Promotes the value of giving praise and positive reassurance.
- Encourages good loving touch (awhi) in your family (whānau), to strengthen parent/child relationships.
- Promotes the value of you, the parent, doing daily activity as a role model for your preschooler.
- Familiarises your preschooler with activities presented at early childhood facilities.
- Promotes taha tinana (body), taha hinengāro (mind), taha wairua (spirit), and taha whānau (family).
- Promotes learning whilst doing; hearing the language and describing the activity, eg 'arms up'.

## Facts About Preschoolers

### Development, Movement and Play

Development is a continuous process. The sequence of development is the same in all children, but the rate of development varies from child to child. The age a toddler becomes a preschooler varies considerably. It does not happen overnight.

Movement is essential for brain development as it is through movement experience that connections are made in the mind/body system.

Development of these connections is necessary for memory, communication between the two sides of the brain, processing information, sensory development, and later the formal learning of language, reading, writing and mathematics.

Preschoolers tend to be more co-operative than toddlers, are able to do more for themselves, are eager to please you and seem easier to live with. They have a better understanding of what the consequences of their actions will be. For example they know throwing a ball over the fence means it will no longer be there to play with. The preschooler thinks about how something works and makes it work.

Preschoolers have confidence in their abilities and want to be more independent, although they need to know their parents or caregivers are always there to come back to. They are adventurous, will climb trees and playground equipment and can run quite fast. They develop the ability to hop, jump and go up and down stairs with one foot on each step. They learn to throw and catch a ball quite well, make a good attempt at dressing themselves, can use a knife and fork and develop better control with hand activities (eg using a pencil). They will alternate between using their left and right hands, and feet, to perform different activities and need to be allowed the freedom to do this.

It is in the preschool years that children begin to develop an awareness of the role each person in the family plays and begin to imitate aspects of each person's behaviour. Therefore if parents and caregivers are active in teaching (ie demonstrating and joining in with play activities) their children will be actively learning; play is their work.

## Play

Play and play materials have educational value, and are part of the basic needs of all preschoolers to assist them in their stages of development. Play also keeps them occupied and prevents boredom which rapidly leads to frustration and bad temper. It is necessary to provide preschoolers with play activities that are appropriate to their individual stages of development and are interesting to them, remembering that toys which interest one child will not necessarily interest another. Play helps preschoolers to discover, to practice old skills and develop new skills, to concentrate, to experiment, to use their imagination and to develop physically. It gives them emotional satisfaction and a sense of achievement. Play is the basis of their learning.

## Social Interaction

During the preschool years children need to learn to interact and play co-operatively with each other. Through this play they learn to share and to take turns, and to develop behaviour that is acceptable in the world outside the family. They begin to use and understand language and instructions which assist them to express themselves and understand other people's needs. Parents and caregivers can help preschoolers to develop tools that enable them to negotiate and solve their own problems.

## Participation

Children play for the fun of it and are not usually interested in, and may not understand the meaning of, winning or losing. The idea of competition and winning is usually introduced to them by adults. Some competition is healthy because it encourages preschoolers, as individuals, to strive to do their best and to do better. This competition

should be directed at personal improvement rather than competition against others. The role of parents and caregivers involves encouraging children to do their best when participating, and to enjoy their activities, rather than to instil their own values of winning in their children. After a game or competition the question to preschoolers should be 'did you have fun?' rather than 'did you win?'. They respond well to praise and positive reassurance for all efforts.

## Language

The more often a word is used the more readily a preschooler will understand and begin to use it. They understand what you say long before they begin to speak. Even though he won't say the words he will put his arms up when getting dressed once he has heard this many times and done the action. Talk with him about his world. Use the names of actions, places and people. Name his body parts too. When doing activities use the directional language (eg up, down, in, out, through).

- Throw the ball up.
- Roll the ball along.
- Push the ball through.

These are challenging concepts and will be more readily understood through doing and associating the words used. Many songs for young children name and use body parts and are a fun way of playing and learning.

## Books

Books are invaluable in the development of the communication skills of listening, thinking, understanding and speaking. Books help preschoolers to develop their visual understanding and ability to notice detail, and stimulate the imagination. An early enjoyment of books provides a foundation for a child's more formal education later on. The library provides a cost effective way of introducing lots of different books. Preschoolers should not be forced to look at books when they would clearly prefer to be doing something else.

## Nutrition

Preschoolers require healthy and regular small snacks because they are very active and growing fast. Eating habits vary enormously from one child to another - some eat small amounts and others larger amounts. It is important to provide them with healthy foods containing all the nutrients they need, so they begin to learn good eating habits at home.

For information about healthy meals and snacks for preschoolers and the whole family (whānau) contact your Plunket Nurse, Public Health Nurse, or Community Dietitian.

Note: If you feel your preschooler is not progressing as expected and you are concerned about their development, contact your Plunket Nurse, Public Health Nurse or Doctor.

## Water

The drinking habits of children are formed early and at home. It is essential to introduce water to children early in their development before they get a taste for sweetened beverages. Water is the recommended choice for children, rather than fruit juice or soft drinks, which can contribute to weight problems and teeth decay. Encouraging your children to drink low-fat milk is also really important as the calcium helps to build strong bones and teeth. Water and low-fat milk are the best choices for everyday drinks.

## PLAY MATERIALS

### Ngā rauemi tākaro

Inexpensive materials have been utilised for nearly all the activities in this manual, most of which you'll find in your home. Some items can be used in several different ways, so you won't have to go out and buy a lot of supplies to clutter your cupboards and shelves. The most expensive toys are not always the best toys, and because they are expensive doesn't necessarily mean that your preschooler will prefer them.

Household items to save:

- Empty plastic bottles that have not contained poisonous or harmful substances.
- Large bottle caps, egg cartons, plastic containers.
- Cardboard boxes of all sizes.
- Aluminium foil and foil dishes.
- Old magazines, newspapers and junk mail.
- Handtowel tubes.
- String and wool.
- Paper, corks.
- Material scraps, cotton reels, wooden pegs.

Environmental items to collect:

- Shells, dried leaves, acorns, pinecones etc.

Pages [11 to 16](#) include instruction and recipes for play materials that are suggested in some of the KiwiPreschooler activities.

Note: Māori beliefs sometimes exclude the practice of using food and cooking utensils for play. For each activity where these have been used alternative materials are suggested.

# RECIPES

## PLAYDOUGH

Store playdough in a sealed plastic container in the fridge. Add some flour if it becomes too sticky.

### Playdough 1

1 1/4 cup flour  
1/2 cup salt  
1/2 cup water



Combine the flour and salt, and slowly mix in the water. Work the mixture into a smooth dough with your fingers.

### Playdough 2

2 cups flour  
1 cup salt  
1 cup water containing food colouring  
2 tablespoons of cooking oil

Combine the flour and salt, stir in the water and oil. Work the ingredients with your fingers until you get the consistency of bread dough.

### Playdough 3

2 cups flour  
2 tablespoons cream of tartar (from the supermarket baking aisle)  
2 cups boiling water  
1/2 cup salt  
2 tablespoons cooking oil

Mix the flour, salt and cream of tartar together, and slowly add the water and oil. Food colouring can be added to the water before mixing.

To make your playdough a bit more interesting or to change the texture add macaroni, glitter, oatmeal or dried beans to it.



## NON TOXIC PAINT

### Paint 1

Beat together soap flakes (from the laundry aisle at your local supermarket) and water to make a mixture that is the consistency of whipped potatoes. Add food colouring of your choice.

### Paint 2

1 cup cornflour

1 litre boiling water

1 cup soap flakes

Food colouring (a few drops)

Dissolve the cornflour in a little cold water. Slowly add the boiling water and boil until thick. Take it off the heat and beat in the soap flakes. Add food colouring to give it a vibrant colour.

### Paint 3

1 cup flour

1 cup cold water

1/4 teaspoon dishwashing liquid

3 cups boiling water

Food colouring (a few drops)

Combine the flour and cold water, stirring until it is smooth. Gradually pour the mixture into the boiling water and bring it to the boil, stirring constantly. Add food colouring and let it cool.

### Paint 4

1/2 cup soap flakes

Food colouring

Large 1/2 cup of water

1/2 cup instant cold water starch

Beat all the ingredients together and add food colouring.

**Note:** These recipes can be used for finger painting, foot painting or brush painting. Store the paint in airtight containers. Paints made with soap flakes or dishwashing liquid are easier to wash off clothes and surfaces.

## BUBBLESOAP

### Bubble Mixture 1

#### Mix together:

7 cups water  
3/4 cup clear dishwashing liquid  
1/4 cup sugar  
Food colouring (optional)

### Bubble Mixture 2

#### Mix together:

1 1/2 cups water  
1/2 cup clear dishwashing liquid  
1/2 cup (or more) glycerine  
(from your pharmacy or supermarket)  
2 tablespoons sugar  
Food colouring (optional)

### Bubble Mixture 3

For frothy bubbles mix liquid detergent and water, or bubblebath and water in a small bowl. Blow bubbles through a straw in the bowl. For coloured bubbles add a few drops food colouring.



**Caution:** Do not let your preschooler swallow the bubblesoap.

## NON TOXIC GLUE

### Glue 1

Mix flour and water together until you get the consistency you want.

### Glue 2

1 cup water

1 heaped teaspoon of flour

Mix the flour to a paste with a little water, then add the rest of the water and boil the mixture for a few minutes. Cool in a covered container.



## Markers

- Make your own marker cones by saving your plastic milk bottles and painting them with bright coloured non toxic paint. Put a few stones, some dirt, water or sand in the bottom of the bottles so they don't fall over.
- Other items that can be used instead of marker cones are cereal boxes, bricks, blocks of wood, or large stones. A variety of markers such as books, toys, upside down bowls, etc can be used inside.
- Plastic marker cones can be bought in most toy shops.

# Homemade Musical Instruments

## Drums

- Upside down saucepan or tin and wooden spoon.
- Cardboard box and paper hand towel tube.

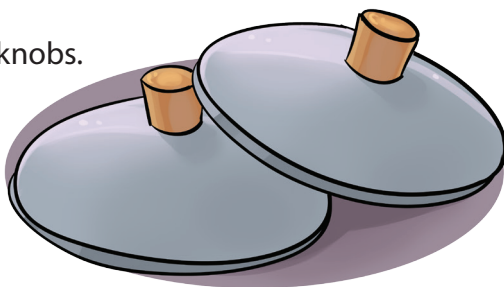


## Shakers

- Pea gravel in a plastic bottle. Seal the lid with strong glue and tape.
- Sand sealed in a small box.

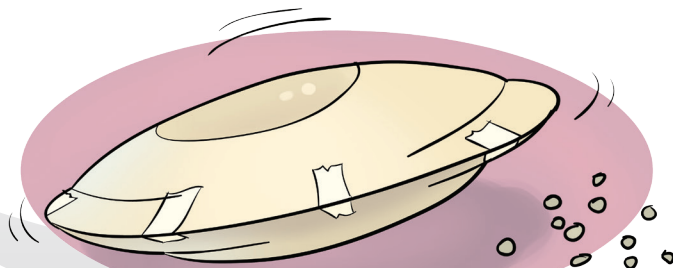
## Cymbals

- Two saucepan lids with knobs.



## Tambourines

- Two disposable plastic plates with pea gravel/acorns/seeds between them and taped together.



### **Scrapers**

- Sandpaper rubbed on a hollow cardboard box.
- Corrugated cardboard and wooden spoon.

### **Comb Tunes**

- Run finger along the teeth of a comb.
- Wrap wax paper around a comb leaving both ends open and blow or hum in one end.

### **Rattles**

- Stone, acorns or dried seeds in an empty plastic milk bottle.
- Coins in a plastic money box.

### **Bells**

- Choose glass containers of different sizes and fill with water to varying levels, and use a pencil or wooden peg as a striker.
- (Supervise this activity).



Musical instruments are readily available in toy shops. Check for non toxic paint.

## Rewards

### Ngā mahi whakanui

Rewarding preschoolers for their efforts boosts their self confidence and self esteem. They respond well to praise and positive reassurance for trying. Rewards can be given to preschoolers after a game, or a KiwiFun session (see [page 111](#)) in acknowledgement of their efforts to try their best, to play cooperatively, to share and to take turns. If rewards are to be given, it is important that every child receives one. They do not need to be expensive.

Examples of rewards you may like to give:

- stickers
- stamp on each hand
- large star or ribbon taped to their chest
- home-made crown for each to wear home
- balloon
- pet rock (small stone with a face painted on it)
- homemade playdough (see [page 11](#)) wrapped in plastic

## Fair Play

It is never too early to teach your child about playing fair. Take advantage of opportunities as they arise at home to encourage respect for other family members; to learn to share toys; to be considerate and to take turns. In other words praise your child for Fair play.

Recognising the effort is important, particularly when young children are still developing skills such as running, jumping and co ordination. Success should be based on participation and the individual's success. All children learn at differing rates, and need us as adults to encourage, motivate and praise.

Mentioning the work Fair play as often as possible will help cement the philosophy from this early stage.

## **Child Safety**

### **Tiaki tamariki**

Young children need to be supervised by an adult at all times. Your child will become increasingly independent from you and the home environment. Begin to give simple explanations of safety precautions, as you make your home safe for your preschooler.

#### **Car Safety**

Ensure your preschooler is always buckled into the appropriately sized child car seat.

You will need to investigate the next stage of child car seat at around four years of age or when your preschooler becomes too big for the car seat. If you purchase a booster seat and harness make sure they are 'Standards' approved. Always use them.

#### **Falls**

Your preschooler is more adventurous now. Play equipment needs to be correctly designed, installed and maintained and the ground surface made of impact absorbing material such as rubber matting or bark. Use window safety catches on upper floor windows.

#### **Burns**

At this age you can teach your preschooler to recognise the hot and cold taps by colour and only to turn on the cold tap. Ensure your hot tap water temperature is no more 55 °C. Apply cold water for ten minutes to any burns.

Dress your preschooler in close fitting fire resistant nightwear and ensure a fireguard is in place.

## Poisoning

Your preschooler is attracted to the contents of bottles and containers during play. Many pills look like lollies. Never call medication 'sweets' or 'lollies'. Ask your chemist to fit child resistant lids on all your medicine bottles.

Keep medicines and household cleaners in a high locked cupboard. Garden poisons must be locked away. NEVER store poisonous liquids in soft drink containers.

If your child has been poisoned give water or milk to drink and then seek medical advice. Phone the National Poisons Centre 0800 764 766; Accident and Emergency Department or your doctor for advice if your child is poisoned.

## Water Safety

Supervise your preschooler at all times when near water. Flotation aids do not remove the need for constant supervision.

Check your swimming pool is fenced to comply with the Swimming Pool Fencing Law. Contact your local council for more information.

## Check List

- Use an approved child car seat on ALL journeys.
- Ensure child car seats are used in other cars for your child.
- Tricycle and wheeled toys should only be ridden inside your property.
- Teach your preschooler to get in and out of the car on the footpath side.
- Teach your preschooler not to leave your property without an adult.
- Hold your preschooler's hand when crossing and stepping onto the road.
- Maintain your hot water temperature at 55 °C.
- Secure fireguards around fires and radiant heaters.



- Use close fitting fire resistant children's night clothes.
- Use a self closing gate with a childproof lock and fence around a swimming pool or spa pool.
- Keep medicines, detergents, cleaning agents and other poisons in high cupboards with safety locks.
- Buy medicines, detergents, cleaning agents and other poisons with child resistant closures/packaging.
- Tools and garden poisons should be kept in a locked cupboard or shed.
- Sharp knives and scissors should be kept out of reach or in a drawer with a safety catch (not on the bench).
- Place safety glass, wooden bars or safety film across all glass at low levels.
- Fence outdoor play areas.
- Ensure that the garage, driveway and work areas are not accessible to your preschooler.
- Have a baby sitter at least 14 years of age. Provide written safety instructions including your contact number.
- Check the safety aspects of your child minder's home or Early Childhood Centre.

## Acknowledgement

This Child Safety information has been provided by the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society.





# KiwiPreschooler Activities

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## Follow the Leader

### Whaiā te tangata

#### Instructions

- Ask your preschooler and her friends to line up behind you.
- Have the children follow you, doing the same actions and movements as you.
- Lead the line around a course, walking forwards, backwards, sideways and zig zag. Use the language with the action.
- Walk on tip toes, on heels, low, tall, big steps, small steps, feet close together and feet wide apart.
- Speed up and slow down.
- Stop and balance on different body parts eg one arm and one leg.

#### Variations

- Have the children link hands as they follow the leader.
- Include arm movements such as swinging and circling the arms.
- Take them through a challenge course (see [page 107](#)).
- Let the children take turns at being the leader.
- Continue to follow the leader but walk together as a group rather than a line.
- Play follow the leader in pairs, taking turns at being the leader.
- Play 'Simon Says' where the children are facing you and they do as you instruct and demonstrate.

#### Main Benefits

- Developing movement skills, flexibility, balance and co ordination.
- Observing and imitating movement.
- Developing listening skills.
- Following instructions.
- Learning body part names.
- Learning directional language.
- Learning through group interaction and co operation.



### **Precautions**

- Allow your preschooler to develop her own interpretation of movement and actions and praise all efforts.
- Ensure her movement is not limited by restrictive clothing.

# Animals In The Zoo

## Ngā momo Kararehe

### Instructions

- Join in a game with your preschooler and his friends pretending to move like some of the animals in the zoo. Demonstrate how the animals move or visit the zoo so they can watch the animals.
- Instruct them to:
  - Walk like an elephant swinging its trunk.
  - Scratch like a monkey.
  - Jump like a kangaroo.
  - Wash your paws like a lion.
  - Move like a crocodile.
  - Yawn like a hippopotamus.
  - Reach for leaves in a tree like a giraffe.
  - Walk on all fours like a bear.
  - Fly like a bird from branch to branch.
- Let the children take turns at naming the animal.

### Variations

- Visit a farm together and pretend to be farm animals such as a cow, horse, sheep, rabbit, duck, chicken.
- Go on a nature walk and imitate birds, ants and spiders. Reach up high like a tree and sway in the breeze like a flower.
- Take a trip to the beach and imitate seagulls, crabs, fish, a dog digging in the sand, rubbing on sunscreen, and someone licking an ice cream.
- Name different vehicles for the children to pretend to be: train, row boat, car, bus, truck, crane, plane.
- Sing any animal songs you know and make some instruments ([page 15](#)).

## Main Benefits

- Developing movement skills, flexibility, balance and co ordination.
- Observing and imitating different movement patterns.
- Developing pretend play and learning to interact with others.
- Encouraging imitation and memory recall.



## Precautions

- Allow your preschooler to develop his own interpretation of movement and actions rather than trying to make him see things the way you do.
- Ensure his movement is not limited by restrictive clothing.

## Walk Tall Te hikoī teitei

### Instructions

- Help your preschooler to balance a sand bag or small folded towel on her head.
- Practice walking around the room together balancing your sand bags or towels on your heads. Try not to let them fall.
- Sit down on a chair while still balancing your sand bags or towels on your heads, and stand up again.

### Variations

- Have other children join in.
- Try balancing different objects on their heads eg book, newspaper, soft toy, plastic bowl.
- Ask children to balance the object on the palm of their hands and the backs of their hands, first one hand and then the other.
- Balance objects on one shoulder, then the other shoulder and then an object on both shoulders at the same time.
- Have the children bend forward and then put an object on each of their backs. Ask them to walk around trying not to let the object fall off.
- Ask them to walk heel to toe along a line forwards.
- Try activities walking backwards or sideways.
- Bend down and pick up an object.
- Walk over small objects placed on the floor eg a pair of socks.



### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, co ordination and awareness of posture.
- Learning by example and through word association.
- Experimenting with her centre of gravity and having fun.
- Following instructions and learning directional language.



### ! Precautions

Ensure there is plenty of clear space to play this game. Avoid extending this activity time to the stage where you or the children cease to enjoy it.

## Board Walk He hīkoi whānui

### Instructions

- Balance a board on two low boxes; one box at each end of the board no higher than child's knee height.
- Pretend it is a diving board and encourage your preschooler to walk to the end of the board, bend his knees and jump into an imaginary swimming pool. Then have him climb out of the imaginary pool and walk around and do it again.
- While he is walking the board he may need to hold your hand to maintain his balance, or he may balance by holding his arms out sideways.

### Variations

- Narrow the width of the board to make it harder, and then try using a ladder instead of a board.
- Raise the height of the board, to make it harder, and then try raising one end more than the other.
- Ask him to walk the board with his hands out sideways, then at his sides, on his head, and behind his back.
- Place challenges on the board such as sand bags and ask him to step over or between them.
- Help him learn to walk along the board backwards and then sideways.
- Add these activities to a challenge course (see [page 107](#)).

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance and co ordination.
- Practicing landings with bent knees.
- Experimenting with height and gravity.
- Developing pretend play.
- Practicing judging distances.
- Interpreting instructions.



### Precautions



- The safest way to minimise climbing accidents is to teach him how to climb up and then climb down backwards. Supervise his first attempts at the activity.
- Ensure he will land on a soft surface if he falls.
- You may need to hold his hand when he jumps. Encourage him to land with his knees bent, arms out in front.

# Marching Soldiers

## Ngā mahi hōia

### Instructions

- Use some rhythmic music or make your own rhythm by clapping or beating a drum (see [page 15](#)).
- Have your preschooler move around the room stepping to the beat.
- Ask her to be a soldier marching with her back straight and her head held high.
- Once she has established a rhythmic pattern ask her to swing her arms at her sides as she marches.
- Teach her to take a right turn, left turn and about face.

### Variations

- Have her friends join in to make a marching team, and each have a turn at leading and drumming the beat.
- Have her clap her hands on every fourth beat: 1, 2, 3 clap. Clap hands in front, above her head, behind her back.
- Once she has established a pattern give her a new instruction eg 1, 2, 3, jump; 1, 2, 3 hop; 1, 2, 3, kick.
- Go on a marching expedition in the neighbourhood, march on concrete, gravel, sand, grass and tar seal. March down an alleyway to make your steps echo. March along a crack in the footpath and along the edge of the kerb. March on tip toes, on heels, with legs wide apart and with legs close together.
- Take your preschooler to watch a marching team or army drill.

## Main Benefits

- Improving balancing, left-right co ordination and posture.
- Developing a sense of rhythm.
- Learning by observation and having fun.
- Encouraging creativity and imagination.
- Following directional language.



## Precautions

- Don't laugh at your preschooler's attempts at rhythmic movement as she may become self conscious. Give lots of praise.

# Foot Prints

## Ngā tapuwae

### Instructions

- Provide your preschooler with some paint (see [page 12](#)) and a large piece of paper. Pour some paint into a shallow dish so that he can stand in the paint and then walk across the paper to make footprints.
- When the paint is dry, cut the footprints out and place them on the floor in sequence.
- Practice walking on the footprints placing the correct feet on matching prints. Count each step as you go.
- Vary the spaces between the footprints.

### Variations

- Make footprints along a large strip of old wallpaper by tracing around his feet.
- Make each print a different colour and encourage him to name the colour of each print as he steps on it.
- Number the footprints and then place them along the floor leading into the bathroom so that he counts each step he takes everytime he goes to wash his hands.
- On a large piece of paper trace feet and handprints and then ask your preschooler and his friends to match up one foot, and then each hand. Encourage them to help each other to find the matching prints.
- Walk on different surfaces, eg grass, sand, and up and down slopes.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, co ordination and movement skills.
- Learning by observing and imitating.
- Developing body awareness and exploring new capabilities.
- Learning to count and naming colours.



### Precautions

- If he becomes frustrated and has a difficulty with the game leave it and let him go back to it when he's ready.
- Praise all attempts at the activities whether he is successful or not.

# Statues

## Te mahi whakapakoko

### Instructions

- Pretend to be a statue and ask your preschooler to copy the way you are standing.
- Change your position to be a different statue and let her copy you again.
- Take turns at being the statue, copying each others poses.
- Invite her friends to join in the game encouraging everyone to take turns at being the leader.
- Use the names for body parts during this activity.

### Variations

- Play some music for everyone to dance to. Instruct them to 'freeze' in whatever position they're in when the music stops. Repeat this several times.
- Name shapes and objects and ask the children to be like one eg tree, ball, circle, chair, animal, vehicle.
- Go window shopping in town together and encourage your preschooler to pose like the dummies in the clothes shop windows.
- Look at books together and try to imitate the different poses of characters in the books.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, co ordination and flexibility.
- Learning through observing and imitating others.
- Developing body awareness.
- Learning the names of body parts.





### **Precautions**

- Allow her to interpret poses in her own way and don't laugh at her attempts or she may feel self-conscious and refuse to play. Give her plenty of praise for all her efforts.

# Stepping Stones

## Kōhatu whētoko

### Instructions

- Cut out ten shapes to make stepping stones that are large enough to easily fit two feet on. Number the stones from 1 - 10 so they can be easily read.
- Place them on the floor in a circle.
- Have your preschooler pretend that he has his new shoes on and if he steps between the stones he'll get covered in mud.
- Step from stone to stone in one direction, identifying each number as he steps. Change direction.
- Use the directional language – on, off, between, in and out, as you play this game.

### Variations

- Vary the space between the stones so that he has to take very small steps to very big steps.
- Lay hula hoops on the grass and step, jump and run from hoop to hoop.
- Use bricks, paving stones or blocks of wood as stepping stones.
- Set up a challenge course (see [page 107](#)) that involves stepping from object to object and see if he can do it without touching the ground or floor.
- Try jumping from stone to stone.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, foot/eye co ordination and movement skills.
- Learning by observation and imitating.
- Exploring new capabilities.
- Using imagination and learning to count.
- Learning directional language.



### Precautions



- If he becomes frustrated and has difficulty with the game try teaching it without the numbers until he understands the concept, or leave it and let him go back to it when he is ready.
- Ensure the brick and blocks of wood are sturdy and are unlikely to slide from under his feet.

# Horse And Cart

## Hoiho me te kōneke

### Instructions

- Find a large cardboard box and help your preschooler decorate it with wheels and colours so that it resembles a cart.
- Attach a loop of skipping rope or string to the box as a harness.
- Have your preschooler pretend to be the horse and pull the cart by putting the harness around her waist.
- This can be a useful game when tidying up because she can put all her toys into the cart and take them to her room.

### Variations

- Vary the weight of the cart by putting heavier items in it.
- Develop a course around the garden for the horse and cart to follow, set up red, yellow and green traffic lights, and encourage her to pretend to go shopping.
- Have her drive the cart very slowly around the course and then quickly; galloping and then trotting.
- Encourage her to help in the garden by collecting all the leaves or weeds in the cart and then taking them and putting them on the compost heap.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, co ordination and exercising many different muscles.
- Using her imagination.
- Developing a sense of achievement, learning by observation and word association.
- Establishing routines.



### **Precautions**



- Preschoolers see things differently from adults so give her the opportunity to adapt things to suit her own play.
- Ensure that all fences and gates are secure so that she does not come to any harm.
- Be patient. Sometimes having a 'helper' means that it takes twice as long to get things done.

# Streamers

## Ngā ripene

### Instructions

- Attach a tissue or piece of crepe paper to your preschooler's wrists and ankles.
- Encourage him to stretch out his arms and pretend to be a bird, flapping his arms so that the streamers follow his arm movements.
- Then encourage him to run around the garden flapping his wings.

### Variations

- Play this game on a windy day or in front of a fan to get more movement with the streamers.
- Encourage him to walk backwards and sideways, to march and to jump.
- Have him lie on his back and make patterns in the air with the streamers on his ankles.
- Attach a streamer to his back and pretend it is a tail. Chase him and try to stand on his tail, and then let him chase you, or a playmate's tail.
- Hold a streamer in each hand and make patterns and shapes in the air, or do this same activity with shoelaces or string in a tub of water.
- Make a simple kite and fly it together.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, co ordination, flexibility and movement skills.
- Observing, experimenting, interacting with and thinking about others.
- Learning about air flow.



### **Precautions**

- Your preschooler may prefer to make up his own game rather than take part in any structured play. Allow him the opportunity to do this.
- When playing the tail game ensure that you put his tail back on soon after it comes off because he is likely to have become very attached to it.

# Movement To Music

## Waiata-ā-ringa

### Instructions

- Ask your preschooler and her friends to hold hands in a circle and dance round singing:

'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush,  
the Mulberry Bush, the Mulberry Bush.  
Here we go round the Mulberry Bush  
on a cold and frosty morning.'
- Then instruct them to stop dancing, stop holding hands, and follow your movements while you pretend to brush your hair while singing:

'This is the way we brush our hair,  
brush our hair, brush our hair.  
This is the way we brush our hair  
on a cold and frosty morning.'
- Repeat the song changing the second verse each time eg 'This is the way we clean our teeth', 'wash our hands', 'sweep the floor', 'milk the cow', 'jump up and down', 'twist about', or any other movements.
- Music can be borrowed from the library or purchased. This is an essential for the developing preschooler.

### Variations

#### Hoke Toke

Tō ringa kī roto

Tō ringa kī waho

Tō ringa kī roto

Ka hurihurihia

Kei te hope hope au

Kei te hurihuri au

Kei te pakipaki au e

#### Hokey Tokey

Your hands to the inside

Your hands to the outside

Your hands to the inside

And shake, shake, shake

I am swinging my hips

I am turning around

I am clapping my hands

Repeat the song changing ringa (hands) to waewae (feet), mahunga (head), pakahiwi (shoulders), puku (stomach), nōnō (bottom), etc.



Tahi, rua e toru matimati	1,2,3 fingers
Wha, rima e ono matimati	4, 5, 6 fingers
Whitu, waru e iwa matimati	7, 8, 9 fingers
Tekau matimati e	10 fingers

Use finger actions and sing to the tune of 'Ten Little Indians'.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, flexibility and co ordination.
- Co ordinating movement with words.
- Developing a sense of rhythm.
- Learning through observation and word association.
- Developing patterning, timing and sequencing. These are essential for both maths and reading.
- Developing memory skills.



### Precautions

- Your preschooler may not remember all the words or movements so allow her to interpret the songs in her own way with plenty of praise from you.

# Hide And Seek

## Te huna me te rapu

### Instructions

- Play hide and seek inside or within a defined play area outside.
- Show your preschooler some hiding places and then close your eyes and count to ten slowly.
- Go and look for him.
- Take turns at hiding.

### Variations

- Invite some of his friends to play. Help one of the children to hide his eyes and then count to ten with him. Then let him go and search for the others. Ensure everyone has a turn.
- Play hide and seek with a teddy bear or some other toy in the lounge or bedroom. While your preschooler's not looking place the bear somewhere in the room with a leg or arm visible so that your preschooler can see it. Ask him to find it. Take turns at hiding the bear.
- When he knows most of the hiding places, hide the whole bear so that he can't see it.
- Play hide and seek among trees in an orchard, sand dunes at the beach, or trees in a park.

### Main Benefits

- Developing movement skills, co ordination and an awareness of body size.
- Encouraging him to think and develop memory skills.
- Learning about size in relation to space, and practicing counting.



### Precautions

- Start this game very simply by letting your preschooler see where you are hiding yourself or an object until he begins to understand the game.
- Avoid giving him a fright and therefore causing him to lose interest.
- Ensure the play area is free of dangerous obstacles.
- Teach the children **not** to hide outside the defined play area, in the clothes dryer, fridge, oven, under vehicles or machinery, etc.

# Tunnelling

## Te hanga anaroa

### Instructions

- Make a tunnel by lying a large blanket over some chairs or over the washing line.
- Encourage your preschooler and her friends to pretend they're going on an expedition to discover what is at the end of the tunnel.
- Give them a hat or bike helmet to wear, some imaginary or real flashlights and a snack to take.
- Encourage them to take turns at being the expedition leader.
- Take your preschooler on a trip to explore some caves or a tunnel that is no longer used.

### Variations

- Vary the height of the tunnel so they can walk, crouch, creep and crawl through it, forwards, backwards and sideways.
- Have them carry something, such as a ball, with them as they walk, crouch, creep and crawl through.
- Split the children into pairs and cover one child's eyes with a hat or mask and then ask her partner to lead her slowly through the tunnel. Then change over so that each has a turn to be the leader.
- Have all the children hold hands and play 'follow the leader' through the tunnel. Encourage them to take turns at being the leader.

### Main Benefits

- Continuing to practice crawling essential for developing pathways between the right and left sides of the brain.
- Developing movement skills and an awareness of body size.
- Developing spatial awareness.
- Learning by observing and imitating others.
- Developing her imagination.
- Learning to take turns and interact with others.



### **Precautions**

- Your preschooler may become frustrated and have difficulty with learning to take turns, don't force her to do this, but allow her time to learn.
- Teach her not to enter tunnels or caves without your supervision, or to dig tunnels.

# Volley Balloon

## Te patu poi hau

### Instructions

- Set up two chairs facing back to back with a piece of string tied between them.
- Blow up a balloon and stand with it on the opposite side of the string from your preschooler.
- Show him how to hit the balloon with both hands to make the balloon go over the string, and then encourage him to do the same.
- Volley the balloon back and forth trying not to let it touch the ground.
- Count each time you hit the balloon over the string.
- Use the words up, over, down, under, through, between when you're playing this game to describe the actions.

### Variations

- Have some friends join in and add some more balloons.
- Vary the height of the string.
- Play tennis with the balloon, hitting it with one hand and then the other.
- Teach him to hit the balloon with his head.
- Use a beach ball instead of a balloon.

#### Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye co ordination and balance.
- Having fun and learning word association.
- Experimenting with weight, gravity and timing.
- Practice counting.
- Using directional language.



### Precautions

- When playing outside ensure the area is well fenced, so that if a balloon blows away he won't come to any harm chasing it.
- After energetic play offer him a drink of water. Ensure he doesn't get cold by having him put on a jersey or going inside.
- Make sure all the broken/popped parts of the balloon are put in the rubbish bins.

## Foot Ball

### Te whana pōro

#### Instructions

- Use a lightweight ball that is large enough for your preschooler to kick easily (at least 13cm diameter).
- Put the ball on the ground and kick it towards your preschooler.
- Ask her to stop the ball then kick it back to you.
- Have some of her friends join in by making a large circle and then kick the ball to each other so that the ball moves in one direction from child to child.
- Once everyone has had two or three turns, change the direction by asking the children to kick the ball to the person on the other side of the team.
- Have a ball for at least each pair when working with a group. A child will learn through doing not standing and watching.

#### Variations

- When she has mastered kicking a stationary ball encourage your preschooler to kick the ball while it is rolling. Start by kicking the ball so that it will roll past her slowly and ask her to walk up to it and kick it.
- Teach her how to keep a ball rolling by running behind it and kicking it each time she catches up to it.
- Take her to a football game so she can watch other people's ball kicking skills.
- Show her how to drop kick a balloon and once she is able to do that well, let her try it with a ball.
- Encourage her to kick a ball between two marker cones (see [page 14](#)) and into a box that is lying on its side.
- Provide a variety of balls for her to try.
- Provide a beach ball or balloon for kicking.
- Hold a balloon on a piece of string for her to kick.



### Main Benefits

- Developing balance.
- Developing eye/foot co ordination.
- Learning through observation and exploring new capabilities.
- Learning new words.
- Practicing focusing near and far.



### Precautions

- Give plenty of praise with each attempt at kicking, even when she misses.
- Don't expect her to kick a ball that is too small, too large or too heavy and avoid competing with her.
- Ensure the play area is well-fenced so that she doesn't chase the ball onto the road.

# Ten Pin Bowling

## Pōro rere tōtika

### Instructions

- Stand ten plastic bottles in a group on the floor, place a small amount of sand or gravel in each bottle to weight them slightly, (see [page 14](#)).
- Hold a lightweight ball (approximately 15cm diameter) in both hands, bend down, swing the ball between your legs and then roll it along the ground between the bottles to knock them over.
- Count together with your preschooler, how many bottles have been knocked over.
- Stand the bottles up again, have your preschooler stand away from them and roll the ball towards them.
- Repeat this several times giving plenty of praise with every attempt.
- Use the directional language to describe the rolling eg under, over, between.

### Variations

- Vary the distance between your preschooler and the bottles to make the game more challenging.
- Have other children take turns with bowling.
- Give him a smaller ball that he can easily hold in one hand and encourage him to throw it at the bottles, first under arm and then over arm, using either hand.
- Place two marker cones (see [page 14](#)) a metre apart on the ground and let the children take turns at bowling the large ball and then the small ball between the cones and into a box that is lying on its side. Vary the distance he stands from the cones.
- Roll the ball towards different targets: under chairs, into an empty box, under a table, between your legs.
- Take him to see a game of lawn bowls or visit a ten pin bowling alley.

## Main Benefits

- Learning ball skills and developing balance and co ordination.
- Practicing refocusing close and away.
- Having fun and learning to interact and think about others.
- Learning to count.
- Practicing and hearing directional language.



## Precautions

- Do not use plastic bottles that have contained poisonous or harmful substances in case he tries to drink from them.
- Give plenty of praise with each attempt at bowling, even when he misses.

## Golf

### Te patu pōro

#### Instructions

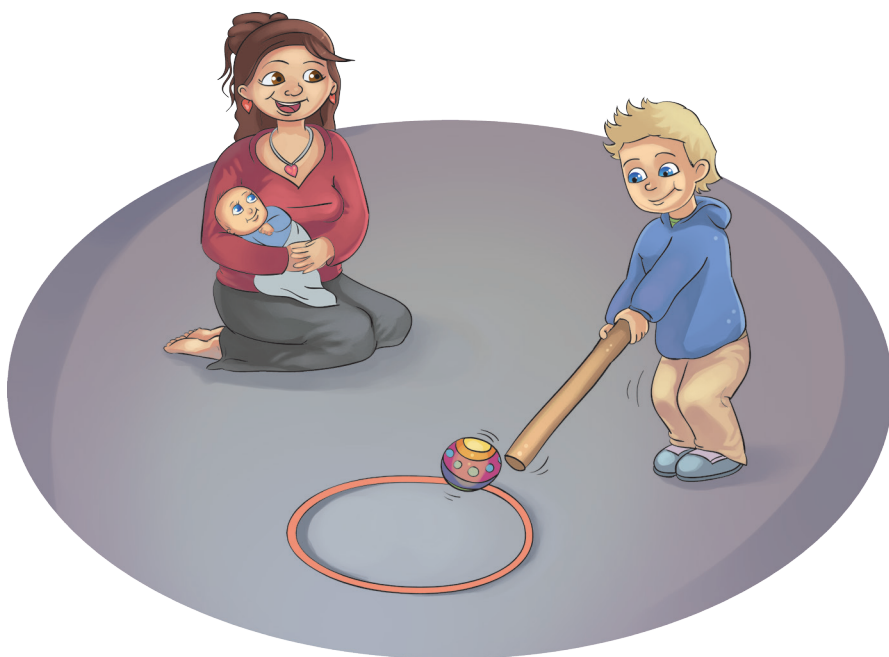
- Show your preschooler how to hit a medium sized (15cm), lightweight ball around the garden with a paper towel tube or rolled up newspaper.
- Encourage her to hit the ball hard so that it travels a long way. (If her play area is restricted in size have her hit it towards a concrete wall or garage door).
- Lie some hoops on the ground two metres apart and encourage her to hit the ball into the middle of each hoop.
- Many children can play this game at the same time.
- Use the directional language that describes the action.

#### Variations

- Teach her how to play hockey by placing two cardboard boxes on their sides, 4-5 metres apart, with the opening facing towards the middle. Show her how to use the paper towel tube to roll the ball along the ground towards a box then hit the ball into the box.
- Repeat this in the other direction.
- Make a tennis racquet from a piece of stiff cardboard, or use a large plastic spade. Show your preschooler how to hold it with two hands and then throw the lightweight ball towards the end of the 'racquet' and encourage her to hit it back to you. Repeat this several times and then let her throw it for you to hit.
- Give her the opportunity to watch people playing golf, hockey, tennis, cricket and table tennis.

## Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye co ordination, balance and movement skills.
- Practicing refocusing near and far.
- Learning through observation and exploring new capabilities.
- Developing word associations.
- Practicing and hearing directional language.



## Precautions

- Give plenty of praise for all attempts.
- Don't have unrealistically high expectations of your preschooler. If she loses interest quickly, allow her to move on to some other activity.

# Hoops

## Ngā mahi korawhiti

### Instructions

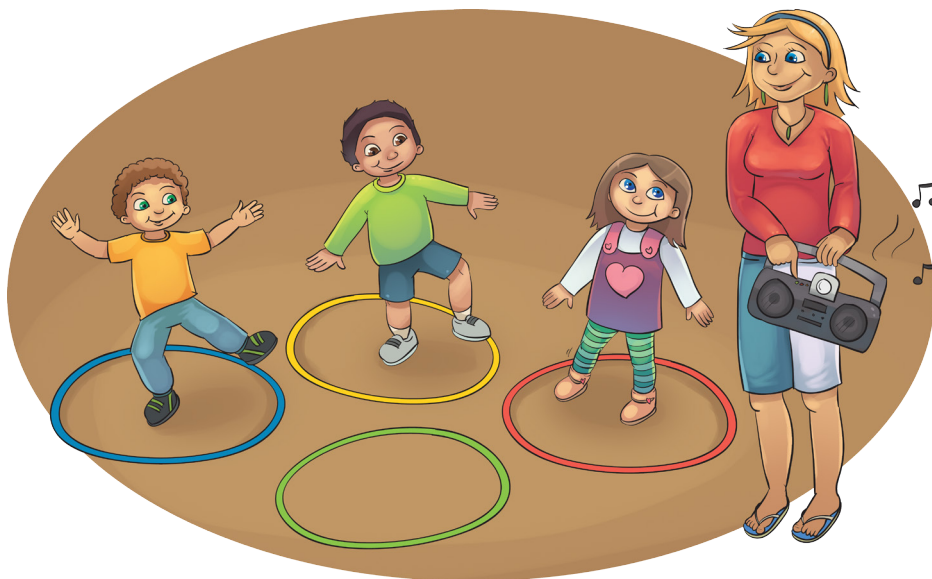
- Scatter hula hoops on the ground at least three metres apart.
- Play some music that your preschooler and his friends can dance to while they move around the hoops.
- Explain to them that when the music stops they are to walk and stand in a hoop.
- After they've played this a few times begin to take one hoop away after each stop so they have to share the hoops.
- When you get down to the last hoop walk and jump in it with them. Huddle together and try to fit everyone in.
- Use lots of directional language in, on, out, between, up and down as you play this game.

### Variations

- Have the children dancing around the hoops as above but each time the music stops give them an instruction like: 'Put a hand in the hoop' or 'Put your elbows in a hoop'. Use as many body parts as you can think of, for example: head, hand, nose, bottom, knee, tummy, finger, etc.
- Use different coloured hoops and instruct them to walk to the red hoop, then hop to the green hoop, skip to the blue hoop etc.
- Place four hoops together in a square so that they are all touching and split the children into groups of three or four. Ask them to place a foot in a hoop, then the other foot in a different hoop, then a hand in another hoop and the other hand in the fourth hoop. This activity involves a lot of co-operation amongst the group and often results in a lot of laughter.
- Use other 'bases' than hoops.

## Main Benefits

- General movement skills and body part awareness.
- Developing listening skills and practicing following instructions.
- Learning colours.
- Learning names of parts of the body.
- Practicing and hearing directional language.



## Precautions

- Ensure his movement isn't limited by restrictive clothing.
- After energetic play offer him a drink of water and ensure he doesn't get cold by having him put on a jersey or going inside for a while.
- Encourage children to walk not run during this activity to avoid colliding with other children.

# Sledge Rides

## Te eke kōneke

### Instructions

- After a spell of wet weather take your preschooler and his friends for a walk in the bush. Talk about what you are seeing.
- Look for a large nikau palm leaf that has fallen to the ground and then find a long, gentle slope. (Take a sheet of polythene in case you can't find a leaf).

### Variations

- In the winter visit a snowy region and use sheets of polythene as sledges.
- Find a fairly steep sand dune and encourage the children to sit on a piece of cardboard and slide down it.
- On a sunny day lay a long sheet of polythene down on a gentle slope and spray some water on it so that the children can slide down it with their swimsuits on.
- Visit a park with slides of various sizes for the children to play on.

### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, co ordination and movement skills.
- Exercising many different muscle groups.
- Experiencing a sense of weightlessness and speed.
- Having fun.
- Learning through word association.
- Parents exercising with their children.





### **Precautions**

- Old clothes are advisable for these activities. Ensure movement is not limited by restrictive clothing.
- Let the children try these activities in their own time so that it becomes an enjoyable activity and they don't lose confidence.

## Climbing

### Me te heke taputapu

#### Instructions

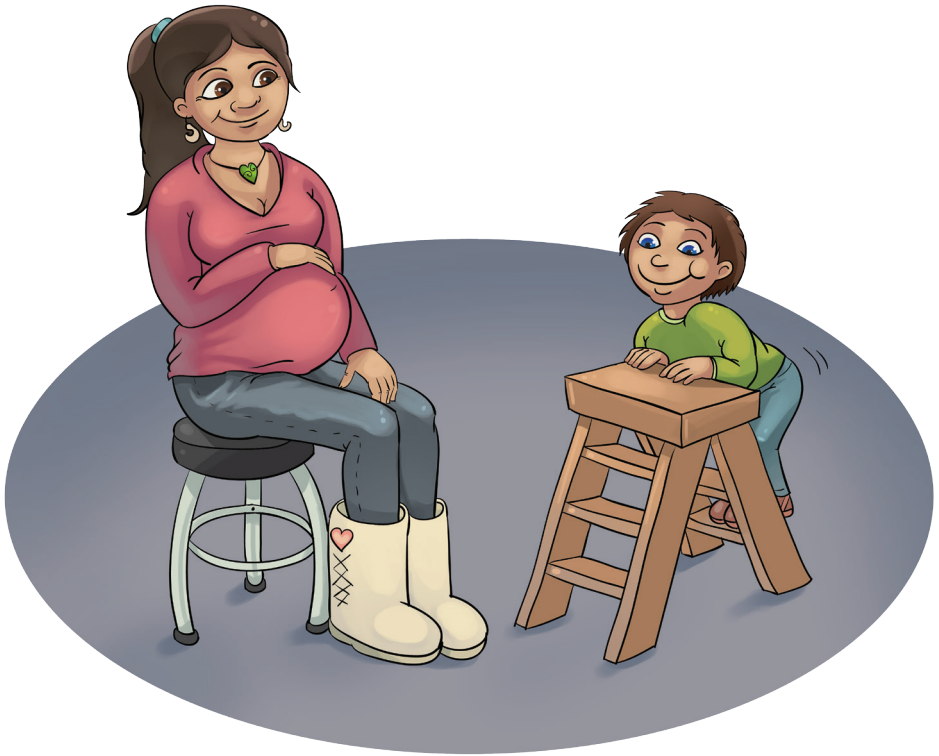
- Give your preschooler the opportunity to practice climbing different things.
- Let her climb onto chairs and off again by herself.
- Encourage her to practice going up and down stairs of different widths and steepness.
- Show her how to climb a kitchen stool and a step ladder. Vary the angle of the ladder gradually so that it becomes steeper each time.
- Allow her to get in and out of the car herself.
- Give plenty of praise with every attempt.

#### Variations

- Climb hillsides and sand dunes together.
- Find different trees for her to climb.
- Visit a rocky beach and help her to climb the rocks and boulders.
- Take your preschooler and friends to a local playground where they can climb on ladders, see saws, swings and other climbing apparatus provided.
- At the playground encourage her to practice hanging from the bars. Have her use the thumb under grip – this is how she will hold a pencil in the future.

#### Main Benefits

- Using and developing strength in the upper body.
- Developing co ordination and flexibility skills.
- Exercising the whole body and having fun.
- Practicing a midline activity.
- Learning about height, weight and gravity.
- Exploring new capabilities and learning by observation and imitation.
- Practicing the correct pencil grip (see [page 88](#)).



### **Precautions**

- Supervise all climbing activities and ensure the climbing apparatus is sturdy and won't tip over.
- Ensure the surface underneath is soft to minimise injury.
- Loose flapping clothing should not be worn, especially when tree climbing, to avoid accidents.

# Opposites

## Ngā taurite

### Instructions

- Teach your preschooler and his friends about the opposite meanings of words through play acting.
- Start with just two different opposites to ensure they grasp the meanings of them before moving onto new ones.
- Begin with the words short and tall, by pointing out the difference between your preschooler who is short, and yourself, who is tall.
- Ask the children to pretend to be very tall by walking around with their arms stretched above their heads. Show them how they can make themselves taller by standing on a stool.
- Now ask them to be very short by crouching down as low as they can or encourage them to get down on their knees and move around.
- Look at pictures in books and magazines and point out short and tall people, buildings etc.
- Go for a walk in a park and point out short and tall trees.

### Variations

- When looking at the words big and small the children can be sent on a hunt around the garden to find a big and small stone, leaf, twig etc.
- To learn about hot and cold have the children pretend that they are going outside on a cold day so they put on their hat, gloves and coat. Then pretend that it is a very hot day and they want to cool off so now they put on their swimsuit and a sun hat.
- Over and under can be a game played in the bedroom with crawling over the bed and then under it.
- Think of other activities for teaching the meanings of opposites such as high and low, up and down, light and dark, open and closed, happy and sad etc.

### Main Benefits

- Practicing a variety of body movements which relate to size and position.
- Practicing balance, co ordination, flexibility and movement skills.
- Developing hand/eye co ordination and body size awareness.
- Learning the meaning of words through imitation and word association.
- Learning the concepts of sizes.



### Precautions

- Be patient, it takes longer for some children to remember the meanings of words than for others.

## Construction Site Ngā mahi hanga whare

### Instructions

- Save your empty cardboard boxes for your preschooler to build with.
- Find a spare corner in the house where she and her friends can construct a house using empty cereal boxes, egg cartons, plastic containers, and large cardboard boxes.
- To make it more permanent, help them to sellotape the boxes together so that they don't topple over.
- Encourage them to play imaginary games in their house.

### Variations

- Show them how to line up boxes or chairs, one behind the other, to make a train or a bus.
- Give them a cardboard box each to sit in and pretend they are cars, trucks, tractors or anything else.
- Encourage them to make a long tunnel by opening each end of their boxes and joining them together.
- See how high they can build a tower with cereal boxes before they topple over. Encourage them to count each box as it is stacked on. Do the same with building blocks.
- Show your preschooler how to line up a row of cereal boxes or dominos so that when one is knocked over you produce a chain reaction.

## Main Benefits

- Practicing balance, co ordination, flexibility and movement skills.
- Developing hand/eye co ordination and body size awareness.
- Experimenting with weight and gravity and learning to count.
- Developing creativity and imagination.



## ! Precautions

- This activity takes team work - allow the children the chance to settle any disputes amongst themselves. Encourage them to take turns and share.

## Bag Of Surprises He pēke whakamīharo

### Instructions

- Fill a sack or pillow case with toys and utensils like a dustpan and broom, a plastic spade, a pair of gumboots, a hairbrush, a feather duster etc. Ensure there are the same number of objects as there are children.
- Pass the sack around and ask each child to take out one object.
- Then ask them to pretend to use the object when you start the music.
- Move around and help each child to imagine they are doing something using the object they choose eg using the spade to dig a hole, a farmer walking around the paddock in gumboots, or someone dusting the shelves.
- Collect up all the items and then pass the sack around again repeating the game two or three times so the children get a different object each time.

### Variations

- Fill the sack with a variety of different hats for the children to play act at being a farmer, nurse, firefighter, sailor etc.
- Pass around a box with pictures of different animals and the children are to pretend to be the animal on the card they chose while the music plays.
- Fill the bag with a variety of musical instruments (see [page 15](#)) that can be played along with some music.



### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, movement and co ordination skills.
- Developing creativity and imagination.
- Learning through pretend play.



### Precautions

- There will be some objects that all the children will want to use so give them the opportunity to have a turn with them.
- Allow them to use the objects in any way they wish and avoid laughing at their attempts at imaginative play.

## Bubble Fun

### He kori koropupu

#### Instructions

- Make up some bubble soap in a bowl (see [page 13](#) for recipes).
- Make a loop with a pipe cleaner or wire coat hanger, or find a toy or utensil with a hole in that will make a good bubble blower.
- Take turns blowing bubbles and chase, poke, clap or stomp on them.

#### Variations

- Tie a piece of string between two chairs and blow the bubbles over and under it. Split a group of children into groups of three and have two hold hands with outstretched arms while the third blows bubbles over and under their arms (encourage them to take turns).
- Blow the bubbles through a hula hoop or a hoop made by another child clasping his hands in a circle above his head.
- Have your preschooler lie on his back with his feet in the air and then blow bubbles towards his feet.
- Encourage your preschooler to experiment with blowing bubbles from other positions eg between his legs, over his head.

#### Main Benefits

- Developing balance, hand/eye co ordination, movement skills and flexibility.
- Practicing eye tracking.
- Having fun, experimenting and learning by observation and word association.



### **Precautions**

- Check the ingredients of bubble soap if you're buying it to avoid the risk of poisoning.
- Clean up spillages so that no one slips over in the soap.

# Gardening

## Te mahi māra

### Instructions

- Give your preschooler the opportunity to observe you working in the garden; weeding, planting, pruning, fertilising and harvesting.
- Explain to them the reasons why you are doing what you are doing.
- Point out things of interest like a seedling pushing through the soil, new leaves and buds, a plant flowering. Watch her progress each day.
- Look together for insects in the garden and talk about what each one does. Let her watch a caterpillar, or other insect, eating a plant.

### Variations

- Plant a variety of brightly coloured flowers. Name all the different parts of a flower (eg stamen, petal, stalk, leaf etc.) and the colours of the flowers you have planted.
- Let your preschooler have her own garden plot and help her to plant vegetables and fruit such as beans, carrots, lettuces, tomatoes, courgettes, and passionfruit.
- Grow indoor plants such as bean sprouts and kumura tops.

### Main Benefits

- Developing hand skills, hand/eye co ordination and flexibility.
- Learning about nature, how plants grow and their nutritional value.
- Learning by observation and word association.



### **Precautions**

- Provide her with garden tools that are safe and are the right size for her.
- Children imitate everything you do, so be patient and remember she is trying to be helpful.

## Swimming

### Ngā mahi kauhoe

#### Instructions

- Give your preschooler the opportunity to learn to enjoy playing with water.
- Help him to begin to enjoy water by encouraging him to wash his own hair. Introduce him to the shower so that he gets used to water on his face.
- When he's in the bath encourage him to lie on his back and float with your hands supporting him.
- Ask him to put his mouth on the surface off the water and blow bubbles. Once he has learnt to do this encourage him to put his whole face in the water and blow bubbles.
- Put some small objects on the bottom of the bath (before any soap is used) and ask him to open his eyes under water and look for them. See how many he can pick up.
- Encourage him to lie on his stomach and kick his feet.

#### Variations

- Make short, frequent visits to a swimming pool complex that has a shallow paddling pool to practice these activities in. Get into the pool with your preschooler.
- Visit the beach and find a rock pool, or shallow estuary for him to swim and splash in.
- Enrol your preschooler in water confidence classes at your local swimming pool.

#### Main Benefits

- Floating, kicking and splashing with resistance from the water.
- Practicing deep breathing and exercising the whole body.
- Developing water confidence and having fun.
- Learning new words.
- Learning water safety.



### Precautions

- **Never leave your preschooler alone with water** because he can drown in a very small amount of water in a very short time.
- Protect him from hot water and the hot tap to prevent burns.
- Don't persist with any water activity he dislikes. It may cause him to lose confidence. Show him and encourage him but allow him to do it in his own time.
- If he begins to shiver take him out of the water and wrap him in a towel.
- If the swimming pool is outside remember to apply water resistant sunscreen cream.

# Exercise For Everyone

## Te korikori tinana

### Instructions

- Provide a good example for your preschooler, and her friends. Build at least thirty minutes of exercise into your daily routine. Let your preschooler join in with you by imitating or helping you with whatever you are doing.
- At the beginning of each day plan what you are going to do depending on the weather.
- On rainy days exercise activities at home may include doing the house work, dancing, exercising to music, joining an exercise class that is on television, sanding furniture, etc.
- On fine days your home exercise activities may include gardening, hanging out washing, sweeping or raking up leaves, washing the car, tidying the yard, painting etc.
- Take notice of how active you and other family members are and try to do something energetic regularly.

### Variations

- Go on family walks around the block, to the park, the shops, the beach etc. Take this time to talk with your preschooler about his surroundings and what is happening around him.
- Take your preschooler to watch people exercising and playing sports.
- Watch together how animals move and play.

### Main Benefits

- Developing an active lifestyle by exercising regularly.
- Learning through role modelling and observing and imitating others.





### **Precautions**

- You do not need to play sport to be leading an active lifestyle. Just ensure that you are physically active daily.

## Kitchen Fun

### Ngā mahi o roto i te whare kai

#### Instructions

- Give your preschooler the opportunity to help you in the kitchen.
- Begin to prepare meals early in the day so that he can help with the preparation of food.
- Show him how to peel potatoes, scrape the seeds out of a pumpkin, and wash the silverbeet or lettuce leaves.
- Encourage him to count the pieces of vegetables to make sure there are enough for everyone.
- Let him help you make meatballs or dip fish in breadcrumbs.
- Ask him to put together a salad with the ingredients you have prepared; he can cut the parsley with clean, round ended scissors.
- Let him spread his own bread with his favourite topping.

#### Variations

- Encourage him to help set the table; discussing which dishes and utensils you'll need for each meal and counting and placing them on the table correctly.
- Give him the opportunity to help you do some baking; sifting, measuring, mixing, rolling, kneading and decorating. Then he can watch to see how it changes when placed in a hot pan or in the oven.
- Show him and his playmates how to make their own play dough (see [page 11](#)) and then give them some kitchen utensils to work the playdough with, such as a rolling pin, biscuit cutters, scissors.
- Children need to learn how to clean up after working in the kitchen; helping to wash and dry dishes, wipe down benches and put away things can be very satisfying for them (and you).

## Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye co ordination and practicing hand skills.
- Learning by observation and word association.
- Discovering the concepts of weight, measures and displacement.
- Establishing routines and developing a sense of achievement.



## Precautions

- Be patient. Sometimes having a 'helper' means that it takes twice as long to get things done.
- Always supervise preschoolers in the kitchen to avoid accidents.

## Water Works

### Te kori ki roto i te wai

#### Instructions (always supervised by an adult).

- Fill a bath with warm water, and place a non-slip mat in the bottom for your preschooler to play in.
- Give her a variety of items to experiment with such as a plastic jar with a lid, a plastic jug, sieve, cork, rolled up tin foil, sponge, egg carton and a plastic ice cream container.
- Encourage her to fill and empty containers and see how much water different items will hold.
- Ask her which items float and which sink, which are wet and which are dry, smooth and slippery, empty and full.
- Have her fill a squeeze bottle with water and then squirt a floating item to make it move.

#### Variations

- Let her fill a bowl or bucket for water play.
- Let her play with the garden hose making patterns on the concrete, filling containers, watering the garden etc.
- Find a rock pool at the beach or by a river and find items that can float and sink, and look for small creatures in the water.
- Help her wash her own dishes after meals, or bath her washable toys, and then dry them.
- Wash windows, walls, footpaths and fences together using rags, sponges or an old paintbrush and water.

### Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye co ordination, hand skills and balance.
- Discovering the concepts of size, weight, quantity and displacement.
- Learning by observation and learning word association.



### Precautions

- Never leave your preschooler alone with water because he can drown in a very small amount of water in a very short time.
- Protect him from hot water and the hot tap to prevent burns.

## Travel Fun

### Te mahi whakakoi hinengaro

#### Instructions

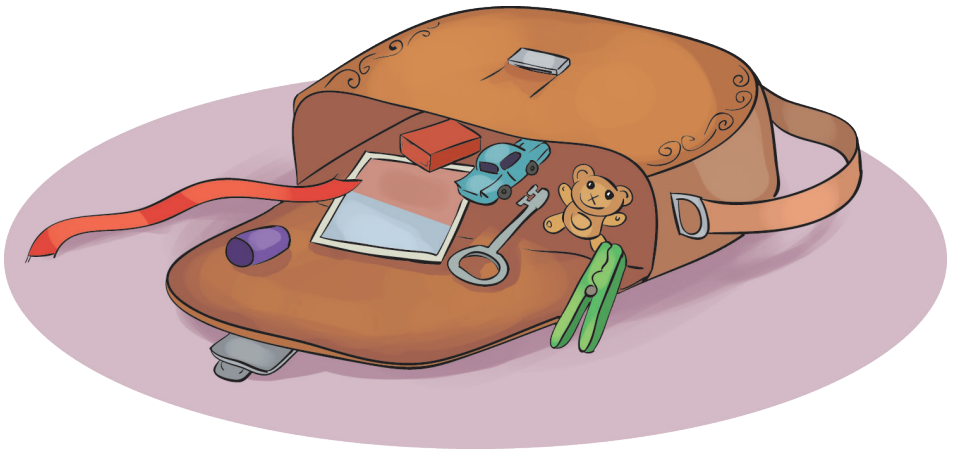
- Put together a bag of small items for your preschooler to play with while you're travelling somewhere.
- Include a variety of items such as a bottle opener, peg, ribbon, photo, small stuffed toy, empty raisin packet, small car, cork, etc.
- Ask him to put his hand in the bag and take out one item and tell you where the item came from and what it is used for. Repeat this until all the items are removed from the bag and discussed.
- Now put everything back in the bag and take turns at taking out an item and making up a story about each one.

#### Variations

- Provide him with a magnifying glass and a magazine to experiment with. Encourage him to look at his hands, arms, feet, toes, buttons and patterns on his clothes through the magnifying glass.
- A magnet and some paper clips are fun to play with. He can also see what else will stick to the magnet.
- A toy with a suction cup attached to it can be stuck to the window and pulled off again.
- Give him a combination lock or lock and key to open and close.
- Nuts and bolts of various sizes to do up and undo.
- A box of small stickers and a notebook to decorate can be a source of interest.
- Provide him with a piece of cardboard with holes in it and a long shoelace to thread in and out of the holes.
- Give him a small prism or crystal and show him how to deflect light and make patterns on the roof.

### Main Benefits

- Developing hand skills and hand/eye co ordination.
- Using his imagination, experimenting with science and having fun.
- Developing concentration skills.



### Precautions

- When going out in the car always strap him into a safe car seat.
- Contact your local Plunket clinic for information concerning car seats.
- Always put a magnifying glass and prism away after use because they can cause fires when left in the sunlight.

## Artwork

### Ngā mahi toi

#### Instructions

- Take your preschooler and her friends on a nature walk to a nearby park.
- Give them a small paper bag each and ask them to collect small objects and put them in the bag.
- Collect items such as different coloured leaves, twigs, flowers, bark from a tree.
- When you get home provide each child with a large sheet of cardboard or heavy paper. Make a picture by gluing the different items onto the cardboard.
- Provide them with extra materials such as coloured wool, different shaped pasta, scraps of material and magazine pictures to add to their picture.

#### Variations

- Show them how to make a collage by cutting pictures out of magazines and glue them onto a large sheet of paper.
- Make a continuous picture with a long sheet of wallpaper. Provide the children with some paint (see recipe [page 12](#)) and let them do finger and foot painting. Give them utensils to paint with such as a paint brush, an old toothbrush, a length of wool (dipped in the paint and dragged across the paper) a leaf (dipped and then pressed onto the paper), etc.
- Show them how to do tracings around hands, feet, boxes, bowls and different shaped objects.
- Provide them with some paper and coloured chalk or crayons and show them how to make rubbings by laying the paper over different shaped objects such as coins, bark, an old credit card, etc. and colouring over it.



## Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye co ordination and hand skills.
- Using creativity and imagination.
- Learning through experimenting, observing and imitating others.



## Precautions

- Provide her with small scissors with rounded ends for safety. Guide and supervise her while she is learning to use them.
- Old clothes or an apron are advisable when playing with glue and paints.
- Some preschoolers prefer to be climbing, running and exploring rather than sitting, so don't be disappointed if she's not interested in this game for long - try again at a later stage.
- Although you could produce a more stunning picture don't be tempted to take over. Remember this is her creation.

# Letters And Numbers

## Ngā pū me te tātai nama

### Instructions

- Cut a potato or kumara in half and then carve a shape in each half to make stamps. Or you can use buttons, lego blocks, keys, nuts, bolts, or any flat objects that will make interesting shapes instead of vegetables.
- Give your preschooler a large piece of paper and some paint (see [page 12](#)) to dip the 'stamps' in.
- Encourage him to make shapes on the paper using the stamps (eg squares, circles, triangles).
- Show him how to make letters and numbers.

### Variations

- Make stamps with numbers on them. Teach him to count by writing the numbers across the top of a piece of paper and have him match them with the corresponding stamp. The same can be done with the alphabet.
- Make stamps for each letter in his name and teach him how to make his name using the stamps.
- Rubber stamps can be used in the same way with home-made paint or an ink pad.
- Cut out cardboard letters and numbers and paint them in a variety of bright colours. Name the colours as you see them. Use magnetic letters and numbers attached to the fridge.

### Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye skills.
- Learning by observation and through word association.
- Encouraging him to think and use his imagination.
- Learning to count and name colours.



### Precautions



- This should be a fun time for your preschooler, so ensure that the emphasis is on play rather than teaching.
- Your preschooler will need to wear old clothes, and put plenty of newspaper down while using paints.

# Let's Draw

## Te tā pikitia

### Instructions

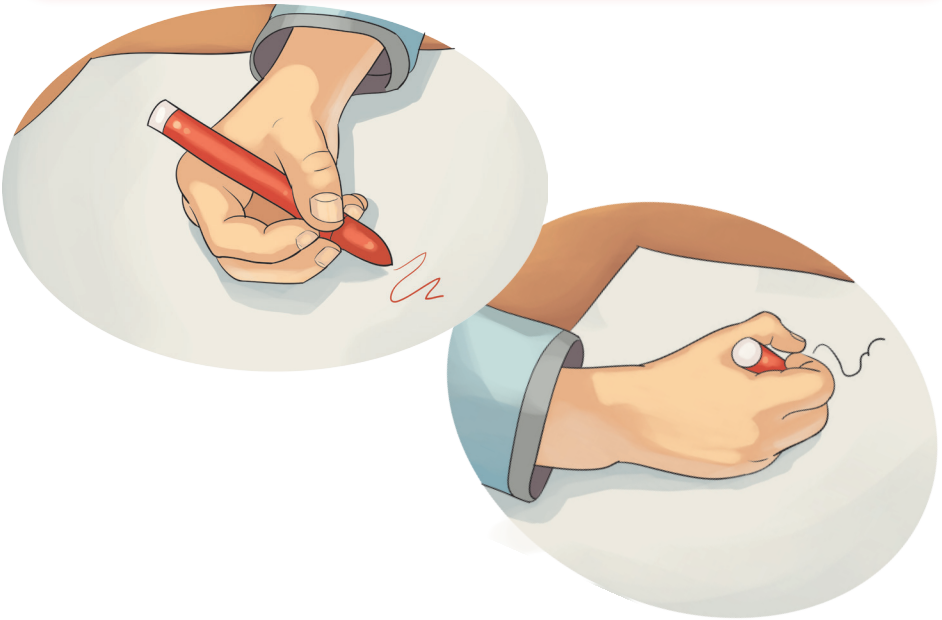
- Give your preschooler the opportunity to experiment with colours, textures and different materials.
- Provide her with plenty of paper to draw on, and pens, crayons, pencils and felt tips to draw with.
- Show her how to draw lines, circles, squares and faces and then let her copy them or do her own drawing.
- Encourage her to draw very small things on small pieces of paper.
- Then provide her with a large sheet of paper to draw very big pictures so that she uses her whole arm with large movements.

### Variations

- Provide her with paints (see [page 12](#)) to experiment with. Start with the three primary colours - red, yellow and blue - as well as black and white. Show her how to mix colours, teaching her the names of the colours as you go. Let her experiment with using different things to paint with such as a paintbrush, toothbrush, string, leaf, sponge etc.
- Provide her with a scrap book or colouring book to work in so that she can put it away and then go back to it when she wants.
- Provide many opportunities for finger and foot painting on sheets of paper. Finger painting can also be done on glass topped tables, painted surfaces, windows or a similar shiny surface.
- On cold days you might allow her to make shapes using her fingers or a paint brush in the condensation on windows.
- Encourage her to use a stick to draw in dirt or sand.
- Flour can be scattered lightly on a table and shapes drawn in it with fingers.
- Chalk can be used on a blackboard, concrete or paving stones.

### Main Benefits

- Developing hand skills and hand/eye co ordination.
- Learning to relax.
- Developing her imagination and creativity.
- Learning about colours and shapes.
- Learning by observation.
- Practicing the 'pencil grip' (see example below).



### Precautions

- Ensure she is aware of what she is and isn't allowed to draw on.
- Praise all efforts and ask her to 'tell me about your drawing' rather than asking 'what is it?' because she may have been drawing patterns rather than a thing.
- Old clothes or an apron are advisable when using paints.
- Ensure all paints are non toxic.

# Wrapping Presents

## Te takai tāonga

### Instructions

- Make believe that you are having a birthday party and show your preschooler how to wrap up some of his toys as gifts.
- Use newspaper or recycled wrapping paper and some sellotape.
- Encourage him to wrap up small items, large items, oddly shaped things and slippery ones.
- Then let him unwrap them all again or give them to someone to unwrap.
- Give plenty of praise for his efforts.

### Variations

- In the kitchen let him help you wrap up the food scraps and put them in the rubbish bin, or wrap potatoes in tinfoil ready to bake.
- Show him how to wrap a doll or teddy bear in a small blanket and tuck it into bed.
- Ask him to cut small shapes out of cardboard and wrap them in tinfoil to hang on a mobile, or on the Christmas tree.
- Let him draw pictures and put them into envelopes. Then he can pretend to post them, or really post them to his grandparents or himself.

### Main Benefits

- Developing hand/eye co ordination and fine motor skills.
- Developing creativity and imagination.
- Learning by observation and imitating.



### Precautions

- Avoid laughing at his efforts at wrapping.
- Accept his work as complete rather than trying to fix it up, which makes him feel as if he didn't do well.

# How Things Grow

## Ngā āhuatanga o te tupu

### Instructions

- Take every opportunity to teach your preschooler how things grow.
- Each time you go the supermarket explain how two of the products you see are grown, for example apples and carrots.
- Talk about whether the produce is grown directly in the soil, on a plant, a vine or a tree.
- If possible let her see the produce being grown by planting it in the garden together and watching it grow (see [page 71](#)).

### Variations

- Take her to visit a market garden and fruit orchards to see how various foods are sown, planted, grown and harvested.
- Visit the library together and find books and pictures on a variety of fruit and vegetables and talk about how they are grown.
- Once you have run out of different types of fruit and vegetables to learn about, move on to other products in the supermarket such as meats, eggs, cereals, dairy products, sugars, jams, etc. Your preschooler can then begin to learn about how foods are processed, packed and delivered to the supermarket. Include visits to libraries, farms and factories.

### Main Benefits

- Being active while learning.
- Developing a knowledge about science and nature.
- Learning about how foods are grown.
- Expanding the vocabulary.





### **Precautions**

- Give your preschooler the opportunity to learn at her own pace.
- She will not remember everything you teach her all at once.
- All her questions will seem important to her, so avoid laughing at questions that you think are silly.

# Tell Me A Story

## Ngā pakiwaitara

### Instructions

- Read to your preschooler regularly.
- Visit your local library often and choose books together.
- Point to the pictures in the books and relate them to the words you are reading.
- Ask your preschooler to point to pictures that you name and describe them eg 'What does Sam have on his head? What colour is his shirt? How many balloons is he holding?'
- Give him the opportunity to read books and tell stories to you.

### Variations

- Relate stories you have read to every day activities. For example talk about Peter Rabbit while you're weeding the garden, and discuss what foods rabbits eat. Or discuss Thomas the Tank Engine when you see a train and count how many carriages it is pulling.
- Encourage your preschooler and his friends to make up their own stories and tell each other about them. Provide them with materials to make their own book using sheets of paper, crayons, magazine pictures, glue, photos, etc.
- Take your preschooler with you to the library and encourage him to choose his own books for sharing.

### Main Benefits

- Learning to eye track, essential for reading.
- Using visual stimulus to learn about movement.
- Practicing listening and memory skills.
- Developing an enjoyment of books and increasing his vocabulary.



### **Precautions**

- Don't force your preschooler to sit and listen to a book at a time when he'd rather be doing other things - books should be fun and being read to a treat.
- Avoid reading books that have scary stories or encourage violence towards people or animals or that stereotype men's or women's roles.

## Write Your Name

### Tuhia tō ingoa

#### Instructions

- Once your preschooler has learnt to recognise her name she will begin to recognise each letter individually.
- Start working with one letter at a time preferably the first letter of her name, for example 'H' for Helen. Show her how to write capital 'H' and the small 'h' and then let her trace it.
- Look through a magazine together and pick out the letters 'H' and 'h' from many different words. Let her cut them out and stick them in a scrapbook.
- When she's ready, move on to the next letters in her name.

#### Variations

- When she has learnt to write her name let her cut out letters from a magazine and glue them on paper to spell her name.
- She may enjoy making her name with playdough, or when finger painting (see pages [11](#) and [12](#)).
- Teach her letters of the alphabet starting from the beginning and relating each letter to a word that she can do the actions of. For example 'A' and 'a' for aeroplane, 'B' and 'b' for bird, 'C' and 'c' for car, etc.
- Once she has learnt a letter and a word that begins with that letter, ask her to write the letter and then draw the word. For example she can write 'A' and 'a' and then draw an aeroplane.

#### Main Benefits

- Developing fine motor skills and hand/eye co ordination.
- Learning by observation and word association.
- Associating symbols with words.
- Practicing the pencil grip (see [page 88](#)).



### **Precautions**

- Provide her with small scissors with rounded ends for safety.
- Guide and supervise her while she is learning to use them.
- Old clothes or an apron are advisable when playing with glue and paints.
- Some preschoolers prefer to be climbing, running and exploring rather than sitting, so don't be disappointed if she's not interested in this game for long - try again at a later stage.

## Who Are You?

### Ko wai tō ingoa? Kei whea tō Kāinga?

#### Instructions

- Teach your preschooler his full name and address so he has it memorised.
- Play games in which he can practice using his name and address.
- Collect the mail from the letterbox together and look at the names and addresses written on the envelopes. Then address some envelopes to him and make a letterbox for him.
- Familiarise him with his neighbourhood and show him your street name on the sign post and the number on your letterbox.

#### Variations

- Role play him being lost in a department store and teach him to go up to a counter and tell the shop assistant he is lost and what his name is.
- Write his name on his lunch box and bag to take to his preschool so that he learns to recognise them easily.
- Ask him to draw a picture of your house with a letterbox and street sign, and then write the street name and house number in for him and at the top of the picture write his name eg John Cameron's house.

#### Main Benefits

- Being active while learning.
- Developing hand/eye co ordination.
- Practicing listening and memory skills.
- Developing an awareness of his surroundings and increasing his vocabulary.



### **Precautions**

- Teach him to stay where he is if he gets lost so that you can come back and find him.
- Take the opportunity to teach road safety when you're out walking.
- Teach him not to interfere with other people's letterboxes.

## Listen Now

### Tena! Whakarongo mai

#### Instructions

- Sit in the garden with your preschooler and close your eyes, or put a mask over your eyes.
- Listen carefully to all the different sounds around you.
- See how many different sounds she can identify.
- Now introduce more sounds, while her eyes are still closed, such as crumpling a dry leaf, tossing pebbles onto the concrete and picking grass.
- See if she can guess what these new sounds are.
- Let her have a turn at making sounds for you to guess.

#### Variations

- Go for walks together and identify the many different sounds in the various places such as the park, beach, railway station or in the city.
- Sit in the dark together, inside and outside, and listen for different sounds such as a door squeaking, or a dog barking.
- After playing listening games ask your preschooler to remember all the things she heard and then draw them, or tell friends and family about the sounds she heard.
- Teach your preschooler and her friends poems and songs, encouraging them to listen to and memorise them, and then repeat often while doing other activities.

#### Main Benefits

- Increasing awareness of listening.
- Relaxing and stretching her muscles and practicing deep breathing.
- Practicing listening and memory skills.
- Developing an awareness of her surroundings and sharpening her senses.





### **Precautions**

- Don't force your preschooler to take part in the activity at a time when she'd rather be running, climbing or doing other things, but use it to help her to wind down after an energetic play or before bed.
- When playing this game in the dark avoid creating a fear of the dark.

# Let's Pretend

## Tuku whakaaro

### Instructions

- Lie down on the grass under a tree with your preschooler and his friends and listen to the birds chirping in the tree.
- Alternatively: Lie on the carpet in the lounge playing a relaxing tape of birds chirping in the background.
- Pretend to be cats curled up under a tree by asking the children to curl their bodies up like a sleeping cat. Then ask them to stretch like a cat, positioned on their hands and knees, arching their backs up and taking a deep breath in. Curl up again as you all let your breath out slowly. Repeat this two or three times.
- Next, staying on your knees, take a deep breath in as you stretch your arms up towards the branches of the tree and try to reach a bird. Then breathe out as you all go down onto your hands and knees. Repeat this two or three times.
- Then tell the children that all the birds have flown away so they can curl up like cats and go back to sleep again.

### Variations

- Use a relaxation tape with the sound of waves, or lie on the beach, and pretend to be waves rolling your bodies gently to one side and then the other. Then get on your hands and knees and ask them to slowly walk their hands forward, away from their bodies as they take a deep breath in, pretending to be waves creeping up the beach. Breathe out slowly as you slide your hands back towards your knees. Repeat two or three times and then lie down and pretend you are floating on the sea.
- Pretend to be flowers that open their petals in the daytime; stretching your arms out wide as you breathe in, and then close them at night time; fold your arms around you as you breathe out.
- Repeat two or three times and then lie down and imagine the breeze blowing on the flowers.

### Main Benefits

- Practicing deep breathing and stretching exercises.
- Learning to relax.
- Developing the imagination and learning by imagination.
- A useful activity for winding down excited children and parents.



### Precautions

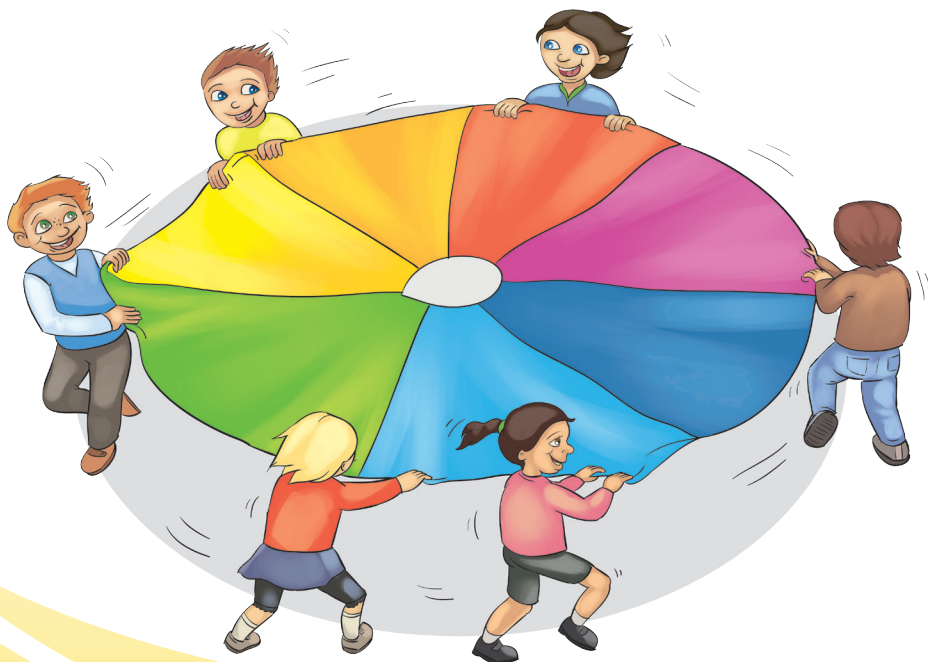
- Some children will not be able to visualise what you see – be patient and allow them to develop their own images.

# Parachute Games

## Ngā kēmu heketau

### How to make a parachute

- Make a parachute out of nylon material.
- Cut out wedge shaped pieces of fabric and sew them together to form a circle.
- Ensure that you leave a hole in the middle of the circle so that the parachute works effectively.
- You could use a large sheet or a light blanket for these activities, when used for small numbers of children.
- Have the children hold the parachute using the thumb under and fingers over. This is practicing the 'pencil' grip!
- You can buy parachutes to use with groups of preschoolers.



## Games Using Your Parachute

- It is essential that parents, caregivers and family members join in these games to make it a more enjoyable time for your preschoolers.

### **Making waves**

- Spread the parachute out and organise the group around the edge. Hold the parachute at waist height with both hands and shake it up and down vigorously and watch the waves that are formed. Make big waves and small waves.

### **Flatten the air bubbles**

- Kneel down on the ground and make waves as above.
- Encourage the children to walk around on the top of the parachute and jump on the air bubbles as you make them. (This needs to be played on a soft surface such as grass or sand).

### **Popcorn**

- Spread the parachute out and organise the group around the edge, holding the parachute at waist height with both hands.
- Throw 6-10 small balls into the parachute and have the group pop them in the air. Encourage them to throw the balls to the outer edges so that they are bounced back in again. (The balls can be foam balls, rolled up paper, pompoms or rolled up socks).

### **Air Balloon**

- Spread the parachute out with all the adults around the outside. Make sure the children are not holding on to the parachute because it may lift them off the ground.
- Count 1-2-3 and lift the parachute about your heads. When it has gone as high as it will go, walk forward four steps and then back out as it comes down.
- Encourage the children to walk under the parachute while it is in the air and then out again before it lands on the ground.
- Encourage them to stand under and reach up to touch it as it comes down. Then ask them to lie on their backs under the parachute with their feet in the air reaching up to the parachute as it comes down.

## **Spaceship**

- Spread the parachute out with all the adults around the outside. Make sure the children are not holding on to the parachute because it may lift them off the ground.
- Count 1-2-3 and lift the parachute above your heads and ask all the children to walk under the parachute. Walk forward two steps, bring the parachute down behind your back and sit on the edges, trapping air. You all end up sitting under the parachute making a spaceship.
- While in the spaceship have the children sit around the edges of the parachute with you and start rhythmical rocking movements. Rock the spaceship in different directions and back and forth.
- You may like to include songs.

## **Merry-go-round**

- Spread the parachute out and organise the group around the edge. Hold onto the parachute with one hand and travel around in a circle - run, hop, leap and then change direction.
- Hold it with two hands and, facing inwards, move around using shuffle, side step, cross over steps etc. Move quickly then move slowly.
- You may like to include music and songs.

## **Sliding (This needs to be played on a shiny floor).**

- Spread the parachute out and organise the group around the edge. Sit on the floor with your legs under the parachute, facing inwards, and hold onto the parachute with both hands.
- Count 1-2-3 and everyone pull hard on the parachute so that they slide under the parachute with all feet pointed towards the centre.
- Then move back by 'walking' on your bottoms to the places you started at. Repeat this several times.

## **Tunnelling**

- Spread the parachute out on the floor and encourage the children to crawl under it on their hands and knees from one side to the other, then stand up, walk around the outside of the parachute and tunnel again. For variation have them pick up a ball and take it through with them.

## **Tug Of War**

- Divide the group into two sides. Each side pulls on the parachute as in a regular tug of war.

## **Cooling Down**

- To finish off a vigorous activity session have turns at lying under the parachute while the others create a fan by gently lifting the parachute up and down.

### **Main Benefits**

- Developing balance, movement skills, flexibility and co ordination, using many of the muscles in the body.
- Parents and family being active with the children.
- Learning about movements, space, gravity and air displacement.
- Learning through imitation and experimentation.
- Following instructions.
- Developing self confidence, interacting co operatively with others and having fun.
- Learning new words.

### **Precautions**

- Allow your preschoolers to join in the parachute games when they are ready so that they don't lose confidence.
- Ensure you have plenty of space to play parachutes games to avoid accidents.
- Always walk when playing these games, don't run.
- Do not allow any children to walk or run on top of the parachute while others are underneath it.

## Challenge Courses

### Whaia te ara

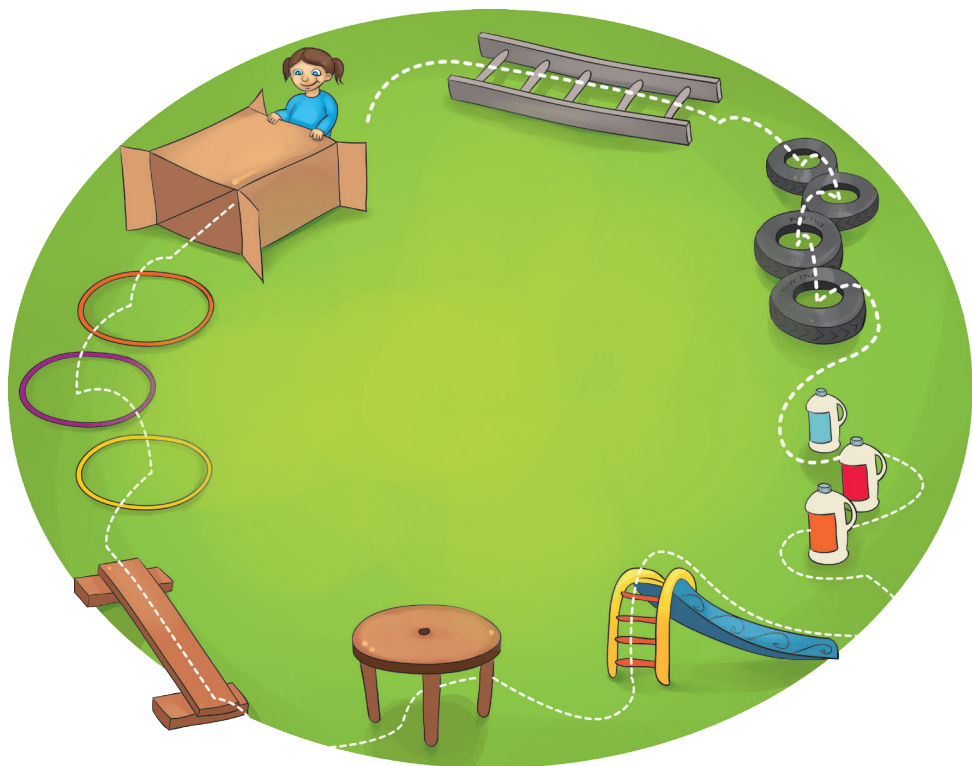
Negotiating a challenge course is an ideal way of enabling your preschooler to practice a variety of skills, to develop concentration and imagination, and have fun.

This involves setting up a course, inside or outside, using equipment which must be travelled over, under, around, through or along. A great way to encourage movement and incorporate directional language.

### Challenge Course Ideas

- Step, jump and run through hoops spread along the ground.
- Zig zag around a row of marker cones ([page 14](#)).
- Crawl through a cardboard box tunnel or a blanket tunnel ([page 47](#)).
- Walk along a bench or board ([page 29](#)).
- Climb up and walk along a row of chairs, and jump down.
- Climb over a gate or climbing frame.
- Walk along some stepping stones ([page 37](#)).
- Jump over a piece of rope or cushion.
- Step between a row of tyres.
- Crawl under, or step over a series of low ropes.
- Run up and/or down a slope or some steps.
- Circle or zig zag around a row of trees.
- Walk along a chalk line or a skipping rope.





## Variations


- Set up the challenge courses inside or outside depending on the space available, the weather and the number of children involved.
- When the children have mastered the course let them try to do the challenge course as quickly as possible, slowly, backwards and in the opposite direction.
- Give them a ball to carry around the course with them. Then have them do the course while holding the ball on their heads and behind their backs. Let them balance a sand bag or folded towel on their heads as they move around the course.
- Encourage the children to do the course in pairs or have them all hold hands and do the challenge course without letting go.



### **Main Benefits**

- Developing balance, co ordination, flexibility and movement skills.
- Experimenting with a wide range of movement patterns and activities.
- Developing confidence and independence.
- Learning through observation and imitation.
- Learning to take turns and interact with others.
- Hearing and doing directional language.

### **Precautions**

- 
- Begin with a very simple course and then gradually make it harder.
  - Allow the children to join in when they are ready.
  - They may become frustrated and have difficulty with learning to take turns. Be patient and allow them the time to learn.
  - Supervise and assist the children with activities they are attempting for the first time.
  - If the children are likely to fall, ensure they will land on a soft surface like rubber matting or bark.
  - After energetic play offer the children a drink of water and ensure they don't get cold.

## KiwiFun Activities

### He huarahi tākaro

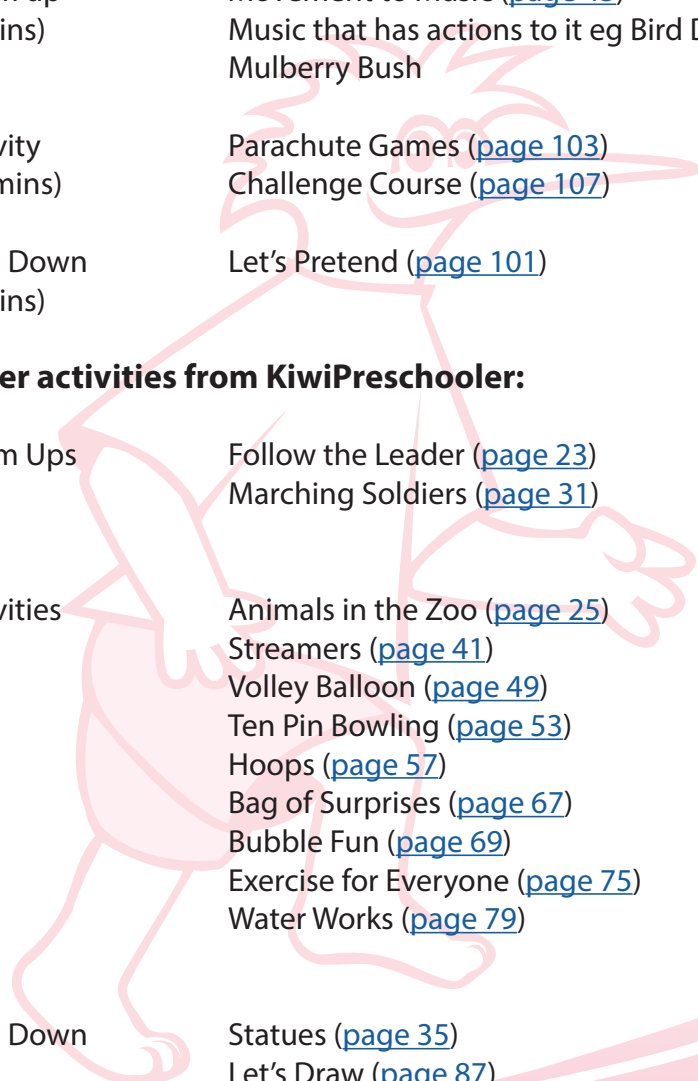
A KiwiFun session is a structured activity session for preschoolers involving a variety of exercises and activities that are challenging, interesting and fun. The session includes a five minute warm up, a 15 minute activity session and then a five minute cool down and stretching time. KiwiFun sessions can be organised for any number of preschoolers and require very little equipment. Plan a KiwiFun session for any occasion, for example:

- Birthday parties
- Family gatherings
- Play groups
- Parent's day at Early Childhood Centres

### Instructions

- Use the ideas and activities in this KiwiPreschooler manual to plan your KiwiFun session, and plan the games before you start.
- Begin with one or two 'warm up' games which are simple and not too energetic. Let the children join in when they are ready. (Warm up for approximately five minutes duration).
- When all the children have joined in and begin to enjoy themselves move on to more energetic and challenging activities (approximately 15 minutes duration).
- End the session with one or two cool down and stretching activities. (Approximately five minutes).
- Make up your own games or visit the library for ideas and include them in your KiwiFun session.

## Example of a KiwiFun session:



Warm up (5 mins)	Movement to Music ( <a href="#">page 43</a> ) Music that has actions to it eg Bird Dance, Mulberry Bush
Activity (15 mins)	Parachute Games ( <a href="#">page 103</a> ) Challenge Course ( <a href="#">page 107</a> )
Cool Down (5 mins)	Let's Pretend ( <a href="#">page 101</a> )

## Other activities from KiwiPreschooler:

Warm Ups	Follow the Leader ( <a href="#">page 23</a> ) Marching Soldiers ( <a href="#">page 31</a> )
Activities	Animals in the Zoo ( <a href="#">page 25</a> ) Streamers ( <a href="#">page 41</a> ) Volley Balloon ( <a href="#">page 49</a> ) Ten Pin Bowling ( <a href="#">page 53</a> ) Hoops ( <a href="#">page 57</a> ) Bag of Surprises ( <a href="#">page 67</a> ) Bubble Fun ( <a href="#">page 69</a> ) Exercise for Everyone ( <a href="#">page 75</a> ) Water Works ( <a href="#">page 79</a> )
Cool Down	Statues ( <a href="#">page 35</a> ) Let's Draw ( <a href="#">page 87</a> ) Massage ( <a href="#">page 115</a> )

### **Main Benefits**

- Exercising the whole body and developing balance, co ordination, movement skills and flexibility.
- Stretching, exercising and deep breathing.
- Parents exercising with their children.
- Developing good habits and having fun.
- Learning through observation and imitation.
- Learning to take turns.
- Beginning to understand concept of warming up the body, playing energetically, cooling down and stretching.

### **Precautions**

- Praise each child for attempting the activities and joining in. There should be no winners or losers.
- Ensure the activities are appropriate, achievable and safe.
- Avoid extending the activity time to the stage where you or the children cease to enjoy it.
- If the children are likely to fall, ensure they will land on a soft surface like rubber matting or bark.
- Provide each child with supervision and assistance while attempting an activity.
- If the activities are outside, ensure the children wear sunblock cream and a hat to prevent sunburn, or woollen hats on cold, windy days.
- After the activities offer the children water to drink and ensure they don't get cold.



## Preschooler Massage

### Ngā āhuatanga o te mirimiri tinana

- Provide your preschooler with plenty of cuddles, loving touch and close contact everyday.
- Make the most of opportunities to massage him when he's sitting quietly looking at books or toys, during bath time, while you're dressing him, at bedtime or any other time he needs calming or settling.
- Use cuddles and reassuring touch to dispel your preschooler's anxieties and fears and to help both of you to deal with frustration and tantrums.
- Use massage techniques particular to your own culture. For generations Māori have focused on massage as part of the inter-relationship between body, spirit and iwi.
- Allow him to give permission to be massaged or cuddled and to break contact when he chooses.
- Be aware of your preschooler's likes and dislikes with loving touch and adapt your massage technique accordingly.
- Be careful not to tickle as this will make your preschooler tense instead of relaxed.
- Massage oils; use natural vegetable oils. What is put on your toddlers skin may be absorbed into the body. Warm the oil by pouring a little on your hands and rubbing them together.

Most preschoolers, including those with special needs, respond well to cuddles and loving touch.



# Massage Techniques

## Ngā āhuatanga mirimiri

### Instructions

Make sure your shoulders and hands are relaxed, make your movements slow and rhythmic, maintaining continuous skin contact at all times (one hand on the child).

There are two main techniques used:

#### **1. Stroking (to spread oil and promote circulation)**

Gliding gently along the surface of the skin in one sweeping movement, always keeping in contact with the skin.

#### **2. Kneading (to promote blood flow and encourage the release of waste products)**

Gently moving the muscles underneath the skin, using the fingertips and thumbs to knead the tissues. This is a slightly deeper massage stroke. When using the kneading technique always work towards the heart as this promotes draining (wrist to shoulders, ankles to thighs).

#### **Generally for each body part:**

- Repeat each technique 2-3 times except for face strokes which are one stroke only because the face is a more sensitive area.
- Be flexible, eg do more of the strokes that the baby obviously likes.
- Try to get an even coverage of the whole body; left and right. Spend equal time on each side or your child may feel 'lopsided'. This will promote even muscle development and stimulate both sides of the brain.
- Massage strokes should be light, gentle and consistent.

## The Front of the Body

Begin with the front so that you can establish eye contact and talk to your child. Verbally identify the body parts as you massage.

### The Head and Face

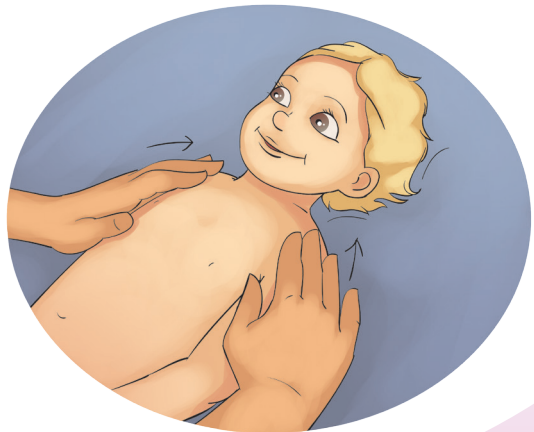
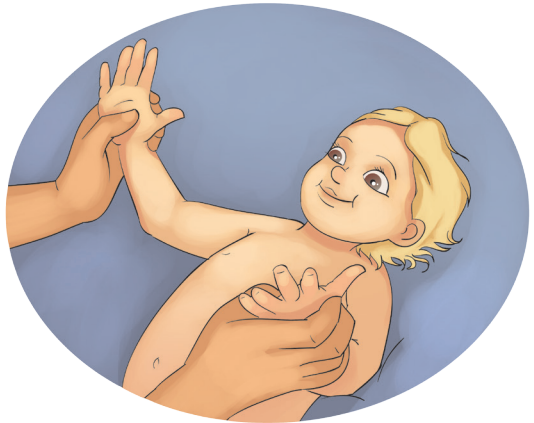
Using fingertips (most people use no oil):

- Stroke around the top of the head using palms or fingers.
- Stroke down the sides of face using fingertips.
- From the centre of the forehead to the temples.
- In circles on the temples.
- Eyebrows from nose to temple.
- From nose over cheeks to ears.
- From inner corners of eyes down sides of nose to corners of mouth.
- From centre of chin out to the ears.
- Behind the ears from top to bottom.
- The ears back and front, following their shape.



## The Arms (use oil as needed from here onwards)

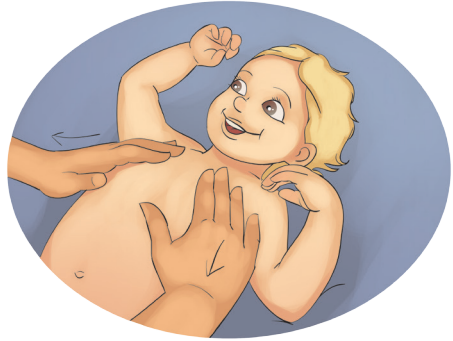
- Stroke from fingertips to shoulders (x3).
- Knead the palm of the hand using your thumb.
- Stroke each finger using your fingertips and thumb.
- Stroke the back of hands using fingers.
- Massage wrist using thumb and forefinger.
- Squeeze the muscles gently using your fingers and thumbs from the wrist to the shoulder.
- Massage using the kneading stroke from wrist to shoulder.
- Finish by stroking of whole arm (x3) from wrist to shoulder.



**Note:** while working on the hands, encourage him to look at what you are doing and talk with him about what you are doing.

## The Chest

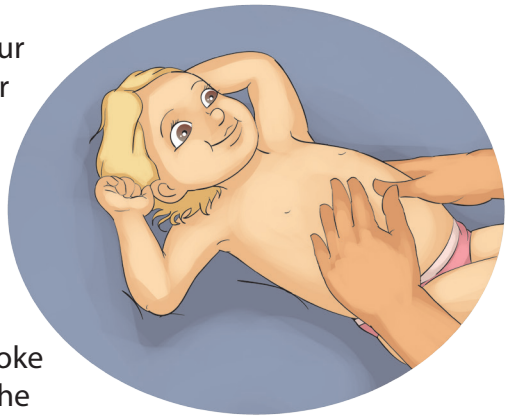
- Start at the centre front of the chest, use both hands to stroke in a down-and-out direction, following the spaces between the ribs. This strokes the small muscles between the ribs used for breathing (be very gentle on this area).
- Start at the centre front of the chest where the ribs meet at the lower end of the breastbone. Use both thumbs, stroke down and out following the line of the bottom rib. This follows the line of the big breathing muscle or diaphragm.



These strokes can be useful if your child suffers from 'wheeziness' or 'chestiness'.

## The Stomach

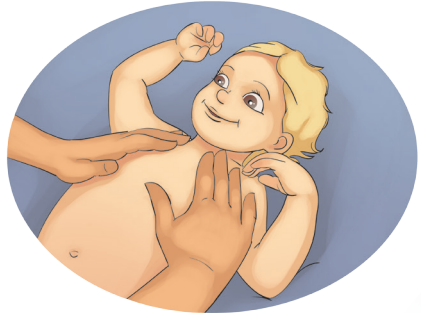
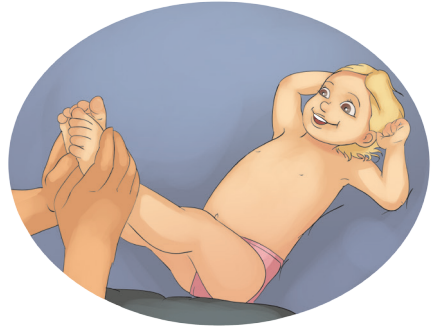
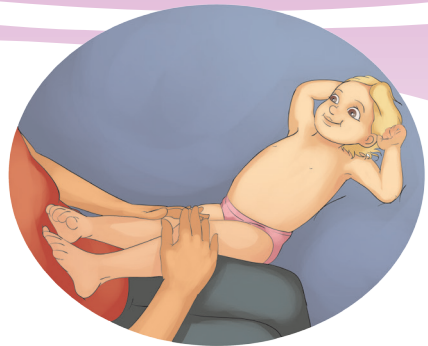
Use the palm of your hand in a stroking movement clockwise around the belly button. This stroke follows the natural direction of the large bowel.



This stroke can be particularly useful if a child is constipated.

## The Legs

- Stroke from toes to tops of thighs (x3).
- Knead muscles gently using your fingers and thumbs, from ankle to thigh.
- Massage the ankle area following natural shapes with your palms or fingers.
- Use your thumbs to massage the soles of her feet from heel to toes.
- Stroke each toe individually.
- Finish with stroking the whole leg (x3).



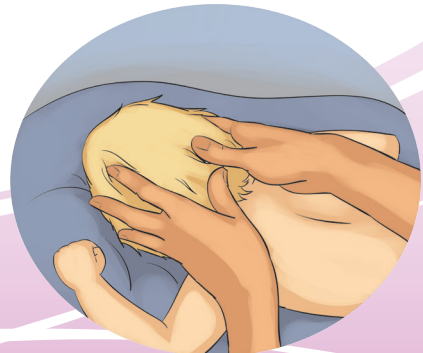
**To complete the front:** Using both hands, once for each half of the body, stroke slowly from neck to toes.

## The Back of the Body

Turn your child over to massage the back of the body.

## The Head

Use fingers and palms to stroke from top of head to base of skull.



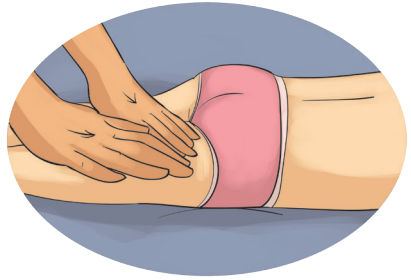
## The Back

- Start with slow circular massage on the lower back (avoid spine).
- Using fingertips stroke upwards from buttocks to neck on either side of the spine (x3).
- Using fingertips of both hands massage muscles in small circular movements in an upwards direction, on either side of the spine.
- Finish with stroking in an upward direction (x3).



## The Legs

Stroke the legs from the toes to the top of the thighs (x3).

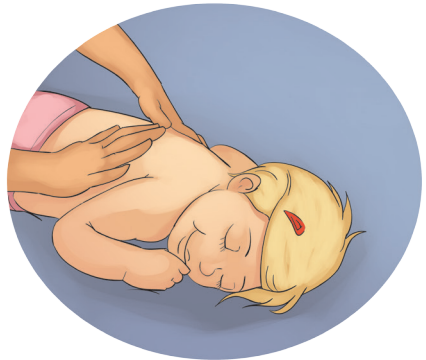


## To Complete the Back

From top of head to tips of toes, give several long, light, loving strokes.

## To Finish

Lay a blanket over your child and let her relax for a while if she chooses. Share a cuddle with her to complete the massage.



## Variations

- Give your child the opportunity to massage you and other members of the family too.
- Play body part games that involve massage such as 'This little piggy...' with the toes or 'Round and round the garden...' on their hands. For even brain and body development, do both right and left hands or feet.
- Pretend to be an animal (eg a cat) and stroke and pat each other the way you would stroke and pat the animal.

## Main Benefits

- Toning skin and muscles.
- Developing loving touch and awareness.
- Promoting general body control through relaxation.
- Enhancing parent/child relationship and learning stress management.

## Precautions

- Do not expect your preschooler to sit still in one place for a period of time. Make the most of opportunities to massage as they occur.
- Do not use oil on your child's skin before going outside because of the risk of sunburn.
- Do not extend massage time beyond the stage when either of you cease to enjoy it.
- In Māori culture the head is considered to be sacred. Find out about massage techniques that are particular to your culture.



## Where To From Here?

KiwiPreschooler is designed to help you, as parents and caregivers, to provide your young children with the foundation for a physically active life. It encourages an enjoyment of being active (kori tinana) as a leisure time pursuit for the whole family.

At school age it is important to continue supporting daily physical activity. Be an 'active family' – one that subscribes to a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life. Play and be physically active with your children. Just making sure children play outside will double the amount of physical activity that they get. Encourage your children to be physically active.

Learn what your children want from physical activity programmes and help them choose appropriate activities. Modified sports (adult sport adapted to suit young people) are a great way to introduce children to sport in a safe and fun way.

Sports offering modified versions are more fun and positive for kids and are more likely to attract and keep young players. Schools or Regional Sports Trusts can provide information on what modified sports are available to your child.

Volunteer to help your child's sport team or recreation programme. A parent is the first and most important coach for their child. As parents we need to nurture and develop our children's physical activity experiences. Children are largely reliant on adults to supervise and structure these organised recreation past times, and to provide models of acceptable behaviour, so commit to helping out.

Teach your children safety rules and make sure they have the clothing and equipment needed to participate safely in physical activity.

Advocate for convenient, safe and adequate places and facilities for young people to play and take part in physical activity. Encourage school administrators and community organisations to support daily physical activity and other school programmes that promote lifelong physical activities as well as sport.



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