

# Play spaces and children's well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand:

King Street Nature Kindergarten Programme  
– A journey to self-discovery.



What is well-being?

Who is responsible for well-being?

What image are we bearing when we think about well-being?



# Research Inspiration

## Te Whāriki aspirations

competent and  
confident  
learners and  
communicators,  
healthy in mind,  
body, and spirit,  
M.O.E (2006)

How are we  
empowering  
our children to  
be active  
members who  
participate in  
the decisions  
about their  
health and  
wellbeing



Seeing children as  
contributing and active  
agents in their own  
learning and in the  
**creation of  
circumstances** that  
promote their health  
and well-being is vital,  
(Rose, Gilbert and Richard, 2016).

## Connections to Mother Earth

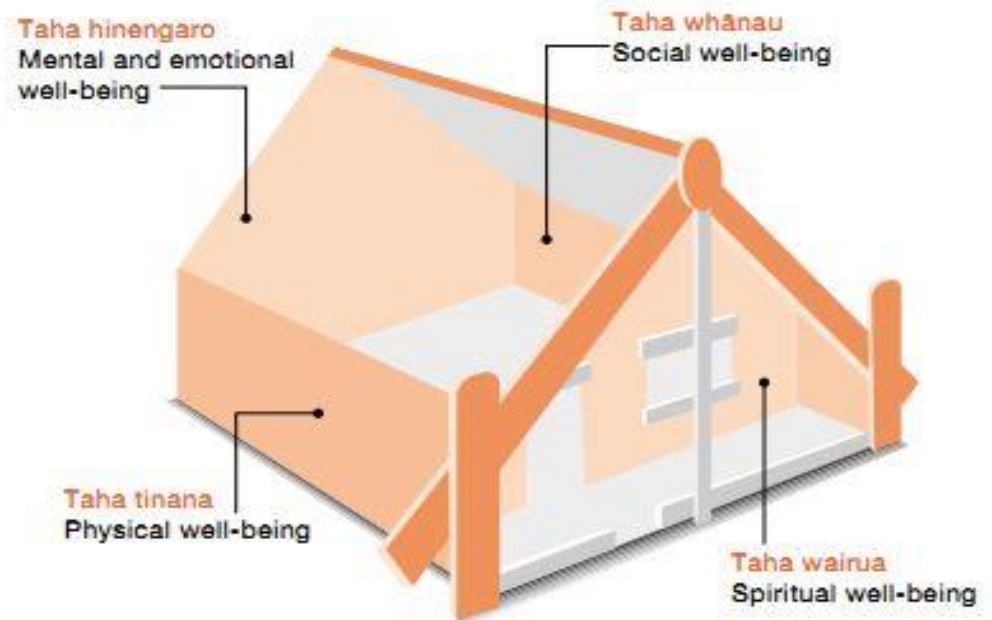
Pere (1991):

Rogoff (2003)  
emphasises on  
**creating own  
socio-cultural  
context** vs  
being the  
recipients of  
external socio-  
cultural  
context

# Te Whāriki

## The strand of Well-Being- Mana Atua

- based on the principle of Empowerment
- enhanced sense of self-worth, identity, confidence, and enjoyment
- development of self- control, self-esteem and independence
- Holistic Development
- Family and Relationships



# Conformity vs Growth



# Subjective Well-Being



- Recognised as a component of Quality of Life, and is denoted as people's affective and cognitive evaluations of their lives (Diener 2000, p.1).

Subjective well-being has three distinct components,

- life satisfaction,
- positive experiences
- negative experiences (Diener 1984),

# Sharing Power



Young children show remarkable skills and major responsibilities throughout the world. They are able to make decisions about their own learning.

We cotton wool, keep them safe and “teach” them the skills we feel that they will need (Canella, 1997).



# Walk the Talk



Discussing and  
negotiating  
safety  
strategies

Conversations



# Wild Spaces

Time

Space

Freedom

Thinking

Community



Nature brings about both intense positive and negative emotional experiences in children (Myers, 2012) .

# Boundaries



# Open Ended Resources – Thinking for Yourself



# Challenge



Philosophy of protection vs philosophy of resilience  
Culture of zero-risk childhood

# Experiencing Challenges and Frustrations



# Accomplishing Challenges



# Managing Risks





# Sharing Cultural Knowledge



Anthony's mum, Tuk visited our Nature Kindergarten and showed us the Thai way of making rice on the fire.

# Elements



Fire



Water



Rocks

# Pedagogy

- Observation
- Conversation
- Time and Space
- Revisiting
- Co-construction
- Active Listening
- Nature Based
- Whanau
- Discussion and Negotiation
- Democracy



- Dealing with Uncertainties
- Tuakana-Teina ( Learning from each other)
- Looking after each other
- Acknowledging, accepting difference
- Ako - Co-learner, Co-researcher

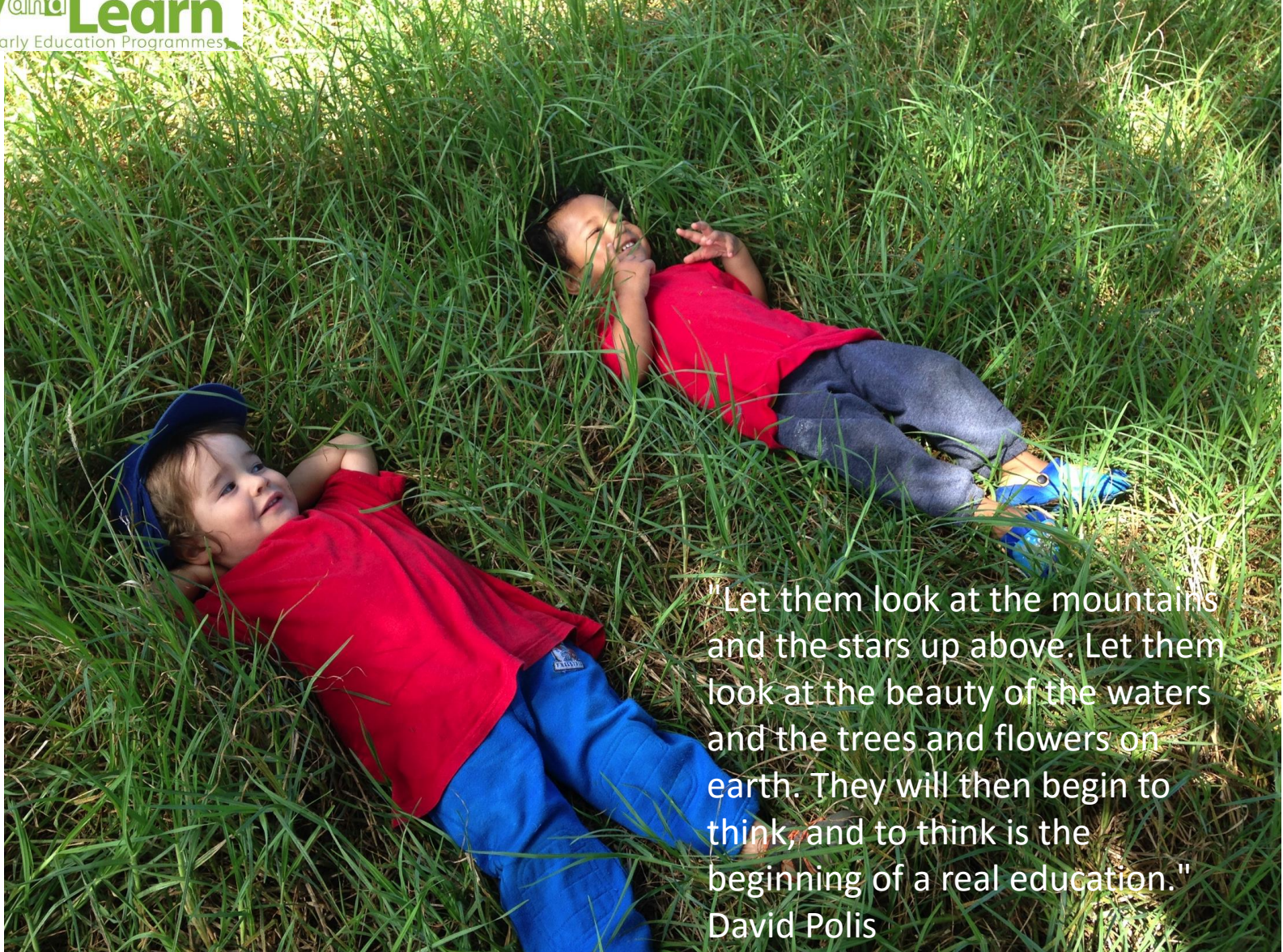


# Sharing Cultural Knowledge



Anthony's mum, Tuk visited our Nature Kindergarten and showed us the Thai way of making rice on the fire.

# Time and Space



"Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on earth. They will then begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education."  
David Polis

# Freedom to Explore, Enquire and Engage



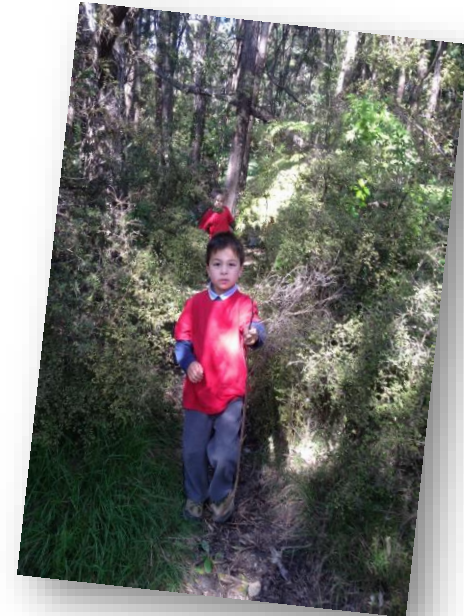
# Self-Belief



# Reflections from our Journey



- Accepting physical challenges
- Dealing with uncertainties
- Children as leaders
- Emotional resilience
- Sharing cultural knowledge
- Self-belief
- Reassurance
- Self acceptance
- Authentic positive self-image
- Can-do attitude



# Well-Being

**Well-Being is a journey,  
a journey of discovery  
the state of being and basking in it.**



# Teacher's Reflection



**“As a teacher, for me, working with the children in the outdoors has changed the way I see my role as teacher and children’s role as learners. Having the freedom of time in the outdoor environment has allowed me to truly observe children’s learning and to realise that given the right environment, children are really good at driving their own learning. My teaching practice has completely changed and I now see myself as firstly an observer, secondly a facilitator and thirdly I sit comfortably alongside children as a learner.” Jan Taylor**

# Feedback



# Thanks



***Our thanks to the dedicated Teachers, the Parents, their wonderful Children of Play and Learn Early Education- King Street and our wider Community.***

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