



Ideas for exploring



Activity title – Ngā mahi a rehia Games, pastimes and pleasurable activities

Objectives:

- 1) Increase familiarity with *Whakatipu*
- 2) Appreciate the role of play in all learning and development
- 3) Understand the value of fun activities in strengthening relationships between tamariki and whānau

Background information: Balancing work and play in the early years of Māori settlements worked well as most mahi happened during the daylight, so at night, especially in winter, whānau would socialize enjoying leisure activities together. It was made easier too with less people and food more accessible. But as populations grew and some traditional food sources were lost, more time was then spent finding and storing food, time to enjoy leisurely pastimes became more difficult!

Sports and games were played at most social gatherings. Tī ringaringa (hand games), whai (string patterns) and karetao (puppets) would have all been enjoyed. Children played with toys made from natural materials. Other social gatherings will have included waiata, rich with history and tradition hākari (feasts) which may have been linked to specific rituals or seasons.

Ngā mahi a rehia includes taonga puoro (music), dancing, haka and poi, playing musical instruments, waiata, kōrero pūrākau (story-telling) and tākaro (games and sports).

At times such activities may be mistakenly seen just for enjoyment or entertainment. But now, as in the early years, their valuable role in sharing knowledge, language *and* building positive relationships within whānau should never be underrated. Kawa e wareware – Tākaro!

Activity: Brainstorm – What traditional games do we know of or have taken part in?

Ngā mahi a rehia traditional games and pastimes included:

1. Games and exercises that were seen as elementary training for boys
2. Aquatic games and pastimes
3. Games requiring manual dexterity and agility
4. Games requiring calculation, mental alertness or memorizing-powers
5. Games and pastimes specifically for children.

Write up the list 1-5 above on whiteboard or large paper. **In pairs** – select one *Whakatipu* booklet, look at the ideas in ngā mahi a pēpi sections. How do they link with the groupings 1-5 above?

Consider the age/stage covered in the booklet and **develop an idea for a game/activity** appropriate for the age range. Make any links to the groupings 1–5.

Extension or additional options: Take an activity and create a list of the learning involved across each developmental domain.

Resources used: Set of *Whakatipu* booklets. Chart paper or whiteboard for recording and feedback.

Other information: Learn more about ngā mahi a rehia at Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand – <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/leisure-in-traditional-maori-society-nga-mahi-a-te-rehia/page-1>
Read the full story by Ross Calman. 'Leisure in traditional Māori society – ngā mahi a te rēhia'.