

## Kei tua o te pae

## Beyond the horizon

This resource is titled *Kei Tua o te Pae*, a line from an oriori (lullaby) by Hirini Melbourne. There are a number of images in this oriori that can be applied to development, learning, and assessment for learning.

### **Continuity**

The first relevant image is about continuity.

Ka tō te marama e tiaho nei  
Ka hī ake ko te rā  
Kei tua o te pae

When the translucent rays  
of the moon disappear,  
a new day dawns with the rising  
of the sun beyond the horizon.

In an ever-changing world, we know that young children’s horizons will expand and change in ways that cannot be foreseen. Children will travel beyond the current horizon, and early childhood education is part of that. It continues the shaping of a vision for children – that of their being “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” (*Te Whāriki*, page 9). Learning is a lifelong journey that will go beyond the current horizon. The details of the journey will change as the world changes, but this vision will remain the same.

### **Engaging the body, mind, and spirit**

The second image is about growth, development, and learning through the engagement of body, mind, and spirit.

Tipu kē ake koe  
Me he horoeka  
Torotika ki te rā  
Whāia te māramatanga  
O te hinengaro  
O te wairua

So too does the cycle of life continue.  
Grow up strong and gracious,  
just like the proud horoeka tree,  
confident and free.  
Seek out the secrets of the  
hidden well-spring of your mind  
and know the sounds and  
dreams of your spirit.

This holistic view of growth reminds us that development and learning have affective, social, and motivational dimensions and that assessment does too.

### **Reciprocal relationships**

The third image is about the reciprocal relationship between the child and their world.

Kia puāwai koe ki te ao  
Ka kitea ō painga

So you shall blossom into the world,  
and the world in turn is transformed.

Children’s learning is embedded in their reciprocal relationships with the world, with people, places, and things. The world shapes their learning, and in turn, their learning shapes and changes the world.

## Assessment for learning Te aromatawai mō te akoranga

### *Noticing, recognising, and responding*

In this project, assessment for learning is described as “noticing, recognising, and responding”. This description comes from Bronwen Cowie’s work on assessment in science classrooms (2000). It was useful to the teachers in her study, and early childhood teachers have found it useful as well. These three processes are progressive filters. Teachers *notice* a great deal as they work with children, and they *recognise* some of what they notice as “learning”. They will *respond* to a selection of what they recognise.

Mary Jane Drummond’s (1993) definition of assessment can be adapted to add more to this description of assessment for learning:

[the] ways in which, in our everyday practice, we [children, families, teachers, and others] observe children’s learning [notice], strive to understand it [recognise], and then put our understanding to good use [respond].

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The difference between noticing and recognising is the application of professional expertise and judgments. In particular, a powerful role for exemplars is to help teachers to recognise some of what they notice as learning (that is, to develop their ability to recognise learning). Sometimes recognising the learning occurs in retrospect, some time after the event. However, if there is a time gap between noticing and recognising, the teacher can’t act (respond) in the moment. The exemplars have been published to assist with closing the gap so that many more responses will be immediate and professional and all members of the learning community will be better able to notice, recognise, and respond to children’s learning.

The early childhood exemplar books use the term “assessment for learning”. Many writers call this “formative assessment”. Philippe Perrenoud (1991) says that “Any assessment that helps the pupil [child] to learn and develop is formative” and adds:

Development and learning depend on countless factors that are often interrelated. Any assessment that helps to optimise one or more of these factors, to however small a degree, can be considered formative.

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Perrenoud includes children’s motivation, their social identities as learners, their views about learning, and the learning atmosphere among these “countless factors”.

One important connection between assessment and learning is feedback. Research tells us that feedback to learners improves learning. Some of this feedback will be through documentation (such as assessments that families and teachers can read back to children and photographs that children can “read” themselves). Some of it will be verbal. Some will be non-verbal (through a gesture, a nod, or a smile). Feedback tells the learners what outcomes are valued in the learning community and how they are doing, and it acknowledges the goals that children set for themselves.

Teachers share stories as well as feedback, and this enriches their noticing, recognising, and responding. A teacher in a childcare centre, discussing the sharing of stories at a team meeting, commented, “We’ve followed on. Jackie did one, and then from reading hers, Sheryl saw something happen and was able to follow it up.”