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Walking The Talk
Tukua Kia Rere!



Once you have made the decision to raise your baby with two languages, you are on the road. The next step is to prepare your family for the journey.

Families come in all shapes and sizes. You may be living with your partner, on your own, flatting with friends, living with your parents or other family, or living with older children.

In this chapter we offer you some ideas of how you can make your home a Māori language speaking environment. While we cannot cover every possible scenario in this book, we do hope that you will take some of these ideas and adapt them for you and your baby. There are lots of things you can do to help raise your baby as a Māori language speaker. The trick is to find and use the ideas that suit you.

Scenario 1: Both parents are fluent speakers of Māori

STRATEGIES

- As parents you should both speak Māori at all times with each other and especially with your baby.
- Māori should be spoken everywhere you go, for example, shopping, out and about, or visiting friends or relations.
- If you are lucky enough to have Māori speaking grandparents living nearby, ask them to speak Māori with you and your baby.
- Encourage your friends and family to communicate in Māori with your child as much as they can.

POINTS

One parent may be fluent, while the other is less so, and therefore they may feel less confident. Despite this, it can be very helpful for the less fluent Māori speaker, because there will be lots of opportunity to improve their own language skills.

Sometimes, one parent speaks Māori, while the other speaks English most of the time. This is less effective because your baby's contact with the language is halved.

Scenario 2: One parent is a Māori speaker, the other is not

STRATEGIES

In a household where one parent is a fluent Māori speaker and the other parent is not, one of the following two strategies may provide an answer.

- **TWO PARENTS, TWO LANGUAGES**

Both languages are used as early as possible in the child's life with one parent speaking to the child in English, the other in Māori. If you choose this method you must keep it up. This means one parent always uses and is responsible for speaking Māori to your baby. The other parent concentrates on speaking English. Do not mix and match – all this does is provide your baby with poor examples of both languages.



● **TWO PARENTS, ONE LANGUAGE**

This scenario requires the non Māori speaking parent to try to speak Māori as much as possible, this way they learn the language alongside their child. This has two great advantages:

- your baby has company and support from a parent while they learn and
- the non Māori speaking parent has a great opportunity for learning Māori.

If you choose this method, you and your partner will probably speak to each other in English. But be aware of the message that this sends to your baby, that is, that adults speak English. You and your partner should try to speak Māori to each other as much as possible in the presence of your baby.



POINTS

If the Māori speaking parent works or is away from home, you need to organise things so that your baby still gets enough contact with Māori language every day. This may mean planning for the Māori speaking parent to spend a reasonable amount of time with baby. This can be used on activities to help your baby's learning of the language, for example, Māori bedtime reading, or preparing and eating breakfast with baby.

It is really important that your baby knows that both parents support them in speaking Māori.



Scenario 3: Where neither parent speaks Māori

STRATEGIES

- Try to use as many Māori words and phrases as you can that you know are correct.
- Use words and phrases with your baby that are used routinely in everyday activities, for example, at mealtimes, for clothing and getting dressed, for showing love and praise, for bedtime or bathtime routines.
- Choose one phrase per week to add to the list of words and phrases you already know. Always use that phrase in Māori.



POINTS

Think about going to Māori language classes.

As your baby grows in the language, ask them to help with translating words and phrases. Learning the language together may prove to be very enjoyable and help with family language bonding.

Do not translate the Māori words and phrases you use with your baby into English. This slows up the learning process and sends a message to your baby that Māori language is less important.

Phrases for bath time

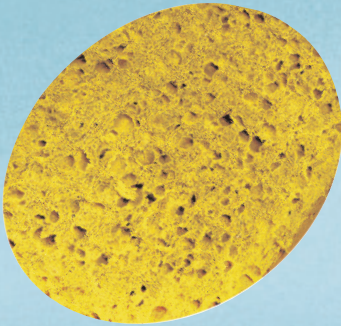
- Shall we take off your clothes?
- Kia tangohia ō kākahu?
- Is the water warm?
- He mahana te wai?
- Look at this big tummy!
- Tirohia tēnei puku nui!
- Are you kicking your legs?
- Kei te whanawhana koe?
- Splash the water!
- Pōhututia te wai!

Here are some other tips to help you make your home a Māori speaking home.

TIPS

- Create an exciting Māori language environment in your baby's bedroom with Māori language books, games, posters, tapes of songs and nursery rhymes, videos and CD-ROMs from your local library.
- Listen to and sing Māori songs and music with your baby.

- Record Māori programmes on the television.
- Take your baby to as many places as possible where you know other Māori speakers will be present and the language can be spoken naturally.



- Form friendships with local Māori speakers and other Māori speaking families.
- Try to visit other Māori speaking homes regularly so that your baby sees that speaking Māori in the home is normal.





- Ask friends and family to talk in Māori with your baby as much as they can.
- Have a Māori language children's dictionary handy all the time at home and refer to it as much as possible.

- Use Māori inside and outside the home in as many situations as possible. This will broaden your baby's view of Māori language.
- Encourage the non-fluent parent to go to Māori language classes.

- Read books on bilingualism.
- Think about Māori medium education options as a way of making sure your baby has regular contact with the Māori language.

- Make sure your baby has fun with Māori language by creating Māori language play activities such as songs, rhymes, games and stories within your home.



