



Montessori

JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE
TE ARA KI HUHATANGA

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Montessori
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND





Introduction

The development of Montessori Journey to Excellence (MJ2Ex): *Te Ara Ki Huhuatanga* has been a journey in itself. Early work in the late 1990's by MANZ focused on the development of an accreditation system for Montessori early learning services and primary schools. However, influenced by the introduction of *Teacher as Inquiry* (TAI) and self review during the 2000s in the New Zealand education system and the requirement for teachers to show evidence of professional learning using the then Registered Teacher Criteria, MANZ moved from an accreditation model to developing a co-constructed approach to building a collaborative inquiry community.

In 2011 a *Montessori Journey to Excellence Working Group* was established and the Essential Elements and Quality Indicators for Montessori education were developed and printed as **DRAFT 2012, Montessori Journey to Excellence (MJ2Ex): Te Ara Ki Huhuatanga**. The aim was to empower MANZ member schools and early learning services to deliver excellent Montessori programmes and guide ongoing development.

At MANZ Conference 2018, expressions of interest were invited, for a re-working party to review the published **DRAFT 2012, Montessori Journey to Excellence (MJ2Ex): Te Ara Ki Huhuatanga** and extend it, to include Essential Elements and Quality Indicators for ages 0-3 years and 6-18 years. From this interest a *Re-Working Party* was established.

This 2020 version identifies *Essential Elements of Montessori* which are aspirational and relevant to the context of Aotearoa. It recognises the influence of leadership in sustaining quality Montessori education and includes a stronger emphasis on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the bicultural foundations of our nation. It also recognises the growing cultural diversity of learners in Aotearoa, and supports quality Montessori for all age groups from birth to 18 years.

This revised document is intended to be an all-encompassing document for kaiako of all levels and within that context to be responsive and reflective of the educational landscape of Aotearoa. Where there are specific Quality Indicators for individual age groups, based on developmental differences, these are specified.

In carrying the Montessori torch, at all levels, we recognise our commitment to *Educating for Peace*. This approach is through an integrated and holistic delivery, which

addresses, through Cosmic Education, the discovery of the cosmic task of the child. We further endorse our mandated directive to 'follow the child' based on disciplined, scientific observation, in conscientiously prepared environments. We acknowledge the divergence of quality, rather than a convergence of conformity and so celebrate the many pathways toward Montessori education, respecting the principles of approach as recognised by professionals trained in this field.

The majority of the Quality Indicators demonstrate alignment of the universal principles of Montessori across all age groups, highlighting that there is more that binds than separates us!

It is our hope that these *Essential Elements* and *Quality Indicators* will help to light your path on this journey as Montessori kaiako working with ākonga and whānau within Aotearoa, New Zealand.

E kore te tangata e pakari runga i te wai marino
A person who remains in calm waters will never get strong

MJ2Ex Re-Working Party 2020





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MANZ Essential Elements

The Essential Elements are intended as a guide for establishing best practice. They are written to encompass the learning and developmental needs of each age group: 0-3, 3-6, 6-12 and 12-18 years.

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Purpose

The Essential Elements are to be used for improvement purposes to support ongoing critical thinking and evaluation and can be used in multiple ways e.g. used as reflection topics by individuals and teams, as a starting point for Teacher as Inquiry (TAI) or indicators for internal reviews, and so on.



Contra indications have been written against each Essential Element. These represent what could be happening in an environment which does not represent best Montessori practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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MANZ Essential Elements

1.0 Montessori Leadership, Vision and Advocacy

The leadership vision and advocacy within Montessori communities (early learning services and schools) is key to ensuring that the quality of Montessori implementation is upheld in all Governance and Management decisions. Leadership encompasses Boards, Committees, Trusts, Owners, Management and Head Kaiako.

1.1 Essential Element

Service/school maintains membership with MANZ and an ongoing commitment to the Essential Elements of Montessori Journey to Excellence.

- Service/school is an active member of MANZ.
- Service/school uses the Essential Elements of MJ2Ex along with other national educational documents to guide their practice, e.g; Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa – Early childhood curriculum; The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), Te Marautanga o Aotearoa; Our Codes and Standards: Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa; Tapasā: Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners; Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners to guide their practice etc.

Contra indicators

- Service/school do not engage with the Essential Elements to support continuous improvement and outcomes for ākonga.

1.2 Essential Element

Policies and budgets reflect a continuing commitment to Montessori qualifications and professional learning and development (PLD) for kaiako/boards/trusts/host schools.

- Policies reflect the importance of recruiting trained Montessori staff, or staff willing to be trained.
- Resources are budgeted for Montessori training of staff.
- Resources are budgeted for teachers to attend MANZ conference and other Montessori-specific PLD.
- Policies, budgets and plans focus on increasing bicultural competence for kaiako and their Montessori communities.

Contra indicators

- Policies/Procedures fail to emphasise what is important when recruiting or training Montessori staff.
- Service/school shows little commitment to developing the Montessori knowledge or Montessori qualifications of their teachers/assistants/kaiako.





1.3 Essential Element

Leadership is responsible for ensuring that an experienced Montessori kaiako guides the implementation of the curriculum in the age group they are with.

- At every level (early learning, primary and rangatahi) a Montessori-trained educational leader is appointed to guide the delivery of the pedagogy.
- In early learning services, rosters are arranged to ensure that trained Montessori kaiako lead work cycles at all times.
- Leadership ensures that training is provided to untrained Montessori kaiako.
- Lead kaiako mentors all kaiako, fostering reflective Montessori practice amongst the team.



Contra indicators

- The leader in charge of philosophy and programme delivery is not Montessori trained or undertaking training.
- There are periods in the work cycle when no Montessori-trained professional is present.
- Leadership makes changes without consulting those with Montessori knowledge.
- Lead Montessori kaiako are unsupported in their role.
- Assistant kaiako are unsupported in their role.

1.4 Essential Element

Service/school have clear processes for recruiting, training and retaining high-quality Montessori kaiako.

- Board of Trustees, the Primary Trusts and leaders are aware of the need for succession planning and where possible, put supportive plans in place to assist with this.
- Personnel policies, budgets and strategic planning reflect dedication to recruitment, training and retaining high-quality Montessori kaiako.
- Service/school maintains relationships with training providers so as to be informed about upcoming training and PLD.
- Recruitment processes examine the depth of understanding of a potential candidate's Montessori knowledge and experience; including best practice of reference checking, interviewing and exit interviewing.
- There is a clear and reflective process that supports and encourages ongoing staff development around Montessori principles and practices.
- Montessori-specific job descriptions and inductions are in place for all kaiako.



Contra indicators

- There is no succession planning to alleviate the impact of a Montessori teacher's departure.
- There is no clear system in place to follow when kaiako are underperforming.
- Service/school leadership has not built relationships with other Montessori organisations and training providers.
- Recruitment processes do not highlight the importance of finding a kaiako with in-depth Montessori understanding and experience.
- Induction of kaiako, and expectations and opportunities for PLD are not clearly articulated.



1.5 Essential Element

Montessori service/school has a clear, lived vision for how it delivers Montessori philosophy and education.

- Leadership maintains and increases knowledge of philosophy and current thinking from Montessori Institutions and publications, e.g; *e-zine* Informed.
- Montessori philosophy is integral to the strategic plan and to policies and procedures. It is visible in practice, e.g., internal evaluations, planning, assessment, PLD priorities and documentation.
- Service/school has a clear curriculum delivery statement/document that addresses the developmental needs at each Plane of Development and is reviewed regularly.
- Montessori knowledge and experience is invited and valued at leadership level, e.g., Board of Trustees and/or senior management.

Contra indicators

- Montessori's principles are ignored or deemed impractical or incompatible with existing systems in schools that integrate a Montessori primary unit within the larger entity.
- Service/school philosophy is not lived by all kaiako.

1.6 Essential Element

Leaders ensure that information about their Montessori programme is regularly provided to their community.

- There are clear introduction or orientation processes for both the parent/whānau and ākonga when they join the service/school/community.
- There are regular opportunities for parents/whānau to learn about and discuss Montessori philosophy and practice, e.g., Information Evenings, Newsletters, Blogs, Parent Library.

Contra indicators

- Information about Montessori philosophy and practice as it pertains to the service/school is limited, non-existent or difficult to access.
- Whānau have no opportunities to ask questions or discuss Montessori pedagogy.





2.0 Montessori Learning Environment

The Montessori environment consists of the physical space (both indoors and out), the materials, tools and equipment provided for ākonga activity, the stories told and ideas discussed, the adults and the tamariki/rangatahi. The environment also embodies the ambience found within the culture and interactions of the community members.

2.1 Essential Element

Montessori learning environments are structured according to Montessori principles (*see appendix*) and offer multiple learning opportunities indoors and outdoors.

- The layout of the environment is orderly, sequential, aesthetically pleasing and meticulously maintained.
- All materials are 'child-sized,' are displayed at ākonga level, follow clear sequential steps, are real, clean, complete and inviting, with plastic items kept to a minimum.
- The colour of furnishings, floors and walls are soft and muted.
- Limited wall displays minimise visual distraction while allowing the Montessori materials to be visually more prominent.
- The environment has a full range of developmentally appropriate Montessori materials and prompts to which ākonga have access at all times.
- The Montessori programme focuses on the self-construction of ākonga as individuals (body, mind and spirit), not on delivering a quantity of curriculum.
- The Montessori principles are valued and Montessori teaching strategies are implemented across both indoor and outdoor areas, with free access between the two (*see appendix*).
- 'Sensitive Periods' or 'Sensitivities' appropriate to the age group are supported (*see appendix*).
- The 'Human Tendencies' are acknowledged and utilised to support learning (*see appendix*).



Contra indicators

- The learning environment is not prepared, nor prepared to extend the learning needs of older learners, ESOL learners or differently-abled learners.
- Service/school lacks clear policies or procedures describing when and how ākonga will transition into and out of their learning environments.
- There is an emphasis on completing academic assignments.
- The Montessori classroom feels cluttered and/or chaotic.
- Ākonga cannot easily find what they want.
- The appropriate range of Montessori materials and activities for the age group is not apparent.
- Resources are inappropriate to the specific age group, e.g., in a 0-3 environment there are Sensorial materials and other 3-6 materials; in a 3-6 environment there are many non-Montessori materials and resources; in 6-12 there are auxiliary materials that duplicate the outcome of Montessori materials; or in the 12-15 environment much of the time is spent in academic work.
- Auxiliary (non-Montessori) materials distract attention from the Montessori 'flow.'
- The Montessori learning environment is limited to specific shelves, areas or rooms within the centre, or to certain times of the day.

2.2 Essential Element

The Montessori environment fosters independence and engagement, appropriate to each Plane of Development.

- Practical Life activities are real-life experiences that support the life of the classroom throughout the day.
- The environment is clean, safe, orderly, and accessible: countertops, handles etc are at a height appropriate for the age of the ākongā and are purposefully organised.
- Materials and activities are provided that offer appropriate challenges and opportunities for motor development and independence.
- The environment provides enticement to activity and isolation of difficulty, enabling ākongā to develop concentration for increasing periods of time.
- Ākongā are provided with real implements and given real responsibilities in the care of the environment, their community and care of themselves.
- Ākongā can choose activities independently and move from one activity to another with little adult direction.
- The environment enables ākongā to be active for long uninterrupted periods of time.
- The programme is rich in oral language (e.g., conversations, vocabulary games, music, reciting poetry, rhymes, speeches, presentations and discussions) that support general knowledge, skill in communication, self-confidence, independence and concentration.
- Many activities have a built in 'control of error' which allows ākongā to self-correct.

Contra indicators

- The environment is disorganised or disorderly or it may be difficult for ākongā to access needed tools or materials.
- Many activities are 'busy work' or distract attention from Montessori materials.
- The programme does not encourage ākongā to care for the environment.
- Supplementary activities may distract attention from Montessori materials.
- Supplementary activities are insufficiently complex to hold the curiosity and attention of ākongā.
- There are materials on the shelf that the teacher does not know how to present.
- The work of ākongā is often interrupted by adult priorities, e.g., compulsory whole group presentations or group morning tea times.
- Ākongā are unable to independently select their own activities.
- Tools in the environment are not 'real', or are an inappropriate size for the age group.
- Resources are broken, damaged or incomplete.
- There is an over-reliance on digital technology.





2.3 Essential Element

The Montessori environment enables freedom of movement, and choice of activity, with long uninterrupted periods of time in which to engage with learning.

- At least one sustained, uninterrupted work cycle in a day ideally 3 hours in length (the exception is in toddler programmes which are ideally 2 hours in length).
- Freedom of choice is evident in the environment with ākonga being able to choose who to work with, where to work and what work they will do, so long as they are not infringing on the rights of others.
- For rangatahi, student ownership is evident in the makeup of group projects and investigations.
- The rhythms of the day allow for a balance of activities, both indoors and outdoors, and include independently chosen activities, kaiako presentations, care moments, spontaneous group activities, rest and relaxation.
- The 'work cycle' is free from interruption by whole-group activities such as snack or mat time or group learning where all ākonga must join in (the exception is in toddler programmes where having a group snack is part of the programme).



Contra indicators

- Work cycles are regularly interrupted by external activities.
- Ākonga are given few or no choices in learning activities and daily routines.
- Group times are compulsory and/or long.
- Ākonga can only access the outdoors at fixed periods of the day and/or only a certain number are allowed outside at any one time.

2.4 Essential Element

The Montessori environment is responsive to diverse learners.

- The learning environment and teaching practice support diverse learners – enabled by ongoing, focused observations of priority ākonga and of the group as a whole.
- To cater for the needs, interests, cultures and abilities of the current group of ākonga, activities are regularly refreshed, rotated or replaced.
- The environment supports development of ākonga and encourages self-responsibility and awareness of how their actions may influence others.
- The learning environment supports each ākonga to learn at their own pace.
- To ensure the needs of diverse learners are met, kaiako seek support from outside agencies as needed, e.g., Learning Support, RTLB.



Contra indicators

- Diverse learners are compromised in their opportunity to exercise freedom.
- Kaiako observations are sporadic.
- Kaiako observations are not reflected on.
- Grace and Courtesy lessons do not support the awareness by ākonga of others, nor model possible ways of navigating social situations.
- The environment is not sufficiently responsive to meet the diverse needs presenting.
- Teachers have not established a trusting relationship with ākonga or their whānau, and are unable to constructively support their presenting needs.



2.5 Essential Element

The Montessori programme is committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, celebrates the culture of each whānau, and enables ākonga to develop a deep sense of self.

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi is prioritised by school leadership through policy and procedures expecting all staff to upskill and evidence their bicultural understanding in practice and inquiry.
- Kaiako work in partnership with whānau to purposefully weave the cultural identity of each ākonga into the Montessori programme.
- The culture, language, identity and heritage of each ākonga is valued as being central to their holistic development.
- Rich cultural experiences and celebrations are regularly integrated into the programme in a way that reflects the community.
- Māori values and perspectives are intrinsic to the fabric of the classroom culture.
- Service/school provides a safe space for ākonga to share, explore and show pride in their own cultures.
- Te reo, tikanga and kawa are integrated deliberately and in a focused manner into the learning environment and woven through the Montessori philosophy and practice.
- Te reo is purposefully taught in the Montessori class. There are supplementary materials in the environment that help ākonga to learn te reo.

Contra indicators

- The culture and aspirations of whānau are not valued.
- The culture, identity and heritage of each ākonga is not celebrated.
- Kaiako do not work with whānau, iwi and hapū to ensure that, through the Montessori curriculum, they are able to respond appropriately to Māori and culturally diverse learners.
- Language is limited to greetings, numbers and occasional phrases or instructions.

2.6 Essential Element

Montessori pedagogy is integrated with Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum (known as Te Whāriki) and The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

0-6 Years

- Teachers can articulate, demonstrate and document how Te Whāriki and Montessori philosophy are woven together as a cohesive whole.
- The local curriculum follows Te Whāriki and the Montessori principles in a way that is developmentally appropriate, dynamic, purposeful and engaging.

6-12 Years

- Where the Montessori Curriculum does not cover all the objectives of the NZC, kaiako will supplement the Montessori Curriculum with that content, using Montessori philosophy and pedagogy and practices to present the necessary material.
- The local/posted curriculum has been developed from the NZC and these expectations are integrated and used with ākonga as a way to inspire and encourage ākonga, and for ākonga to know what needs to be accomplished at particular times.

12-18 Years

- A clear plan details how the content of the NZC is delivered over the three year period of each sub-plane. It should also include the Montessori components of Self Expression, Preparation for Adult Life and Psychic Development.

Contra indicators

0-6 Years

- The objectives of Montessori pedagogy and Te Whāriki are delivered separately.

6-12 Years

- The NZC is ignored and consequently, some topics that are not included in the Montessori curriculum are never covered.
- The local/posted curriculum is used as a tick sheet rather than as a guide.

12-18 years

- 15 year olds lack the academic base knowledge and understanding to progress in the next three years of high school.
- The NZC is adhered to rigidly in a subject specific manner that does not allow for integration of curriculum areas, nor inspire relevance to ākonga.



3.0 Montessori Prepared Kaiako

Kaiako are an active part of the Montessori triangle (kaiako-ākonga-prepared environment). The adult (called teacher, kaiako, guide or directress/director) is the 'dynamic link' between ākonga and the prepared environment. To be an effective link and to be able to prepare the environment well, the adult must be Montessori trained, able to observe thoughtfully, reflect deeply, and be committed to the challenging role of kaiako.

3.1 Essential Element

In addition to appropriate New Zealand early childhood, primary or secondary qualifications, kaiako have specialist Montessori qualifications, appropriate to the age group they guide.

- Montessori qualification includes face-to-face training with the Montessori materials for the age group they teach. That training (for any age group within 0-18) includes supervised practice with materials/activities for a minimum of 150 hours.
- Where possible, support kaiako attend the Orientation Course and/or Montessori PLD relevant to the age group they teach.
- At the rangatahi/adolescent level, the lead kaiako and other guides have undertaken the Adolescent Diploma.
- Qualifications for all ages include required observations and supervised practice teaching.



Contra indicators

- The lead kaiako does not have any Montessori teacher qualification, is not in training or does not intend to enter training.
- The qualification of the lead kaiako has little or no face-to-face, experiential or integrative component.
- The training is not relevant for or reflective to the age being taught.

3.2 Essential Element

As part of reflective practice, Montessori kaiako engage in regular Montessori professional learning, inquiry and evaluation.

- Every year whole kaiako teams engage in Montessori professional development specific to the age they are teaching.
- All kaiako regularly collaborate in sustained inquiry and ongoing internal evaluation to grow their Montessori understanding and for improved outcomes for all ākonga.
- Kaiako engage in peer mentoring.
- Kaiako engage in purposeful observation to develop and grow their own practice.
- Self-reflection is an integral part of Montessori practice, and part of the daily preparation of kaiako.



Contra indicators

- Montessori kaiako learning is not reflected on or implemented in practice.



3.3 Essential Element

While still meeting regulatory requirements, the number of adults is kept to a minimum, which supports self-reliance and peer teaching/learning.

- Kaiako protect from interruption the focused, concentrated state of ākongā who are deeply engaged.
- When ākongā are actively engaged, kaiako stand back and observe.
- Adult-child ratio and classroom routines foster independence of ākongā.

Contra indicators

- Independence of ākongā is hindered by kaiako who are too readily available.
- Kaiako step in too soon not allowing ākongā to solve their own quandary.



3.4 Essential Element

Montessori kaiako deliberately model behaviours and attitudes that will support ākongā to adapt constructively to their culture and its expectations.

- As role models kaiako are deeply mindful of their behaviour and language.
- Respect and courtesy are observable in the interactions of ākongā (manaaki, aroha and atawhai).
- At each Plane of Development, Grace and Courtesy lessons are frequent, proactively modelling useful, desired, and sometimes needed behaviours supporting rangatiratanga.
- Kaiako are deeply mindful of their behaviour and language because they want to be worthy of being role models (whakamana).
- Kaiako are self-effacing, move calmly and use effective body language. They modulate their voices appropriate to the circumstance (hūmarie, māhaki).
- Kaiako exhibit grace, warmth, enthusiasm and commitment to the community of ākongā.
- Manaakitanga (hospitality) and whakawhānaungatanga (the building of relationships) are modelled by kaiako.
- The established tikanga and kawa (principles and practices) of the community are articulated and role modelled to ākongā.
- Kaiako understand the importance of building resilience in ākongā and practice strategies to promote it.
- Kaiako regularly examine and challenge their personal bias towards certain ākongā, wanting all to receive equal opportunities.

Contra indicators

- Kaiako display disrespectful behaviours such as talking loudly, using sarcasm, interrupting or correcting in front of others.
- There is little evidence of kaiako reflecting on how their behaviour might impact ākongā negatively.
- Personal issues of kaiako negatively impact their professional practice and relationships.
- Grace and Courtesy lessons are presented in ways which are inappropriate to the age group. (e.g., 3-6 years only presented at large group times rather than in small groups or naturally occurring instances).



3.5 Essential Element

Montessori kaiako use their knowledge of human development and the whole ākonga to engage in an intentional cycle of assessment, planning and evaluation underpinned by thoughtful observations.

- Collaboration with whānau, which is focused and recorded, support kaiako to understand ākonga.
- Montessori kaiako use regular observations to assess, evaluate and plan learning for ākonga – individually and for the whole group
- The implementation of the curriculum is guided by Montessori principles which include Human Tendencies, Sensitive Periods and understanding the needs of ākonga in that Plane of Development (*see appendix*).
- There is a systematic way of recording and sharing observations that inform assessment, planning and evaluating the needs of each ākonga and their areas of interest.
- Kaiako meet regularly to share observations, discuss ākonga interests and needs, and make plans for new presentations/interactions.

Contra indicators

- Discussion and collaboration with whānau is not effective.
- Observations of the class and of individuals are sporadic, not well recorded, and/or not prioritised.
- Kaiako do not meet regularly to discuss observed ākonga needs.
- Human Tendencies are rarely thought about when setting up the environment, routines or systems.
- Kaiako have little understanding of the Planes of Development, to help them determine what is developmentally appropriate for each ākonga.
- Formal testing/assessment is prevalent.



3.6 Essential Element

Montessori kaiako are skilled in following learners – responding to their changing interests, discoveries and individual needs.

- Kaiako are knowledgeable about all the materials within the environment, how they can be used and expanded on to support learning.
- Kaiako seek the balance between actively interacting with ākongā, and allowing them time and space for their own uninterrupted exploration.
- The routines and rituals of the day enable uninterrupted focus for ākongā.
- Kaiako present regular focused lessons, across the curriculum, designed to pique the interests of ākongā.
- Kaiako create a culture that invites ākongā to request lessons and repeat activities.
- Kaiako conference regularly with ākongā about their work, learning and social needs.
- Kaiako understand the Montessori principles which allow them to 'follow the child', i.e. they actively use the physical, emotional, social and psychic development of ākongā to plan programme (see *appendix*).

0-3 Years

- Presentations are mostly offered individually with kaiako involving ākongā at the earliest opportunity.
- Kaiako give language throughout presentations but not at the same time as moving.

3-6 Years

- When kaiako give presentations, speaking is minimal, if at all.
- Extension activities, games and associated language lessons are typically introduced to small groups of ākongā.

6-12 Years

- Lessons are typically given in small groups of mixed ages and genders and factor in the relationships within the class.
- Ākongā are working in many different curriculum areas at any one time.
- Ākongā are encouraged and guided to research their own interests.

12-18 Years

- Seminars should enable ākongā to grapple with advanced concepts, listen to and clarify a range of arguments and opinions, and experience different scenarios in a supported way.
- Community service is a regular part of the programme.
- Programmes allow for different approaches to developing work.
- Self-chosen work is linked to both manual and intellectual endeavours.
- The work for ākongā is meaningful and social.
- Social cohesion is learnt through experience with authentic, ongoing economic enterprise.
- There are opportunities for 'valorisation' through contribution to the community.
- Operating a small business should be a foundational element of the adolescent programme.
- Work on the land may be an inherent part of the programme. Animals may be included if the animals' welfare needs are considered.



Contra indicators

All ages

- Kaiako are in the lead – there is little culture of agency of ākongā.
- Ākongā are not given the respect or freedom to work to their own timetable.
- Ākongā work only in limited areas of the curriculum.
- Ākongā are required to attend lessons when they don't want to, or to return to work that doesn't interest them.
- Kaiako follow a tick list and/or sets a plan to decide the learning of ākongā.
- Ākongā have restricted time to lead their own learning.
- Ākongā do not know why they are doing what they do.

12-18 Years

- Intellectual and manual endeavours are not balanced.



4.0 Montessori Community

The Montessori community is a collaboration of many, including, but not limited to: ākonga and kaiako; whānau, hapū, iwi, and wider community; leaders and governance bodies; and all supporters who share the goals of the Montessori community.

4.1 Essential Element

Ākonga and adults experience a respectful, safe, caring community.

- Relationships between ākonga, kaiako and whānau are deliberate, responsive and respectful.
- Whānau are valued members of the Montessori community and their contributions to the community are welcomed.
- Ākonga are secure in routines and expectations.
- Whānau support networks are established within the community to welcome new parents/whānau and enable them to feel included.
- Montessori tikanga and kawa (principles and practice) are clearly articulated to whānau and ākonga.
- Each ākonga plays a part in contributing to the daily life and functioning of the community in a positive manner.
- Ākonga play important roles in deciding and managing activities and routines, e.g. preparing food, learning about and facilitating conflict resolution, participating in community meetings, community service projects, and helping each other with lessons and follow-up work.
- Ākonga are guided by their peers and kaiako to develop social competence.



Contra indicators

- Ākonga are not free to interact with each other.
- Ākonga are frequently disturbing others.
- Lack of consistency in staffing does not allow ākonga to develop trust with familiar adults.
- Responses to the needs of ākonga are unpredictable and inconsistent across the team.
- Routines are not flexible enough to respond to the needs of ākonga promptly i.e. allow for primary caregiving (0-3 years).
- Adult voices dominate the environment.

4.2 Essential Element

A productive, purposeful partnership, focused on the needs of ākonga is evident between parents/whānau and the Montessori service/school, in all formal and informal communications.

- There are clear transition processes for both parents/whānau and ākonga into, within, and out of the service/school.
- Informal and formal parent and/or whānau meetings (wānanga) are held regularly, at mutually agreed times, to report progress of the development of ākonga and to share any necessary decisions.
- Based on their own experience and understanding of current research, kaiako are able to communicate clearly, and if necessary, reassure whānau about the development and learning of ākonga.
- In order to support ākonga to settle successfully into the Montessori environment, robust, two way communication begins prior to enrolment.



Contra indicators

- Formal written communication with parents/whānau is not in plain language and/or contains unexpected information and/or concerns that have not been raised in face-to-face conversations.
- It is unclear to parents/whānau how the service/school works, what the routines are, and how they can support ākonga to settle in the environment.
- There are no clear processes to enable parents/whānau to seek feedback on the progress and/or development of ākonga, or to give feedback, offer suggestions and/or to make comments to the service/school.

4.3 Essential Element

Kaiako consult with the wider educational community as needed, to gain clarity around priorities for programme development and learning of ākonga.

- Kaiako recognise and value that parents/whānau are advocates for the well-being and development of their ākonga, and have knowledge of their capability outside of the education setting.
- The teaching team works with parents/whānau and specialists to develop timely, meaningful Individual Education Plan/Individual Development Plan (IEPs/IDPs) for ākonga.
- Kaiako engage with MoE and the wider education sector to understand national education learning priorities for ākonga.
- Kaiako consult with parents/whānau, hapū and iwi, and other relevant sectors of the wider community, to ensure there is a collaborative and appropriate response to Māori learners, and other diverse learners.

Contra indicators

- Kaiako create learning priorities without consultation with the community.
- Learning priorities have no link with Montessori principles.



4.4 Essential Element

The Montessori community nurtures kotahitanga (the collective, togetherness), supports the ethos of aroha (compassion, empathy), and role models whakamana (respect), all in the context of bicultural (and indeed, multicultural) understanding.

- 'Education for Peace' is evident at every level of Montessori education and maybe visible through:
 - interactions between ākonga, staff, whānau and the wider community which are characterised by respect, grace, warmth and courtesy.
 - ākonga learning social conventions and skills that help them participate effectively in community life, e.g., negotiation, co-operation, conflict resolution, respect for others.
 - diversity welcomed within the environment.
 - other cultures revealed through songs, stories, pictures, language, resources, musical instruments and books.

6-12 years

- lessons and discussion about positive role models of our time and throughout history e.g. people who made significant contributions to society.
- regular community meetings are held to resolve issues and discuss how the community might work collaboratively.
- ākonga learning to set aside their personal needs for the good of the group.
- ākonga using reasoning and imagination to problem solve for conflict resolution.

12-18

- opportunities for 'valorisation' for individual contributions to the community.
- community service is a regular part of the timetable.
- regular community meetings are held to resolve issues and discuss how the community might work collaboratively.
- opportunity are available for a strong relationship with at least one guide who ākonga can look up to.

Contra indicators

- Community meetings are not organised and facilitated by ākonga (primary +).
- Ākonga, parents/whānau or other community members do not feel respected.
- Kaiako practice feels distant, perhaps mechanical. The focus of lessons is on process rather than purpose.



Appendix

Glossary

<p>Best Montessori practice for age group ratios</p>	<p>Nido – 0-15 months (up to competently walking): Group size 6-8 ākongā maximum with a ratio of not more than 1:3 adults.</p> <p>Infant Community – 15 months-3 years: Group size 10-12 ākongā with 3 adults.</p> <p>3-6 years and 6-12 years: There are minimal adults present as Dr. Montessori suggests the fewer adults in the environment, the better,. Ideal numbers of ākongā are between 28 and 35 with one trained adult and an assistant. In preschool no more than Government regulated ratios and where possible have excess staff sitting and observing rather than interacting with ākongā.</p> <p>12-18 years: approximately one adult (including specialists etc.) per 10-12 ākongā, or such numbers as allow kaiako to work alongside ākongā.</p>
<p>Education for Peace</p>	<p>The focus of teaching and educating for peace in the classroom prepares learners to be peace-seekers. How it is done depends on the age and stage of ākongā.</p>
<p>Human Tendencies</p>	<p>Human Tendencies is a term used by Mario Montessori (Dr. Montessori’s son) to describe universal human traits which last from birth until death. These are motivation energies that support or spark each person and are essential to survival and fulfilment assisting in helping us to adapt to the environment which is a uniquely human trait. The Human Tendencies are: Orientation, Order, Exploration, Communication, Activity, Manipulation, Work, Repetition, Exactness, Abstraction and Perfection.</p>
<p>MANZ</p>	<p>Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand. MANZ is a collective of schools, organisations and individual members who work together to provide and promote Montessori education in New Zealand.</p>
<p>MJ2Ex</p>	<p>Montessori Journey to Excellence, commenced in 2010 with the aim of identifying Essential Elements and Quality Indicators of Montessori practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The New Essential Elements work, commenced in 2018, continues with the intent of providing a guide for establishing best practice, while recognising the influence of leadership in sustaining quality Montessori education and including a stronger emphasis on Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</p>
<p>Montessori Principles used to structure a Montessori Programme</p>	<p>The Montessori classroom (indoors and out) is designed to optimise learning, social relationships, and self esteem. Some of the characteristics of this classroom (and its programme) - at all levels of Montessori education - include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the learner’s unique developmental needs and interests. Learners are not compared, they are valued for their individuality. Montessori education embraces multiple styles of learning and understands that each ākongā learning journey is different. • Kaiako are warm and welcoming, trained to connect ākongā with hands-on experiences, frequently utilising Montessori materials. • Kaiako utilise a variety of observation techniques to assist them in effectively connecting ākongā with compelling activities. • Freedom of movement and choice of activity are both encouraged, within the context of respect for others (“common good” and “common courtesy”). • Hands-on Montessori materials, which demonstrate particular aspects of the academic curriculum, are “housed” accessibly on ākongā-height shelves.

<p>Montessori Principles used to structure a Montessori Programme ...<i>continued</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent effort is encouraged, as is peer collaboration (see below) • Mixed Age Range supports peer collaboration (tuakana/teina relationships). Typical age groupings are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-15 months (infants, not yet walking) • 15 months - 3 years (confidently walking) • 3-6 years (early learning) • 6-9 and 9-12 years OR a combined 6-12 years (primary classes) • 12-15 years (middle school) • 15-18 years (high school) • Activities such as class meetings, “goings out,” and community service projects put ākonga in charge of their community’s functioning and its culture of friendliness. • “Rewards” are intrinsic to the programme - ākonga are encouraged to notice when they have worked well, and experience satisfaction as a result.
<p>Planes of Development</p>	<p>The Four Planes of Development is the holistic framework upon which Montessori built her vision of developmental psychology. This theory encompasses human development from birth until maturity at age 24 with each plane lasting approximately six years and having its own characteristics.</p>
<p>Primary caregiver</p>	<p>A primary or key caregiver is a term used in the 0-3 year programme and indicates the child’s own special teacher or educator.</p>
<p>Programme Characteristics of each age group</p>	<p>0-3 Years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Primary caregiving</i> is fundamental to the 0-3 programme. - Community includes all members of the child’s team. <p>0-6 Years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities which challenge gross and fine motor development are available throughout the day. - The needs of the individual and the community of tamariki (e.g. for exercise, interest, exploration, self-expression, food, self-care and care of each other) drive the programme and the activities available. - Academic studies made possible by Montessori materials include language, mathematics, geometry, geography (both physical and cultural) and the passage of time. <p>6-12 Years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community meetings provide opportunities for collective problem solving and initiation of large projects. - Community service projects allow ākonga to connect and serve in a wider community. - The <i>Going-Out Programme</i> enables learning beyond the classroom and teaches protocols for connecting with a wider community. - <i>Cosmic Curriculum</i> describes the interconnection of all subject areas. Cosmic curriculum ‘studies’ are typically tied to a number of vast ‘stories’ shared by kaiako, which make possible the integration of traditional subject areas such as language, mathematics, geometry, history, geography, biology, physical science, music, art, gardening, and cooking. <p>12-18 Years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experts in their field are invited into class to ‘teach’ or are visited in their place of work. - Opportunities for living together are included in the programme. - Multiple ways to experience social organisation are provided. - Opportunities to contribute by working alongside other adults are provided. - The <i>Going Out Programme</i> from 6-12 continues with increasing independence.



Psychic Development	This term refers to development that involves the physical body and the mind.
Sensitive Periods	<p>These are developmental windows of opportunity during which ākongā can learn specific concepts more easily and naturally than at any other time in their lives. Ākongā in the midst of a Sensitive Period will show an especially strong interest or inclination toward certain activities or lessons.</p> <p>Sensitive Periods characteristic of the age groups, and which the programme must support include:</p> <p>0-6: The Absorbent Mind, Movement, Language, Senses, Order, Detail. 6-12: The Reasoning Mind, Social Concerns, Community, Justice/Morality. 12-18: The Social New Born, Personal Dignity, Social Justice, Belonging.</p>
Montessori Teaching Strategies	<p>Grace and Courtesy Lessons: an integral part of the Montessori curriculum beginning in the early learning classroom and continuing through the primary levels. They are lessons which help tamariki learn social strategies to navigate friendships and collaborations with others that will benefit them throughout their life.</p> <p>Free Access to Hands-On Materials: supports the curiosity of ākongā, and scaffolds independent practice and understanding.</p> <p>Nurturing Self-Awareness: include activities which care for the environment and support others and the community.</p> <p>Standing Back: Montessori kaiako maintain a low profile in class to foster self-reliance and peer problem solving.</p> <p>Montessori Teaching Strategies Particularly for 0-6 Years and Early Primary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple daily routines support predictability and safety for ākongā. - Ākongā are taught how to organise their day. - Ākongā are shown how to maintain the cleanliness and order of their environment. - Lessons are typically given 1:1 (for younger ākongā and ākongā needing the intensity of a teacher-relationship) and with increasing age and capability, in appropriately small groups. - For purposes of clarity, kaiako use minimal words and slow exaggerated movements when presenting a lesson. - Ākongā are encouraged to ask for help from their peers.
Valorisation	The self-esteem and sense of self worth which comes from having one's work valued by peers and guides.
Work cycle	This is an uninterrupted block of time. During this time ākongā are able to explore all environments and engage with materials of their own choosing.
Teaching as Inquiry (TAI)	This is where kaiako inquire into their practice with an emphasis on improving outcomes for ākongā.
MoE	Ministry of Education.
High quality	Refers to education which provides the outcomes needed for ākongā to prosper.
Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour (RTLb)	RTLb's work together with kaiako and schools to support the achievement of ākongā, in Years 1-10, with learning and/or behaviour challenges.
IEP / IDP	<p>Individual Education Plan/Individual Development Plan</p> <p>An IEP / IDP is a written plan that sets out goals for ākongā who have learning support needs. Kaiako and whānau work together to develop a plan that outlines goals for ākongā.</p>

Glossary of Māori words

Ākonga	This has been used to describe learners of all ages.
Aroha	Love, compassion, empathy, respect.
Atawhai	Kindness, caring.
Hapū	A kinship group comprising of a number of whanau groups; membership is determined by a genealogical ancestor. A number of related hapū usually share adjacent territories forming iwi.
Hūmarie	To be pleasant, peaceful, gentle.
Iwi	Refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.
Kaiako	Teacher.
Kaitiaki	Refers to a trustee, minder, guard, custodian, guardian, caregiver, keeper or steward.
Kawa	The local rules.
Kotahitanga	Unity, togetherness, solidarity.
Māhaki	To be inoffensive, calm, quiet.
Manaaki	To support, take care of, show respect and generosity.
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness.
Rangatahi	Adolescent.
Rangatiratanga	Leadership, autonomy, agency, sovereignty.
Tamariki	Children.
Te reo	The language.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi.
Tikanga	The customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context.
Tuakana-teina	Older children supporting younger children.
Wānanga	To meet and discuss, deliberate / seminar, conference.
Whakamana	To enable, empower, or give prestige.
Whakawhānaungatanga	Relationship-building.
Whānau	Extended family or family group, familial term of address to a number of people.



Ministry of Education and Teaching Council of Aotearoa Documents

He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa - Early childhood curriculum (Te Whāriki).	This is underpinned by a vision for ākonga who are 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.
New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.	In keeping with the spirit and intent of the Treaty of Waitangi and New Zealand's bi-cultural nationhood, there are two statements of national curriculum: The New Zealand Curriculum, and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. These set the direction for ākonga learning and provides guidance for schools as they design and review their curriculum. It commences with a vision of ākonga developing the competencies they need for study, work, and lifelong learning, so they may go on to realise their potential.
Our Codes and Standards: Ngā Tikanga Matatika Ngā Paerewa.	The Code sets out the high standards for ethical behaviour that are expected of every teacher. The Standards describe the expectations of effective teaching practice. Together they set out what it is and what it means to be a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Tapasā: Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners.	This is a document that can be used by all teachers to increase the capability of Pacific learners.
Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners to guide their practice.	Tātaiako provides teachers with information, prompts and questions to stimulate thinking and discussion about their current practice and how responsive that practice is to the specific learning and cultural needs of Māori learners.





Montessori
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND



PO Box 31-461
Lower Hutt
Ph 0274 485 525

WWW.MONTESSORI.ORG.NZ