



When does
my tamaiti start
learning te reo
Māori?

Is it ever too early to start learning te reo Māori?

The whare tangata
is the first whare
wānanga. Pēpi is
learning the sounds
and rhythm of
te reo Māori
in utero

In utero pēpi can
hear the difference
between languages

In utero: Share what you know with pēpi while hapū. Singing waiata, sharing karakia and having a kōrero with your pēpi while hapū will get them learning the sounds and rhythm of te reo rangatira.

At birth pēpi
prefers the sound of
the languages they
heard in utero



At birth: Pēpi prefers the sound of their mother as well as the voices of whānau they heard often in utero. They can tell the difference between environmental sounds (birds, cars, dishes) and the sound of voices. They show us they are wired into learning languages from before birth.

They love the sound of your voice so don't even worry if you don't have a flash voice, they'll love your waiata!

5 - 7 months
Pēpi gains control of
head, neck and tongue
muscles and starts to
mimic sounds they hear
most often

Pēpi plays with
sounds like the
rolled 'r' in roimata
and 'ng' in
ngeru

5-7 months: Pēpi often starts to make intentional babbling sounds around the same time they learn to sit upright. They might have been using all sorts of sounds from birth such as raspberries, crying, laughing etc. But now they have better control of their muscles, they can be more intentional with the sounds they make.

They want to make the same sounds you do so if you're using te reo Māori. We can extend our use of te reo Māori by reading reo Māori books, singing waiata, using karakia and sharing anything else you know. Anything repetitive boosts their learning.

6 months
Starting to
understand
everyday words
such as
pukapuka



6 months: During the babbling stage their understanding of language is increasing. It's a good time to be commenting on things around you in te reo Māori.

When you and pēpi are looking at the same thing, try naming it in te reo Māori. This joint gaze or reciprocal gaze helps pēpi to learn and understand new words.

11 months
Pēpi starts to
'prune' away the
sounds they don't
hear often



11 months: Pēpi is born with the ability to learn any language in the world. By 11 months they will recognise all the sounds used within the languages they hear most often. At this age they also start a process called pruning, where they tune out things they don't hear very often so they can put their focus on learning language they hear the most.

If pēpi is hearing te reo Māori in the first 11 months, it will help them tune into the sounds of te reo Māori. They will play with the sounds through babbling which sets them up to say reo Māori kupu and sentences.

12 - 18 months
Pēpi is starting to
say their first
words



12 – 18 months: we don't often hear first words from pēpi until after 12 months, you can see there is a lot that they have been learning to get to this point.

**Its never too early
for your tamaiti
to start learning
te reo Māori**



Our tūpuna knew and expected our pēpi to be learning before birth and we have taonga tuku iho to show us this is the case. Waiata oriori were often sung to pēpi during hapūtanga and birth to share the language, whakapapa and identity of that pēpi. Our tūpuna knew that these were precious moments of learning language, culture and identity.

It's nevert too early, and its never too late to start learning te reo Māori!