

Comment on what they are looking at

Me kōrero ki a rātou ake mahi me a rātou ake tirohanga

When we describe what babies and toddlers are doing or looking at, we're giving them words and sentences that match their interest at that moment. This tells them we're interested in them and makes it easier for them to take a turn. Don't be shy to use 'juicy' words e.g. you could say the bird is flying, but you could also say it's soaring or fluttering.

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TE POU ORANGA O
WHAKATŌHEA
Whānau Ora, Hapū Ora, Ka Ora ai te Iwi

Encourage them, be positive

Me whakamanawatia, whakamanatia i ngā wā kātoa

She wants to play with her baby sister and knows she's got to be careful. Let your tamaiti know how to play with pēpi in a gentle way. She might learn some new words along the way.

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Follow their lead, do what interests them

Me whai haere i ā rātou, me mahia te mahi pai ki a rātou

When playing with babies and toddlers, go with the flow and follow their interests. Their attention often jumps from one thing to another and that's natural for their age. Once you're tuned in and following their lead it can be a surprise as to what they're interested in. We want to talk about the mobile we're making, while they're obsessed with something else. Go with it. It's interesting to them.

Get down to their level, face to face

Me whakaheke ki a rātou kōeketanga: kanohi ki te kanohi

Kanohi ki te Kanohi is the foundation for any genuine connection and most important for babies and toddlers. Not only do they learn from our facial expressions, they're taking note of the shapes our lips are making as we speak. They want to copy us. Being face to face helps us notice what they're interested in too.

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Imitate them, and add words

Whakataurite i a rātou me whakahua atu i ngā kupu ki a rātou

Imitating the sounds and gestures baby makes is fun. It can go on for hours! Next time you imitate pēpi, add a word or short sentence about what you're doing to take it to the next level.

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Name things they are interested in

Me whakaingoa mai i ngā mea e rātou te aroarohia

You might not find a baby bottle that interesting, but that doesn't mean babies feel the same! Their world and community is new to them - share the gift of language by naming things they look at, touch or taste.

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Repeat and add to what they say and do

Me pāorooro, me whakapiri hoki i ngā kupu
ki ā rātou kōrero, ki ā rātou mahi hoki

Children LOVE repetition and they learn so much from it. Next time they want to hear or sing the same waiata again why not add another verse? Or why not add movements this time? Indulge their need for “one more time”, keep it fresh for you and teach them something new. It’s how they learn.



Take turns, don't do all the talking

Me whakawhiti kōrero ki a rātou, kaula e kōrero i ngā wā katoa

It can be easy to get carried away and read the whole story in one go – funny voices and all. Why not pause for a moment and let your child take a turn? A baby's response could be a sound or touching the page. A toddler might use a single word or a sentence. Give them space to share their thoughts and ideas.

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talking
 matters

Talk about what you are doing and thinking

Me kōrero ki āu ake mahi, ki āu ake whakaaro

We all have our own internal monologue as we go about our tasks. Why not share this with pēpi, toddlers and young children? This is a great opportunity to share the gift of language with them.

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**TE POU ORANGA O
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Touch, hug, hold

Pā atu, awhi, pūmau

Talking isn't the only way we connect and communicate. We connect with babies through loving touch and we can never cuddle a baby too much. Scientists have also discovered that the more you hug your baby, the more their brain grows!

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Tune in

Me āta rongō, me āta rangona

Take a moment to tune in to what your baby might be thinking and feeling. They love spending time with you.

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Wait for their response

Me tatari mō tā rātou whakautu

Babies and toddlers are learning so much every single day, it's incredible how much they're taking in. Sometimes it can take them a wee bit of time to respond as many of their movements, sounds, gestures and words are new to them. Give them time. Don't assume they don't know.

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