

# Rhythmic movement

This information sheet describes rhythmic movement through dance, music and drama. It highlights the role some of the senses play in enabling tamariki to move confidently.

## Moving in different ways

Dance, music, and drama encourage tamariki to imaginatively use their body to interpret and portray feelings, the environment, and stories in their own way.

As they explore their own forms of self expression, tamariki draw on their fundamental movement skills to isolate and move parts of the body, to combine movements, and to vary the speed, force, and size of movements.

While developing the physical skills to move rhythmically, tamariki are also engaging in the cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of learning by, for example, learning to:

- express their emotions and creative ideas through movement
- explore new ways of communicating ideas, stories, and feelings
- develop language and memory skills
- relate concepts to movements, for example, by twisting like tuna or being as strong as a kauri
- work with others to explore storytelling and creative movement
- learn to tell and retell the stories, songs, and dances of their heritage
- appreciate the cultural taonga that te ao Māori expresses through te ao kori.

## Embracing traditional arts

For many cultures, traditional arts are a vital part of continuing the oral traditions and customs of the past. Dance, music, and drama provide opportunities for tamariki to learn about and gain competencies in their own traditional forms of movement and the stories these forms pass on. For example, learning specific hand movements, moving to certain drum patterns, or using poi, fans, flowers, or ribbons.

## The role of the senses

Dance, music, and drama highlight the role senses play in enabling tamariki to move confidently as they express themselves in rhythmic ways.

Along with the five well known senses, there are three others: the vestibular, proprioceptive and interoceptive senses. Tamariki draw on these senses as they coordinate body movements, learn about balance, and understand how their body responds.

### The vestibular sense

The vestibular sense develops balance, stability, and an understanding of where tamariki are in space. When tamariki are spinning, swinging, bouncing or rocking they stimulate their vestibular sense. Some tamariki will do this more than others, developing in their own way at their own pace.

### The proprioceptive sense

Feeling the way their body moves and the relationships between parts of the body, builds the proprioceptive sense, the body awareness, of tamariki. The weight of a blanket, the sensation of being hugged, holding things loosely or tightly, and the ways joints, muscles, and ligaments work separately or together builds this sense. The development of the proprioceptive sense leads to muscle memory and an unconscious ability to move in certain ways, such as walking, running, and falling.

### The interoceptive sense

This sense helps tamariki make connections between what their internal organs are feeling and how that relates to their own personal needs or emotions. For example, when we are hungry, thirsty, hot, or cold our bodies physically respond in some way – tummy noises, dry mouth, goosebumps or shivering. Strong emotions also create bodily responses such as changes in breathing, temperature or heart beat.

Supports Video 2: Do you hear me?

## Considerations for kaiako practice

Kaiako support tamariki to engage in dancing, music, and drama when they:

- give infants opportunities to bounce, rock, jiggle
- provide time and resources – poi, coconut cups, fans – for tamariki to explore
- give tamariki opportunities to see, hear, and respond to music that reflects their age, whānau, and culture
- encourage informal dramatisation of rhymes, fables, pūrākau, and books that tamariki like
- engage in dance with tamariki, and role model different movements
- engage tamariki in mindfulness and breathing activities such as hikitia te hā or yoga
- intentionally prepare for opportunities to use finger plays, body rhymes, action songs
- intentionally plan for dramatic experiences, for example providing props and costumes.

## Sharing with whānau and parents

Kaiako can partner with whānau to:

- build on children’s prior experiences of dance, music, and drama and whānau expertise
- create opportunities for tamariki to share their dance, music, and drama with the community.

*Do you hear me?*

*Ka rongō rānei koe i ahau?*

*O e lagona mai a’u?*

*Ke fanongo mai kiate au?*

*Logona nakai e koe au?*

*E kē lagona mai au?*

## Further information

### Video and websites

This information sheet expands on the video Do you hear me? Watch the video for examples of kaiako supporting tamariki to engage in dance, music and drama.

- <https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/kia-kori-tahi/>

The following websites provide information related to the senses and rhythmic movement:

- All Right? – Hikitia te Hā  
[allright.org.nz/tools/hikitia-te-ha](http://allright.org.nz/tools/hikitia-te-ha)
- Te Whāriki Online – Storytelling and oral language  
[tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/teaching-strategies-and-resources/communication/talking-together/talk-tools/storytelling-and-oral-language/](http://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/teaching-strategies-and-resources/communication/talking-together/talk-tools/storytelling-and-oral-language/)

## Te ao kori

*Kia kawea tātou e te rēhia – Let us be taken by the spirit of joy, of entertainment*

“Te ao kori, the world of movement, is a Māori celebration of life through movement and its many expressions. Throughout history, Māori have developed ways to sharpen mental and physical agility, hand-eye coordination, and a sense of wellbeing. The environment has inspired a wide range of movements, games, competitions, dance, song, fun, and enjoyment – a celebration of life.”

[health.tki.org.nz/Key-collections/Exploring-te-ao-kori/What-is-te-ao-kori](http://health.tki.org.nz/Key-collections/Exploring-te-ao-kori/What-is-te-ao-kori)