



FAQ – Toothbrushing at He Manu Hou

He Manu Hou is one of the two pilot settings for the evidence-based South Canterbury toothbrushing programme and are continuing toothbrushing at their ECE. Below are some answers to frequently asked questions about toothbrushing programmes at an ECE, from Missy King, head kaiako at He Manu Hou.

1. What does a daily toothbrushing routine look like at He Manu Hou?

Through trial and practice we have developed a paraihe ngā niho (toothbrushing) routine, which is working well for us, and is a regular part of our curriculum. He Manu Hou is a mixed aged kaupapa Māori setting, so we had to figure out how this was going to work for ngā tamariki katoa (all children). Tamariki are involved in this programme from when their baby teeth break through. Tamariki paraihe niho after lunch. Four tamariki sit around a small tēpu (table) with stools and mirrors to see what they are doing. Tamariki wait for their turn to brush. This is Ako in practice, as our older and younger tamariki are learning and doing together. We have two toothbrushing racks and we wash them once a week, on two alternative days.



2. Tell us about how you involved tamariki and whānau with the toothbrushing programme?

Having a routine and dedicated space for toothbrushing has been key for engaging with the tamariki. We have a small tēpu and stools, and little mirrors for the tamariki to look at while brushing. Now that we have a routine the tamariki are keen to brush their niho (teeth) and they pack up their pouaka kai (lunchbox) when they see the toothbrushing being set up and they remind us about toothbrushing if they're going to be missing it for whatever reason that day. They are also very excited to show us their shiny teeth and smile when they are done.

Whānau have been on board from the beginning. As part of the pilot, we did a whānau hui and provided whānau packs with resources and toothbrushes and paste, and have wall displays about healthy niho and kai.

We've provided ongoing education around oral health and healthy kai in the daily programme with tamariki and to whānau. All of this helped support the toothbrushing programme.

One whānau member commented, "It's great to see our tamariki supported with the knowledge of 'how' to brush their teeth".

3. Do you have any tips that may help other ECE who are starting the toothbrushing programme?

Find out what works for you as what works in one centre might be different to what works in another centre. Decide when and where is the most suitable time to brush, ideally somewhere close to a tap. Have a dedicated space for toothbrushing. For us having the tēpu and stools and mirrors for the tamariki to look at made all the difference. Decide who will lead the programme, have at least two kaiako for this.

The most important thing is to start, and you will figure all this out and how it will best work your centre once you start the toothbrushing.