



## Our tikanga approach

# Introduction

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The purpose of the Independent Children's Monitor (the Monitor) is to provide a credible view of the Oranga Tamariki System, highlighting areas that will drive continuous improvement to advance outcomes for tamariki and their whānau, particularly tamariki and whānau Māori.

To understand if the Oranga Tamariki system is working for tamariki and whānau, we need to hear their experiences and views on what is going well and areas for improvement. To do this well, we must uphold their mana when we kōrero with them so that they feel valued and safe to share with us.

Our tikanga approach lays a sound foundation for us to work with tamariki and whānau and those who hold their best interests at heart - hapū, iwi and communities. Relationships built on respect and trust, reciprocity, a common focus, cohesiveness and proactive engagement along with effective processes for talking, learning and working together, will contribute to a successful outcome.

Our tikanga approach is about always striving to do the right thing in the right way when we hui, and consists of the following principles:

- Whakapapa (kinship) – making connections through finding out a little about each other and acknowledging connections
- Whakamana i te tāngata (respect) – showing respect by understanding and supporting Māori kawa and tikanga
- Whanaungatanga (relationship) – fostering a sense of connection when engaging with each other. Relationships are important
- Manaakitanga (caring for others) – having integrity and caring about how we relate to people
- Kotahitanga (unity) – while people may hold diverse views, it is important to identify a shared sense of purpose.
- Kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face) – engaging in person particularly to resolve any issues and maintain connections.

Although our tikanga approach has a strong focus on Māori, the principles apply to all peoples and communities.

## Our tikanga journey

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Since the Monitor was established in July 2019, we have focussed on building a strong tikanga foundation. We have engaged with iwi, Māori and community partners from across the motu and established the Kāhui group made up of Māori rangatira to provide us with expert advice, guidance, support and oversight of our work including cultural guidance. We have recruited Māori staff with strong kawa and tikanga knowledge, and we support all staff to build cultural knowledge and understanding to confidently engage with tamariki, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities.

Some of the ways we have supported staff include providing weekly te reo Māori and waiata sessions and supporting staff to learn their pepeha and karakia for opening and closing hui. Staff have also learnt about the mihi whakatau process and all new staff are welcomed with mihi whakatau. Going forward we will be providing staff with professional whakawhiti kōrero (reflective conversations) and cultural supervision to enable them to reflect on and improve their practice, particularly when we hui with others.

Our Tikanga approach for engaging with tamariki, whānau, and communities is a living and evolving approach that will be reviewed and strengthened as we learn from tamariki, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities, about their experiences engaging with us.