

Exploring through treasure baskets

Treasure baskets are full of safe, everyday items that invite tamariki to explore using all their senses. This kind of open ended play is grounded in Te Whāriki and supports creativity, curiosity, and discovery in natural and meaningful ways.

Treasure baskets play can help tamariki to:

- Explore using their senses — noticing texture, weight, sound, smell, and how things move
- Focus and stay engaged Imagine, invent, experiment and create
- Develop early maths skills through sorting, counting, classifying and measuring
- Build language and storytelling skills as they describe what they are doing



Ideas for your treasure basket

Choose a mix of textures, materials and shapes. You can repurpose things from around your home, or visit an op-shop to find interesting items. Always choose safe, non-toxic items that cannot be swallowed or broken easily.

Soft textures

Velvet scrunchies, makeup brushes, pom poms

Natural objects

Smooth shells, driftwood, pumice, loofahs, harakeke balls

Household items

Jam jar lids, wooden spoons, metal tins, silicone bakeware

Curious objects

Bangles, egg timers, small books or ornaments

Containers for sorting and hiding

Old purses, tissue boxes, containers, cups, paper bags, pots

How to

1. Gather 15 or so items in a basket
2. Choose a safe area on the floor and lay out their play mat
3. Give the basket to your tamaiti and let them explore
4. Watch over them, but don't intervene if you can

How you can support this play

- Let tamariki explore at their own pace and their own way
- Encourage their ideas and decision making
- Support turn taking, sharing and social interactions

