

# Poipoia ngā tamariki

## How whānau and teachers support tamariki Māori to be successful in learning and education—COMPASS

He whakarāpopototanga  
Executive summary



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## He rangahau | COMPASS project

The COMPASS project is a partnership between Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and Professor Melinda Webber from The University of Auckland. It is part of NZCER's Te Pae Tawhiti Government Grant programme of research, funded through the Ministry of Education.

*Poipoia ngā tamariki: How whānau and teachers support tamariki Māori to be successful in learning and education* is the third COMPASS report from the collaboration between NZCER and Professor Melinda Webber on the analysis of data collected through her national research project *Kia tū rangatira ai: Living, thriving and succeeding in education*.

This kaupapa Māori study shares whānau beliefs about how they, and teachers, can best support tamariki to be successful in learning and education.

## He kitenga | Findings

### He aha te angitu ki tā te whānau titiro? | Whānau perceptions of success

For whānau, success in learning and education means that, firstly, their tamariki develop a solid social, emotional, and cultural foundation that sets them up well to succeed in life and learning. They have a strong sense of self-worth, identity, and belonging. They have also developed the attributes that whānau associate with being successful, admirable human beings, which are often passed on within each whānau.

Secondly, whānau view tamariki as successful when they are enjoying learning, are pursuing their interests, and achieving their learning and academic goals. Success for tamariki means they are proud of their culture and language and able to move confidently within te ao Māori. They are able to take up opportunities to fulfil their aspirations and can also navigate setbacks and challenges when they arise.

Whānau perceptions of success and knowing how they can support tamariki to be successful and feel mana-ful are strongly aligned with the optimal conditions outlined in the Mana Model developed by Webber and Macfarlane (2020). This model identifies five individual, family, school, and community conditions that support Māori students to achieve their educational, social, and cultural goals. Within the Mana Model, the five key optimal conditions for Māori student success are: Mana Whānau (familial pride); Mana Motuhake (personal pride and a sense of embedded achievement); Mana Tū (tenacity and self-esteem); Mana Ūkaipo (belonging and connectedness); and Mana Tangatarua (broad knowledge and skills).

## Poipoia te tamaiti | Supporting tamariki

### The four most important things whānau can do to support tamariki to be successful

The four most important things whānau believe they can do to support their tamariki to be successful are to:

- love and care for them
- encourage and support them
- nurture positive attitudes towards education
- be actively involved in learning at home and at school.

Within a complex whānau support system, different aspects of all these things can be in play at once. Looking after all aspects of their children’s wellbeing and encouraging and supporting them to achieve their learning aspirations—and in some respects the aspirations of their whānau—is very important to whānau. Whānau also strongly believe in the importance of showing tamariki that they value learning and education by being actively involved in learning and education at home and at school. For whānau, it is important that tamariki have good relationships and enjoyable learning experiences so that they are well set up to make choices about their futures.

### Tuakiritanga | Pride and strength from Māori cultural identity

The study found that Māori cultural identity provides many benefits for tamariki. The sense of belonging, connectedness, and pride derived from identity is important for creating positive cultural foundations for tamariki. Whānau also viewed Māori identity as a protective factor. A strong and confident sense of Māori identity is perceived by whānau to play an important role in the positive self-concept and academic resilience of tamariki Māori. It helps develop cultural efficacy and ability to stay focused, as well as commitment to achieving their aspirations at school for the collective benefit of their whānau.

### Kia whakaohooho | Inspirational role models

Inspirational role models for whānau exist within every generation. Both whānau and ākongā agree that parents are the most important role models in a young person’s life. Whānau views of positive role models closely align with ākongā views of role models as people who have long-lasting, quality relationships with tamariki, who exhibit admirable values and personal attributes, and who actively help tamariki.

One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that in general, parents have more of an impact on the aspirations of their tamariki than they realise. As a group, parents underestimate how much their tamariki look to them for inspiration as the people they want to emulate.

### The five best things teachers can do to support tamariki to be successful

Teachers have a very important role in supporting tamariki to be successful in education. Many of the things they do to support tamariki are the same things that whānau are doing at home. The five best things whānau think teachers do to support tamariki to succeed are:

1. encouraging and supporting tamariki
2. knowing and caring about tamariki

3. listening to tamariki
4. teaching to individuals' strengths and needs
5. embodying qualities and values that whānau admire.

Whānau value the expertise teachers bring in determining an individual's learning strengths and needs. They most value teachers who are able to adjust their teaching practice to best support individual learning strengths, needs, and interests, and make learning enjoyable for tamariki.

### Ētahi āwangawanga | Concerns

Racism against Māori in schools and limited access to Māori-medium education are issues that continue to concern whānau. Positive action and deep changes are needed at the system and institutional levels of education if these barriers to Māori success are to be removed.

Role models have a positive impact on the outcomes of ākongā. However, we found that there are tamariki who do not have role models. Considering how important role models are, this raises the question of how these tamariki can otherwise be supported.

### He kupu whakakapi | Conclusion

This study contributes to understanding, recognising, and celebrating the important role of whānau and of Māori identity in helping tamariki Māori to be successful. While success within the school domain was a primary focus, this study has found that the social, emotional, and cultural foundations that whānau help tamariki develop are also intended to set tamariki up for success in all areas of life.

