



Hororata Primary School

Learning for our future

Helping your child develop Key Competencies (KC's)

Your child is learning a range of skills and abilities (key competencies) to help them to do well in life. There are lots of things you can do to help your child develop and use these.

The world your child lives in is very different to what it was like when you were growing up and is continuing to change. It is no longer enough to just learn "facts".

No-one knows exactly what life will be like for today's children when they become adults, but we do know that they will need to develop a range of key competencies, so that they can adapt and function well in the world.

These key competencies are:

- Thinking
- Using language, symbols, and texts
- Managing self
- Relating to others
- Participating and contributing

These key competencies are an important part of your child's learning at school. They are included in the New Zealand Curriculum and are woven into all the teaching that takes place.

Key competencies are not just for school, but for life. Your child uses these key competencies in many different situations at home, at sport, at church, at cultural occasions, and eventually at work.

HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?

The key competencies are a really useful way to think about and get involved in your child's learning. There are lots of ways to do this:

- Understand what's happening at school - ask your teacher how they are teaching your child about key competencies, why, and what you can do to help at home
- Be enthusiastic and interested in what your child is doing at school – ask your child what they learned today, talk about the skills that they are developing, and how useful they are in life

Do things together that uses one or more key competencies - this shows your child that what they learn at school is connected to the things they do in everyday life, for example:

- Planning a meal – thinking; using language, symbols and texts, managing self
- Taking part in a powhiri at your marae – relating to others; participating and contributing, using language, symbols and texts
- Being in a sports team – participating and contributing; relating to others, managing self
- Mastering the rules of an online game – thinking; using language, symbols and texts.

THINKING

Is about developing the sort of thinking skills that children need in the world today. They are using creative and critical ways of thinking to make sense of information, experiences and ideas.

Things to try at home

- Talk to your child about how thinking is important to make sense of everything they do at school and at home
- Ask your child's teacher to explain the thinking strategies they are using at school so that you can notice and reinforce them at home. Ask the teacher what you can do to build on them at home
- Notice and praise your child when they use different sorts of thinking, like mathematical and logical thinking, or knowing how to find flaws in thinking (such as assuming that something is true based on a few examples)
- Make it fun. Playful thinking is a great way of building the brain and your child's thinking abilities. Games of all types - make believe, imaginary friends, "what if" flights of fancy, and so on all provide opportunities for playful thinking.

SUGGESTED EARNING EXPERIENCES...

ASSIGNMENTS / PROJECT RESEARCH... Completing projects and assignments is a great way to learn as it involves learning new things, comparing and evaluating different sources of information and time factors such as due dates.

Research should include finding out information a variety of sources e.g., using digital media, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, libraries, parents and a host of other sources.

USE COMPUTER FOR WORK... Computing skills are absolutely essential for students in their future working life and leisure pursuits. Many students only use computers for recreation, but they must also learn to use the whole range of services that computers supply including researching information, communicating with family and friends, testing hypotheses, writing and word processing and using specific programs to develop skills such as painting programs, spreadsheets, data bases and telecommunications. Time should be limited as this is mostly sedentary work and often reclusive. More emphasis should be given to using computers as a tool, rather than a toy!

USING LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND TEXTS

Is about the different ways to communicate and understand information, experiences and ideas.

Things to try at home

- Check whether your child understands the meaning in different types of texts or languages. If they tell you that something “is” so, ask them how they know, or what makes them think that. This can help them think about other possibilities, which is what the teachers do at school as well
- When you flick through the junk mail or watch television together, talk about the language the advertisers have used to make you want to buy their products. Encourage your child to think about how the language makes the advertising claims believable, and what information they leave out and what that also tells us
- Comment when you see a symbol used in a new way, or the same symbol used to mean different things in different contexts. Talk about who might have “invented” each use, and why.

SUGGESTED EARNING EXPERIENCES...

READING... Reading includes reading for pleasure, reading fiction, newspapers, magazines, textbooks and should include examples of reading to, reading with and reading by.

Being read to is an important part of developing the desire to read and bonding with parents. It enables children to imagine and form thoughts in their heads. By parents using intonation and expression, children get a love of books and stories. Older siblings and other family members should also read to children, as this is bonding and a very memorable time of childhood.

SHOPPING... This is an active pastime and a very valuable one in gaining a number of life skills including budgeting, selecting, discerning, totalling, money handling, reading item labels and discovering what things cost and value for money. Many students leave school without these skills and these should be developed early in life. This includes grocery and other shopping including clothes and hardware etc. This is also a bonding activity with one or both parents and siblings.

COOKING... This includes all forms of food preparation e.g., cooking, baking, preserving etc. Cooking is an excellent way to combine a child’s knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics or the 3R’s. Children are given the opportunity to apply their knowledge of written language through the comprehension of recipes, making inferences and following instructions, and using their mathematical knowledge and strategies to estimate, measure and time the cooking process.

MANAGING SELF

This means being self-motivated, having a can-do attitude and understanding yourself as a learner.

Things to try at home

- Notice and praise your child when they do regular chores or homework without having to be asked. This shows them that you value their independent self-management
- Talk about the challenges of learning, not just about what has been learned, and show them that you are always learning as well
- Support and encourage your child when the going gets tough. For example, say “the periodic table, or paragraphs for a young child, can be really hard to understand, so we’re working at it together”. Be positive, and show them that you have confidence in them, rather than letting them make excuses.

SUGGESTED EARNING EXPERIENCES...

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY... This is a crucial part of home life and work balance. There is a need for young people to have less sedentary lives, get fit and learn active skills that should see them grow into healthier, happier adults.

This may include sports practices and activities with parents and siblings such as walking, riding a bicycle, bushwalking, fishing, walking the dog and a whole range of active pursuits both indoors and outdoors.

This, again, when done with one's parents, enhances communication and assists with the building of strong and lasting bonds between adults and children.

HOUSEWORK... This is very important and must be a daily part of a child's life. Students are often opting out of family life and not doing chores, which places a lot of stress on parents, particularly where both parents work or in the case of single parents who are very busy doing the job of two parents.

Children must not make parents their servants. At the very least they need to pick up after themselves and assist with activities for their benefit such as helping prepare meals, tidying their rooms and other parts of the house, cleaning the house and keeping it clean and tidy both inside and outside. Outdoor work could include weeding, gardening, raking and sweeping, painting and decorating. Many handy person skills are necessary for them to be able to manage their own dwellings in later years. Again when housework is done with parents or siblings, it becomes a bonding activity and should enhance family life.

RELATING TO OTHERS

Is about relating well to a diverse range of people, and includes things like begin able to listen well, see different points of view, negotiate and share ideas.

Things to try at home

- Talk openly about different ways of "being" in the world. Compare the different cultures in your life, so you can talk about how things are in different contexts, and why
- Be open to, and show respect for difference. No-one is the same. Children are then more likely to show respect too
- Play the "devil's advocate" from time to time. It is great for children to practice seeing things from different perspectives and to understand that respectful debate is healthy
- Think about how well you listen to, and negotiate with your children. Your child learns how to relate to others from you.

SUGGESTED EARNING EXPERIENCES...

PLAY A GAME WITH AN ADULT... This is different to playing with friends and brothers or sisters. This is a special time to develop communication, problem solving and skills that can be transferred from adult to child. It can also teach the child to win and lose graciously. This could include outdoor games of all sorts as well as indoor pastimes such as crosswords, Scrabble, Yahtzee and a plethora of board games which emphasise pictorial, verbal, linguistic, monetary and even social skills. It should also be the place to allow for more interaction between child and parent that has often been replaced by computers and television. Development of patience and cooperation is a highlight of this Grid entry (new games can be loaned from school to achieve this task).

TEACHING OTHERS... One of the best ways of consolidating what one has learnt is to teach the concept to another. This can be set for class work or happen spontaneously to enable students to brief parents about work covered, but go a step further and try to explain and teach particular topics learnt that day or that week. When a child is preparing material to present to others, it is reinforcing learning of the concept and by verbalizing it to another it is further consolidating the learning process. This is also an excellent way to enhance home / school co-operation.

PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING

Means being involved in things that are going on, being a good group member, contributing, including and creating opportunities for others.

Things to try at home

- Be a good role model. You might be surprised at what knowledge and skills you have that the teacher would appreciate you contributing. For example, in schools where students are learning how to grow food, adults with gardening skills can help
- Encourage your child to take part in things they haven't tried before. This challenges them and gets them involved in new activities and groups. Talk to them about the new skills and knowledge they gain
- Support your child when they take on leadership roles at school or in the community. This could be something as simple as being the bin monitor for a week, caring for a class pet over the holidays, looking after younger students during breaks or at a sports day, taking care of equipment or resources or speaking during an assembly. Schools are usually really good at providing lots opportunities for students to step up and take a lead.

SUGGESTED EARNING EXPERIENCES...

ARTS & CULTURE... This can be expanded to include artistic pursuits such as learning an instrument, pottery, painting, drawing and sketching, needlework and sewing and general creative pursuits and hobbies under the Art and Craft banner. Children need to be creative and stay creative throughout their Primary and Secondary school years. Students who select more scientific subjects in lower and upper secondary schooling risk losing much of the creative talent they demonstrated in early years. This should be continued so that they balance their pursuits to include work and leisure activities.

This is an essential part of a child’s life. They should develop an early appreciation of The Arts and be taken to concerts, shows and production including Live Theatre. This is also the place to include music lessons, band practice, choir, drama rehearsals etc that many students already do immediately after school or at home.

The KC’s in our own Backyard

Hororata Primary School is a remarkable school with a strong emphasis on family, community, academic and sporting excellence. We are committed to providing quality education to enable the children of Hororata to become “Life Long Learners”. The school curriculum has been designed around our vision, values and principles and a metaphoric representation of the Key Competencies as the “Five Pillars of Learning”.

The Five Pillars forge a coherent link between our vision, values and principles.

Thinking	Managing Self	Relating to Others	Participating & Contributing	Using Language, Symbols & Texts
Students who are competent thinkers and problem-solvers actively seek, use, and create knowledge and develop skill (Lifelong Learners)	Students who manage themselves are resourceful, reliable, resilient and set high standards (Confident)	Students who relate well to others are open to new learning and able to take different roles in different situations. They are aware of how their words and actions affect others (Connected)	Students who are competent participators and contributors, contribute appropriately as a group member, to make connections with others, and to create opportunities for others in the group (Actively involved)	Students who are competent users of language, symbols and texts can interpret and use words, numbers, images, movement, metaphor, and technologies in a range of contexts (Lifelong learners)

