

Pause Breathe Smile Enrichment / Follow-On Lesson

Nurtured by Nature

Experiential practice: “Air Inside, Air Outside ”

Content:

What is it good to pay attention to?

There are a lot of things happening all around us and even inside of our bodies and minds at any given second. But in addition to noticing them with mindfulness, did you know that paying attention to nature is really good for your health? Like, really, really good for you?

Being in nature supports all four walls of our whare. Spending time in nature is good for our body (tinana), mind (hinengaro), our sense of connection with others (whanāu), and our spirit (wairua).

Thousands of scientific and medical studies have considered the role that green spaces, blue water, and animals and plants play in our wellbeing. Research shows that people who spend time in gardens, parks, near trees, bodies of water, and other green places have many health benefits, including

- lower risks of heart disease, asthma hospitalisation, and mental distress
- improved cognitive function and focus
- lower risks of obesity and nearsightedness in children

And to be healthier and nurtured by nature, we don't have to spend hours and hours outside in the bush, either, although that is beneficial for sure!

Activity: Nature and Hauora

Invite the children to reflect on this question: What are some of the ways you can think of that being out in nature supports the four domains of hauora?

Put on some nature sounds (birdsong, ocean waves, rain/thunderstorm recording from Youtube, Spotify, or a CD). With the music on, give the tamariki time to think about the question. They can write, create a piece of art, or sketch out a mindmap/illustration.

Then, have everyone come back together to share their reflections.

To reinforce the different domains of wellbeing and how nature supports them, draw four quadrants on the white board and jot down the class answers with the associated wall of the whare.

We've come up with some great ideas about how nature helps support our wellbeing!

Experiential practice: “Grateful for Air, Earth, Water”

Additional activity for today or another day: Go for a nature walk. Upon returning to the classroom, break into pairs and ask each pair to come up with a simple dance or movement that captures the feeling of something they saw on their nature walk.

Note for Teachers:

This enrichment activity can be delivered as one complete lesson or you could break it down into chunks across a series of days. Feel free to use it in a way that makes sense with your learners in your context.