

ROAD SAFETY MESSAGES AT KINDERGARTEN

Tairangi kindergarten had a 10 week focus on road safety education this year which culminated in the writing, publishing and launching of their own road safety book, titled *Walking in our Community*, in conjunction with the Porirua City Council Road Safety Co-ordinator, Mark Kairua. The book features one of the attending families on their journey to kindergarten and the many hazards faced on an every day walk, the catch phrase in the book is.. "Watch out for Hazards and Stay Safe" with the final page challenging the reader to remember the hazards Teniku and her family encountered on their walk to kindergarten.

The book was launched at the kindergarten with a traditional Powhiri to welcome Constable Simon Bygate of Whitby community Police, Kindergarten Association senior teacher, Lynette Wray, Porirua City Council Road Safety Co-ordinator, and Councillor, Litea Ahoi, who read the book aloud to the children before Constable Simon Bygate gave each child their own book to keep. The kindergarten children and staff were helped to carry out the Powhiri by students from Tairangi School.

Some of the work done by the kindergarten children, teachers and families leading up to the book launch included many group discussions, wall displays, looking at maps of surrounding roads and streets and practical road crossing experiences using the pedestrian crossing nearby the kindergarten.

Head Teacher, Andrew Allen, said that "through discussions with the children, we (the teachers) were pleased, and surprised, at how much road safety knowledge the children already had about things such as, holding hands and looking both ways when crossing the road as well as always wearing seatbelts". He also emphasised the importance of the responsible adult's role in keeping children safe on the roads.

"It's great the community is taking the initiative and ownership of these types of educational programmes based around road safety" said Mr Kairua, Road Safety Co-ordinator. The community involves Kindergarten, parents and local businesses such as Rainbow Creative who donated a tremendous amount of time and effort to make this book a reality.