

I would think it would be important to know about the pā and village connections, protocols, songs, whakapapa. The importance of traditions such as rāhui, to deal with disease and dilemmas.

I want them to know that New Zealand history is Māori history, and that learning about Māori isn't just about poi and pā. While I don't want them thinking that all Pākehā were and are villains, I also don't want colonial history glossed over. It's important for kids to know that some of the issues they hear about today have come from old injustice and over a century of attempts at recovery and settlement. I also want them to know about the Treaty, so they don't just think that February 6th is a day off. My kids are Pasifika students. They need to know that, while many different kinds of people live in New Zealand, Māori are tied here in the same way my kids are tied to Samoa – through generations of family and history. If we want to live in their place, we need to learn about it.

My children are going to grow up in a country vastly different from the one we grew up in. I want my children to learn the history of the first people of this country, to give them an understanding of where New Zealand has come from.

If we want students to think critically about what is happening in New Zealand now and what might happen in the future, they need to know and understand the distant and recent past from many perspectives. It's all very well learning about Mt Everest, Anzac Day and the Napier earthquake but a truly representative teaching programme should encompass specific Māori historical events and viewpoints.

As a Pākehā New Zealander, I think it is of the utmost importance that my children gain an accurate understanding of New Zealand history. This would include the geographical history of Gondwanaland through the migration of Polynesian/Māori settlers to today. I would expect linking between the immigration stories the first Māori might have had with the first Europeans through to our immediate ancestors today.

I think understanding the past enables us to see why people think and act the way they do today.

WHAT DO PARENTS THINK?

I would think the Māori wars and issues over land would be essential and how some iwi battled with other iwi.

What is important to me is that children are not only exposed to Māori culture but also to the circumstances and events that constitute Māori history. Going beyond cultural practices and traditions to explore the significance of events such as Parihaka, Bastion Point and hikoi really matters to me.