

Nesian Narratives Toolkit

Voyage 9: My Body

Fiji



A Pacific-Led Educational Resource for Kaiako Supporting Identity and Wellbeing of Tamariki Aged 4-5 in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Settings across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Citation and Acknowledgements

Citation

Veukiso-Ulugia, A., Mizziebo, A., Ah Mann, A., & Roberts, M. (2025). *Nesian Narratives Toolkit. Voyage 9: My Body – Fiji. A Pacific-Led Educational Resource for Kaiako Supporting Identity and Wellbeing of Tamariki Aged 4-5 in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Settings across Aotearoa New Zealand*. Moana Connect and The University of Auckland.

Acknowledgements

Fa’afetai, Fakaau lahi, Malo ‘aupito, Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Nesian Narratives project. Your insights, support, and commitment have been invaluable in shaping this work. We gratefully acknowledge funding from the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC), and support from the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy – Faculty of Arts and Education, and Fofonga Pacific Research Excellence.

Special thanks to the Nesian Narratives Expert Advisory Group: Professor Katie Fitzpatrick, Professor Damon Salesa, Dr Jacinta Fa’alili-Fidow, and Dr Amio Matenga-Ikihele, whose wisdom and support deeply inspired and motivated us throughout this journey.

Funding

The Nesian Narratives research project was conducted during tenure of a Pacific Health Research Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

Report Design

Bo Moore, www.bomoore.net

Illustrations

Yvette Sapatu, yvettesapatu@gmail.com

External Content Disclaimer and Attribution

External links are provided to support wider learning and engagement. These sites are independent of our work, and we do not take responsibility for their content. This resource is shared for educational purposes only. All intellectual property rights remain with the original creator or copyright holder. Users are encouraged to respect the terms of use and copyright policies of the linked content.

Contact

Dr Analosa Veukiso-Ulugia
Faculty of Arts and Education
The University of Auckland
Email: a.veukiso-ulugia@auckland.ac.nz

Ang Mizziebo (Centre Director)
The Tree House, Middlemore Staff Early Childcare Centre
100 Hospital Road, Otahuhu, Auckland
Email: ang.mizziebo@middlemore.co.nz



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
University
of Auckland

MOANA
CONNECT

Nesian Narratives Toolkit

Voyage 9: My Body

Fiji

Contents

	Page
1. About this topic	1
2. Learning Outcomes	1
3. Curriculum Planning	2
4. Connections to Curriculum	4
5. Assessment and Evaluation	4
6. Essential Facts for Kaiako	5
7. Information to share with Parents and Caregivers	6
8. Professional Development	7
9. Health and Safety Guidelines	7
10. Island Nation Spotlight: Key Facts About Fiji	9
11. Additional Resources	14

VOYAGE 9.1

a) Watch and Wonder: Dakuwaqa the Shark Guardian	16
b) Our Journey to Fiji through music, language, and shapes	18
c) Meet the Collared Lory: Fiji's Colourful Bird	20

VOYAGE 9.2

a) My Body, My Kupu – Learning About Our Bodies the Fijian Way	21
b) My Amazing Body – Drawing, Naming, and Learning about our Bodies	22
c) Dakuwaqa Says: Exploring Body Parts and Listening Skills	24

VOYAGE 9.3

a) Dakuwaqa's Ocean Adventure: Exploring Bodies and Feelings	25
b) Emotion Movement Adventure – “How Does My Body Feel?”	27
c) Sensory Story Journey – “Dakuwaqa and the Brave Lory”	28

1. About this topic

During this learning journey, tamariki will embark on an exciting exploration of Fiji—its people, rich culture, captivating history, and stunning natural landscapes. As they uncover fascinating facts about the islands, traditions, and geography, they will also reflect on their own identities and experiences. This dual voyage encourages curiosity and connection, helping tamariki appreciate both the diversity of the world around them and the uniqueness within themselves.

Alongside cultural discovery, tamariki will deepen their understanding of their bodies and emotions. Through playful, hands-on activities, they will learn to identify key body parts and understand how each part helps them move, interact, and express themselves. They will also begin to recognise physical sensations and emotions, learning how to describe what they feel and how their bodies respond. This growing self-awareness will empower tamariki to communicate their needs, seek support when needed, and care for themselves and others—building confidence and emotional resilience as they navigate their personal and collective journeys.

2. Learning Outcomes

Over time and with guidance and encouragement, tamariki will become increasingly capable of:

1. Discovering and discussing fascinating facts about Fiji, including its people, culture, history, geography, and traditions.
2. Tamariki learn to identify and name key body parts—like the head, arms, legs, hands, feet, and torso—and understand how each part functions (e.g., hands for gripping, legs for movement, eyes for sight).
3. Learning to recognise and describe physical sensations (e.g., feeling warm, chilly, exhausted) and emotions (e.g., joyful, upset, frustrated) while understanding how the body responds to these feelings.

3. Curriculum Planning

1. Tamariki will explore and share fascinating facts about Fiji

Principle: Empowerment | Whakamana

Strand: Belonging | Mana Whenua

Goal: Tamariki will gain cultural understanding, self-awareness and experience an environment where they know they have a place.

Outcome: Tamariki will develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for Fijian culture, history, geography and values.

Planned Learning Experience:

- a) Watch and Wonder: Dakuwaqa the Shark Guardian
- b) Our Journey to Fiji through music, language, and shapes
- c) Meet the Collared Lory: Fiji's Colourful Bird

2. Exploring our Bodies: Naming and understanding how they work

Principle: Empowerment | Whakamana

Strand: Communication | Mana Reo

Goal: Tamariki experience an environment where they develop verbal communication skills to describe their bodies and how they function.

Objective: Tamariki will be able to identify, name, and describe the functions of major body parts with increasing confidence and clarity.

Planned Learning Experience:

- a) My Body, My Kupu – Learning About Our Bodies the Fijian Way
- b) My Amazing Body – Drawing, Naming, and Learning about our Bodies
- c) Dakuwaqa Says: Exploring Body parts and listening skills

3. Feeling and Expressing - Understanding sensations and emotions

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Children experience an environment where they explore their physical and emotional worlds through meaningful and spontaneous play.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn to recognise and describe physical sensations and emotions, and understand how their bodies respond to these experiences.

Planned Learning Experience:

- a) Dakuwaqa's Ocean Adventure: Exploring Bodies and Feelings
- b) Emotion Movement Adventure – "How Does My Body Feel?"
- c) Sensory Story Journey – "Dakuwaqa and the Brave Lory"

4. Connections to Curriculum

The topic of “My Body” aligns closely with both *Te Whāriki* and *Tapasā*, supporting tamariki in developing self-awareness, confidence, and an understanding of their physical and emotional wellbeing (Ministry of Education, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2018).

1. Discovering and Discussing Identity and Cultural Belonging

Te Whāriki: Strengthens tamariki’s sense of belonging (Mana Whenua) by exploring diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives. Learning about Fiji’s rich heritage encourages appreciation for different identities and fosters an understanding of one’s place in the world.

Tapasā: Supports culturally responsive teaching, ensuring tamariki develop awareness and appreciation for Pacific identities, languages, and traditions, deepening their connection to their own cultural heritage.

2. Exploring the Functionality of the Human Body

Te Whāriki: Connects with exploration (Mana Aotūroa), encouraging tamariki to engage in inquiry-based learning and discover how different body parts function. Through curiosity and hands-on discovery, they develop a deeper understanding of their own physical capabilities.

Tapasā: Reinforces inquiry-based approaches, supporting tamariki in making meaningful connections between their bodies, health, and everyday experiences within their cultural contexts.

3. Understanding Sensations and Emotions

Te Whāriki: Supports emotional development through wellbeing (Mana Atua), helping tamariki recognise and describe physical sensations and emotions. By developing emotional awareness, tamariki build self-regulation skills and deepen their understanding of personal wellbeing.

Tapasā: Emphasises cultural perspectives on emotions and wellbeing, ensuring educators create supportive environments that respect diverse ways of expressing and understanding feelings.

5. Assessment and Evaluation

Kaiako can record and track tamariki’s understanding of their bodies and Fiji using a range of methods aligned with *Te Whāriki*. These methods include, but are not limited to:

- Observations
- Learning stories
- Group discussions
- Portfolio/Diary entries
- Child friendly self-assessment
- Quizzes (e.g., on iPad)
- Group projects and presentations
- Parent and whānau feedback

6. Essential Facts for Kaiako

Here are key insights for kaiako to support tamariki in understanding how their bodies function. When introducing this topic, it is essential to consider tamariki's level of understanding and interest, ensuring that discussions are age-appropriate and engaging. Incorporating cultural perspectives and ethical values fosters a deeper, more meaningful connection to the learning experience. For further details on Fijian culture, values, and connections can be found in Section 10: Island Nation Spotlight.

1. Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Fiji

- **Culture:** Fiji is a multicultural nation with a rich tapestry of traditions from native Fijian, Indian, European, Chinese, and other communities. Traditional Fijian culture includes communal living, respect for elders, and vibrant ceremonies involving music and dance.
- **History:** Fiji has a long history influenced by various cultures, including Polynesian, Melanesian, and European. It became a British colony in 1874 and gained independence in 1970.
- **Geography:** Fiji is an archipelago of over 300 islands in the South Pacific Ocean, with Viti Levu and Vanua Levu being the largest. The islands are known for their tropical climate, beautiful beaches, and coral reefs.
- **Values:** Family and community are central to Fijian values. The concept of “vanua” (land) is important, symbolising the connection between people, their community, and the environment.

2. Identifying and Naming Major Body Parts

- **Major Body Parts:** Teach children to identify and name major body parts such as the head, arms, legs, hands, feet, and torso. Use visual aids and interactive activities to make learning engaging.
- **Importance:** Knowing the names of body parts helps children communicate more effectively about their bodies and any issues they may experience.

3. Understanding Functions of Body Parts

- **Functions:** Explain the functions of different body parts in simple terms. For example, hands are for holding, legs are for walking, and eyes are for seeing.
- **Interactive Learning:** Use songs, games, and activities to help children understand and remember the functions of their body parts.

4. Recognising and Describing Physical Sensations and Emotions

- **Emotions:** Help children identify and describe their emotions, such as feeling happy, sad, or angry. Use visual aids like emotion charts to make it easier for them to express their feelings.
- **Body Reactions:** Explain how their bodies might react to different emotions, such as feeling butterflies in their stomach when nervous or having a fast heartbeat when excited.
- **Physical Sensations:** Teach children to recognise and describe physical sensations such as feeling hot, cold, or tired. This helps them become more aware of their bodies and how they feel.

7. Information to share with Parents and Caregivers

Supporting Your Child in Understanding their Body

Supporting your child in understanding their body is an important part of their growth and self-awareness. Through interactive activities and meaningful conversations, they can build confidence in their physical abilities while learning how their body works and how to take care of it.

As parents and caregivers, you play a key role in guiding them through this journey, helping them develop a strong sense of identity and wellbeing.

Why Knowing Your Body Matters

Understanding their bodies helps tamariki feel confident, make good choices about their health, and learn more about themselves. When they know how their bodies work, they can recognise their physical and emotional needs, which supports their overall wellbeing.

Learning about their bodies also helps them move better, set personal boundaries, and respect others. It teaches them how to take care of themselves and become more independent. Including cultural perspectives and ethical values helps tamariki appreciate their bodies and build healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Family Contributions

Simple, everyday interactions can help tamariki explore and understand their bodies. Here are a few activities you can do together:

- **Discovering Fijian Culture:** Engage in cultural activities like cooking traditional Fijian dishes, listening to Fijian music, or creating Fijian-inspired art. Learning about Fiji's history and geography through books and videos can deepen their connection to diverse traditions.
- **Exploring Body Awareness:** Make learning fun with games like "Simon Says" to help tamariki identify and name different body parts. Encourage them to draw a picture of themselves and label their major body parts, strengthening their self-awareness and confidence.
- **Recognising Physical Sensations and Emotions:** Play emotion charades, where family members act out different feelings and tamariki guess what they are. Sensory activities like touching ice cubes (cold) or warm water (hot) can help tamariki recognise different physical sensations and connect them to their emotions.
- **Building Healthy Habits:** Have regular conversations about how tamariki are feeling and what their bodies are experiencing. Encourage daily habits like exercise, balanced nutrition, and proper hygiene to support their overall wellbeing and body awareness.

8. Professional Development

To become confident in teaching topics related to Fijian culture, body parts, and emotional literacy, ECE educators/kaiako can pursue various professional development opportunities. These include cultural competency training on Fijian culture, early childhood development courses, and basic anatomy workshops. Health education and mental health first aid training are also beneficial.

Additionally, learning about formative and summative assessment techniques, social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, and play-based learning methods can enhance teaching effectiveness. Integrating creative arts into lessons can make learning more engaging for tamariki. These opportunities collectively help educators/kaiako provide a well-rounded and enriching educational experience.

9. Health and Safety Guidelines

In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the following ECE health and safety guidelines are relevant for teaching tamariki about Fiji, body parts, and physical sensations and emotions:

1. Health and Safety Standards

Regulation 46 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008: This regulation outlines the requirements for promoting the

good health and safety of children, preventing accidents, and maintaining safe premises.

2. Hazard and Risk Management

Daily Hazard Checks: Ensure that equipment, premises, and facilities are checked daily for hazards to children.

This includes managing risks related to cleaning agents, medicines, electrical appliances, and other potential hazards.

3. Hygiene and Sanitation

Hygienic Practices: Implement procedures for the hygienic laundering of linen, changing nappies, and maintaining clean and safe environments.

4. Emergency Procedures

Emergency Preparedness: Develop and practice procedures for dealing with emergencies such as fire, earthquakes, and other incidents.

This includes conducting regular emergency drills with children.

5. Child Protection

Child Abuse Prevention: Establish processes for responding to suspected child abuse and preventing abuse, consistent with guidelines from Oranga Tamariki or New Zealand Police.

Staff Awareness: All school staff, not just the teachers involved in the programme, must be knowledgeable about the procedures to follow if a student discloses abuse. This is in line with the school's Child Protection Policy.

Parental Awareness: Parents should also be informed about the appropriate actions to take if their child discloses abuse. Refer them to the Child Protection Guidelines available on the NZ Police School Portal for detailed information.

Safety Guidelines: Ensure that comprehensive safety guidelines are in place to protect students during the KOS programme.

6. Health and Well-being

Monitoring Health: Keep records of all injuries, incidents, and serious illnesses that occur. Ensure that there are procedures for administering medicine and obtaining parental permission for any medical treatment.

7. Cultural Competency

Inclusive Practices: Incorporate cultural competency training to ensure that teaching about Fiji's culture, history, and geography is respectful and accurate. This helps create an inclusive learning environment for all tamariki.

10. Island Nation Spotlight: Key Facts About Fiji

1. Host / Guide*

Kaiako may wish to use the following character as a host or guide to lead tamariki through the voyage learning experiences, helping make the journey engaging, relatable, and culturally meaningful.

In Fijian mythology, one of the prominent mythical figures is **Dakuwaqa**, the shark god. Dakuwaqa is often depicted as a half-man, half-shark creature who is revered by fishermen and seafarers. According to legend, Dakuwaqa protects humans from the dangers of the sea and has the ability to control the tides.

2. Animal / Puppet

The national animal of Fiji is the Collared Lory. This beautifully coloured parrot, with its bright red, green, and purple plumage, is an iconic symbol of Fiji.

3. Landmarks

- **Sawa-i-Lau Caves:** Located in the Yasawa Islands, these limestone caves are famous for their stunning formations and crystal-clear waters.
- **Wainibau Falls:** Found on Taveuni Island, this waterfall is a natural beauty tucked away in Bouma National Heritage Park.
- **The Garden of the Sleeping Giant:** Located in Nadi, this garden is known for its tropical forest, orchids, and butterflies.
- **Sri Siva Subramaniya Temple:** This Hindu temple in Nadi is renowned for its elaborate murals and carvings.

4. Famous People

- **Shamima Ali:** A political activist and coordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Center.
- **Jimmy Snuka:** A famous professional wrestler known for his time in the WW.
- **Brij Vilash Lal:** A prominent historian known for his work on the Pacific and Indian indenture systems.

5. Common phrases

Hello *Bula*

Goodbye *Moce*

Thank you *Vinaka*

How are you? *Vacava tiko?*

Please? *Kerekere?*

6. Cultural artefacts

- **Tanoa Bowl:** Used in traditional kava ceremonies, this wooden bowl is an important cultural artefact.
- **Masi:** Also known as tapa cloth, this is made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree and decorated with traditional patterns.
- **Woven Baskets and Mats:** Made from pandanus leaves, these items are used in everyday life and traditional ceremonies.
- **Tabua:** A polished whale's tooth, considered a highly valuable and sacred item, often used in important ceremonies and negotiations.

7. Cultural practices

- **Weaving:** Weaving is an integral part of Fijian culture. Traditional woven items include mats, baskets, fans, and wall hangings, typically made from pandanus leaves.
- **Kava Ceremony:** Known as “Yaqona” in Fijian, this is a traditional ritual where kava, a drink made from the root of the kava plant, is prepared and shared among participants. It is a significant cultural practice and a symbol of hospitality.
- **Tattooing:** Traditional Fijian tattooing, known as “veiqia,” is a significant cultural practice for both men and women. It involves intricate designs that often symbolise one's heritage and social status.
- **Meke:** A traditional Fijian dance that combines storytelling with dance and music. It is often performed during ceremonies and celebrations.

8. Easy songs to learn

Pasifika Beatz Fijian Songs is a vibrant and educational playlist created by Loopy Tunes Preschool Music in collaboration with Whānau Āwhina Plunket, celebrating the richness of Pacific languages through music. Developed as part of a wider Pasifika Beatz project marking the 10th anniversary of the Auckland-based playgroup, this collection features 10 Fijian songs tailored for young children. Each song blends familiar melodies with Fijian lyrics to support language learning, cultural identity, and joyful engagement. The project was made possible with support from the Ministry of Pacific Peoples.

Here are the 10 songs included in the playlist:

- **Fijian Welcome Song** – A warm and friendly introduction to Fijian greetings.
- **Ulu, Taba (Head, Shoulders)** – A bilingual action song teaching body parts.
- **Old MacDonald Had A Farm (Fijian Animals)** – Learn animal names through a classic tune.

- **Iwirini (Fijian Shapes)** – A playful song introducing basic shapes in Fijian.
- **Vulavula Is White (Fijian)** – A colour-themed song featuring the word for white.
- **Lima Little Ducks (Fijian)** – Count along with five little ducks in Fijian.
- **Fijian Alphabet** – Sing through the letters of the Fijian alphabet.
- **Little Birdy On A Tree (Fijian)** – A gentle song featuring nature and animals.
- **Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star (Fijian)** – A beloved lullaby in Fijian.
- **I'm A Little Teapot (Fijian)** – A fun and interactive song for young learners.

Access song resources:

Action videos for each song are available on [Whānau Āwhina Plunket's YouTube channel](#).

Lyrics for the Fijian songs can be found on the [Loopy Tunes Preschool Music website](#).

9. Cultural attire

- **Sulu:** The sulu is a traditional Fijian garment worn by both men and women. It is a rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, similar to a sarong. Men often wear it with a shirt, while women may wear it as a dress or skirt.
- **Sulu Jaba:** For formal occasions, women wear the sulu jaba, which includes a matching top and skirt. The top is usually fitted, while the skirt is long and flowing.
- **Masi:** Also known as tapa cloth, masi is made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree and is often worn during traditional ceremonies and special events. It is decorated with intricate patterns and designs.

10. Cultural food

- **Kokoda:** A popular Fijian dish made from raw fish marinated in coconut milk, lime juice, onions, tomatoes, and chili peppers. It is similar to ceviche and is a refreshing and flavourful dish.
- **Lovo:** A traditional Fijian feast cooked in an underground oven. It includes various meats, fish, root vegetables, and sometimes palusami (taro leaves with coconut cream). The food is wrapped in banana leaves and cooked over hot stones.
- **Rourou:** A dish made from taro leaves cooked in coconut milk. It is often served as a side dish and is rich and creamy.
- **Cassava:** Also known as tapioca or manioc, cassava is a staple in Fijian cuisine. It can be boiled, baked, or made into chips.
- **Vakalolo:** A traditional dessert made from grated cassava, coconut cream, and brown sugar, often steamed in banana leaves.

11. Flag / Flag description

The flag of Fiji features a light blue field with the Union Jack in the upper hoist-side corner. The light blue background symbolises the Pacific Ocean surrounding the islands of Fiji. On the right side of the flag, there is the national coat of arms, which includes a shield divided into four sections. Each section of the shield represents an important aspect of Fiji's history and culture:

- A golden lion holding a cocoa pod, symbolising the country's colonial history and agricultural heritage.
- Three sugar canes, symbolising the importance of sugar cane farming.
- A coconut palm, representing the abundance of coconut trees and their significance.
- A dove holding an olive branch, symbolising peace.

12. Sports

Popular sports:

- **Rugby:** Rugby is the most popular sport in Fiji, with the Fijian national rugby union team being highly successful on the international stage. Fiji is especially known for its prowess in rugby sevens.
- **Soccer:** Soccer is widely played and followed in Fiji, with many local clubs and competitions.
- **Cricket:** While not as popular as rugby and soccer, cricket is also played and enjoyed in Fiji.
- **Netball:** Netball is a popular sport among women and is played at both the community and national levels.

Some traditional Fijian sports include:

- **Veisaga:** A traditional wrestling sport.
- **Kai Viti:** A traditional form of canoe racing.

13. Myths / legends specific to this island nation

- **Degei the Snake God:** Degei is one of the most powerful deities in Fijian mythology. He is a serpent god who is believed to have created the islands of Fiji and is associated with wisdom and transformation.
- **Dakuwaqa the Shark God:** Dakuwaqa is a prominent figure in Fijian mythology. He is a shark god who protects fishermen and seafarers from the dangers of the sea.
- **Tuilakemba:** Known as the Fijian Hercules, Tuilakemba is celebrated for his incredible strength and bravery. He is a symbol of protection for his people.
- **Tuilangi:** The Skyland Ruler, Tuilangi, is known for his strength and leadership. His stories teach about the balance of power and the importance of courage in facing challenges.

14. Proverb

- **“Lutu na niu, lutu ki vuna”:** A coconut falls close to its roots. This proverb means that children tend to behave similarly to their parents.
- **“Dui seva ga na bua ka tea”:** You will reap the flowers that you plant. This proverb is similar to “you reap what you sow” and means that you eventually have to face the consequences of your actions.
- **“Sivi mada na veikau qai kalu”:** It is best to first go past the forest before you start whistling. This proverb means that you should complete a task first before boasting about it.
- **“Toro cake na ua, toro cake na kolokolo”:** The waves rise high and the swimmer tries to go higher. This proverb means that you should know your limits and not try to exceed them.

15. Other Facts

- **Climate:** Fiji has a tropical marine climate, with warm temperatures year-round. There are distinct wet and dry seasons, with the wet season from November to April.
- **Economy:** The economy of Fiji is primarily based on tourism.

16. References

1. Parke, A. (2014). *Degei's descendants: Spirits, place and people in pre-cession Fiji*. Terra Australis 41. OAPEN Library. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/33351>
2. NatureFiji-MareqetiViti. (2020, March 9). *Birds in Fiji's forests: Kula*. NatureFiji. <https://www.naturefiji.org/birds-in-fijis-forests-kula/>
3. Tourism Fiji. (n.d.). *Sawa-i-Lau: The heart of Yasawa Islands*. Fiji Travel. <https://www.fiji.travel/places-to-go/yasawa-islands/locations/sawa-i-lau-the-heart-of-yasawa-islands>
4. Narsey, W. (2024, January 15). *Prof Brij Lal – Greatest academic export of Fiji*. The Fiji Times. <https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/prof-brij-lal-greatest-academic-export-of-fiji/>
5. Fiji Guide. (n.d.). *Useful Fijian words and phrases*. Fiji Guide. <https://fijiguide.com/culture/language/useful-words-and-phrases/>
6. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. (n.d.). *Art and power in Fiji*. University of Cambridge. <https://maa.cam.ac.uk/collections/world-cultures/chiefs-and-governors-art-and-power-fiji/art-and-power-fiji>
7. Parke, A. (2014). *Degei's descendants: Spirits, place and people in pre-cession Fiji*. Terra Australis 41. OAPEN Library. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/33351>
8. Whānau Āwhina Plunket. (n.d.). Pasifika Beatz. Plunket New Zealand. <https://www.plunket.org.nz/plunket/what-we-offer/pasifika-beatz/>
9. Polynesian Pride. (2025). Fiji traditional clothing: Timeless beauty and island style. Polynesian Pride. <https://blog.polynesianpride.co/fiji-traditional-clothing/>
10. Kolhberger, J. (2010, June 9). Feasting in Fiji. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/feasting-fiji>
11. Reserve Bank of Fiji. (2025). Charts on the Fiji economy as at August 2025. <https://www.rbf.gov.fj/charts-on-the-fiji-economy-as-at-august-2025/>
12. World Bank. (n.d.). Fiji – Summary. *Climate Change Knowledge Portal*. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/fiji>

11. Additional Resources

Here are some helpful resources that support teaching tamariki about Fiji and their bodies. *Please note that while many of these resources are free, some may require payment.*

NZ Government Resources

NZ Police School Portal - Keeping Ourselves

Safe: A child protection programme where children learn and apply safety skills, including understanding body autonomy and recognising unsafe situations.

Website: <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-and-community-advice/school-portal/resources/successful-relationships/junior-primary-school-portal> | New Zealand Police

Ministry of Education - Body Care and Physical

Safety: Provides resources to help ākonga make informed decisions about body care, recognise hazards, and adopt safe practices.

Website: <https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/body-care-and-physical-safety/5637165725.p>
<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/wellbeing-in-education/>

Macawa ni Vosa Vakaviti – Fijian Language

Week. This initiative, led by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples with support from the Ministry of Education, offers a range of resources including language tools, cultural games, and multimedia content that explore Fijian traditions such as meke, tabua, and masi. It also fosters collaboration between schools and Fijian communities, while aligning with curriculum goals to enhance Pacific-focused education.

Website: [Macawa ni Vosa Vakaviti - Fijian Language Week](#)

Local Government Resources

HealthEd - Personal Safety: Offers free health resources on various topics, including body safety, which can be downloaded and ordered online.

Website: <https://healthed.govt.nz/collections/all>

Local Community Resources

Plunket - Keeping Kids Safe: Information and resources for parents on keeping children safe, including body safety education.

Weblink: <https://www.plunket.org.nz/your-child/safety/keeping-kids-safe/>

Safeguarding Children - Body Safety Resources:

Free resources such as body maps and child safeguarding posters to help educate children about body safety.

Website: <https://www.safeguardingchildren.org.nz/resources/>

Fijian Language Activity Book – Te Papa:

A free downloadable activity book for ages 5–10, featuring: Word searches, colouring pages, simple stories and vocabulary building.

Website: [Fijian language activity book | Te Papa](#)

Online Resources

Loopy Tunes – Pasifika Beatz: A YouTube music series featuring bilingual songs in Fijian and other Pacific languages, created in partnership with Whānau Āwhina Plunket and supported by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples. Designed to help tamariki learn Pacific languages through fun, engaging music.

Weblink: <https://www.loopytunespreschoolmusic.com/pasifika-beatz/>

Social Workers Toolbox - My Body is Mine:

Provides free activity packs and educational toolkits focused on teaching children about body autonomy and safety.

Website: <https://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/my-body-is-mine-a-coloring-read-with-me-book-for-safety-smart-kids/>

My Body Is My Body Program: A free, animated musical program that teaches children about body safety through songs and fun activities.

Website: <https://mbimb.org/the-program/>

ChildSafe Australia - Body Safety Resources:

Offers body safety resources to empower children, educators, and families with knowledge about body autonomy and safety.

Website: <https://www.childsafe.org.au/help-for-families/body-safety-resources/>

Me, Myself and My Body: Free Activity Pack - A creatively designed activity pack that focuses on teaching children about body autonomy and safety in an engaging and fun way.

Website: <https://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/me-myself-and-my-body-free-activity-pack-to-learn-about-personal-safety/>

My Body Belongs to Me - Interface Children & Family Services: An educational toolkit designed for parents and teachers to teach children about personal safety, including role plays and safety planning.

Website: <https://www.icfs.org/wp-content/uploads/My-Body-Belongs-To-Me-Toolkit-English.pdf>

Other Resources

Jayneen Sanders is a writer of several children's books to help tamariki understand personal boundaries, safe and unsafe touch, and how to seek help when needed. Some of her well-known books include:

“My Body! What I Say Goes!” – A book teaching children about body autonomy and consent.

“Let’s Talk About Body Boundaries, Consent and Respect” – A resource for parents and educators to start conversations about personal safety.

Website: <https://e2epublishing.info/pages/jayneen>

VOYAGE 9.1

Planned Learning

Experience: Learning and sharing fascinating facts about Fiji

a) Watch and Wonder: Dakuwaqa the Shark Guardian

Principle:	Empowerment Whakamana
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki will gain cultural understanding, self-awareness and experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Outcome:	Tamariki will develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for Fijian culture, history, geography and values.

Background:

Tamariki will meet Dakuwaqa, the mythical Fijian sea guardian, through a short animated video and creative movement.

The video tells a traditional Fijian story about Dakuwaqa, a mighty shark god who could change shape. At first, Dakuwaqa wanted to take control of all the islands in Fiji and defeat every spirit guardian he encountered. His journey led him to challenge several powerful beings, including a clever eel at the Rewa River and a tricky shark named Masilaca.

Eventually, Dakuwaqa met Rokobakaniceva, a wise octopus spirit who protected Kadavu Island. Instead of fighting, Rokobakaniceva used a special technique to stop Dakuwaqa and taught him a lesson about humility. After this encounter, Dakuwaqa changed his ways and became a guardian of the sea, helping and protecting Fijian fishers on their journeys.

Note: External links and websites referenced are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials Needed:

- Access to the TED-Ed video 'The Great Octopus Battle': [Watch here](#)
- Shark puppet or toy (optional)
- Blue cloth or sheet (to represent the ocean)
- Open space for movement
- Drawing paper and crayons

Activity Steps:

1. Video Viewing – “Let’s Meet Dakuwaqa!”

Gather tamariki and introduce the video:

“We’re going to watch a story about a strong shark named Dakuwaqa. He wanted to be the boss of the sea, but he learned something very important!”

Play the TED-Ed video. Keep it short and pause if needed to explain parts in simple language.

2. Discussion – “What Did You See?”

Ask open-ended questions:

“Who was Dakuwaqa?”

“What did he want to do?”

“Who did he meet in the ocean?”

“What did he learn?”

3. Movement – “Swim Like Dakuwaqa”

Invite tamariki to pretend to be Dakuwaqa swimming through the ocean. Use the blue cloth as the sea and let them move around it. Add other sea creature movements (octopus, eel, flounder) for variety.

4. Creative Time – “Draw Your Sea Guardian”

Tamariki draw their own sea guardian. Encourage them to name it and say what it protects (e.g., “My fish helps keep the ocean clean!”).

5. Wrap-Up Circle

Ask tamariki:

“What did you like about the video?”

“Would you want Dakuwaqa to protect your ocean?”

“What kind of sea guardian would you be?”

VOYAGE 9.1

Planned Learning

Experience: Learning and sharing fascinating facts about Fiji

b) Our Journey to Fiji through music, language, and shapes

Principle:	Empowerment Whakamana
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki will gain cultural understanding, self-awareness and experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Outcome:	Tamariki will develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for Fijian culture, history, geography and values.

Background:

This is a two-part integrated learning experience for 4–5-year-old tamariki that introduces them to Fijian culture through music, language and shapes.

Note: External links and websites referenced are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Part 1: Welcome to Fiji!

Materials Needed:

- YouTubeVideo: Fijian Welcome Song (See [here](#))
- Speakers or screen to play the YouTube video
- Scarves or tapa cloth for dancing
- Map of the Pacific showing Fiji
- Printed word card: Bula! (Hello)

Activity Steps:

- 1. Pretend sail to Fiji in a va'a / vaka:** Arrange chairs in a line or circle to represent a traditional canoe. Say, "Let's sail across the ocean to Fiji in our va'a!" Play gentle ocean sounds or drumming to simulate the journey.
- 2. Visual Aid:** Show a map of the Pacific and trace the route to Fiji. Talk about how people in the Pacific have travelled by va'a or vaka for generations.
- 3. Watch the Video:** Play the Fijian Welcome Song. Encourage tamariki to listen and move to the rhythm.
- 4. Learn the Word "Bula":** Practice saying Bula! together. Use the word card and repeat it with different emotions (happy, loud, quiet).
- 5. Dance Together:** Use scarves or tapa cloth to create a simple group dance. Encourage joyful movement.
- 6. Discussion:** Ask, "How do Fijians welcome people?" Talk about kindness and smiles.

Part 2: Discovering Shapes in Fiji

Materials Needed:

- Video: Fijian Shapes – Irwini (See [here](#))
- Playdough or drawing paper and crayons
- Natural or classroom objects shaped like circles, squares, triangles, etc. (e.g., leaves, blocks, plates)

Activity Steps:

1. **Watch the Video:** Play the Fijian Shapes video. Pause after each shape and repeat the Fijian word together.
2. **Shape Hunt:** Invite tamariki to explore the room or outdoor area to find objects that match the shapes from the video.
3. **Create Shapes:** Use playdough or drawing to make shapes. As they create, encourage tamariki to say the Fijian word for each shape.
4. **Group Sharing:** Gather together and let each child show their shape and say the Fijian name aloud.

VOYAGE 9.1

Planned Learning

Experience: Learning and sharing fascinating facts about Fiji

c) Meet the Collared Lory: Fiji's Colourful Bird

Principle:	Empowerment Whakamana
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki will gain cultural understanding, self-awareness and experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Outcome:	Tamariki will develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for Fijian culture, history, geography and values.

Background:

This learning experience introduces tamariki to the Collared Lory, its bright colours, where it lives, and what makes it special to Fiji.

Note: External links and websites referenced are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials Needed:

- Pictures of the Collared Lory (printed or digital) [See here](#) or [here](#)
- Video - Vulavula is White (see [here](#))
- Red, green, and purple feathers or coloured paper
- Bird puppet or soft toy (optional)
- Large map of Fiji. Note, this is available as a paid resource from Twinkl. [See Twinkl New Zealand Resources](#)
- Drawing paper and crayons
- Simple bird sounds ([optional audio](#))

Activity Steps:

1. Circle Time Introduction – “What Is a Collared Lory?” Show a picture of the Collared Lory.

You may wish to share:

“This is a Collared Lory. It’s a beautiful bird with red, green, and purple feathers. It lives only in Fiji, which means you won’t find it anywhere else in the world!”

Point to Fiji on a map and explain that it’s a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean.

2. Watch the Video – Vulavula is White: Play the video and repeat color words together. Ask tamariki to spot colors in the room or on their clothes.

3. Make Your Own Lory: Give tamariki red, green, and purple paper or feathers. Help them glue or stick the colors onto a bird outline. Encourage them to name their bird and say where it lives.

4. Fly Like a Lory:

Play gentle music and invite tamariki to flap their arms like wings. Let them “fly” around the room like Collared Lories looking for flowers and fruit.

5. Story Time – A Day in the Life of a Lory:

Tell a short story:

“Lory wakes up in a tall tree in Fiji. She flies to find sweet flowers to drink from. She sees her friends and sings a happy song. Then she rests in the shade and watches the waves.”

6. Wrap-Up Reflection: Ask:

“What colours does the Collared Lory have?”

“Where does it live?”

“What would you name your Lory?”

VOYAGE 9.2

Planned Learning

Experience: Tamariki will learn how to name major body parts

a) My Body, My Kupu – Learning About Our Bodies the Fijian Way

Principle:	Empowerment Whakamana
Strand:	Communication Mana Reo
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they develop verbal communication skills to describe their bodies and how they function.
Objective:	Tamariki will be able to identify, name, and describe the functions of major body parts with increasing confidence and clarity.

Background:

In this learning experience, tamariki will explore the names of body parts in both English and Fijian through music, movement, and creative activities. They will learn that all body parts are important, and begin to understand the difference between private and non-private parts in a safe and respectful way. Through singing, drawing, and discussion, tamariki will build confidence in talking about their bodies and learn how to care for themselves and others.

Materials Needed:

- English Version – *Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*
- Fijian Version – Ulu, Taba, Duru, Yava (See [here](#))
- Speakers or screen to play both videos
- Open space for movement
- Large paper and crayons for drawing bodies
- Dolls or puppets for body part identification

Activity Steps:

1. Circle Time Introduction – “Our Bodies Are Special”

Begin with a gentle kōrero:

“Our bodies are amazing. They help us move, dance, and play. Some parts of our bodies are

private, and some we use every day, like our hands and feet.”

Use a doll or puppet to point to body parts and explain:

“Private parts are the ones covered by our underwear or clothes. We don’t show or touch these unless a trusted adult is helping us, like at bath time or the doctor.”

2. Sing and Move

Sing the English version of *Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*. Encourage tamariki to sing and touch each body part as they go. Play the Fijian version: *Ulu, Taba, Duru, Yava*.

Teach the Fijian words:

- *Ulu* – Head
- *Taba* – Shoulders
- *Duru* – Knees
- *Yava* – Toes

Repeat the song slowly and then faster for fun and learning.

3. Reflection Circle – “What Did We Learn?”

Ask tamariki:

“What is ulu in Fijian?”

“What do we use our shoulders, knees, and toes for?”

VOYAGE 9.2

Planned Learning

Experience: Tamariki will learn how to name major body parts

b) My Amazing Body – Drawing, Naming, and Learning about our Bodies

Principle:	Empowerment Whakamana
Strand:	Communication Mana Reo
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they develop verbal communication skills to describe their bodies and how they function.
Objective:	Tamariki will be able to identify, name, and describe the functions of major body parts with increasing confidence and clarity.

Background:

Tamariki will create their own body outlines through drawing and tracing, identify and name key body parts through observation and discussion, and develop body awareness, fine motor skills, and confidence in expressing themselves.

Materials Needed:

- Large sheets of paper or cardboard
- Crayons, markers, or pencils
- Mirrors or reflective surfaces
- Optional: fabric scraps, collage materials, glue, scissors

Activity Steps:

1. Body Tracing or Drawing:

Invite tamariki to work in pairs or with kaiako support. They can:

- Lie down on large paper while a friend traces around them
- Or draw their own body shape freehand, starting with a head and adding arms, legs, and other features

Encourage creativity—each outline is unique and doesn't need to be perfect.

2. Look, Touch, Name:

Use mirrors and gentle prompts to help tamariki observe their own bodies:

- “Let’s look in the mirror—can you find your eyes?”
- “Touch your shoulders—can you draw them on your outline?”
- “Where are your knees? Can you show me and then draw them?”

As they explore, guide them to label parts on their drawings using their own writing or symbols. You can support with phonetic spelling or simple prompts like:

“What sound does ‘hand’ start with?”

“Can you draw a little picture next to your foot to help remember it?”

Focus on visible and functional parts:

- **Head and Face:** Head, hair, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, teeth, tongue
- **Upper body:** Neck, shoulders, arms, elbows, hands, fingers, chest, tummy (abdomen), Back
- **Lower body:** Hips, legs, knees, feet, toes
- **Internal awareness:** Heart, lungs (for breathing)
- **Private parts:** Use gentle language to mark private parts with a heart or star and say: “These parts are special and private.”

3. **Decorate and Personalise:**

Let tamariki decorate their body outlines with clothing, hair, or accessories using collage materials. This adds identity and ownership to their work.

4. **Group Reflection** – “What Makes Our Bodies Amazing?”

Gather in a circle and invite tamariki to share:

- *“What part of your body did you like drawing the most?”*
- *“What helps your body move?”*
- *“What makes your body feel strong or calm?”*

VOYAGE 9.2

Planned Learning

Experience: Tamariki will learn how to name major body parts

c) Dakuwaqa Says: Exploring Body Parts and Listening Skills

Principle:	Empowerment Whakamana
Strand:	Communication Mana Reo
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they develop verbal communication skills to describe their bodies and how they function.
Objective:	Tamariki will be able to identify, name, and describe the functions of major body parts with increasing confidence and clarity.

Materials Needed:

- Shark puppet or mask (to represent Dakuwaqa)
- Music (optional, for transitions or movement breaks)
- Open space for movement

Activity Steps:

1. Begin by re-introducing tamariki to **Dakuwaqa**, the mighty shark guardian of the ocean. Explain that today, Dakuwaqa will help them learn about their bodies through a fun game.

2. **Play** a version of *Simon Says* called **“Dakuwaqa Says”** (pronounced da-KOO-wah-kah).

The kaiako (teacher) or a tamaiti (child) wearing the shark puppet becomes Dakuwaqa and gives instructions like:

“Dakuwaqa says touch your toes!”

“Dakuwaqa says wiggle your fingers!”

“Touch your nose!” (If Dakuwaqa didn’t say it, tamariki stay still!)

3. **Body Parts to Focus On:** Start with visible and functional parts:

- Head, eyes, ears, nose, mouth
- Arms, hands, fingers
- Legs, feet, toes
- Tummy, back, shoulders

4. **Move when Dakuwaqa says:** Encourage tamariki to listen carefully and move only when Dakuwaqa gives the command. Use a mix of body part actions and ocean-themed movements:

“Dakuwaqa says swim like a shark!”

“Dakuwaqa says stretch your arms like an octopus!”

“Dakuwaqa says glide like a flounder!”

Pause occasionally to ask:

“Which body part did you use just now?”

5. **Wrap-Up Circle** – “What Did Dakuwaqa Teach Us?”

Gather tamariki in a seated circle and gently transition from movement to reflection. Invite them to share what they learned and felt during the game. Use open-ended prompts like:

“What was your favourite movement today?”

“Which body part did you use the most?”

“How did your body feel when you were swimming like a shark or stretching like an octopus?”

“What helps your body feel calm, like floating seaweed?”

Encourage tamariki to show one movement or pose they enjoyed most. End with a group breath together—“Let’s all take one big ocean breath like Dakuwaqa”—to close the activity with calm and connection.

VOYAGE 9.3

Planned Learning

Experience: Feeling and Expressing- Understanding Sensations and Emotions

a) Dakuwaqa's Ocean Adventure: Exploring Bodies and Feelings

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Children experience an environment where they explore their physical and emotional worlds through meaningful and spontaneous play.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn to recognise and describe physical sensations and emotions, and understand how their bodies respond to these experiences.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki will explore Fijian sea legends through storytelling, movement, and creative play. They will identify key body parts, discover how their bodies move, and begin to understand how emotions feel and show up physically.

Note: External links and websites referenced are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials Needed:

- Large blue fabric or sheet (to represent the ocean)
- Shark puppet or mask (for Dakuwaqa)
- Octopus, eel, and flounder images or puppets
- Music for movement
- Mirror or reflective surface
- Drawing and collage supplies
- Access to the TED-Ed video 'The Great Octopus Battle': [Watch here](#)

Activity Steps:

1. Story Circle

You may want to rewatch 'The Great Octopus Battle', or use a simplified retelling of Dakuwaqa's story (see below).

Use puppets or props to introduce characters: Dakuwaqa (shark), Rokobakaniceva (octopus), Te Pusi (eel), Te Ali (flounder).

You can pause during the story to ask tamariki:

"How do you think Dakuwaqa felt when he was caught?"

"What do you think made Rokobakaniceva strong?"

The Great Octopus Battle – A Story for Tamariki

*A long time ago, in the deep blue ocean, there lived a powerful shark god named **Dakuwaqa**. He was strong and fast, and he wanted to be the ruler of all the seas. Dakuwaqa swam from reef to reef, challenging other sea creatures to prove he was the mightiest.*

*One day, he came to a quiet reef guarded by a clever and calm octopus named **Rokobakaniceva**. Dakuwaqa thought he could easily win, but Rokobakaniceva had a surprise—she didn't fight with strength, she used her many arms to wrap around Dakuwaqa and hold him still.*

Dakuwaqa struggled and splashed, but the octopus stayed calm and didn't let go. In the end, Dakuwaqa realized that being strong wasn't just about muscles—it was also about being wise and knowing when to stop. He promised to protect the reef instead of ruling it, and the ocean became peaceful once again.

2. Movement and Body Awareness – “Swim Like the Sea Creatures”

Invite tamariki to move like each character:

- Shark: strong arms and fast swimming
- Octopus: wiggly arms and slow floating
- Eel: slithering and stretching
- Flounder: flat and gentle gliding

As they move, guide them to notice and name the body parts they're using: *“Let's feel our arms stretch like an eel!” “Can you feel your legs helping you glide like a flounder?”* Ask: *“How does your body feel when you move like this?” “Is it tired, excited, strong, or calm?”*

3. Emotion Exploration – “Ocean Feelings”

Revisit moments in the story and ask tamariki to show how the characters might feel using their bodies and faces.

Encourage them to:

- Make a happy face like Te Ali gliding peacefully.
- Show a scared body like Dakuwaqa when he meets Rokobakaniceva.
- Pose in a strong stance like the shark.
- Breathe slowly to feel calm like the ocean.
- Use mirrors so tamariki can observe their expressions and body shapes.

4. Creative Expression – “My Ocean Creature”

Tamariki create their own ocean creature using drawing or collage.

Encourage them to:

- Name their creature.
- Describe how it moves (e.g., “My creature wiggles with its long tail!”).
- Share how it feels (e.g., “It feels brave when it swims fast!”).

5. Reflection Circle – “What Did We Learn?”

Sit together and reflect:

“What was your favourite creature?”

“What body part did you use the most?”

“How did your body feel when you were happy/scared/strong?”

VOYAGE 9.3

Planned Learning

Experience: Feeling and Expressing- Understanding Sensations and Emotions

b) Emotion Movement Adventure – “How Does My Body Feel?”

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Children experience an environment where they explore their physical and emotional worlds through meaningful and spontaneous play.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn to recognise and describe physical sensations and emotions, and understand how their bodies respond to these experiences.

Background:

In this activity, tamariki will explore different emotions through movement, helping them connect physical sensations with emotional experiences.

Materials Needed:

- An open space indoors or outdoors.
- Use natural materials (e.g., leaves, stones, fabric) to mark different “emotion zones” (e.g., happy, sad, angry, excited, calm).

Activity Steps:

- 1. Warm-up Circle:** Begin with a karakia or short mindfulness moment. Ask tamariki how their bodies feel today.
- 2. Emotion Zones Exploration:** Invite tamariki to move through each zone and express the emotion using their bodies. For example:
 - Happy: Jumping, spinning, smiling.
 - Sad: Slow walking, curled posture.
 - Angry: Stomping, strong arms.
 - Calm: Gentle swaying, deep breathing.
- 3. Reflection Time:** Gather in a circle and ask:
“Which movement felt most like you today?”
“What does your body do when you feel excited?”
“How can we help our bodies feel calm?”

VOYAGE 9.3

Planned Learning

Experience: Feeling and Expressing- Understanding Sensations and Emotions

c) Sensory Story Journey – “Dakuwaqa and the Brave Lory”

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Children experience an environment where they explore their physical and emotional worlds through meaningful and spontaneous play.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn to recognise and describe physical sensations and emotions, and understand how their bodies respond to these experiences.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki will explore how their bodies give them clues when something doesn't feel right, using a culturally resonant story featuring Dakuwaqa, the powerful shark god, and the Collared Lory. Through storytelling, movement, and reflection, tamariki will learn to recognise and describe internal body signals that may indicate they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

They will be empowered to trust their instincts, understand that they have the right to say “No” to any touch that feels wrong, and know that they can always talk to a trusted adult. Dakuwaqa and the Lory remind us that being brave means listening to our bodies.

Materials Needed:

- Natural props to represent story elements:
- Shells (for ocean scenes)
- Feathers (for the Collared Lory)
- Leaves, bark, or stones (for forest scenes)
- Small bowls of water (to represent the sea)
- Soft mat or storytelling area for group time

Optional visual aids:

- Simple illustrations of Dakuwaqa and the Collared Lory
- Calm music or ocean sounds (optional, for atmosphere)
- Paper and drawing materials (for reflection or creative expression)

Story Summary:

One sunny morning in the warm waters of Fiji, Dakuwaqa the shark god was gliding through the reef, watching over the ocean. He was strong and wise, and he protected those who respected the sea.

High above, the Collared Lory — bright red and green — flew through the forest, singing happily. She loved exploring new places and meeting new friends.

But one day, the Lory flew into a part of the forest she didn't know. The trees were quiet, and her tummy felt tight. Her feathers puffed up, and her heart beat fast. Something didn't feel right.

Just then, Dakuwaqa appeared in the waves below. He called out, “Lory, your body is talking to you. When your tummy feels tight or your heart races, it means something might not be safe.”

The Lory nodded. "I didn't like how that place made me feel. I want to go back to my safe tree."

Dakuwaqa smiled. "That's a brave choice. Always listen to your body. And if someone touches you in a way you don't like, you can say 'No,' fly away, and tell someone you trust."

Learning Steps:

1. Introduction – Setting the Scene

Begin by gathering tamariki in a quiet, comfortable space.

Introduce the story characters: Dakuwaqa the shark god and the Collared Lory.

Explain that the story will help us learn how our bodies talk to us when something doesn't feel right.

2. Storytelling Journey

Tell the story of Dakuwaqa and the Brave Lory, using props to bring the scenes to life.

Pause at key moments to ask tamariki:

"What do you think the Lory felt in her body?"

"Have you ever felt like that?"

3. Exploring Body Clues

Invite tamariki to act out different body clues:

- Tight tummy
- Fast heartbeat
- Wobbly knees
- Wanting to hide or fly away

Encourage them to describe how these sensations feel and when they might happen.

4. Empowerment Circle

Facilitate a group kōrero:

"What can we do if our body tells us something doesn't feel right?"

"Is it okay to say 'No' or 'Stop'?"

"Who are the trusted adults we can talk to?"

Reinforce that their feelings are important and they have the right to feel safe.

5. Closing the Experience – "My Body, My Voice"

Affirmation Circle

Invite tamariki to stand or sit in a circle. Together, say a simple affirmation that reinforces their right to feel safe. For example:

"My body is strong."

"My feelings are important."

"I can say no."

"I can ask for help."

You can repeat it together with actions (e.g., hand on heart, arms out wide, thumbs up).

Breathing or Grounding Moment

Lead a short calming activity to help tamariki settle:

"Take three deep breaths together."

Or do a grounding activity like *"wiggle your toes, stretch your arms, feel your feet on the ground."*

6. Thank the Story Characters

Close by thanking Dakuwaqa and the Collared Lory for helping us learn how to listen to our bodies. You might say:

"Vinaka vaka levu, Dakuwaqa."

"Thank you, Lory."

"You helped us remember that being brave means listening to our bodies."