|  |
| --- |
| Te Puna Taiao: Healthy, resilient tamariki and communities through transformed outdoor spaces |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Setting/problem**Even though New Zealand is a relatively prosperous nation, our prosperity is not shared equally. We have some of the worst social outcomes in the developed world and comparatively high rates of poverty and inequity. Internationally there is a movement to use schools to reconnect children to their environment for two-directional benefit; as children learn to enjoy being in nature, they are empowered to become its kaitiaki, and children playing in natural settings experience a range health benefits. This approach is especially pressing in New Zealand given the special relationship of tangata whenua with Te Ao Tūroa. **Intervention**Te Puna Taiao Is an initiative to reimagine, transform and better use our nation’s school outdoor spaces and to advocate for policy changes to support outdoor learning. It creates interactive, natural and culturally-connected spaces that provide opportunities for creative play, risk-taking, and forging connections. The kaupapa can be tailored to a school’s unique situation and includes design elements that draw directly on latest cross-disciplinary research and mātauranga Māori.  Allandale School in Whakatāne is the first school to adopt the kaupapa and is in the process of transforming its outdoor spaces.  Allandale is a Decile 2 primary school of around 400 students, approximately three quarters of whom identify as Māori. The project has significant community support and the design is the result of a highly collaborative process.  **Outcomes**We foresee Te Puna Taiao will not only create enriched play and teaching spaces in schools, and greenspaces for local communities, but that it has the potential make improvements to the spiritual, mental and physical health outcomes of our tamariki and communities. Implementation would provide key support to many existing programmes of work underway in schools and could play a key role in reducing inequity in our education system, in making our schools more inclusive places and in improving community access to nearby greenspaces.**Implications**An evaluation programme is in development to assess the impacts of Te Puna Taiao at Allandale. We aim to pilot and evaluate the kaupapa in a further 10-12 primary schools. If found to be successful, it could be implemented in schools across the country with an initial focus on low decile schools, as a much-needed cross-disciplinary early intervention to improve the hauora of our children and communities.**Preferred presentation format:** Oral |