# Unlocking West Aukcland Play Streets

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Few things are associated with childhood more than playing and exploring in our local environments, but across West Auckland, seeing children and young people playing in their neighbourhoods has declined significantly. Inadequate access to play spaces, perceptions around safety, the value of play within different cultures and lack of permission are contributing to the downward trend of this essential activity during early development.

With a focus on understanding the barriers and enablers to play in West Auckland, Healthy Families Waitākere is working alongside stakeholders and communities to prototype play streets as a model for sustainable change. The team are identifying elements and factors required to normalise play and unlock play neighbourhoods across West Auckland. This has involved gathering insights and ideas from a variety of community groups/events. This has provided information and data that has informed the play streets model and responds to the needs of the community.

This kaupapa takes a systems approach to play through identifying and developing play champions in the community, testing community-led play opportunities, and influencing stakeholders and decision makers within the urban development and transport sectors. The model encourages the application of an indigenous lens, integrating indigenous play concepts throughout play streets.

Healthy Families Waitākere are part of a growing movement of organisations working together to harness the power of collective impact to effectively increase play across Aotearoa. Sport NZ, NZTA, Local Councils, Ministry of Health, the International Play Association and a number of other Healthy Families NZ locations are all looking at ways to work towards collective impact for communities.