



Little Minds New Plymouth Local Curriculum Our Whakatauki

"Tangata iti, Wawata nui"

Kei hea to tamaiti ka poipoia te tangata takitahi, ka whakanuia o rātou
wawata, me nga whakatutukitanga

"Little individuals, big ambitions"

Where your child's individuality is nurtured, and their ambitions and
achievements are celebrated

Our vision

Akonga will feel safe to learn and grow as happy, independent, and socially competent individuals.

Our values

Embracing a culture of respect, creativity, and collaboration.

Our philosophy

We embody the value of respect, as we believe respect places the child at the centre of all our interactions, decision making and rituals.

We celebrate each other's unique cultural values and beliefs by embracing the diversity of our centre whanau and community.

As a community through tuakana teina we empower whanau and kaiako to develop a shared vision for the learning and teaching of all our tamariki.

We give the gift of time to each other while journeying together.

Learning priorities

Happiness, Independence, Encouraging self-help skills, Empathy for others, Communication, Music, and Culture

Hapaitia te ara tira puumua ait e rangatiratanga moo naga uri whakatipu.
Fostering pathways of knowledge to strengthen, independence and growth for future generations.

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RUMA KAITAKE

Our Kaitake room is for our children aged between two years and 6 months to three years and six months. This classroom has a 1:8 ratio, this includes 3 to 4 full time teachers and up to 23 children. There is never a dull moment, our children are very enthusiastic and love to participate in a variety of learning experiences. Some of these experiences we have include:

- Play dough
- Dinosaur bone excavation
- Co-constructing 3D models, such as cars, planes, and rockets
- Crafts including stitching, fabric painting are just a couple to name

Great thought goes into the aesthetics of our environment to captivate and extend on the children's focus. We are always in communication with our families to ensure the children's best interest is at heart and to maintain a trusting relationship.

'Together may we give our tamariki the roots to grow and the winds to fly' – Henry Ward Beecher

RUMA PARITUTU

Our Paritutu classroom is for our eldest children aged between 3.5 to 5 years of age. There is a 1:8 ratio, this includes 3 to 4 full time teachers and up to 23 children. Being the biggest of all four rooms you will hear and see a hive of activity, including laughter, creativity, and lots of fun. Our teachers spend time throughout the day growing their independence by taking responsibility for their belongings, respecting, and caring for our environment, participating in our class hui that we have throughout the week, this is when we do Show and Tell. When your child turns 4 years old, we incorporate extra special learning experiences in preparation for school. Once a week they take home a book bag with their chosen pukapuka to share and read with their whanau. On Thursdays, your child will participate in our lunchbox day, where they bring their lunchbox from home and make their own lunch at the kai table.

Welcome to Little Minds Early Learning Centre Our Parent Handbook

Welcome to Little Minds Early Learning Centre Parent Handbook. This handbook is a guide to commonly asked questions. If you have a question that is not covered in this handbook, please feel free to contact us. The Parent Handbook covers:

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| • Licensed hours and Age Group | • Nutrition |
| • Absence | • Storypark |
| • Sickness | • Clothing |
| • Attendance Register | • Hats |
| • Belongings | • Sunscreen |
| • Celebrations: Birthday, Leaving Day | • Medication |
| • Collection of Children | • Special Requirements |
| • Communication with Parents | • Settling Visits |
| • Complaints Procedure | • Talking with your Child About Attending Little Minds |
| • Enrolment Fee | • Settling Your Child |
| • WINZ Fees | • Comforts and Personal Toys |
| • 20 Hours ECE | • Parent Participation |
| • Weekly Fees | • Toilet Learning |
| • Late Pick Up | • Nappies |
| • Change of Hours | • Withdrawing your Child from Little Minds |
| • Holiday Fees | • Transitioning Between Rooms |
| • Statutory Holidays | • Our Rooms: Taranaki, Pouakai, Kaitake, Paritutu, |
| • Sibling Discount | |

LICENSED HOURS AND AGE GROUPS

At Little Minds we are licensed Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 5.30pm for children aged from 3 months until they go to school (aged 5 or 6). We are licensed for 83 children at any one time, including up to 25 children under the age of two.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent for any reason please contact us via text, email, or phone.

Unfortunately, if your child is going to be absent due to illness or other family reasons, fees will still be charged for the enrolled hours.

If a child is absent for longer than 21 consecutive days their WINZ and government funding will cease, and the parent or caregiver may be liable to cover these costs.

SICKNESS

To minimise the risk of infection, if your child is sick, please ensure that they stay home. Please see our illness and infectious disease policy, our exclusion due to illness policy for more information and our Covid policy.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Little Minds Early Learning Centre is required by the Ministry of Education to ensure all children are signed in and out of the centre. At reception we have a tablet using the Discover app to sign your child/ren in and out each day. Each pick up person who is on the enrolment form will be given a unique 4-digit number code to use.

There is also an attendance register that is to be signed weekly parents/guardian, this is to acknowledge the previous weeks of attendance are true and correct.

The attendance register is a legal document audited by the Ministry of education; therefore, accurate times are essential. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

RUMA TARANAKI

Our nursery room is for our youngest of children aged between 3 months to 18 months. We have a 1:4 ratio to ensure our children are cared for in a relaxed and unhurried environment. We pride ourselves in the ability to offer a small intimate environment of 12 children at one time. Our 4 dedicated and gentle teachers ensure your precious little one is nurtured within a safe and trusting environment. Our daily practices are centred around free movement and respectful practices. Relationships, care moments and rituals are the forefront of our curriculum. This helps to provide a safe and predictable environment, which then enables our children to venture of to explore and discover the world around them.

“Allow the child to be authentic, to move, to feel the way they move, appreciating them for what they are”.

– Magda Gerber

RUMA POUAKAI

Our toddler room is for children aged between 18 months to two years and 6 months. We have a 1:6 ratio, this includes 4-5 full time teachers and up to 23 children at one time. Toddlers are busy curious beings, eager to learn about the world around them, striving for more independence as they develop their identities as autonomous learners. To support their learning, we offer a range of new and exciting learning experiences, that incorporate mess, fun, and creativity, while learning with and alongside others. Viewing our children as capable and confident people we offer an empowering environment where they are encouraged to make decision that concern their wellbeing and learning. We recognise they are full of big emotions as they navigate their independence and social skills and view these valuable available learning opportunities.

‘All children accomplish milestones in their own way, in their own time’ – Magda Gerber

OUR CENTRE AND CLASSROOMS

We are a purpose-built centre that is licensed for 83 children. We have lovely purpose-built rooms, there are four defined classrooms, and we have two separate playgrounds for our children and families that are age appropriate and well-resourced. Each room has a team of amazing and loving teachers who have been joined Little Minds due to their individual qualities they bring, their knowledge on learning and development and experience within the early childhood sector. We also value teachers in training as we share our knowledge and experience with them, they to bring a wealth of knowledge. Each room implements a key teaching approach to ensure the children build a trusting and reciprocal relationship with at least one teacher. There is also a Head Teacher in each room to help ensure the day to day running of the centre is meeting compliance, policies, and procedures and health and safety standards.

We have a strong philosophy, based around the overall well-being of all kaiako, tamariki and whānau through tapa wha. We have a strong foundation, built on respect for all that come into our path and support those around us. Nga tamariki are viewed as capable and competent individuals to build a foundation for life-long learning. At Little Minds Early Learning Centre, we believe in nurturing and inspiring little minds to reach their full potential, just as the koru unfurls into a silver fern. We build a respectful community where all cultures and identities are embraced. Through empowering our tamariki they will gain the ability to become confident and competent future citizens of Aotearoa. At Little minds we have big hearts to grow little minds.

BELONGINGS

Please ensure all belongings that come to the centre are named including bags, spare clothing, hats, lunch bottles, drink bottles, etc. We always have a supply of vivid markers if you wish to use these when you come in. When belongings are named, it is easier to return them to their rightful owners. If any belongings are found with no name, they are kept in lost property. Please remember to check this when you arrive or leave.

CELEBRATIONS (BIRTHDAY/LEAVING DAY)

At Little Minds Early Learning Centre there are special celebrations which are held to acknowledge birthdays and when leaving Little Minds.

A final celebration occurs on a child's leaving day and they have a farewell hui all families are welcome to share in these celebrations.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Our policy on the collection of children has been made for the safety and protection of the children. Only those people listed on your child's enrolment form may pick them up from Little Minds Early Learning Centre. Names of whanau/friends with permission to pick-up children can be added (or removed) from an enrolment form at any time. To help our staff, if there are Court orders (copies must be supplied) and a photo would be helpful to keep with your child's enrolment form.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Little Minds Early Learning Centre values quality communication with parent's caregivers and the wider community. Methods of communication include our website, our Facebook page, Storypark, by email or text. Please note that we have an open-door policy, so you are always welcome to talk to our lovely Teachers or Centre Manager at any time.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Please see complaints procedure which is always displayed in our foyer.

ENROLMENT FEE

You will need to pay one week's fees in advance and there is also an administration fee of \$30 as a one-off payment. Some of this is to put towards a Little Minds wet bag for your child so that we can put their wet/dirty clothing in it to take home. This helps us to eliminate the use of plastic bags.

WINZ FEES

WINZ allowances are available for some families. Please see our manager to discuss.

20 Hours ECE

The Government funds the cost of children aged 3-5 years to attend early childhood education (ECE) for up to 20 hours a week. This funding is called 20 Hours ECE subsidy and is available for up to six hours a day for children in approved programmes. If have further questions in relation to this, please talk with the Centre Manager and/or your child's Head Teacher.

WEEKLY FEES

For specific fees please refer to our fee schedule and contact our manager for further details. We are here to help.

LATE PICK UP

Should a late pick up outside of enrolled hours occur late fees will be charged. If for any reason you are finding yourself running a few minutes behind, a courtesy call is welcomed, this helps us to ensure we stay within our legal ratios.

POLICIES

You will find all our policies in reception for you to read at any time. Each policy gets reviewed throughout the year or if required earlier for any reason. These policies will be added to a community post on Storypark and we welcome your input. If you require copies of any of our policies, or need more clarification, please do not hesitate to see the Centre Manager.

NAPPIES

At Little Minds ELC we use disposable nappies or pull ups for our children. Within a period of a day children are changed at a minimum of three times. In addition to this children are checked continuously throughout the day and are changed more frequently when required.

WITHDRAWING A CHILD FROM LITTLE MINDS

If there comes a time where you no longer need your child to attend Little Minds, we require a minimum of two weeks written notice of your intention to withdraw your child from the centre. You will continue to pay for all fees up to the date of the termination of enrolment whether your child attends the last two weeks or not. Two weeks' notice needs to be given in writing if you wish to withdraw your child from our centre. You will continue to be liable for fees on your enrolled days up to the date when your enrolment contract finishes.

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN ROOMS

As your child becomes older, they reach a time where they move rooms. Their transition visits are over 3 weeks during their hours of attendance, where they experience different parts of the of day within their new environment and getting know their new key teacher. If you child is attending part-time, you are more than welcome to arrange times with the Head Teacher or primary care teacher in your child's new room for additional visits. This is also a great time for you, the parent, to build a relationship with your child's new key teacher, to ask questions and to become familiar with their programme, rituals, and expectations within the room.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION

We love you being involved with your child's learning. We have an open-door policy whereby you are welcome to come and spend time with your child at the centre. We review policies and procedures regularly and will add these to Storypark, send them to you by email and leave copies of these in the foyer, for your input in the communication and consultation process, we encourage and appreciate your feedback. All policies are readily available for you to view in a folder at the main entrance.

TOILET LEARNING

Many newly enrolled children are often in the early stages of toilet learning. This is a huge developmental milestone and each child's toilet learning process is given support and guidance to support the emotional wellbeing of the child. We often find children feel more comfortable and confident with toilet learning at home first, so you may notice a difference in learning experience between home and centre. This can be due to a child being so involved within a learning experience. For children to understand they need to go the toilet, they first need to recognise what it is their body is telling them, stop what they are doing, then make their way to the toilet or ask for help from a teacher. We empower the children to lead their toilet learning as we find the children have less accidents. If we are finding a child has more than 3 accidents within a short period of time, we will talk with the child about wearing a pull-up or appropriate learning underwear provided by the parent. This not only protects the child's emotional wellbeing but also ensures the health and safety of the other children within the learning environments. Please include plenty of spare underpants and clothes and talk with your key teacher or Head Teacher before considering implementing toilet learning, this will help with expectations and preparation.

CHANGE OF HOURS

If you wish to change the days your child attends, please email our centre manager. Two weeks' notice is preferred, and each request is treated on a case-by-case basis as spaces may not be available.

HOLIDAY FEES

Little Minds ELC offer a 50% discount on fees over the 2-week Christmas break, when you opt to keep your child away during these 2 weeks. We also offer you a 1-week holiday at 50% to use at your discretion throughout the year, on condition that your account is kept up to date.

STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

Little Minds is open throughout the year, we are closed on statutory holidays and weekends only. Please note that there is a charge for statutory holidays. If you have a planned holiday for longer than three weeks, please see our manager as soon as possible.

During the 2 weeks between Christmas and New Year's we are open in between the Stat Holidays. In October/November we ask if your child will be attending. If your child will not be attending during this period, we give a 50% discount on your weekly fee. We have minimum staff on to ensure that our teachers get a break with their families over this time. Please also note that our hours may decrease during these two weeks, more communication will come out closer to the time on this.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

We also offer our families 10% discount when siblings attend Little Minds, this discount will apply to your oldest child's fees. Please see our Centre Manager to set this up and let you know how it works.

NUTRITION

Little Minds Early Learning Centre here in New Plymouth supply morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack for those children who are here in the later part of the afternoon. We have a Nutrition Policy to ensure the children are getting most of their daily requirements whilst they are in our care. The Nutrition Policy is kept in the reception area to read at your leisure, or you may ask to have a copy. To ensure the children's health is promoted we follow the Ministry of Health's Food and Nutrition guidelines for age-appropriate food. We are also signed up to meet the Healthy Heart Award Programme. You can find more information on the Healthy Heart Award Programme at <https://www.heartfoundation.org.nz/educators/healthy-heart-award>

We offer a delicious seasonal menu, with fresh fruit and vegetables that are sourced locally. We meet individual dietary requirements this includes dairy free, gluten free, egg free while ensuring we cater for individual allergies and cultural beliefs. Please talk with either your child's Head Teacher and/or key teacher to discuss this on an individual basis, to ensure we are meeting your child's dietary needs

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As per Ministry of Health guidelines "Reducing food-related choking for babies and young children at early learning services" (2020)

SETTLING VISITS

Before your child starts at Little Minds, we encourage you to attend 2-3 pre-enrolment visits weekly together and building up to short periods of time of leaving them with their key teacher. Please feel free to discuss this with the Centre Manager or Head Teacher of your room. You know your child best and we are here to make sure it is a smooth transition for you and your child.

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT ATTENDING LITTLE MINDS

It's usually best to introduce your child to the idea of starting at an early childhood centre a few days before they start. Too much advanced warning can cause anxiety and too little warning can be a shock. Talk to your child and reassure them about what will happen during their day at Little Minds.

SETTLING YOUR CHILD

We know that it is not easy leaving your child, particularly if they have never been left before. Please talk to our Centre Manager, Head Teacher, or primary care teacher about this, we are experienced in settling children, but we will work with you to make it as easy as possible for you and your child.

When you are ready to leave, please always let your child know you are leaving and will be back soon. This helps your child to build an understanding that you leave and come back. If you sneak off, they learn not to trust and often take longer to settle. There is always a teacher available to support you and your child through this. As time goes by you will find this becomes easier. Every child is different, so the length of time varies, consistency is key.

COMFORTS AND PERSONAL TOYS

We understand that some children have their special comforts that they are attached too. These special comforts can come in the form of a teddy, doll, blanket and/or pacifier, we encourage you to allow your child to bring this with them as they provide security and comfort to your child, especially while they are settling in building a trusting and reciprocal relationship with the key teacher and familiarising themselves within their new surroundings.

Please encourage your child to leave their play toys at home or in the car rather than in their bags. The reason being is that the lure of toys in the bag can be too tempting for some children even if it is not their own! Little Minds cannot take responsibility for any toys that come in and subsequently go missing or get broken.

Our Paritutu Pre-school room implement a Show and Tell time into their curriculum, this is the perfect opportunity for your child to bring something in on their designated day each week.

STORYPARK

To document each child's learning journey with Little Minds Early Learning Centre a Storypark portfolio is developed over time. This is a valuable resource full of learning information and photographs. Your child's online portfolio is an important tool in creating a link between Little Minds and the home environment.

Parents are encouraged to add their own memories to the portfolio, for example, aspirations for their child, pictures of their family, stories from holidays and special family celebrations, or anything else you would like to share. Parents are in control over who they invite to see their child's learning, this could be family members and close friends from near and far. One full learning story is uploaded per month and then child notes are incorporated that link to the current learning focus per child. We also implement group learning; this is where the individual rooms have a learning focus that many of the children are showing a keen interest in. This can also link to your child's individual planning. All of the learning plans are visual on Storypark and we encourage parents to contribute. Both individual and group planning is assessed and evaluated to help guide and extend on the learning.

We exclude the following:

- Juice and Flavoured milk
- Large seeds, like pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- Hard rice crackers
- Dried fruit
- Sausages, saveloys and cheerio's
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Uncooked apple, pear, carrot
- Grapes
- Whole peas and chickpeas

WE ARE A NUT FREE CENTRE

We work very closely with our families to ensure we are meeting individual children's dietary requirements due to medical conditions, allergies, and cultural beliefs. If you have questions in relation to this, please talk with the Centre Manager or Head Teacher of the room your child will be attending.

Our kitchen staff are highly skilled and trained. There is a collaborative approach in designing menus and menu changes are made accordingly to seasons.

MEDICATION

All medicine to be administered during licensed hours must be signed into the Medical Register by a parent or caregiver. Unfortunately, we cannot administer medicines without this being done. Please let a teacher know that your child needs medicine, and they can put it in a safe place out of reach of children, please don't leave it in your child's bags.

All medication must be prescribed by a health provider and display a current label with your child's name, dosage, and expiry date.

Pamol or pain relievers may be administered if they are prescribed by a doctor for acute on-going conditions such as ear infections.

If your child has an on-going medical condition and needs to keep medication at school for example, an asthma inhaler or epiPen, please ensure you fill out an individual health plan form available from one of the teachers.

All nappy rash creams are under category 3, as per Ministry of Education guidelines. We supply Bepanthen Antiseptic, this is signed for in the enrolment form if you would like your child to use this or not. Any other nappy rash creams or body lotions must be signed in for our teachers to apply to your child via our Medication Register and you will also be required to sign for this each day it is applied to verify you know the cream was applied.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

If your child has any special requirements for example; long term medication or an allergy, please ensure this is clearly stated on the enrolment form and discussed at the parent introduction visit. This information will allow the teaching team to plan for your child's needs before they start, ensuring a safe and smooth transition.

CLOTHING

Here at Little Minds, we engage in messy play, painting, water play, clay and all those lovely messy things that you may not want to do at home. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately in clothes that you do not mind getting dirty. We ask that you please pack plenty of spare named clothing and underwear each day, appropriate to the seasons. Accidents do happen and children often get wet and dirty from water play during summertime and mud in the wintertime. During the summer months please provide a brimmed hat / bucket hat, ensure clothing covers their shoulders. During the winter months please supply your child with a jacket, warm clothes, winter hat and gum boots, and overalls are great too.

HATS

Due to the severity of our New Zealand sun, hats are compulsory in the summer months, we have 'No hat – No outside' policy. Named hats can be kept in the hat basket at Little minds or in your child's bag. these should be taken home weekly to be washed and returned on their first day back.

SUNSCREEN

Please apply sunblock to your child before coming in. You are welcome to use the centre one in reception and stamp their hand, or the sunblock that is available in your child's room.