



PARENTS HANDBOOK



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VISIONS + VALUES

OUR VISION

Ākonga (students) 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 and 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 whānau and community. As a community through tuakana-teina we empower whānau 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.

*“All children accomplish milestones in their own way,
in their own time.”*

Magda Gerber,
Child Therapist & Infant Specialist

OUR CENTRE + CLASSROOMS

We are a purpose-built centre that is licensed for 83 children. We have four lovely purpose-built defined classrooms, including 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 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. Each room implements a key teaching approach to ensure the children build a trusting and reciprocal relationship with at least one teacher.

Each classroom has a dedicated Head Teacher to help ensure the day-to-day running of the centre meets compliance, policies, 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 capable future citizens of Aotearoa. At Little minds we have big hearts to grow little minds.

RUMA TARANAKI - NURSERY

Our nursery room is for our youngest tamariki 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 personal environment for 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 centered around free movement and respectful practices. Relationships, care moments and rituals are the forefront of our curriculum. This helps to provide a safe and predicable environment, which then enables our children to venture off to explore and discover the world around them.

RUMA POUAKAI - TODDLERS

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, while 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, which incorporate mess, fun, and creativity, while learning with and alongside others.

Viewing our tamariki as capable and confident people, we offer an empowering environment where they are encouraged to make decisions that concern their wellbeing and learning. We recognise they are full of big emotions as they navigate their independence and social skills and view them as valuable learning opportunities.

RUMA KAITAKE - PRESCHOOL

Our Kaitake room is for our tamariki aged between 2 years and 6 months to 3 years and 6 months. This classroom has a 1:8 ratio, this includes 3 – 4 full time teachers and up to 24 children. Our children are very enthusiastic and love to participate in a variety of learning experiences. Some of these experiences include:

- Play dough and Dinosaur bone excavation.
- Co-constructing 3D models e.g. cars, planes, and rockets.
- Crafts including stitching and fabric painting.

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

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

Magda Gerber
Child Therapist & Infant Specialist

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 24 children.

Being the biggest of all four rooms you will hear and see a hive of activity, laughter, creativity, and lots of fun. Our teachers spend time throughout the day growing children's independence by taking responsibility for their belongings, teaching caring, and respecting our environment. Children are encouraged to participate in our class hui that we have throughout the week called '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.



GETTING STARTED

SETTLING VISITS

Before your child starts at Little Minds, we encourage you to attend 2 – 3 pre-enrolment visits weekly together, building up to shorter periods of time or 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 TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT LITTLE MINDS

It is best to introduce your child to the idea of starting at an early childhood centre a few days before beginning. 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 both 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 and so the length of time to settle varies. We have found that consistency is key.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Little Minds 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 person who is on the enrolment form as a contact will be given a unique 4-digit pin number to use. There is also an attendance register that is signed weekly by parents or guardians to acknowledge the previous week's attendance is true and correct.

The attendance register is a legal document audited by the Ministry of Education; therefore, accurate times are essential.

WHAT TO BRING

BELONGINGS

Please ensure all personal belongings are clearly named including bags, spare clothing, hats, lunch boxes, drink bottles, etc. 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 the lost property box. Please remember to check this when you arrive or leave.

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, gum boots, and overalls are great too.

SUN HATS

Due to the severity of our sun, hats are compulsory in the summer months. We have a '*No hat – No outside*' policy. Named hats can be kept in the hat basket 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 drop-off. You are welcome to use the sunblock that is available in your child's room.

COMFORTS AND PERSONAL TOYS

We understand 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 with 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 implements 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.



Ruma Taranaki - Nursery

HEALTH + SAFETY

MEDICATION

All medicine administered during licensed hours must be signed into the Medical Register by a parent or caregiver. Unfortunately, we cannot administer medicines without this process 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 do not leave it in your child's bag.

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 infection.

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 our teachers.

We supply Bepanthen Antiseptic Cream, this is included 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.

*“Children must be taught how to think,
not what to think”.*

Margaret Mead
Child Theorist

NURTRITON

Little Minds supplies morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack for children who are enrolled in the later part of the afternoon. We have a Nutrition Policy to ensure tamariki meet 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 have also signed up to meet the Healthy Heart Award Programme. You can find more information on the Healthy Heart Award Programme at www.heartfoundation.org.nz/educators/healthy-heart-award

We offer delicious seasonal menus, 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 or key teacher to discuss this on an individual basis, to ensure we are meeting your child's dietary needs.

We exclude the following:

- Juice and flavoured milk
- Seeds, like pumpkin or sunflower
- 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 according to seasons.



FEES + SUBSIDIES

Please refer to our Fees Policy in this enrolment pack for more details regarding the fees we charge. Our invoices/statements are issued weekly via email, and it is very important that fees are kept at least one week in advance.

ENROLMENT FEE

You will need to pay one week's fees in advance and there is also an Administration Fee of \$50 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.

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 programs. If you have further questions in relation to this, please talk with the Centre Manager and/or your child's Head Teacher.

CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

Work and Income subsidies are available for some families to help with the cost of childcare. Please see the Centre Manager to discuss this in more detail.

You must pay the total fee amount until your subsidy is approved.

EARLY DROP OFF AND LATE PICK-UP FEE

We ask for your co-operation when dropping off and collecting children within their enrolled times. An early drop off or late pick up fee will be charged. If for any reason you are finding yourself running a few minutes late, a courtesy call is welcomed, this helps us to ensure we stay within our legal ratios.

CHANGE OF HOURS

If you wish to change the days your child attends, please email the office. Two (2) weeks' notice is preferred, and each request is treated on a case-by-case basis as spaces may not be available.

HOLIDAY FEES

Each child will receive a Holiday Discount of 50% of three weeks (pro rata) per calendar year which is to be taken within the calendar year for holidays. Each child is eligible for this discount on the condition that the child's 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 (3) weeks, please see our Centre 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 during this time. We have minimum staff on to ensure that our teachers get a break with their families during this time. Please also note that our operating hours may change during the week before Christmas and over the two-week holiday period, more communication will come out closer to the time.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

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

DEBT COLLECTION

It is a condition of enrolment that all parents agree for the Centre to engage a debt collection agency for the collection of any outstanding fees. If any account remains unpaid 30 days after the due date, our debt collection agent will be engaged to recover outstanding fees and the parents will be responsible for all fees charged by this agency.

*“Hapaitia te ara tika pumau ai te rangatiratanga mo nga uri
whakatipu*

*Fostering pathways of knowledge to strengthen independence
and growth for future generations”.*



Ruma Paritutu - Preschool

A QUICK GUIDE

LICENSED HOURS AND AGE GROUPS

At Little Minds our hours are 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, please contact us via text message, 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 enrolment 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

We kindly ask that any child who is unwell be kept at home, so illness does not spread throughout the centre. The Centre Manager, at their discretion, may refuse to accept any child deemed unwell to attend the Centre.

Children with severe coughs or colds, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, rashes or raised temperatures cannot be brought into the Centre. If symptoms continue or develop during the day you will be contacted to arrange for immediate collection of your child. Please see our Illness and Infectious Disease Policy and our Exclusion Due to Illness Policy for more information.

IMMUNISATION

When you enrol your child with us, we ask for a copy of their immunisation status. We send automatic reminders when immunisations are due. If your child is not immunised a letter confirming this needs to be attached to your enrolment form. In the case of an outbreak of such a disease your child will be asked to stay away from Little Minds for the duration of the outbreak.

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.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Please see our Complaints Procedure which is always displayed in our foyer.

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 assist 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 to 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 find a child has more than three (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 environment. 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.

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 the learning plans are visual on Storypark, and we encourage parents to contribute. Both individual and group planning are assessed and evaluated to help guide and extend the learning.

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 reception.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Little Minds Early Learning Centre values quality communication with parents or 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.



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 (3) 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 when you no longer need your child to attend Little Minds, we require a minimum of two (2) 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. We kindly ask that your account is settled before your child/ren's last day.

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN ROOMS

As your child becomes older, they reach a time where they move rooms. Their transition visits are over three (3) weeks during their hours of attendance, where they experience different parts of the day within their new environment and get to know their new key teacher. If your 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 program, rituals, and expectations within the room.

CONTACT DETAILS

44 Barrett Road, Whalers Gate, New Plymouth

021 190 1960

littlemindselc-np.co.nz

adminnp@littlemindselc.co.nz

Ruma Taranaki (Nursery) 021 190 5518

Ruma Pouakai (Toddlers) 021 190 1495

Ruma Kaitake (Preschool) 021 190 1917

Ruma Paritutu (Preschool) 021 870 481

