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Vision

It takes big hearts to teach little minds

Philosophy

At Little Minds Early Learning Centre we believe in inspiring little minds to reach their full potential, just as the koru unfurls into a silver fern.

Through play based learning, Teachers will follow the children's interests as well as growing their minds by introducing new experiences to excite their imagination.

We strive to build a respectful community of happy, engaged learners and encourage opportunities to build tuakana/teina relationships.

When our children leave our centre they will be equipped with all the skills and passion to continue on their lifelong learning journey.

The 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.

1. LICENSED HOURS AND AGE GROUPS

We are licensed Monday to Friday 7.30 to 5.30 for children aged from 3 months until they go to school (aged 5 or 6).

2. ABSENCES

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

If a 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.

3. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Little Minds Early Learning Centre is required by the Ministry of Education to ensure all children are signed in and out of preschool. An attendance register is kept in the centre's foyer for parents to sign as they arrive and leave. The attendance register is a legal document audited by the Ministry of education, therefore accurate times are essential.

4. BELONGINGS

It is important all belongings that come to the centre are named including school bag, spare clothing and items for news time. When belongings are named it is easy to return them to their rightful owner. If any belongings are found with no name they are kept in lost property which is in the reception area of our centre.

5. 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 when they are presented with a leaving certificate and all their work, paintings, sewing, creations they have saved as special examples.

All families are welcome to share in these celebrations, and you are more than welcome to bring a cake if you wish. We provide treats for children with food allergies.

6. CHANGE OF HOURS

If you wish to change the days your child attends school please fill in the change of bookings form, our Centre Manager or administrator can help you with this. Two weeks' notice is preferred and each request is treated on a case by case basis as spaces may not be available

7. 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 caregivers 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) against any family member gaining access to a child, a photo would be helpful to keep with the child's records.

8. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Little Minds Early Learning Centre values quality communication with parent's caregivers and the wider community. Methods of communication include the website, Facebook, Story park, by email. Each family also has its own parent pocket where current information pamphlets, permission slips, etc are kept for parents to pick up. We have an open door so you are always welcome to talk to the teachers, manager or the administrator at any time.

9. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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

10. FEES

WINZ

WINZ allowances are available for some families. Please see our Manager or administrator to discuss.

Weekly Fees

For specific fees please refer to our fee schedule and contact our Manager or administrator 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.

Holiday fee

Each family is entitled to 3 weeks of Holiday discount fees per calendar year. This applies if your child will be absent from pre-school for a period of minimum 1 consecutive week where you will be charged 50% of your normal rate. This must be taken in complete week allotments but can be spread across the year on 3 separate occasions. Two weeks' notice is required.

11. FOOD

Little Minds early learning centre has a healthy eating policy and so we encourage parents to provide healthy food for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea in a named lunch box. Most lunch boxes consist of a sandwich, fruit, yogurt, crackers, cheese and one treat item. Water is available at all times, but it is recommended that children bring their own named drink bottle of water each day.

Nuts

Please be aware that some children have peanut allergies or develop a sensitivity to foods. We will advise all families as soon as we know of a child at our preschool with a serious allergy and what food will not be suitable.

12. HOLIDAYS

Little Minds early learning centre is open throughout the year, we are closed on statutory holidays and weekends only. If you have a planned holiday for longer than three weeks, please see our administrator as soon as possible.

13. INDEPENDENCE OF THE CHILD

At the core of our philosophy lies the independence of the child. Please be aware of allowing your child to be independent and perform tasks for him/herself. Examples of this would be carrying their own school bag, putting his/her lunchbox and water bottle on the food trolley.

14. SICKNESS

It is the parent or caregiver's responsibility to keep a sick child who is at risk of infecting the other children and staff at home and inform the school of his illness. Any child or teacher showing signs of sickness will be sent home to minimise the risk of the illness spreading.

15. E-PORTFOLIO

To document each child's learning journey with Little Minds early learning centre a Storypark portfolio is developed over time, this is full of information and photographs. Your child's e-portfolio is an important tool in creating a link between their school and 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.

GETTING READY FOR Little Minds early learning centre.

School Bag

Collecting together items for your child's school bag is an important part of starting preschool. Allow your child help to choose his bag and to pack it full of everything he needs.

Please ensure that all your child's belongings are named including the bag, lunch box, water bottle and clothing.

Clothing

It is very important that your child is dressed appropriately in clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Clothes need to be functional and comfortable for working in the classroom as well as outside. Please ensure your child has at least one complete change of clothes (including underpants) in their school bag every day. Accidents do happen and children often get wet and dirty from water play during summer time and mud in the winter time. During the winter months please supply your child with a jacket and warm clothes in the winter. They will also need a raincoat and gumboots for rainy days.

Hat

Summer Hats are compulsory in the summer months, we have 'No hat – No play' policy. Named hats can be kept in the hat basket at school or in your child's school bag.

Medication and Medicine Register

All medicine to be administered during licensed hours must be signed into the Medical Register by a parent or caregiver.

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

Pamol or medicine that moderates temperatures will not be given to recently sick children as this can inhibit the ability of the teaching staff to assess if the child is seriously sick. However, 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 Epi-pen, please ensure you fill out a long term medicine form available from one of the teachers. Please do not leave any medicines in your child's bag. They will need to go into the kitchen medicine cupboard out of reach of children.

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 smooth transition.

PRE ENROLMENT VISITS

Before your child starts at Little Minds, you will be encouraged to attend pre enrolment visits.

Ways in which you can be involved at Little Minds Early Learning Centre

We would love you to be involved with your child's learning. We have an open-door policy where by 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 also leave copies of these in the foyer, for you to be involved in the communication and consultation process, we encourage your feedback.

How to approach telling your child about attending Little Minds

It's usually best to introduce your child to the idea of preschool 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 preschool. It is also a good idea to give them a simple explanation of what you will be doing while they are at preschool.

Routines

The routine of the preschool day remains consistent because preschool aged children love order and repetition. A description of a typical day can be found on our website and will be discussed at the parent introduction visit.

Personal Toys at Little Minds

Please encourage your child to leave toys at home rather than in their bags at preschool. The lure of toys in the bag can be too tempting for some children even if it is not their own! Unfortunately Little Minds can't take responsibility for any toys that come and subsequently go missing or get broken. Comfort toys/teddies/special blankets or cuddlies are more than welcome.

Toileting

Many newly enrolled children that are 2 and over are often in the early stages of toilet training, in which case the teachers regularly remind, and actively encourage them to go to the toilet. In many cases starting preschool helps the child complete their toilet training as they are eager to copy their older peers. During the early days children may well have accidents as they get too involved in their activities. These accidents create a perfect learning opportunity for the child to complete their understanding of toileting and caring for themselves. Include plenty of spare underpants and we also have spares at preschool.

Nappies

Nappies will need to be provided by Little Minds.

Sunscreen

All children must be protected from the sun during the summer months. Sunscreen will be applied by the teachers every 2-3 hours.

If you wish your child to use a specific sunscreen please name it and supply this to the preschool.

Plastic bag free

We are currently working on being plastic bag free, so charge an enrolment fee of \$15.50 which provides each child with their own personalised wet bag for wet clothes.

WITHDRAWING A CHILD FROM PRE-SCHOOL

Little Minds requires four weeks written notice of your intention to withdraw your child from school. You will continue to be liable for all fees up to the date of the termination of enrolment.

Four 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.