

PARENT HANDBOOK



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WELCOME TO OUR KIDS EARLY LEARNING

WE HOPE THAT YOUR TIME HERE IS ENJOYABLE

We provide safe, secure, and dynamic learning environments where foundations are laid for a lifelong love for learning. Our early childcare centres are special places where curiosity, wonder, discovery and spontaneous imagination facilitate children's learning.

Our main vision is to empower children's sense of self, and to foster their ability to direct their own learning in a nurturing environment that is autonomous, open, and child-centred.

The outdoor spaces have a strong focus on the natural setting, where children will be encouraged to explore, learn, and grow in an environment that is both engaging and challenging. The inside spaces are thoughtfully organised in a respectful and homely manner, where careful considerations have been given to the aesthetics and natural elements to help instil a sense of belonging.

At Our Kids Early Learning Centres your children will experience a planned and emergent curriculum that will build on their experiences, knowledge, skills, attitudes,

needs, interests and views of the world. Our education programmes provide children with limitless opportunities to learn and develop to their potential as well as to share and fully participate in the teaching and learning process.

Our passionate staff provide the tamariki and family/whānau with support and respect. We are constantly innovating and improving our centres and training our staff, based on new ideas and research.



'Our Kids' is a wonderful centre with a very inclusive 'family' feel about it. I always found the staff to be very approachable and easy to talk to.

Our three privately owned and operated childcare centres are located in Glendene and Glen Eden with many of our children coming from surrounding West Auckland areas including Kelston, Te Atatu and Titirangi.

ANITA KUMAR

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Anita Kumar established Our Kids Early Learning Centre in 2008 following 13 years in the education sector. She holds a Bachelor of Education, (Teaching) (ECE), from the University of Auckland, and is an experienced teacher, head teacher, and early learning centre manager. Her passion is for quality in early childhood education, stemming from her years of study, experience and ongoing professional development.

She is passionate about inspiring teachers to strive for excellence. She enjoys being in a mentoring role with teachers, supporting them when embracing challenges within the changing education landscape. She is a good listener who establishes relationships with teachers and others easily.

She is responsible for developing policies and establishing strategic and management plans to guide the future direction of the centres.

She has considerable experience with mixed aged grouping and both the Our Kids Glendene and Glendale road centres have mixed aged licenses.



The centre manager is committed to providing good quality early childhood education. She has established useful strategic and management plans to guide the future direction of the centre.

ABOUT US

KIM BASSETT

CENTRE MANAGER

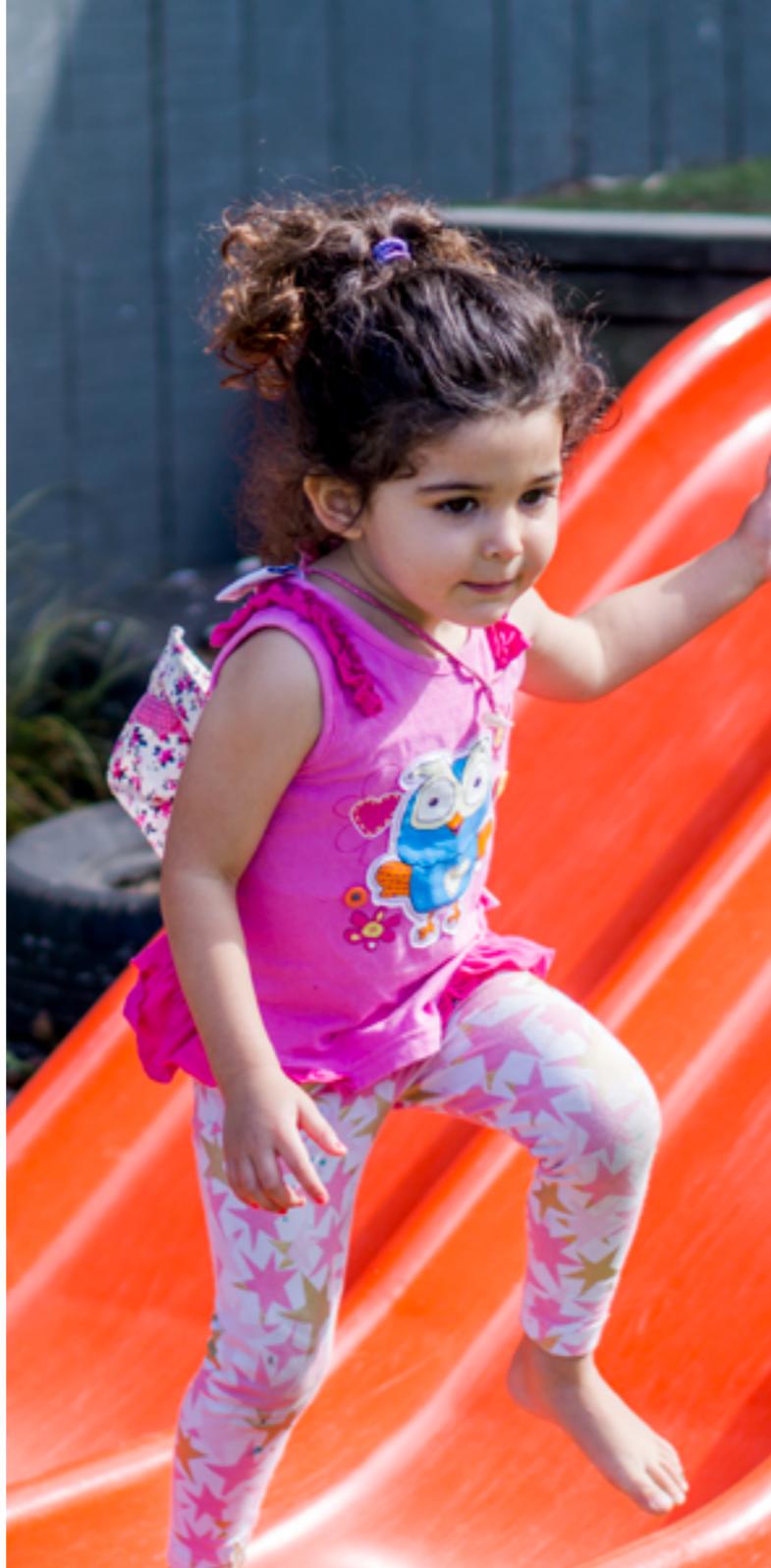
Kia ora, my name is Kim and I am the Centre Manager at Our Kids Glen Eden centres. I hold a Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education and have been working as an Early Childhood Teacher since 2010. In recent years I have enjoyed the role as Head Teacher at Our Kids Early Learning, Glen Eden.

I started my career in early childhood when my own children were enrolled in preschool many years ago. I became very involved in my children's preschool community through volunteering, working and participating in the parent network association. It was at this time that I really discovered a love for working with young children and held a strong interest in their learning and development, inspiring me to study for a Bachelor Degree to begin a career as a qualified early childhood teacher.

As an experienced and knowledgeable early childhood educator I have always been committed to providing quality childcare and education, and it is this commitment that truly inspires me to lead and mentor our teachers to ensure our precious children are provided with the best possible care and education at Our Kids Early Learning.

*“Poipoia te kakano
Kia puawai”
Nurture the seed and it will blossom*

He whakatauki



OUR TEACHERS

Our staff are selected for their knowledge of early childhood, their expertise in providing appropriate educational programmes, their compassion for children and their philosophy of education and early childhood development. Our teachers are qualified early childhood educators and undertake regular professional development to keep them abreast of the current trends in our field. Our teachers participate in a yearly appraisal programme where management and teachers can reflect on strengths, weaknesses and goals and plan for the following year.

All qualified teachers are expected to maintain current Teacher Registration and first aid certification. Registration ensures that teachers go on to participate in professional development throughout their careers and that satisfactory teaching and knowledge standards are maintained. We undertake a series of safety checking steps when appointing all staff at this centre.



My son has been at Our Kids Glendene for over a year now and I'm very pleased by his growth there. I have seen his confidence increase, his social skills improve, his overall learning and development thrive with the guidance and support of his teachers.





CENTRE DETAILS



3 Beazley Place, Glendene

P: (09) 836 6495
E: glendene@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

Opening Hours: 7:30am - 5:30pm

23 Glendale Road, Glen Eden

P: (09) 818 9913
E: gleneden@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

Opening Hours: 7:00am - 5:30pm

3 Mataki Way, Glen Eden

P: (09) 218 6407
E: matakiway@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

Opening Hours: 7:00am - 6:00pm

For children attending all day we require a minimum attendance of six hours. We accept children a minimum of two days per week. We request that your child be at the centre by 9:30am so that they may benefit from the full range of experiences offered by our educational curriculum. If you arrive after 9:30am please give us a courtesy call.

Meals are provided at our Glendale Road and Mataki Way centres in Glen Eden. Our resident cook provides

for morning, lunch and afternoon food breaks taking into consideration nutritional guidelines, and any special dietary requirements such as allergies. Our Kids teachers encourage positive attitudes in children to support healthy food choices and have created a four week cycle menu in collaboration with families and in-sync with the NZ Heart Foundation's guidelines.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

INCLUSIVE ATMOSPHERES

Our Kids teachers strive to create inclusive atmospheres where every child feels comfortable and secure in knowing their voice and presence is valued in a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Children learn through imitation, imagination and inquiry, and our teachers support these themes through actively listening to children and responding to their needs and interests. We believe in observing and tuning in to what children are doing, in order to build on their learning. This is opposed to interfering with their desire to explore, discover and engage with their spontaneous imaginations.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY

We believe strong relationships between children, families/whānau, and the teaching team, are the building blocks for creating a warm, rich, and diverse learning community. Forging authentic, reciprocal and trusting relationships with families enables us to understand and meet the needs of each child.

ENVIRONMENT IS CENTRAL

We consider the environment to be the third teacher. It's a place where innate curiosity, wonder, respect and discovery take place to enrich imagination and creativity, and to drive children's interests.

ENVIRONMENT as THIRD TEACHER

INDOOR & OUTDOOR SPACES

Some key things that we consider when creating our inside spaces are aesthetics (colour, cozy spaces, etc), natural elements and authentic materials that are commonly seen or used in adult spaces. Carefully chosen furniture, objects and open-ended resources organised in calm and comfortable environments encourage children to think, problem solve and be creative.

At Our Kids we believe in fostering the tamariki's innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life and in ensuring a world that is sustainable for present and future generations. We aim to generate in children a sense of respect and responsibility for the well-being of both the living and non-living environment; and to foster children's working theories about the living world and knowledge of how to care for it.





OUR APPROACH

CURRICULUM

Children learn from actively participating in the world around them: playing with their peers and teachers, the physical environment and the resources.

Curriculum represents everything at Our Kids centres that impacts children's development, learning and well-being. It covers activities and learning paths children initiate themselves, daily rituals and routines, and other learning experiences planned by our teachers.

Our goal is to encourage a life-long love of learning and we facilitate this through open ended play. As children discover the magic in learning at this early age they're set up to cope with the diverse challenges of life, including the more immediate challenge of starting school.

We are guided by:

- Te Whariki, New Zealand Ministry of Education's early childhood curriculum policy statement.
- The principles of Pikler and RIE (Resources for Infant Educators) Philosophies.
- Children's play urges identification based on the work of Pennie Brownlee and Kimberley Crisp, is used as a tool to recognise patterns of repeated behaviour and to extend and develop their thinking.

The teachers support the children's learning by working closely with them, observing their play, and responding to their needs and interests. We document their learning and development in the children's portfolio.

PORTFOLIOS & STORYPARK

Portfolios are individualised records of your child's learning journey whilst they are at Our Kids. They focus on your child's interests, strengths and celebrate special milestones. Children love to look through their portfolios revisiting old learning and sharing memories with friends/peers and whānau. We encourage you to regularly check your child's portfolio to discuss their learning with them or teachers. We also welcome your input in the form of photos, comments, and

stories from home. Your portfolio is a treasured taonga of their time spent with us.

Storypark is a secure online network where photos, videos and observations can be posted in a child's e-portfolio within a private and safe learning community. Storypark helps parents/whānau become more involved in their child's learning by bridging learning activity during the day in childcare, with the home environment.

Storypark is effectively a shared learning tool that helps develop strong relationships. It's great for busy working parents and far-away grandparents and other family/whānau, because it enables all the important people in a child's life to be more included in the child's learning and discovery, no matter where they are in New Zealand or elsewhere in the world.



"My daughter has attended Our Kids Centre for a year, and I always pick her up with a smile on her face. She loves her teachers! I greatly appreciate the immense time and energy the teachers dedicate to the kids, and maintaining the centre. The centre has an excellent philosophy including kindness and respect for others, which is reflected in the children's play, and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this centre to my friends and family!"



BENEFITS OF MIXED AGED GROUPINGS

Lev Vygotsky's theory of Social Constructivism is one of the foundations of how we approach children's learning these days. The approach looks at all learning as happening in the context of social interactions. Learning is most effective (so the theory goes) when you're trying to accomplish something and someone who knows more than you is there giving you little hints and encouragements (known as "scaffolding")—allowing you to succeed, through your own children's learning. But usually there are only a few teachers and a whole lot of children—the teacher can't scaffold everyone simultaneously.

And that's where mixed-age (or mixed-ability) groupings come to the rescue. Older children scaffold younger ones. Younger children look to older ones as models. Our qualified teachers know how to set up relationships amongst

the children so that they're ALL teaching and ALL learning from each other all the time. And it's not just the younger ones who benefit from the older; older children learn by being models for the younger ones. It's win-win.

Our Beazley place, Glendene centre and 23 Glendale road, Glen Eden centre have mixed age licenses.

The Mataki Way centre will have separate areas for under 2s and over 2s as it is a larger centre, but we will still integrate the mixed aged philosophy where possible.

“

I feel Cohen has benefited greatly from being in a mixed aged environment, interacting and making friends with children of all ages. As he has had the opportunity to interact with the babies and infants in the centre, he has learnt to be gentle and caring towards younger children. This was evident to us when his baby sister arrived recently and he was so loving towards her and knew what appropriate behaviour was around her.

Cohen loves to play in the beautiful outdoor area which has many different areas to explore, and activities to challenge him and burn off some of his energy!”

OUR APPROACH TO INFANTS & TODDLERS

At Our Kids we believe strong relationships are important. Our teachers observe, listen to gestures, body movements, facial expressions, and sounds to recognise and respond meaningfully toward children's needs and interests.

Caregiving routines such as feeding and nappy changing provide natural opportunities for quality time and to promote attachment with teachers.

Our teachers are familiar with research on how the infant brain develops and with this knowledge they support and extend their curiosity by creating areas, providing open-ended objects and experiences that offer opportunities for child initiated learning to help under-2 children learn and grow.



TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

When young children are learning in preschool education environments they're gathering the skills, knowledge and dispositions to cope with the diverse challenges of life, including the more immediate challenge of starting school.

During early childhood at Our Kids the foundations for literacy and numeracy, decision making, perseverance, patience and creativity are developed through a range of

play based learning experiences. Self-help and self-care skills are fostered within the children, along with the development of social competence leading up to the transition to school.

Teachers at Our Kids Early Learning Centre are guided by Te Whariki; they weave a holistic curriculum in response to children's learning and development in the early childhood setting and wider context of the child's world. The children at Our Kids



continually set their own goals and choose their own learning paths, make their own decisions, and construct their own understandings in a stimulating, challenging, and responsive environment, alongside teachers who support them to widen and deepen their learning.

Children develop deep understandings when they're able to choose learning paths that interest them and they are able to explore for extended periods of

of time with minimal interruptions. They learn persistence and patience when they're able to return to their own chosen pursuits day after day. For these reasons we do not feel the need to introduce special set times for learning to take place as children are setting these challenges for themselves.

The staff are all lovely and are fully trained in early childhood education. My boys love going to daycare and really look at it as their second home away from home. Nico is starting school in a few weeks now and is well prepared for it. I am so happy that we found 'Our Kids' and can only recommend them.





STARTING AT OUR KIDS SETTLING IN...

VISITS

We appreciate that settling into a new environment can be an exciting and sensitive time for children and parents. We aim to facilitate positive transitions into the centre to ensure that all children and their families are welcomed into the centre.

We ask that you come for three visits before your child starts

- On the first visit parents are invited to stay at the centre with their child and get to know staff and centre routines. This is a lovely time for staff to chat with the parent about their child. A staff member will take you through a “parent induction”

process so that you know where everything is and what you need to do.

- On the second visit parents are invited to spend time again at the centre with their child, but a teacher will now take the lead and assist your child in the settling process.
- On the third visit we ask parents to leave their child at the centre for a short period.

SAYING GOODBYE

We request that parents say good bye to their child and let them know they will return to collect them later on. Teachers can assist children in fare welling family/whanau members and will support their transition into learning. A well done goodbye lets children feel secure in that parents will return as opposed to simply disappearing at any moment.

MAKING OUR KIDS THEIR PLACE

We believe that each and every child is unique and respect the special routines that you have developed at home. We value any information that you can share with us regarding your child's routines, preferences and personality.

This helps our teachers learn about the special characteristics of your child such as their:

- Special words and ways of communicating
- Your child's favourite way of comforting
- When and how they like to go to sleep
- Dietary needs and preferences
- Important events in your child's life

TOILET TRAINING

When you feel that your child is ready for toilet training please discuss this with the staff. We ask that you start toilet training at home first so that you can assess whether or not your child is ready. Once your child has been learning to use the toilet at home for some weeks we'll try at child care. If your child doesn't seem ready: shows no interest, is fearful, or has too many

accidents, toilet training will be put on hold until we decide together that your child is ready to try again. We will remind your child to use the toilet throughout the day, however children are often more easily distracted when playing with friends so it is important for your child to have a good start at toilet training at home before we try here.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING TO THE CENTRE

Play and exploration can often be wet or messy, so dress your children in clothes that are comfortable and easily washed.

- Two/three changes of clothes clearly labelled
- For children in nappies provide at least five nappies for each day your child attends
- In summer ensure your child has a clearly labelled hat and apply sunblock before coming to the centre
- In winter please ensure your child has warm hat, jacket and gumboots

SLEEP/REST TIMES

We recognise that each child is unique and comes to us with their own sleeping routine which we will follow for children aged 6 months-18 months.

Children aged 18 months – 5 years have a rest period immediately after lunch. Children who need to sleep can do so in our sleep room after lunch.

All children are provided with their own individual sleeping space and bed linen. Linen is washed weekly.



ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Using the tablets, you are required to record your child's drop-off and pick-up times.

As at July 2018 the MOE still require that we must have parents physically sign a piece of paper in respect to attendance.

We will be producing a Weekly

Attendance Report at the beginning of the week, with a place for the Signature. We will require parents to sign weekly to confirm the attendance record.



YOUR CHILDS BIRTHDAY

We acknowledge that birthdays are a very exciting time for children and their whanau. You are warmly welcomed to celebrate your child's birthday in the centre. Each centre has their own birthday celebration ritual. We welcome whanau to join in celebrating with us.

If for cultural or personal reasons you want to celebrate your child's birthday differently please see one of the teachers prior to your child's celebration.



On Friday 2nd February was my girls last day, after been there since she was 1 1/2 years old, it was a sad, but happy day, they put on a little graduation for her and the things said about Katie from teacher and children was just awesome, I know I've loved every bit of my girl being at our kids, my girl has even more so. I highly recommend and appreciate everything the centre stands for you guys do a fantastic job.



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

When enrolling your child you will be asked to write in emergency contacts and people able to pick your child up. We are unable to release your child to anyone not on the enrolment form. If your child is to be released to anyone other than the people nominated, we must have details in advance. These arrangements can be made with the teachers in person or by telephone.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

We are prepared in the event of an emergency. Fire, earthquake and lockdown drills are practised regularly and supplies in the event of an emergency are on site. Teachers are trained in first aid and know what to do in an emergency.

FEEDBACK

When communication is flowing relationships work. Please feel free to talk to your child's Head Teacher or Centre Manager if you have any concerns/praise. We love to hear when things are going well but we also need to know if things aren't going well. If we don't know we can't make changes.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Fees are payable one week in advance by cash, cheque, automatic payments or direct credit. We encourage families to pay by Direct Debit or Automatic Payment. Cash or cheque payments can be given to any staff member, which gets written into the fees payment sheet. This requires the signature of the teacher and the family member.

Families will receive a statement fortnightly or when required.

OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

- Overdue fees must be paid within seven days after the date of the invoice.
- Families with invoices that remain outstanding after 14 days will be sent an “Over Due Fees Reminder” notice, again asking for the account to be paid immediately or for families to contact the Head Teacher or Centre Director to discuss their situation.
- Families with invoices that remain outstanding after 21 days will be sent an “Over Due Fees – Booking Cancelled” notice. At this stage the child’s booking is cancelled, and the child will not be able to attend the Centre until the account is paid in full, or an appropriate arrangement has been made with the Head Teacher/Centre Director.
- Families with invoices that remain outstanding after 35 days and/or no appropriate arrangement has been made with the Centre Manager for payment of the debt, will be sent a “Debt Collection” notice. The account will now be assigned to Baycorp, our Debt Collection Agency, and all costs associated with the Debt Collection Process will be payable by the family.

WINZ SUBSIDY

You may be eligible for WINZ subsidies or assistance through the Working for Families initiative. Please ask us for more information on your entitlements and how to apply for them. We have some childcare subsidy forms available at the centre if you need them.

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

NOTICE PERIOD AND CHANGES TO ENROLLMENT

Changes in a child’s regular schedule when decreasing hours may be made two week prior in writing through the appropriate form available at the centre and we will accommodate increases as soon as possible space permitting.

Families are required to give two weeks’ notice when withdrawing their child from the centre or alternatively two weeks fees are payable in lieu of notice.



LATE PICK UP FEES

A late fee of \$1 per minute will be incurred for time in the centre after the agreed upon times.

ABSENCES

Fees are charged for statutory holidays and in the event of absence or sickness. We do not provide any make up sessions.

CHILD'S HEALTH

If your child is feeling unwell or displaying any of the symptoms listed below we ask that they remain away from the centre.

- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea: Individuals need to be clear for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea before returning to the Centre.
- A high temperature: If a child's temperature is higher than 38°C, a parent will be contacted to collect their child. If antibiotics are prescribed, the individual must have been taking them for 24hrs before they can return to the Centre.
- An unidentified rash
- Any person with Conjunctivitis will need to stay away from the centre while there is discharge from the eyes.
- Open wounds and sores that cannot be covered with bandages and clothing
- Any other symptom of a contagious illness
- General unwellness

We will follow the guidelines for illness & infections, as indicated in Ministry of Health Infectious Diseases: Information & Exclusion List. The centre reserves the right to request a medical certificate.

We ask that you respect our Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy – illness spreads fast in a group environment.

MINOR ACCIDENTS

If your child suffers a minor accident such as a grazed knee, cut or bruise, a staff member will treat the injury, and offer plenty of TLC.



MAJOR ACCIDENTS

We do everything possible to provide a safe environment for the child. However in the event that a major accident occurs, such as bumps, significant cuts or potential fractures you and your emergency contacts will be phoned as soon as possible. If no contact is made an ambulance will be called if necessary.

All accidents will be written up in an accident register, which you will be asked to sign and sign. A copy will be given to parents in case of serious accidents.

Our centre is fully equipped with first aid resources and all teachers hold current first aid certificates.

HEALTH SERVICES

Hearing and vision testing are done regularly at the Centre by outside agencies. Consents for these free services will be requested by the teachers when required.

MEDICATION

Medication is not given to a child unless prior written authority has been given by the parent/caregiver. Should your child require medicine to be administered, the details and dosage should be entered in the Medication Register each day.

IMMUNISATION

Parents are free to choose whether their child is immunised or not, but Health Regulations state that all parents must provide documented evidence of their child's immunisation status.

In the event of a breakout of a vaccine preventable disease in the Centre, children who are not immunised will be required to remain at home for the required stand down period. We will be guided by Ministry of Health should this occur.

No enrolment can be accepted unless we have details on your child's immunisation status. Please keep your child's immunisation status updated.

BEAZLEY PLACE, GLENDENE

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glendene@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

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