

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 four privately owned and operated childcare centres are located in Glendene, two in Glen Eden & our newest centre in Onehunga.

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



OUR TEAM

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 and managers are qualified early childhood educators and undertake regular professional development to keep them abreast of the current trends in our field. Centre managers and teachers participate in a yearly professional growth cycle where they reflect on strengths, weaknesses, goals and plan for the following year.

We have over 80% qualified teachers and those who are not qualified are either in training or hold significant experience working in early childhood environment. 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 our centres.

Each centre has its own centre manager and head teachers. We all work collaboratively to enhance our philosophy in action, which enables us to continuously review and improve our centres, ensuring we consistently provide positive learning outcomes for all children in our care.





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

208A Church Street, Onehunga

P: (09) 636 1395
E: onehunga@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

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

NUTRITION

Our two centres in Glen Eden and our Onehunga centre provide delicious whole foods, unprocessed food cooked onsite. Our resident chefs plan meals for morning, lunch and afternoon breaks taking into consideration nutritional guidelines, any special dietary requirements such as allergies. We have created a four-week cycle menu in collaboration with families and in-sync with the NZ Heart Foundation's guidelines.

At Our Kids, your children will enjoy delicious whole foods, unprocessed healthy snacks, and meals. We believe that the relationship between nutrition, health and learning is undeniably strong and appreciate the impact we have in establishing healthy eating habits for your child. Opportunities for children to prepare and cook are provided so they can develop working theories about nutrition.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

KOTAHITANGA HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Human development is multidimensional and includes intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual dimensions. These dimensions need to be viewed holistically, as closely interwoven, and interdependent. Thus, we take a holistic view to education which is closely linked to the four dimensions identified in the Māori model of well being, Te Whare Tapa Whā (Mason Durie): whānau (family health), tinana (physical health), hinengaro (mental health) and wairua (spiritual health).

Teachers at Our Kids strive to create inclusive atmospheres where every child feels comfortable and secure. In our care they will know that their voice and presence is valued and that their family, culture, and knowledge are respected in a nurturing learning environment.

WHAKARONGO PIIKARI ACTIVE LISTENING

Children learn through imitation, imagination, and inquiry. Our teachers support these themes by 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.

WHANAUNGATANGA RELATIONSHIPS

We believe in strong relationships between children, families/whānau, and the teaching team. These 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.

TE TAIAO OUR ENVIRONMENT

We consider the natural environment/taiao to be a place where a sense of belonging is nurtured; where innate curiosity, wonder, respect, and discovery takes place to enrich creativity and to motivate children's interests and urges.

At Our Kids we believe in fostering the innate tendency of tamariki to seek connections with te taiao and other forms of life. Kaiako (teachers) model their role as kaitiaki (guardians/ caretakers) and support tamariki in finding their own roles in the ecology of our place. Tamariki connect with and learn from nature, explore our ecosystems and how humans influence them. In becoming more knowledgeable and respectful kaitiaki (guardians) of our taiao (environment), we strive to ensure a world that is sustainable for present and future generations.

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.
- Holistic models of well-being and growth (Te Whare Tapa Whā (M. Durie), Te Wheke (R. Pete) which centres our interconnectedness within the whakapapa of the natural world.

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. 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 Matakī Way and Onehunga centre will have separate areas for under 2s and over 2s as they are larger centres, but we will still integrate the mixed aged philosophy where possible.

PRIMARY CAREGIVING

Primary caregiving is essential for supporting 'attuned' caregiving (which means the caregiver is aware of and responsive to the child). Secondary caregivers build a relationship with, and knowledge of, the child; and making sure if a teacher leaves that there is overlap between the familiar teacher and a new one. It is important to ensure a consistency of practice across caregivers, which, while it does not replace the security of a primary caregiver, helps children know what to

expect from each adult in our setting. The safety and security promoted by a predictable relationship with a permanent caregiver ensures that the child is supported to develop relationships with other caregivers and children in the setting. This enables the child to engage in, and learn from, a wider range of interactions.

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. However nappies are provided at our Onehunga centre.
- 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 to 24 months.

Children aged two years to five 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 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 due one week after the date of the invoice, payments can be made by cash, cheque, automatic payments or direct credit. We encourage families to pay by Direct Credit 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 on request.

OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

- 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 Manager 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 Manager.
- 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

Two weeks notice is required for changes in enrolment, in cases of increasing days/hours of child’s enrolments, we will aim to accommodate wherever possible space permitting. In the event we can’t accommodate your increased enrolment, you can choose to be waitlisted for that time/day.



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 incident 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

3 Beazley Place
Glendene, 0602
Auckland
(09) 836 6495
glendene@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

GLENDALE ROAD, GLEN EDEN

23 Glendale Road
Glen Eden, 0602
Auckland
(09) 818 9913
gleneden@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

MATAKI WAY, GLEN EDEN

3 Mataki Way
Glen Eden, 0602
Auckland
(09) 218 6407
matakiway@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz

CHURCH STREET, ONEHUNGA

208A Church Street
Onehunga, 1061
Auckland
(09) 636 1395
onehunga@ourkidsearlylearning.co.nz