



WELCOME GUIDE



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Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul.

– Friedrich Froebel



Welcome/Nau mai

Kia ora, Hello, Talofa, Nǐ hǎo, Mālō 'etau lava...

Kindergarten is a special place where children, teachers and families/whānau come together to build strong communities and lasting friendships.

For many of us, kindergarten is the start of our education and our life of learning; where we develop important life skills such as patience, sharing, respect, curiosity, confidence and tolerance. Kindergarten was our special place that gave us room to run, explore, create and imagine.

Kindergarten, which literally means “the children’s garden” was founded by Fredrick Froebel in 1837. Just as Froebel intended, our kindergartens value nature and gardens as a place where children are seen as tiny plants, nourished and supported through play based learning to grow into beautiful, fruitful trees.

Inspired Kindergartens (formerly Tauranga Region Kindergartens), a not for profit organisation, provides quality early childhood education to over 900 children through its network of 21 kindergartens and home based education services.

Join us and discover a world of learning and fun!



Values



At the heart of Inspired Kindergartens are five core values.

These values are:



Welcoming

No matter who you are or where you are from, we strive to make everyone feel welcome and connected to our services.



Aroha

We work to be open-hearted, generous of spirit, kind and nurturing - and we encourage children to be these things too.



Being the best we can be

We aim to be the best we can be and encourage children whose lives we are privileged to be part of to do that too.



For the good of the children

Everything we do puts tamariki first. As a not for profit organisation, we are concerned only with doing the right thing by the children, whānau and communities. Every decision we make, every hour we spend working with them, is for them.



Mana

We respect and honour the founding treaty of our country; its commitment to bi-culturalism, the land and its people is also our commitment. We are blessed to work in beautiful environments and we honour our natural landscapes with respect and dignity for now and future generations.

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Learning through play

At Inspired Kindergartens we provide a warm environment where children are encouraged to problem solve, observe and explore at their own pace with support from their teachers, parents, wider whānau and their peers.

We believe play is an essential part of learning; play is children's work!

Play is the highest form of research.

– Albert Einstein



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Quality teaching



Inspired Kindergartens employ 100% qualified, registered teachers who are professional, dedicated and passionate about children's learning.

All teachers engage in ongoing professional learning and are supported by senior teachers.

Our professional team are dedicated to positively shaping young minds and making a difference every day.

Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.

Mā te ahurei o te tamaiti e ārahi i ā tātou mahi.



How to enrol



We encourage all families/whānau to visit their preferred kindergarten/s to meet with the teachers and get a real feel for the environment.

We understand you want the very best for your child and that you need to know your child is in a happy, fun, caring and safe environment.

Our teams are truly passionate about what they do, love meeting new families/whānau and showing what we are all about.

We believe in building a relationship not only with your child but with your family/whānau, as together we are all invested in the education and care of your child.

What to do

- Step 1** Select which kindergarten/s you would like for your child.
- Step 2** Call to arrange a visit or pop in during the day.
- Step 3** Confirm which kindergarten you would like for your child and enroll.
- Step 4** Complete an enrolment form. The form contains essential information about your child. You can either complete this on-site or take the form home. A teacher will discuss your needs, talk about when a space is available and answer any queries you have.
- Step 5** The kindergarten will stay in contact with you and arrange a suitable start date.

Please be aware in some instances you may need to wait until there is space at your preferred kindergarten. Children continually graduate to school or sometimes move, therefore vacancies do arise regularly.

By law, all early childhood education centres are required to keep an immunisation register. Please give a copy of your child's immunisation certificate and birth certificate to the kindergarten team. The team will discuss this with you during the enrolment process.

What your child will learn

Children attending Inspired Kindergartens will build strong foundations for ongoing learning. They will develop:

- Ways to learn
- Wonderment and awe
- A connection with nature
- Social skills and the ability to work with and alongside others
- Independence
- Perseverance and persistence
- Early literacy skills, mathematic skills and problem solving skills
- Physical skills and spatial awareness
- An understanding of Māori culture and language.

As your child nears school age, we will assist them in their transition to school and the new challenges this brings. We aim to make this process simple and seamless.

Our learning programmes are based on New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum; Te Whāriki which is “underpinned by a vision for children who are competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.”

– Te Whāriki 2017

Starting kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a big step for your child; it can be a big step for your family/whānau. Your little one is growing up and becoming an independent and confident individual.

Here are a few simple steps to help:

1. Kindergarten visits

Before your child's official start date at kindergarten, it is a good idea to do a few visits to familiarise both yourself and your child with the kindergarten environment. The teachers will welcome you and show you around, explain the routines and what you can expect.

Your child may wish to watch, or they may be keen to join in an activity straight away. Let your child get a sense for the new surroundings and go at their pace as they feel comfortable.

2. Building relationships

If your child is anxious about spending time away from you, it can be helpful to form a relationship with one particular teacher. Then, when it is time for you to leave, the child can be left with the teacher that they are more familiar with. Teachers will also introduce them to the other children so they can start to form some friendships.

3. Talk about kindergarten

Before starting, talk to your child about kindergarten, the activities, the environment and the new friends they will make. This helps children get used to the idea of spending time away from home and away from you.





I just wanted to say a huge thank you for being so kind and welcoming while Henry transitioned into the kindergarten whānau. It has been such a pleasure to spend so much time at the kindy and to see you guys in action and what a wonderful job you do with the children. Every visit has reaffirmed that we've made the right choice in enrolling Henry with you.

– Parent, Te Puna Kindergarten



First few days



Many children love their first day and sometimes the first week as it is so new and exciting. However, it slowly also becomes apparent that they will be left at kindergarten. This separation can be daunting for your child, particularly if they are not used to change. This stage will pass and the teachers will help your child become confident and feel secure at kindergarten.

Here are a few tips that may help:

Start an activity

When you arrive each day help your child settle into an activity.

Saying goodbye

It is important to be honest with your child, saying goodbye and that you are leaving but you will be back later to collect them. There may be a few tears, but often when parents are out of sight children will happily settle into an activity and start their day. We understand this can be upsetting for you too so feel free to phone the kindergarten during the day to find out how your child is. The team will also call you should your child continue to be upset and not able to settle.

Be positive

If you are upset or worried, children can sense this and this can increase their anxiety. Try to encourage your child to look forward to their day and the fun they will have.

Schedule an early pick-up

On the first few days we recommend new families/whānau return about 30 minutes before the end of session as this is when new children can become anxious.

Please be assured the teaching team are committed to ensuring this settling in time for you and your child is as enjoyable and easy as possible!

By following these simple tips, you will be pleasantly surprised at how quickly your child will adapt and look forward to their time at kindergarten.



Children and their families feel a sense of belonging.

*Ko te whakatipiranga tēnei o te mana
ki te whenua, te mana tūrangawaewae,
me te mana toi whenua o te tangata.*



What to bring



Each day your child will need to bring:

- A bag with your child's name clearly printed
- A change of clothes (that you don't mind getting dirty)
- A sun hat in the summer months/sunscreen
- Small lunch box with healthy food/kai (snacks and lunch if staying a full day) and a water bottle
- Nappies or pull-ups (if necessary)
- Other items that are part of your kindergarten's daily routine.

Please make sure to name all of your child's belongings.

Lost property

Please ask the teaching team regarding their lost property system.



Food and snacks

We promote healthy eating at kindergarten and encourage all families/whānau to send their children with nutritious healthy food. Please see examples below:

Main (pick 1)

Sandwiches	Quiche	Savory muffins
Wraps	Fried rice	Kebab
Filled rolls	Stir fry	Quesadilla
Home made pizza	Pasta salad	Sushi
Meat balls or patties	Filo pies	Samosa

Fruit & veggies (pick 2)

Sliced vegetables & dip	Mixed berries	Stewed fruit
Roast vegetables	Fresh fruit	Fruit pouches
Mixed raw vegetables	Fruit salad	Salad

Snacks & treats (pick 1 or 2)

Salami/ham slices	Muffins	Yoghurt
Cheese slices	Roti	DIY snack bar
Raisins	Crackers	Dried fruit
Pretzels	Hummus dip	Yoghurt covered fruit
Popcorn	Tzatziki dip	Fruit smoothie

Don't forget a water bottle.

Remember to name your child's lunch box and drink bottle.

If your child has any food allergies, please notify the kindergarten team.



*Gather the seeds, prepare the seedbed carefully,
and you will be gifted with an abundance of food.*

*Kohikohia ngā kākano, whakaritea te pārekereke,
kia puāwai ngā hua.*



Arrival & departure



We ask that you sign your child in on arrival and out on departure in the attendance register. It is important to do this each day for our record of attendance and for safety purposes.

In the case of other adults collecting your child, they must have your written consent, or in the case of an emergency, a phone call to your kindergarten will suffice.

If you need to collect your child early from session please inform one of the teachers before taking your child.

Please be aware children under 14 years old cannot collect a child.

Custody

All Inspired Kindergartens staff are required by law to ensure that the welfare of children is protected while in the kindergarten. Teachers are also required to observe court orders that are made in respect of the care of children and we will require copies of any applicable court orders.

Please discuss any custody issues with your teaching team. All information is kept confidential.

Learning portfolios

Our kindergartens keep portfolios of your child's learning. The portfolio reflects your child's interests, strengths, discoveries and progress.

The learning portfolio is kept at the kindergarten. You and your child can access this whenever you wish and are welcome to take the portfolio book home to share with your family/whānau. The portfolio is given to your child when they leave kindergarten. The portfolios are a great way to share in your child's learning journey.

The health and wellbeing of the child are protected and nurtured.



Ko tēnei te whakatipuranga o te tamaiti i roto i tōna oranga nui, i runga hoki i tōna mana motuhake, mana atuata.





Costs

Inspired Kindergartens is part of the government scheme, which allows all children over three years of age, to receive 20 hours free early childhood education (ECE) a week. However, we have extended this scheme, offering 30 hours free ECE for children from two years of age.

However, government funding does not cover all kindergarten costs. To assist with expenses that will enhance your child's kindergarten experience, we ask families/whānau to make regular donations. All donations received from families/whānau are retained by each kindergarten and channelled back into children's learning. These donations assist with meeting the daily running costs of each kindergarten.

Requested donations are based on the following scale:

- Part day kindergarten session (up to 4.25 hours) - \$4 per child
- Longer kindergarten session (over 4.25 hours) - \$6 per child

Some kindergartens operate extended sessions and a separate fee is charged for this type of session.

All donations paid to the kindergarten can be claimed on an annual basis to receive a 33% tax credit refund from IRD.

Please note: Families/whānau who do not attest their 20 hours ECE to the kindergarten will also be charged a fee. For more information, please speak to your kindergarten team.



Hours

Each kindergarten typically offers school hours and/or shorter sessions. Availability and times will vary between kindergartens.

Kindergarten terms are similar to school terms, with a two week break in April, July and September and a longer break over December and January.



Holiday programmes

Many kindergartens offer holiday programmes. For more information on this service please talk to your kindergarten.

It is becoming increasingly clear through research on the brain, as well as in other areas of study, that childhood needs play. Play acts as a forward feed mechanism into courageous, creative, rigorous thinking in adulthood.

– Tina Bruce, Professor, Early Childhood Studies

Medical care



Sickness and accidents

If your child is feeling unwell or displaying any of the symptoms below, we ask that they remain away from their kindergarten and return 48 hours after the final symptom clears. In particular, watch for:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- A high temperature
- An unidentified rash
- Conjunctivitis (unless medical treatment has been applied for at least 24 hours)
- Any other symptoms of a contagious illness
- Head lice (after treatment)

To stop sickness from spreading, it is important for you to keep your child at home when they are ill. How long they should be home depends on what sickness they have. If you are unsure about whether your child can attend, please phone your kindergarten first and discuss with your teaching team.

For more information on exclusion and or infectious diseases you can contact your Doctor, visit Ministry of Health's website www.health.govt.nz or call Healthline for some free advice on 0800 611 116.

Medication

All medication requirements must be received in writing from the parent/guardian. Please ensure that medication is given to a staff member for safety. All medication must be labelled clearly with your child's name, method, dosage and when medicine is to be given. Please speak to the teaching team about their medication policy.

Complaints procedure

All of our kindergartens have a standardised complaints policy. You will find this on your kindergarten's noticeboard.

Going to school

We aim to ensure a smooth and successful transition into the school environment for our children and families/whānau. Parents and whānau are assisted with information about local schools. Talk to your kindergarten team about this process.

I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini.



Parent/whānau involvement

You are always welcome at your kindergarten.

We greatly value the contribution families/whānau and the community make to children's learning.

Opportunities are provided to all families/whānau to talk with teachers about their child, share information about their learning and to be involved in decision-making that affects their wellbeing.

Parents also have the opportunity to help in sessions or help out around the kindergarten. Your child will enjoy having you stay and your teachers really appreciate your help.

We encourage you to get involved!

We believe early learning is a partnership with parents and whānau. Together we want to engage young children in authentic learning experiences with the space, freedom and care that builds self-confidence, independence and individuality.

– Peter Monteith, Principal Inspired Kindergartens





Greer came into kindy 2 years ago as a tiny seed. Over the last 2 years she has been fed with enthusiasm and passion. The seed sprouted into a tiny plant which has continued to grow into a beautiful flower. The teachers at Maungatapu Kindergarten have watered her with knowledge, nurtured her with confidence and nourished her to take risks in all areas of her learning.

– Parent, Maungatapu Kindergarten

We look forward to welcoming
your family and whānau to
Inspired Kindergartens





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