

Settling into Nest

A Parent Handbook



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CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

Thank you for choosing to share the care and education of your child with us here at Nest.

Settling your child into a new environment when you may be feeling a little nervous yourself is not an easy thing to do. Whether you are settling your first born or fourth it is a process that takes time as both you and your child start to build new relationships and a sense of belonging in a new environment.

This booklet is full of information we thought might be helpful. We've included examples of what our values look like in action, what you can expect as you and your child begin to settle in, what to bring with you, and tips that may be helpful as you prepare to join the Nest whānau. Feel free to browse and, as always, your child's key kaiako will be happy to answer any questions or queries.

We invite any suggestions that you may have to update and improve this resource for other new parents.

- The Team at Nest

OUR HOURS

Nest will be open from 7.30am to 5.30pm from Monday through to Friday. We will be closed on public holidays, for two teacher only days per year and also the Christmas and New Year break.

Your co-operation in dropping off and collecting your children within our operating hours is appreciated. If at any time you have an emergency and are going to be delayed, please contact the Centre. Our kaiako can then allay your child's concerns and make plans for their own commitments.

A late fee may apply if your child remains at the Centre after closing time.

PARKING

While you are visiting Nest you must park in our carpark. This is a condition of our resource consent which does not permit roadside parking.

CONFIRMING ATTENDANCE

You are required to sign your child in and out of Nest every day on the tablet provided at the front entrance of each classroom. A summary of the times that have been logged from the previous week of attendance will be printed and must be signed to confirm they are correct.

This is a very important part of your routine while dropping off and collecting your child as it is a requirement by the Ministry of Education which can be audited at any time and also a safety requirement in case of emergency evacuation of Nest.

YOUR KEY KAIAKO

WHAT IS A KEY KAIAKO SYSTEM?

For children to reach their full potential they need to feel safe and secure, this happens when they have someone that is familiar who cares for them and all their needs. Every child at Nest will have a key kaiako; this teacher is the person responsible for building a partnership with your family and child, they are an advocate for your family, and especially your child, while they are at Nest.

WHY IS A KEY KAIAKO IMPORTANT?

Right now, you are your child's secure base – the most familiar person to them that they know and love. You can read their cues and know when they are tired or upset and how they like to be comforted, you know when they're ready for sleep and how they like to fall asleep, you know their preferences and dislikes and they know yours.

You might notice when you're visiting a new environment with your child, they stay very close to you, maybe travelling a small distance to explore, and then turning around to check you're still there - they are reassured and feel safe knowing that you are there. Gradually they will explore further, for longer, building up the trust and confidence in their new place.

Your key kaiako's role is to be available to your child as their secure base when you are not there, so they know there is someone who is familiar and consistent who will be available for them to return to the safety of someone familiar, who can care for them and all their needs. A secure base allows children to be truly free to explore, learn and grow without fear or anxiety of the unknown.

As we strive to provide an environment where your child will feel safe at all times we have a secondary kaiako system. If the key kaiako is the only person that a child will go to, then when they are not there the child will struggle. The secondary kaiako is another teacher that gets to know your child and family well, and can be there when the key kaiako is not. The key and secondary kaiako work together during the day to support each other and the other teachers within the room.

It will usually be your key kaiako that will talk to you and work together to make decisions about your child's care and education. Once you have made any decision, they will then share these with the rest of the team to ensure everyone is informed. If your key kaiako is not available, please feel free to share information about your child with any of the kaiako in the room as this information will be passed on to the team.

SETTLING VISITS

One of the most effective ways you can help your child feel comfortable in our environment and with their new kaiako is if you yourself feel comfortable. Visiting Nest prior to your child's 'start date' provides an opportunity for you and your child to begin getting to know your key kaiako and becoming familiar with and comfortable in the Nest environment.

We understand that nobody can ever replace a child's parents and you are an expert on your child, therefore, by knowing you and your family as we develop a trusting and authentic partnership, you can be reassured that your key kaiako has the tools and knowledge to care for your child as close as possible to how you would yourself.

The beginning of the settling process is focused on building the relationship between kaiako, child and whānau. You are your child's secure base and they are taking their cues from you as to whether they are safe here with us. Although it may feel like you are sitting around and not really doing much during your first few visits this time spent building relationships really is important.

During your visits you also have a unique opportunity to see how the kaiako work together, how the busy times of the day flow and how they respond to all the children to ensure everyone is feeling safe and having their needs met. This is also an opportunity for you to have one-on-one time to get to know the kaiako who will be caring for your child.

Your key kaiako will contact you to organise a time and day which suits for your first visit to take place and subsequent visits can be scheduled.

Nest is not only a place for your children but a place for you and your whānau. Please feel free to make yourself at home, you are always welcome to pull up a chair in the kitchen and enjoy a tea or coffee.

WHAT TO BRING

During your settling visits and once your child has officially started with us you will need to bring a bag with your child's things in it, just as you would if you were heading out for the day.

You will need to pack your child a lunchbox with their meals and snacks for the time that they are in our care. If your child has a bottle, you will need to bring their bottle(s) with you each day prefilled with water (so we can heat and add the formula) or with breast milk. Their bottles will go home with you to be cleaned and brought back fresh the next day.

If your child wears a nappy, they will have an allocated cubby in our bathroom that holds the cloth nappies which we provide. If you are choosing not to use our cloth nappies you are welcome to bring disposable nappies and keep them in their cubby. Every child will also be allocated a 'pigeon hole', which is where you are welcome to leave anything that needs to be kept out of reach from the children, and a locker to keep their bag in during the time they are in our care.

We provide bedding for each child which is washed weekly and used only by your child while they are here. It can be helpful to bring something familiar from home that can provide some familiarity and help your child settle to sleep.

A sunhat and several changes of clothes in their bag is great as we provide an environment which encourages every child to explore the mud, paint, clay, dirt, sand and water. It is very important that everything you bring to Nest is named or initialled. We do our best to ensure that your child's clothing is returned to their bag once removed, however, lost property boxes seem to have a knack for accumulating odd socks and singlets.

We do provide a sunscreen which we apply through the day, however, you are welcome to provide your own sunscreen for us to apply if you would prefer.

SPECIAL THINGS FROM HOME

It can be comforting for children to have something with them during the day that reminds them of home and help them feel comforted when they are away from you. When children have the familiarity of an item that smells or reminds them of the safety and security of home they can often settle into their new environment more easily. It is quite common for children to be more attached to these security items when they first start and gradually, as they become more secure within the environment, the security item will become less important.

We welcome your child to bring items such as a cuddly toy, a blanket or a dummy if they would usually use these items for comfort at home. It is a good idea to have more than one of these so that if one becomes dirty or misplaced you have another one handy.

These security items or a 'cuddly' can also give children a sense of ownership and belonging as it is something in their environment that is theirs – something that they don't need to share with anyone else if they don't choose to. This can be quite important in an environment which they are sharing with many other children.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SAYING GOODBYE

When you first say goodbye to your child they may be upset. This is a completely normal response as you are their secure base and person they trust the most. Some might think that it would be easier to sneak away when your child isn't looking, while this may be easier for the parent, it is not for the child.

When your child realises that you have disappeared they often lose trust in the people in their new environment – for all they know we could have been the ones to make you disappear. As a result, the next morning as you arrive at Nest they may be on high alert and anxious that you might disappear at any time, which in-turn undermines the safe, trusting environment we want to create for them. Similarly, if you say goodbye and tell your child that you are leaving but then don't go, it can be confusing and often results in the child becoming more upset.

We ask that all parents say goodbye to their child whenever they are leaving. Although this may initially be a little harder for you as a parent, it does help their settling journey in the long run as they can pre-empt you are going to say goodbye, leave and then come back.

When saying goodbye to your child it is helpful if you explain that you need to go but you will always be back later. During your child's settling visits we can practice saying goodbye and you may leave the room to enjoy a tea or coffee in the kitchen or perhaps a walk around the block before returning to collect them. By practicing saying goodbye your child can begin to develop trust that you will always come back.



WHO INSPIRED OUR PHILOSOPHY?

A philosophy is a set of beliefs or way of doing things. Every Centre in New Zealand is required to have a philosophy where they share with you what they believe about how children learn and how that is reflected in their day to day practices. It allows you, as a parent, to make an informed decision about the kind of care and education you want for your child.

Although you may be familiar with our philosophy, you might not be aware that it is based on the work of a woman called Emmi Pikler.

Emmi Pikler was a paediatrician in Hungary that worked with many families in their homes. After the Second World War the government asked her to open an orphanage and this was the beginning of the Pikler Institute. The institute is still open today and continues to share Pikler's approach.

She also taught us the importance of respect, which is one of our four values which underpins our philosophy. You will notice that the value of respect is crucial to our practice and everything that we do is based around creating an environment that reflects this for the children, parents, whānau and our team members. She taught us the importance of care moments, unhurried responsive connections and allowing children to develop in a progression, just as nature intended.

We have woven together our strongest beliefs and values to create a philosophy which best represents and underpins all that we do. Courage, respect, peace and service anchor us in our practice. Alongside these values runs the understanding that unhurried responsive connections and play are vital for children's development.

The following pages 'unpack' our core values and show how they are interwoven and brought to life at Nest.



A person's a person no matter how small – Dr Seuss

Respectful relationships are at the heart of Nest. Our team take time to really get to know every child and have the skills to adjust the pace and environment to their individual needs. We believe that there is no need to rush. When children are allowed the time and space to explore they will accomplish every milestone in their own way and own time. With their emotional tanks full to the brim every child can feel safe to do the most important work there is for a child to do – play.

CREATING RITUALS

There is no doubt that within the context of early childhood environments there is much to be done. The need for routine is obvious, however, with a little more thought, effort, love, care and creativity, we can stop going into auto pilot and turn these routines into rituals.

Children benefit from the familiarity and security that routines provide, but nobody benefits if these routines become hurried or mundane. Rituals require our full attention, gentle care, and confidence that our intentions will bring a rich and rewarding experience for all involved.

You will see us valuing each child as an individual person as we invite them to participate, rather than demanding or forcing. Imagine you're enjoying your lunch and a colleague suddenly pulls out a tissue and unexpectedly wipes your nose or they lean down and sniff your behind to check you don't need to visit the bathroom – an awkward invasion of your personal space would be an understatement. Isn't it interesting that what we might consider invasive or disrespectful to do to another adult is often common place when referring to a child?

Asking for permission goes a long way in establishing a respectful and trusting relationship regardless of age. Please feel free to ask questions or for our kaiako to demonstrate how we ask for our children's

permission as part of our day to day practice.

OPEN ENDED AND UNHURRIED ENVIRONMENT

Our environment is our greatest offer of respect as it celebrates the natural progression of children's emotional and physical development.

Our kaiako prepare the environment by carefully considering the resources that are available. Rather than trying to predict what every single child might like to explore that day and pre-prepare it – they provide the resources, time and support as they allow the child to make the decision. We know that when a child initiates the play the learning is ten-fold.

Society can leave its pressure to do things fast or as soon as possible at our door. We are advocates for free movement and play as we know that in their own way and time children will achieve their milestones.

You also won't spot artificial grass, plastic water troughs or traditional playground structures at Nest; rather grass, trees, plants, paths, sand, logs, stumps, places for movement and places for retreat and rest. This is purely because we know children have an innate desire to connect with nature. We respect their natural urges and prepare our beautiful environment accordingly.

COURAGE

*Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.
It is also what it takes to sit down and listen – Winston Churchill*

To be courageous we have to be willing to confront our fears. At Nest, we want children to grow and emerge with a strong sense of self so they can be sure of who they are and have the courage not to dilute the real them. This isn't possible without decision making, and we know the only way to learn to make good decisions is through practice. Our passionate team are part of this learning community and lead by example; questioning and reflecting to improve our service.

CONFIDENCE

Confidence and courage go hand-in-hand as you cannot raise a confident child without the value of courage. Confidence is a mind-set that you develop as a result of being courageous, taking a risk and being successful.

Think about it; you're never confident the first time you do something completely new. But if you're courageous and try that new activity or experience you could be successful and tadah as a result you've raised your confidence. You can have the best intentions and ideas in the world but without the courage to put them into action you'll never develop the confident 'I-can-do this' attitude and sense of accomplishment. If you were to think of something you're incredibly proud of achieving or doing, we'll guarantee that while you were in the process of achieving it you had to be courageous because it didn't come easy.

The trusting and respectful relationships that our kaiako form with each child is central to them feeling safe to be courageous and in turn become confident contributors to our community.

RISK ASSESSING

We have prepared an environment that children can freely explore without interference from a teacher. This means that when children are playing, kaiako are there to observe and support as needed, but mostly children just need space and time to learn and explore.

Whether indoors or out, when children are taking risks a kaiako will position themselves close by and they will talk to the child if they need reassurance. They will only offer assistance if a child is really stuck or asking for help; in which case the kaiako will provide enough help to get the child 'unstuck' without taking their sense of achievement.

When children are given the opportunity to work through balancing, climbing and falling off small heights they are less likely to make the same mistakes when the heights become bigger as they get older. This is why you'll see kaiako talking to the children about the situations they're in, but allowing the child the opportunity to solve the problem themselves. The kaiako will always step in and help if the child is in danger or are asking for help, providing enough assistance so the child can feel accomplished and solve the problem next time. We provide children with the opportunity to develop a great understanding of what they can and cannot do, alongside the skills to assess risks and extend their abilities if they choose to accept the challenge.

Everything we do is infused with the energy in which we do it. If we're frantic, life will be frantic. If we are peaceful, life will be peaceful – Marianne Williamson

Nest has been thoughtfully furnished to create a cosy and homely learning space. Unhurried and heart-centred, we strive to create a feeling of peacefulness in every interaction, right down to our loose parts resources which encourage your child's imagination to shine. Our team are well supported in their roles; allowing them the flexibility and space to create irresistible invitations to participate in meaningful play.

OUR HEART-CENTRED KAIAKO

The peaceful tone of Nest can be firstly attributed to our unhurried and heart-centred team of kaiako. By being intentional and fully present with the children we are able to keep the care in our care moments. Whether we are changing nappies or clothing, giving bottles or meals, wiping noses or helping a child to fall asleep, these moments of care are not about the end result of being fed or changed, they are about connection and trust. These are the times of day that each child is guaranteed their teachers full attention, filling their emotional cup so they can explore again.

You might notice that during care moments your key kaiako is only responding to your child. We ask that if you arrive and a kaiako is engaging in a care moment with another child that you respect this time they are sharing and either wait until they are finished before speaking with them or chat with another kaiako.

MEALTIME RITUALS

Our mealtime rituals cherish and preserve the art of conversation and togetherness, allowing our children to develop awareness about their personal needs and access to self-regulation. Our children are encouraged to participate in setting the tables with flowers, coasters and placemats for a mealtime. Meal times at the dining table involve a small group of children and a responsive kaiako who begins each meal with a deep breath before saying a karakia or blessing to help relax our body and focus on the present moment. We provide real crockery, glasses and cutlery for the children at meal times. We believe if you trust children with real things then they will learn to respect them. Also, real objects are more robust and children have more control than trying to manoeuvre plastic equipment.

CHILD INITIATED PLAY

Our environment might look quite different from other Centres or even what you were expecting a Centre to look like. We have prepared an environment that children can freely explore without interference from an adult; we have an environment rich in experiences rather than activities. Our kaiako closely observe the learning that each child is initiating, providing support in the form of knowledge, resource, time and space while still allowing the child ownership of what they choose to explore.

Often when you arrive you will see kaiako sitting with the children. Remember how we mentioned earlier that our kaiako become a secure base who the children trust – imagine if that secure base was moving all about the place; inside, outside, into the bathroom. That child would have their eyes peeled to that kaiako and although not necessarily visibly upset, they may not feel safe and secure to explore.

*Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua -
Care for the land, care for the people, go forward*

Service is the act of giving something of ourselves for the benefit of others. Our role as kaitiaki - or guardians - of our land is not underestimated. You will see our impact on the environment is always considered in regards to our practices and resources with many of our resources pre-loved and upcycled. Our lush garden reflects the appreciation we have for Papatūānuku or Mother Earth, with beautiful spaces to engage children's senses, inviting wonderment and exploration.

OUR GARDEN

One of the ways we show our appreciation for Mother Earth is through our garden. Nature provides a wonderful setting for children to develop their sense of risk, challenge themselves, explore, discover and wonder. Our garden is an 'all weather' area and a wet day does not equal an indoors day. Of course we use our judgement, paying attention to matters of safety, ensuring appropriate clothing, and observing to know when to move back indoors. There is a difference between the weather being too cold and the child being too cold; cold weather is ok for a little while and the beauty of care moments can be enjoyed as the dressing and redressing often takes twice as much time as the actual outdoor time.

CLOTH NAPPIES

Every child at Nest who wears a nappy while attending our care has the option of using a cloth nappy provided by us. If you're not familiar with or currently using cloth nappies at home you will no doubt have many questions which we hope we have answered below but, if not, please feel free to chat with your key kaiako as they're happy to help. It is important to note that there is no expectation that your child will use cloth nappies while attending, this is simply a service that we offer in our efforts to reduce unnecessary waste. You are welcome to provide disposable nappies for your child to use while in our care.

Every enrolled child will have a set of reusable nappies provided and your child's set is only used on your child. Our facilities are designed to accommodate a robust 'Ministry of Health approved' cleaning procedure which involves washing any solids into our sluice sink before the nappies are put into a separate washing machine specifically for nappies. From here they are washed on a hot wash with detergent and an antifungal and antibacterial solution which eliminates any germs and keeps the nappies fresh and clean.

OPEN-ENDED AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Our resources are both very open ended and natural. Natural materials provide much more variance in textures, weights and noises as opposed to plastic. We have chosen resources that children can do anything with; this means that there are endless possibilities for play with each resource and how each child chooses to play with it. We are creating a positive 'yes' environment as there is no 'right' way of using a toy; this allows children to be successful as the equipment has no set outcome. This also means that the resources are developmentally appropriate as children will only do what they are ready to do.

PARENT AND WHĀNAU COMMUNICATION

It is really important that we are able to share with you what is happening for your child while they are here at Nest and also for you to share what is happening for your child and family at home.

Our primary means of communication will always be face to face. Your key kaiako will try to catch up with you each day that your child attends, both as you drop them off and collect them. If for whatever reason your key kaiako is not available you are more than welcome to share your update or news with another kaiako and they will be sure to pass this information onto your key kaiako and the rest of our team.

There is a diary next to the sign in tablet where you can see which kaiako are away on any day and who will be relieving or visiting us. This book sometimes has reminders for parents and snapshot photos of children's learning from the day.

You are always more than welcome to phone if you realise after dropping your child off that you forgot to pass a message on or if there is something you want to organise a time to discuss with your key kaiako.

LEARNING JOURNALS

Your child will have their own individual learning journal which is a record of your child's learning at Nest. We hope this journal can become a cherished keepsake for you and your child as you enjoy reading and re-visiting the moments that have been captured and celebrate the learning through play that has taken place.

This personalised journal provides a record of the journey of exploration and discovery, special interests and strengths which our kaiako have captured. We welcome you to share your own contributions - whether that be photos you have taken, a story that you don't want to forget, or souvenirs from your adventures outside of Nest - every contribution helps this journal to become a more accurate reflection of your child's learning journey.

STORYPARK

To support the learning journals and sharing of your child's day we have an online software programme called Storypark. Your child will have their own private page which you and any family or friends you invite can access. It's like a blog, where we will upload any stories, photos and messages about your child, and you can also add to it through stories or photos from life at home. Notices and pānui (newsletters) are emailed and also posted to Storypark.

REVIEWING OUR PRACTICE

Our parent library is located in our foyer and is where you'll find documents such as this handbook, our policies and procedures (which explain our processes for everything that we do here at Nest), our emergency evacuation plan and our education review report. We periodically evaluate the effectiveness of our learning and teaching practices, management, environments and education we are providing. We will always invite and welcome your feedback and suggestions on our areas of review which will be shared through Storypark and our pānui.

EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT

As we are a brand new Centre we have not had our first visit from the Education Review Office yet, however, when we do the report will be made public on their website www.ero.govt.nz and we will be sure to let you know when this is available.

FEES SCHEDULE

Please refer to the Fees Schedule that is attached to your child's enrolment form. You can also download one from the 'Enrolment and Fees' page on our website www.nestonmatai.co.nz

Invoices are issued fortnightly and all payments should be made by bank transfer. For the smooth running of the Centre, it is very important that your fees are kept up to date. All overdue fees will be sent to a debt collection agency and the parents will be responsible for all fees charged by this agency.

20 HOURS ECE

Nest offers the 20 hours subsidy which is provided by the Ministry of Education to all 3 and 4 year old children. To be eligible you must complete an attestation form which confirms your attendance and that you are not attending another early childhood centre at the same time as you have applied for funding at Nest. If you change your enrolment hours you must complete another form.

You may apply for this subsidy from more than one Centre, but you must indicate this on your form.

CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

Work and Income provides a subsidy for parents whose children attend Nest which is subject to an income qualification. Contact Work and Income for further information and forms. Full payment of fees is the caregiver's responsibility and will be required until a subsidy has been approved.



EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

We have a robust Emergency Management Plan which you are welcome to view in the parent library which details our actions in the event of every foreseeable emergency.

In case of an emergency situation, every effort will be made to contact you to collect your child. Nest has safety measures such as monitored heat and smoke detectors, and emergency exit doors are clearly marked. Regular fire drills are necessary for regulation purposes. If you are present at a fire drill, you are required by law to participate.

Emergency evacuation plans are displayed in our rooms and our team are familiar with evacuation procedures and policies. Parents and visitors to Nest will be asked to make themselves familiar with the evacuation plan and where hoses and first aid equipment is to be found. Every effort will be made to make evacuation procedures enjoyable rather than stressful events for the children. Regular emergency procedures give the children an opportunity to become familiar with the routine and planned evacuation.



KEEPING EVERYONE WELL

We ask that any child who is unwell be kept at home so illness does not spread through our Centre. The Centre Leader may at his/her discretion refuse to accept any child deemed unwell enough to attend Nest, as we do not have the specialist staff or the space for sick children. Children with severe coughs or colds, vomiting, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, rashes or raised temperatures cannot be brought into the Centre. If symptoms develop during the day you will be contacted to arrange for the immediate collection of your child.

Please make yourself familiar with our illness and injury policy which is in your enrolment pack, as it has a detailed list of reasons why your child may be excluded from Nest due to illness. It also explains the procedures that we will follow if your child becomes unwell throughout their day with us or has an injury.

KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE

Nest has a documented risk management system which ensures that equipment, premises and facilities are checked twice daily using the Daily Hazard Checklist on every day of operation for hazards to children, parents, kaiako and visitors. All identified hazards are assessed based on severity and likelihood; and correspondingly eliminated, isolated or minimised.

If you notice a hazard while visiting Nest please let a kaiako or the Centre Leader know as soon as possible so we can take action to eliminate, isolate or minimise the identified hazard.

MEDICATION

Please advise kaiako if your child is taking any medication. All medicines must be kept out of reach of children and recorded in the medicine book, which is kept beside the sign in tablet. The medication book must be filled in each day that you would like us to administer any medication. Only medication that has a label stating your child's name and expiry date will be administered.

If your child is taking antibiotics they are required to stay at home for 24 hours after their first dose. This ensures that the medication has time to work and allows for important rest time for the child.

IMMUNISATION

We are required to keep an up-to-date list of all children at Nest and their immunisation status. Please remember to bring your Well Child Book and a copy of your immunisation certificate with you when you enrol your child. 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 a disease your child will be asked to stay away from Nest for the duration of the outbreak.

Concerns or Complaints

Please feel free to discuss any queries or concerns with your kaiako or Centre Leader. However, remember that while dropping your child off or collecting them may not always be an appropriate time to have extended discussions and you may need to schedule an appointment with them at another time.

A policy for dealing with complaints is displayed in the Foyer. If you have any concerns or complaints relating to the operation of Nest please refer the matter to: Liane Davidson, 1 Matai Street, Edgecumbe. Phone 07 304 6161.



