

Infants and Toddlers in Kindergartens

Responsible to:	CEO, Senior Teachers
Applies to:	All Kindergarten Staff
Rationale:	<p>This policy is to clearly define our approach and practices in relation to infant and toddlers as part of our whānau based approach. A Whānau Based Approach ensures that ākonga are encouraged to learn together without artificial age barriers (e.g. the under twos space/over twos space, or sessions for younger tamariki and sessions for older tamariki) in an environment that deeply embraces kaupapa Māori concepts such as ako, manaakitanga, and whanaungatanga. It is the creation of spaces that invite ākonga to explore and develop with kaiako in ways that encapsulate the concepts of mana, and the principles contained in Te Whāriki. A whānau-based approach is socioculturally framed rather than developmentally framed.</p>
Purpose:	<p>To ensure that teaching and learning within a whānau based setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is consistent with current pedagogical theory and practice,• highlights relationships that are characterised by sensitive responsiveness,• respects all children as competent and confident learners and communicators,• is flexible to meet the individual and fluctuating needs of infants, toddlers and ākonga, and;• shows consistency of approach across WMK.
Definitions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infants - from birth to around 18 months;• Toddlers - aged from around 18 months to around 3 years;• Akonga – 3 years to 5 years, and;• Whānau based settings – includes small and sometimes larger groups of infants, toddlers and young ākonga from around ages, 6 months to 5 years. This allows for younger and older ākonga to spend time together at different times of the day yet always ensures high quality ratios are met and relationships are sustained.
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres, 2008.• Te Whāriki, 2017.• Te Manawa: Criteria for Weaving and Implementing the Curriculum.

- Kei Tua o Te Pae; Assessment for learning: Early Childhood Exemplars.
- Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens Association Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017
- He Māpuna te Tamaiti: Supporting Social and Emotional Competence in Early Learning

Policy

Whānau based Kindergartens and kaiako will:

- implement practices that highlight the particular importance of relationships and secure attachments when working with infants, toddlers and young ākonga;
- promote opportunities for whanaungatanga and tuakana-teina learning experiences;
- ensure group sizes and teacher child ratios will ensure the above is enabled;
- sensitively observe in order to be, responsive to and respectful of the needs of infants, toddlers and young ākonga by demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness through caregiving rituals such and kai times, changing and sleep;
- have positive attitudes towards and highly value aspects of the curriculum when engaged in care routines such as kai times, nappy changing and sleep;
- work in partnership with whānau, encouraging involvement with and sharing knowledge and understanding about their ākonga at kindergarten;
- have access to and apply current pedagogy knowledge in their practice and interactions (intentional teaching);
- recognise the importance of learning to self regulate emotions and behaviour for infants and toddlers, and support their agency and choices;
- use their pedagogical skills and knowledge to ensure the physical environment and resources are appropriate for all ākonga in whānau based settings;
- support ākonga in their active and curious exploration of the world around them.

Procedure

Teaching team teams will develop their own procedures for:

- Settling and induction;
- Daily rhythms of care rituals as part of the care and education of infants, toddlers and young ākonga;
- Te Manawa - procedures will contain direct references to the curriculum implementation for a whānau based approach learning environment;
- Nappy changing and toileting, sleep and rest, food and drink, social and emotional competency;
- Opportunities for whānau to be engaged in all aspects of care and learning, and;
- Planning for whānau based learning environment.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Te Manawa
- Social and Emotional Competency criteria.
- Enrolment and Admission Policy
- Food and Drink Policy
- Changing, Toileting and Bathing Policy
- Sleep or Rest Policy