



Parent/Caregiver Handbook

small WORLD 

Welcome to Small World

Kia ora and welcome to Small World. We are very excited that you have chosen our centre as the first step in your child's educational journey and look forward to getting to know you, your family, and your whānau.

Small World opened in 1999 and quickly earned a reputation as an innovative early childhood centre with management and teaching teams committed to providing quality early childhood care and education. At the time, our facilities, resources, group sizes, ratios and levels of staff qualifications set new benchmarks for service provision in Auckland, and today we continue to lead the field in these important areas. For most families however, it is our passion for teaching and learning that makes the choice to enrol here such an easy one. Our teachers are dynamic and experienced professionals, who simply love what they do.

This handbook is the first acknowledgement of our commitment to work closely with you in support of your child's growth and development. It contains important information about Small World that will help ensure your early experiences with us are positive and rewarding. Please do not hesitate to approach any member of the teaching or management teams should you have any additional questions or concerns. Our aim is to support you, your child, and your family in every way that we can.

Atawhaitia te rito
Kia puawai te taimaiti
Ako I te taimaiti
Kia tu tangata

Cherish and nurture the tender shoot
So that the child will bloom
Learn with the child
So you both stand tall



Our Services

Small World is an inclusive environment and welcomes all children and families unconditionally.

We are open from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday and accept enrolments for children aged six months to five years on a full day and/or sessional basis – though of course children may be dropped off and picked up at any time. At Small World the minimum enrolment is two days per week, a policy that we believe supports children to build meaningful relationships with teachers and one another.



As part of our core educational programmes, all Small World children enjoy the opportunity to participate in specialist motor development and dance & drama sessions led by our expert itinerant teachers. In their last year, each child also has the opportunity to be part of *The Enquiry Room*, a learning space that supports children's emerging skills and confidence as they approach the challenges of school.

Additionally, Small World offers holiday programmes for children aged five to ten years and Saturday night sleepovers for children aged two to ten years. Holiday programmes operate during term breaks and the weeks immediately before each new school year, while Saturday night sleepovers occur once a month throughout the year. Please ask at reception if you would like to find out more about these services or make a booking.

Our Commitment to Excellence

Centre Personnel

Small World personnel are selected for their knowledge, experience, professionalism and love of teaching. They are diverse and interesting people whose backgrounds are reflective of the increasingly multicultural nature of Auckland. Small World teachers either hold professional teaching qualifications or are being supported to obtain them. If eligible, teachers are also registered or provisionally registered with the New Zealand Teachers Council. A full list of teachers' qualifications and their registration status is posted in the foyer for your information.

Small World also employs three permanent release/relief teachers to ensure continuity of care when regular teachers are on leave.

Environments

Small World's learning spaces are purpose designed and built, well maintained, safe, secure, and well in excess of mandatory space requirements.

Group Sizes and Ratios

Small World offers group sizes and ratios that are a substantial improvement on mandatory requirements.

Internal and External Review

All aspects of service provision at Small World are reviewed regularly by the management and teaching teams. Small World also participates in formal reviews by the Education Review Office every three years. A copy of our latest review is available in the foyer for your information.

Centre Organisation

Small World is organised into two centres. Centre One caters for children aged six months to three years and Centre Two caters for children aged three years and over. Children are grouped developmentally and progress from room to room. All the rooms are named after New Zealand native birds – Tara, Tui, Morepork, Pukeko, Kiwi and Takahe. Group sizes, ratios and environments reflect the children's stage of development. There is a designated team leader in each room, though teams operate collaboratively and team members share decision-making and most responsibilities. In each centre there is a designated supervisor who has overall responsibility for day-to-day service delivery. The management team is made up of the centre supervisors, a Manager of Teaching, and a Manager of Administration. Additionally, Small World employs a receptionist and a chef.

Statement of Teaching and Learning

At Small World every child is treated with respect and dignity. This is achieved through consistent, but flexible routines, respectful caregiving, and environments that support children to learn at their own pace and level.

Communication is valued as the basis of responsive and reciprocal relationships with both children and families. Parents are respected as children's first teachers and these bonds are viewed as the most special and important to children. We acknowledge, support, and respect each individual family.

At Small World we provide dynamic and challenging learning environments where children feel safe and where needs are met and responded to in ways that foster trusting relationships with peers and adults. Our planned programmes are based on Te Whaariki (the Ministry of Education's national early childhood curriculum) and the belief that children learn best through play – the natural activity of early childhood. Learning and development is fostered through children's strengths and interests and by supporting and scaffolding children's experiences so that optimal learning can take place.

As teachers we are committed to our own learning and to centre-wide professional development to ensure that Small World teaching practices are always based on current learning theories and methods.

Te Whaariki

Te Whaariki is the national New Zealand early childhood curriculum document. Unlike curricula in the school sector, Te Whaariki is not strictly mandatory as attendance at early childhood centres is by choice. Most early childhood centres in New Zealand however use Te Whaariki as a framework for guiding their philosophy and practice.

Te Whaariki is founded on the following aspirations for children – *to grow up as 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 Whaariki uses the term ‘curriculum’ broadly to refer to all the *activities, experiences and events* that happen for children when they are at an early childhood centre. It argues that early childhood curriculum must –

- Empower children to learn and grow
- Reflect the holistic way that children learn
- Recognise the importance of children’s families and communities
- Recognise that children learn best through responsive relationships

At Small World these are key elements to our philosophy and practice.



Te Whaariki delineates five ‘strands’ of learning that early childhood teachers should focus on –

- **Well-being – Manu Atua**
Ensuring that the health and well-being of children is protected and nurtured
- **Belonging – Manu Whenua**
Ensuring that children and their families feel a sense of belonging
- **Contribution – Mana Tangata**
Ensuring that opportunities for learning are equitable and each child’s contribution is valued
- **Communication – Mana Reo**
Ensuring that the languages and symbols of children’s own and other cultures are promoted and protected
- **Exploration – Mana Aoturoa**
Ensuring that the children learn through active exploration of the environment

At Small World these strands and the specific goals that accompany them are an integral focus of our programmes, though you may see them expressed differently in wall displays and planning formats.

Te Whaariki also provides us with guidelines about the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are important to foster in early childhood and the special learning characteristics of infants, toddlers and young children. These ideas also underpin how Small World is organised and many of our teaching practices.

A copy of Te Whaariki is always kept in the reception foyer for your enjoyment.

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Teaching Practices and Programmes

At Small World our teaching teams work hard to ensure programmes are exciting and promote optimal learning. We have interwoven elements of a variety of teaching approaches with the guidelines offered by Te Whaariki to provide programmes that are innovative and compatible with Ministry of Education expectations.

In Centre One, practices are particularly inspired by the thinking of Emmi Pikler, a paediatrician who established orphanages for children in Hungary after World War II. Emmi was a passionate advocate for responsive, reciprocal teaching practices that are respectful of children's autonomy, competence, and the pace, style and rhythm of their learning. At Small World this is most evident in the ways that teachers talk to and handle children, provide explanations and forewarnings about events and actions that will affect them, and ensure that the routines and pace of the day are unhurried, relaxed and child driven.

In Centre Two, practices and programmes are inspired by approaches in Reggio Emilia, a small town in northern Italy renowned for its innovative early childhood centres. Reggio pedagogy recognises that all children are capable and competent learners who need space and opportunity to explore, experiment, and take risks. At Small World this is most evident in the ways that teachers follow children's interests, support them to 'do' for themselves, challenge thinking, and work hard to create aesthetic, inspiring and magical learning spaces that encourage children to express themselves in a variety of ways. In Centre Two routines have been minimised to avoid disruptions to children's play and children are able and encouraged to move freely throughout the centre for large parts of the day.

Small World programmes are driven by children's emerging skills and interests and innate desire to learn about their world. They are focused on building independence, self-confidence, social skills and an enthusiasm for learning. We do support emerging literacy and numeracy understandings and skills but recognise that formal teaching in these areas properly occurs at the next stage in a child's educational journey. More information about our programmes can be found throughout the centre, but please do not hesitate to ask teachers or a member of the management team if you have any questions.



Biculturalism and Multiculturalism

Early childhood is a time when children begin to develop understandings about the attitudes and values of our society and the skills and confidence they will need to contribute actively in our communities.

At Small World we recognise that New Zealand is a country with two cultural heritages, and we endeavour to create learning spaces that are respectful of the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi, and to integrate te reo Maori (Maori language) and tikanga Maori (Maori culture) naturally into children's daily experiences.

At Small World we also recognise the increasing cultural diversity of our communities and value the rich learning opportunities that arise from working with and alongside children and families of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Working in Partnership

Small World staff and families have always enjoyed open, collaborative relationships. Our aim is to create a 'learning community' where parents and families feel a genuine sense of belonging and are involved, interested and proud of what happens here. Our doors are always 'open', and we encourage you to spend time enjoying Small World with your child whenever you can.

Communication

Please feel free to chat with teachers and management when you drop off and pick up your child. We can also make a time to meet with you should discussions require more time or a private space. Please check your information pigeonhole each day, read the noticeboards in your child's room, and check the whiteboard in the foyer. In the Tara and Tui rooms children are also provided with a 'communication book' to encourage the sharing of information between home and centre.

Enrolment Forms

Please complete the enrolment form and return it to us as soon as possible. The information you provide is extremely important and will remain confidential at all times.

What to Bring

Everything is provided at Small World except for nappies and bottles. It is important however that your child brings spare, named clothes each day in their bag. Children are also welcome to bring a special comfort item if they have one.

Toys From Home

At Small World we ask that children leave their own toys at home to avoid any heartache should they become lost or damaged.



Settling Into Small World

At Small World we appreciate the significance of your decision to leave your child in someone else's care, and the challenges that can be involved when attendance begins. Our teachers are very experienced in supporting children (and families) to settle into centre life, and ask that you assist us by visiting with your child for at least two pre-visits before enrolment commences. Our teachers are also happy to visit you and your child at home as a way of nurturing a special bond to assist with the transition ahead.

For many children, Small World will be the first experience of significant separation from parents and families and most will be anxious about the change, at least initially. Please feel free to call us at any time to find out about your child's day or to discuss your concerns with teachers. We look forward to working closely with you to make this important step as smooth as possible.

You can assist by –

- Initially leaving your child for shorter periods
- Being prepared to spend extra time at the centre on the first few days when dropping off and picking up
- Being confident and positive about teachers and the environment
- Ensuring that your child has their special security item
- Involving your child in an activity and then having a teacher take your place
- Always saying goodbye and telling your child when you will return
- Not prolonging the farewell
- Always letting teachers know that you are leaving so that they can provide extra support if it is needed

Transitions

At Small World children will also make a series of transitions between classrooms. These moves encourage the development of mastery skills for the more significant changes that lie ahead. Room transitions are organised well in advance and preceded by reciprocal visits that enable children to develop bonds with their new teachers and familiarity with the routines and rhythm of their new classroom. Additional home visits can be organised at this time if required.

Portfolios, Progress Discussions, and Progress Reports

Each child at Small World has a 'portfolio' that documents their learning and progress. These include stories about learning and photos that anecdotally record special moments. Portfolios are always accessible and children and families are actively encouraged to contribute ideas and comments, revisit stories, and to write their own stories to share. Progress meetings are held at least once during your child's time in each room, usually in the weeks before or after transition. A written record of the progress discussion is placed in the portfolio.



The Parent Liaison Group

The Small World Parent Liaison Group is made up of six parents and/or caregivers from both Centre One and Centre Two, and has an advice and guidance role. The 'PLG' meets regularly with the management team and supports the children, parents, staff and management at Small World in a number of important ways. Key amongst these are receiving feedback from parents and families and sharing it with the management team, participating in the selection of staff, organising social events, and participating in decision making around governance and strategic planning. There are posters throughout Small World identifying PLG members and providing their contact details.

Involvement and Participation

Enjoying Small World with your child helps them feel that their work is valued and that Small World is important. Parents and caregivers are always welcome to spend time at the centre working alongside children or sharing a special skill, but there are many ways that you can be involved in centre life. For ideas and inspiration please refer to the booklet *Enjoying Small World With Your Child*, included in your enrolment pack.

Concerns and Complaints

At Small World we recognise that constructive feedback from parents and families helps to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible service at all times. If you have a concern or complaint (no matter how small) please address it with the teacher or Centre Supervisor concerned, or a member of the management team, as soon as possible. All complaints are treated confidentially and are managed in a positive and respectful way.

Newsletters

Every month you will receive a management newsletter and a newsletter from your child's room or centre. These newsletters will keep you informed of everything that is happening at Small World, and in particular what is happening in your child's learning spaces.

Celebrations

At Small World we encourage families and children to share their special celebrations with us. Please discuss arrangements with your teachers.

Parent Libraries

Small World has a number of books and resources on topics of interest to parents and families that you are welcome to borrow. The Centre One library is located outside the Morepork room and the Centre Two library is located outside the Kiwi room.



Social Events

Small World has a number of social events for children and families each year. These are advertised on noticeboards and in newsletters and are an important part of centre life. We look forward to your participation.

Health

Supporting Children to Become Socially Competent

At Small World we view social difficulties as learning opportunities and work hard alongside children and families to support the development of social skills conducive to successful interpersonal interactions and relationships. Our guidance strategies are firm, positive, and encouraging and recognise that social skills are learnt through practice.

Immunisation

Small World is required to maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children attending the centre. Please supply a copy of your child's immunisation record at enrolment and keep us informed when any new immunisations occur.



Sleep and Rest Times

At Small World sleep and rest routines vary from room to room. In the Tara room (children aged six to fourteen months) children follow their own sleep routines, while children in the Tui and Morepork rooms (aged fourteen months to three years) have a rest period immediately after lunch. Sleep and rest time is optional for children in Centre Two. Please feel free to discuss your child's routines and needs with your classroom teachers.

Sun Safety

At Small World we aim to promote a positive attitude toward skin protection and take effective measures to ensure children's safety in the sun. Sunscreen is applied before children venture outdoors and a suitable hat is required outside during the summer months. Please provide a named hat for your child each time they attend, and if they are allergic to common brands of sunscreen please provide an alternative sunscreen that we can use.

Meals

Meals at Small World are important social occasions and an integral part of centre life. They also provide learning opportunities where children can develop independence and self help skills, sound nutrition and hygiene habits, and understandings about the etiquette involved in sharing food as a group. All meals at Small World are prepared on a daily basis by our chef, and the menu is carefully planned in advance and rotated regularly. Meals include morning and afternoon tea, lunch, and a late snack for those staying after 5 pm. If your child has special dietary needs, please discuss these with your classroom teachers or our chef.

Clothing and Footwear

At Small World children are actively encouraged to experiment and explore. They will participate in a wide range of activities and engage with a wide range of materials. Please ensure that your child is dressed comfortably in practical clothes that will support their play and learning. Footwear needs to be comfortable, well fitted and suitable for outdoor play and climbing. Please no clogs or jandals.

It is also helpful if all clothes are named and if there is always a spare change of clothing in your child's bag. There are lost property boxes in both centres should your child's belongings go astray. Wet, soiled or dirty clothes will be put in a plastic bag and placed in your child's bag or locker to be taken home.

Medication

If your child requires medication while at Small World, you must complete a Medication Administration Form each day that medication is required. This form will ask you for the following information – the name of the medication, the dosage, the time the medication is to be administered, and the time of the last dose. There is also a space for a parent or caregiver signature authorising the administration.

Two teachers will sign the form to indicate that the medication has been administered.

Medication must remain in its original named container, and if prescribed, be clearly labelled with the doctor's original instructions. All medications must be given directly to a teacher on arrival, and collected at the end of each day. No medications or creams of any kind may be left in children's bags.

Illness and Communicable Diseases

Small World is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy environment for everyone. We appreciate that keeping a child at home is often difficult for busy families, but your child must remain at home if they are unwell. If your child becomes ill at Small World or shows signs of a contagious or infectious illness, we will contact you immediately and ask you to collect them. Children who have had communicable illnesses must stay at home until they are no longer infectious. Please notify us immediately if your child has, or has been exposed to, a communicable illness.

Further details about our wellbeing policies are contained in the policy folder at reception. Please be aware that we reserve the right to deny entry to any child who is clearly not well or who is unable to cope with the demands of a busy Small World day.

Special Needs

All children are unique and will need support to make the most of the opportunities Small World offers. Please do not hesitate to discuss your child's needs with any member of the Small World teaching or management teams.

Hygiene

At Small World children are encouraged to wash and dry their hands before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy activities.

Safety

Security System, Gates and Doors

All families are issued with a security access code for the front door at enrolment. Please ensure that you do not disclose this code to unauthorised persons. Please also ensure that you secure all gates and room doors firmly on arrival and departure.

Evacuation

Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the centre and once a month we conduct evacuation drills. These drills aim to ensure that in the event of a real emergency, children can be evacuated quickly and easily. If you are on site during a drill you are required to participate in this procedure.

Accidents and Injuries

Accidents and injuries occur even in the safest environment. Any accidents that occur at the centre are recorded in an Incident Report. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign the Incident Report, indicating that you have been made aware of the incident. If necessary you will be contacted to collect your child. If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, we will take the necessary required steps. Any medical expenses incurred will be your responsibility.

Dropping Off and Collecting Children

Please ensure that you accompany your child into the classroom on arrival, acknowledge your arrival and departure with teachers, and sign the 'sign in and out' register. Please also check your pigeonhole, room noticeboards and the foyer whiteboard for messages and important information. Small World will only allow persons authorised by you on the enrolment form to collect your child.



Custody Arrangements

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide us with a copy for our records. Please also notify us immediately if these circumstances change.

Excursions

Older Small World children regularly go on excursions out of the centre to deepen interests and learning. Families are informed in advance of any excursions and are required to give written permission for their child to participate.

Cellphones

To protect the integrity of Small World as a children's environment, we ask that you refrain from using your cellphone on site.



Fees and Holidays

Fee Structure and Payment

A current fees schedule is available at reception. Fees are payable (strictly) two weeks in advance unless paying by direct debit, when payment may be made in the week the child attends. Overdue accounts risk the cancellation of your child's place at Small World.

Booked Days

At Small World fees are payable for each day that your child is enrolled that the centre is physically open. This means that no fees are payable on 'teacher only' days, public holidays, and the days when the centre closes over the Christmas holiday period.

Change of Days

If you would like to change your child's enrolled days please complete the 'change of days request' form available from reception. Your request will be given top priority when any vacancies occur.

Make Up Days and Casual Days

Small World does not offer make up days when children are sick or absent. Bookings for casual days in addition to your child's regular enrolment can be made at reception, space permitting. Casual days are charged at the normal daily rate.

Attendance Records

Please ensure that you sign your child in and out each time they attend the centre, and verify your child's attendance on the attendance register when it is presented for signing at reception. These are Ministry of Education requirements.

Late Fee

A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged to families who have not collected their child from the centre by 5.30 pm or by 3 pm if the enrolment is a sessional one.

Cancelling your Enrolment

If you wish to reduce or cancel your enrolment we require two weeks' notice in writing. All fees are due prior to departure and any outstanding balance may incur collection costs.

Government Assistance

Included in this enrolment pack are brochures outlining the different types of government assistance available to families who may meet the specified criteria. Please don't hesitate to ask a member of the management team if you have any further queries.



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