



OMANU Preschool

Transitioning - Creating A Sense of Belonging Policy

Policy Title: Building a Sense of Belonging

Policy Classification: Curriculum

Issue Date: February 2020 Review Date: January 2021 Next review date: January 2023

Reference:

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centre 2008

Belonging – Goal 3 “Children and their whānau experience an environment where connecting links with the family and wider world are affirmed and extended, they know that have a place, they feel comfortable with the routines, customs and regular events”.

Rationale:

At Omanu Preschool we understand that the process of starting Early Childhood Education and care or moving from one centre to another can be an unsettling time for children, whanau, and teachers. It is our aspiration to ensure that the process of settling in and getting to know each other is as positive, flexible, and respectful for all involved.

During the beginning of forging a relationship with a child and family, and the process of getting to know each child and family is undertaken as skilfully, respectfully, and sensitively as is possible. Through having visits before a child’s start date aids in the ‘getting to know you’ process and builds a foundation of trust and security with their key teacher and preschool environment before they begin with us.

We acknowledge the role that parents play as first teachers of their children and therefore while we have procedures outlined, we know that the parents know their child best and that we will need to be flexible and open to what is best for the child/ren and whānau.

The transitioning process is one not to be rushed and will usually start 2-3 weeks before a child’s start date.

Before they visit

Before a child starts his/her first visit, initial contact is made by the Centre Manager or Head teacher to organise an appropriate day and time.

A Transitioning – Creating A Sense of Belonging Policy will be given to the family as well as an information booklet.

A key teacher will be assigned to the child, however we understand that in some relationships children are drawn to particular teachers so this process is flexible in case the child decides to choose their own key teacher.

Name tags for their bags, a place for their nappies, and a sleeping spot is organised before their first day.

First Visit

On the child's first visit, they will attend with at least one primary caregiver (or grandparent if they have a close relationship). The purpose of this meeting is an introduction into the centre for the child and family. This visit is usually 1-1 ½ hours long.

The child's key teacher will be available and working alongside the child and caregiver for the duration of the visit. When a parent is actively involved, working and playing alongside the child, and engaging in conversation with the key teacher, the child will know that they are not alone thus creating a sense of security in their new environment.

During this first visit the key teacher will show the parent and child around, letting them know where to sign in and out, where the bathrooms are, and the sleeping space for example. Teachers will answer any questions or concerns that the parent may have about their child while they are attending the preschool.

During this visit we will also see what other teacher a child is drawn to and look to assign a secondary key teacher. This is to ensure there is another teacher to be there for your child if the other key teacher is away.

During this time we will also discuss a child's routines and rituals that they have at home, so that we can mirror this pattern as best we can while at preschool, such as having a bottle before bed, having a special toy that they like to sleep with etc – this information can also be documented on the Special Information form included in information pack. The key teacher will arrange the next visits.

Visit 2:

The purpose of this visit is to reinforce that the preschool is a fun and safe place, and continue to build the relationships between the child, parent and key teacher. This visit is usually for a longer time, approximately 2-3 hours, in which the parent may take a less active role if the child is feeling comfortable to independently play, build connections with other children, and/or venture independently in the environment.

The parent may be offered a cup of tea or coffee and the other teachers will be introduced or make themselves known to the parent.

Parents are also encouraged to change their child's nappy or support them in the bathroom during this time.

During this visit, the parent and child are invited to stay for mat time and/or lunch. If the child has not brought a lunch box in with them, they can be offered some fruit, crackers and/or a sandwich.

Visit 3.

Usually by the third visit the child and family have developed familiarity with the centre and key teacher. During this visit both the parent and child visit together, spending some time with the child's key teacher. Once the child is comfortable and confident his/her parent will let the child know they will be leaving for a short period of time and will be back soon. The parent is welcome to stay in the office for this time or leave and go offsite, but the parent will be back within 30-60 minutes.

Parents are encouraged to spend some time with their child at the centre upon their return. If the child sleeps, this may be a valuable time when the parent gets the child ready for a sleep and nurtures them to sleep, with the child's key teacher being in the sleep space also.

Visit 4:

By the fourth visit, the child will continue to develop their sense of belonging, an awareness of their environment developing his/her confidence with each visit. With consultation with the child's key teacher, it will be decided upon the length of this transition visit.

During this visit, in consultation with the parents, the key teacher and Centre Manager will reconfirm the start date for the child to start at the preschool. This will largely depend on how the relationship building process is going and how confident the parents and the child feel in the environment.

On their first day

We encourage a lot of positive conversation about preschool, their teachers, and friends at home and on the way to preschool so the child feels comfortable and positive about their first day. Children should come prepared, the child's bag will have a lunchbox (**No Nuts or Nut butter please**), drink bottle, nappies (if required), three changes of clothes for messy play and comfort item (if required).

Developing a routine with your child of looking for their name tag, hanging their bag up, helping them to put their lunchbox on the trolley, and then settling them into an activity that they love, such as playdough, trains, books etc will help to build a sense of predictably and knowing what will happen next. The child's key teacher will be there to support you and your child with saying goodbye.

Parents are welcome to contact us at any time to check on their child's progress.

First Week

Welcome pages will be created by the child's key teacher. These are the foundation of a child/ren's portfolio which will always be accessible to children and also uploaded to Storypark.

First Month

A settling story will be written that outlines how the child/ren have settled in at Omanu Preschool (relationships formed, interests and strengths etc). The key teacher will check in

with the family/whānau daily as much as is possible to discuss their child's settling in process, and weekly to discuss their learning, play, and to set aspirations.

Date approved: February 2020

Review date: January 2021

Reviewed _____

Centre Manager signed _____

