

Greytown Early Years 5.0 Policy: Curriculum and Learning environment

5.5 Settling – in and Transitioning

Date effective: September 2023

Review Date: September 2025

Rationale:

The emotional wellbeing of any child must be upheld in order for them to thrive and grow. It is vital that consistency and continuity of care between home, centre and school be maintained in positive and peaceful ways to ensure comfort, security and confidence. Nurturing a sense of belonging, comfort and security through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things is at the heart of everything we do.

Purpose:

To provide a safe and secure environment where

- children are loved and valued as individuals
- children feel safe and comfortable through positive learning experiences, regular events and familiar rituals
- the aspirations and values of our diverse families are welcomed, acknowledged and upheld.

References:

- Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008
- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008 (as amended Sep 2022) **C2, C6, C7, C11, C12; GMA1 GMA2 GMA3**
- Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum
 - *Wellbeing/Mana Atua: children experience an environment where their emotional wellbeing is nurtured.*
 - *Belonging/Mana Whenua: Children and their whānau experience an environment where they feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events.*
- 5.3 Enrolment Policy

SETTLING IN AND TRANSITIONING PROCEDURES:

Management will work with families to establish a plan with dates for settling new children. We encourage at least four settling visits scheduled at least two to three weeks prior to the child starting. These visits are made up of two visits with a whānau member (1 hour each), followed by two drop-off visits (1 hour and 2 hours respectively). The timing of these visits is flexible and are based on the individual children's needs.

There is a whānau approach to settling. Management will appoint where at two key teachers who will work closely with the child and whānau. These key teachers will be the child's primary teachers in the initial stages; however this is not an exclusive relationship. Children and their families are actively supported and encouraged to develop relationships with other teachers too. In the initial settling in period the key teachers will engage in most of the nurturing tasks with a child (such as nappy changing, sleeps and bottles / kai) but over time other teachers will assist with these tasks as children extend their relationships with all teachers.

At the first visit, the child and their family will be introduced to their key teacher. Whānau are encouraged to get to know their child's key teacher and share special information about their child, their individual cues, rhythms and familiar care rituals. Whānau will be asked to complete an "All About Me" sheet detailing their child's family, cultural identity, interests and parent aspirations.

This partnership between teacher and whānau involves responsive and reciprocal communication and will play an essential role in relationship building as well as provide opportunity to share information about culture, learning, and care between home and centre. This relationship based care system ensures a consistent person is available to each child and their family to support learning and development throughout their time at Greytown Early Years.

Parents are asked to bring plenty of spare named clothing and nappies in their bag, as well as anything needed for a sleep in keeping it consistent with home – e.g. sleepsack, dummy, or any transitional objects or comfort toys to help settle and comfort a child when they are at Early Years for a length of time.

Once the child has started their enrolled days, we recommend that parents spend a short period of time with their child each morning for the first few days. We encourage parents to say goodbye to their children when they go (children may take longer to settle into the centre if they are surprised to find their parent/caregiver has disappeared.) We also recommend that parents/caregivers' day be flexible for the first week or so after the child's start date, for cases when the key teacher suggests it is best for the child's emotional wellbeing to have a shorter day than planned.

During the day, the key teacher will remain close to the new child to learn about their interests and needs and ensure they develop a sense of belonging and well-being at Greytown Early Years. To reassure parents in the first few days in particular, the key teacher will keep in touch to let parents know how things are going. This will usually be by text or a notification on Storypark.

The child's key teacher will be responsible for their care routines, settling in, learning stories and developmental updates. At around 6 weeks the key teacher will have a learning

conversation to reflect on settling, check in with parents if there is anything they aren't aware of and start the process of setting some learning goals for the child.

At Early Years we have a group of teachers who are key teachers for the younger children and a group who are key teachers for the older children. This means a child's key teacher may change as they get older and by this stage children are settled and have expanded their connections to all teachers. We will communicate if a child's key teacher changes so whānau know who to speak to regarding their child's learning and development.

Communication between home and centre

Communication to whānau is through:

- Face to face at drop off and pick up
- Regular learning conversations every 6 months to discuss your child's learning and progress.
- Emailed monthly bulletins and other important information.
- Storypark – Community Posts
- Whiteboard on the wall at the entry to the centre - updated daily with events, important dates and messages.
- Centre cell phone for calls and text messages.
- Board reports including a curriculum update.

Four-Year-Old Transitioning:

When a child turns four (or sometimes earlier, depending on numbers), they transition to the Kowhai room for lunch and take part in the special rituals around our kai in here. These rituals all encourage and support independence and self-help skills.

At this time children begin attending our weekly Explorers Programme at O'Connor's Bush. This programme builds children's confidence, resilience and their view of themselves as a capable learner whilst growing their connection to Papatūānuku.

Transitioning to School:

Transitioning to school is an important time in a child's life. To ensure that children are ready to continue their learning journey, we will support them to have a strong learner identity; seeing themselves as confident, enthusiastic and competent learners in a school environment. We see the transition to school as a process that starts well before a child turns five. Teachers are happy to discuss and plan with each family how this transition will be supported for their child. A teacher will be available to attend one school visit alongside the child.

We support transitions by:

- Ensuring there are positive and successful transition processes between Greytown Early Years and School for children and their families/Whānau.
- Providing parents with information about our local schools and their transition processes.
- Providing families with extra support or strategies where needed
- building positive reciprocal working relationships with our local schools so children are familiar with some of the school routines, buildings and teachers
- Providing relevant information about local schools for children and families, e.g. displaying photos of local schools, teachers, and children already at school who have attended Early Years.