



*Creative Cubs*  
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

# Parent Handbook





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# Welcome to Creative Cubs Early Learning Centre

Learning through creativity and wonder.

## Our story

It all began as a young child, coming from a big family, knowing from a young age that I wanted to work with children and be a teacher. My mother used to call me the 'Piped Piper' as she has memories of me as a natural leader engaging with children. My interest turned into passion, becoming a qualified early childhood teacher in 2010. During my years of teaching, I have had opportunities to explore my passion in both teaching and leadership roles, dedicated to empowering children to develop a love for life long learning.

My passion for music came hand in hand with my teaching. Due to a large part of my life as a muso (such as performing, vocal and instrumental training) I developed a love and connection for music. I incorporated music and movement into my teaching experiences to discover the amazing benefits children reap. It was clear that music was a natural platform for every child to explore and learn in a holistic way; engaging all areas of development, physically, emotionally, socially and mentally. With a commitment to spreading the gift of music to others, I focused on providing a service where early childhood centres could engage in inclusive music and movement programmes where every child had the opportunity to benefit from what music has to offer. Every day I was able to witness the joy and learning children gained from their music experiences.

Weaving both my passion for teaching and music together, my dream has come to life through creating Creative Cubs Early Learning Centre alongside my brother. I feel privileged and honoured to offer a place where children and families can be apart of the Creative Cubs whānau.

As owners of Creative Cubs Early Learning Centre, we are committed to providing high quality care and education. Our commitment to quality is reinforced by passionate and caring owners, qualified and dedicated teachers, low ratios and a unique and enriched curriculum that empowers children to discover a love for life long learning.

## Our Vision

To us family is everything and we welcome you and your child into the Creative Cubs whānau.

Our vision is to provide an environment where children, families and teachers come together as a community of learners to achieve high quality care and education.

## Our Philosophy

At Creative Cubs children and families are at the heart of what we do.

We believe in providing environments where children feel safe and secure, enabling them to feel happy, capable and confident.

We value child-led, creative and practical experiences to enhance children's development across all areas. Children who are actively engaged and involved in their own learning see themselves as competent and capable young people.

We value the arts approach where through imagination, music, dance, drama and visual arts, creativity will flourish amongst children.

Our calm and nurturing environments offer enriched learning spaces that promote challenge, collaboration, creative synergy, problem solving and active thinking skills.

Te Whariki underpins our curriculum, as well as incorporating the RIE philosophy, Reggio Emilia and Carl Orff approach.

We value partnerships with parents, whānau and the community as a collaborative approach.

Our teachers are also life long learners who work alongside and nurture children, to explore and discover their unique interests and strengths.

We value respectful and inclusive practise where children are seen as unique individuals and learn and grow together.

# Our Learning Spaces

Our nursery and preschool spaces offer nurturing, calm and inspiring environments. Each child has a key teacher who is responsible for learning development and routines.

## Nursery (6 months to 2 years)

Our nursery is a calm and unhurried environment, underpinned by the RIE and Reggio Emilia philosophy where children are respected as natural explorers and self learners.

We embrace a home like environment, where we reflect children's routines and rituals from home to ensure consistency and predictability.

We value primary care-giving where every child can build a strong relationship with their carer. Through consistent and meaningful interactions, children feel safe and secure, happy and capable.

## Preschool (2 years to 6 years)

Our preschool is a mixed aged group where we value respect, kindness and inclusiveness. The older children become role models for the younger children, whilst the younger children can engage in more complex experiences to positively challenge their learning and development.

Children are supported to explore and discover their own learning through interactive, creative and engaging ways. We learn through creativity and wonder where one day we might be travelling around the world on a magic carpet, the next going on a nature adventure to explore

Through active pretending and imagination, we can think outside of the box and challenge our thinking skills. Through, music and movement drama, storytelling and visual arts we can bring learning to life so that every child can feel excited about learning! To sing, act, move and play is part of our every day programme!

## Our Programme

At Creative Cubs we place importance in play and focus on a creative arts approach. We know that children who are given freedom of choice and are actively engaged and involved become curious, ask questions, take risks, problem solve and see themselves as competent and capable young people.

Teachers work alongside to guide, support and challenge tamariki to discover their own learning, to make choices and follow their interests.

We use Storypark as a communication tool to share daily happenings, learning goals and stories of your child's learning and development. We update photos, videos and share notices and special events. Storypark is a great way for families to be more involved in our programme planning and in capturing the wonder of learning moments.

## Te Whariki, early childhood curriculum

Creative Cubs curriculum is inspired by best teaching practises around the world, such as Magda Gerber's RIE, the competencies in Tataiako, Carl Orff and Te Whariki, the Early childhood Curriculum document. We use Te Whariki to guide our planning based on the principles of empowerment, holistic development, family and community and relationships.

## Arts approach

Within our programme, we place importance on the arts approach where children will have regular opportunities to express themselves through music, dance and drama. This supports the holistic development of all children and provides opportunities for numerous learning pathways.

The Carl Orff approach is a child-centered approach towards music education, combining music, movement, drama and speech into learning experiences similar to child's world of play. "Since the beginning of time, children have not liked to study. They would much rather play, and if you have their interests at heart, you will let them learn while they play; they will find that what they have mastered is child's play. Tell me, I forget, show me, I remember, involve me, I understand" Carl Orff.

Research consistently states the significant benefits children gain from on-going and regular opportunities in the creative arts. "The arts are an important building block in the early years as it supports the development of a child in a number of ways, furthering their cognitive, social, problem solving and personal competencies, as well as their physical, verbal and emotional

development” Jenson, K. (2018). Early childhood: Learning through visual art. He Kupu, 5 (3), 75-82.

## Our Teachers

Our teachers are qualified or training to become qualified in early childhood education. Our teachers are passionate and caring professionals who offer respectful guidance for tamariki through responsive interactions to ensure quality teaching and learning. Our teachers are life long learners and all participate in professional development and reflective practise as a vital part of our pedagogy at Creative Cubs.

We value our teachers as our biggest asset and provide a caring, supportive and positive environment where we can grow and learn together.

## Parent Involvement

We have an open door policy, where parents and family are welcome into the centre at any time. Parent participation sends a strong positive message to your child that you support them and their learning journey.

We value strong partnerships between parents, caregivers and your child. Communication is a vital part to the success of this partnership. We welcome parent involvement, whether it may be materials for our art supplies (such as egg cartons, cardboard tubes, boxes etc), a skill/interest to share with the children or just to come in for a coffee and play.

Open and meaningful communication is an essential part of our programme. Parents are kept informed of centre life and events through Storypark, newsletters, notices posted in the centre, and through our Facebook page. We also hold Parent/Whānau evenings and special celebration events regularly throughout the year and welcome you and your whānau to attend.

Parents are asked to contribute to policy development, internal evaluations and decisions concerning their child's care and education.

Expenditure of Ministry of Education funding, operational documents and information concerning your child is available to parents and whānau on request to the centre manager/head teacher.



Our most recent education review office review is displayed on the wall in the reception.

## Operating Hours

We are open Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 5.30pm, 50 weeks of the year.

## Fees

Please refer to the Fees Schedule that is attached. Invoices are issued weekly. For the smooth running of the centre, it is very important that your fees are kept at least one week in advance. Accounts are payable weekly in advance. Fees are to be paid by automatic payment, direct debit or cash. Your account should always have a positive balance. We have the right to withdraw your child from our service should your account be in arrears. We will use a debt collection agency to recover any unpaid accounts. You are required to pay for any legal costs involved in the recovery of your account.

Creative Cubs offers free 20 hours subsidy which is provided by the Ministry of Education to all 3-6 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 here.

Many families are entitled to a childcare subsidy through WINZ; these are paid directly to our centre. The subsidy is based on your annual income and you will need to apply to WINZ to receive your entitlement.

## Attendance

We have a minimum enrolment requirement of 2 days. This is because we understand the importance of routine and consistency with children. This is particularly important for older children as they prepare for the transition to school.

Having children attend 2-3 days ensures they form relationships with teaching staff and other children and become familiar with our daily routines.

Creative Cubs does not accept children on a trial basis.

Once a starting date has been agreed, one week's notice is required to postpone this.

Please ensure that you contact the kindergarten if your child will be absent. When children are absent from an enrolled session the full fees are still charged.

## Pick-up's & Drop-off's

Each day your child attends please remember to sign in and out on the tablet with your provided pin number.

For your child's safety, if anyone other than yourself is picking up your child, we must be notified by a phone call or at the start of a session, or the child will not be allowed to leave until we have made the necessary calls.

Please refer to the fee schedule for information on changes and notice periods/late fees.

## What to Bring

- Named spare clothing
- Suitable shoes
- Named bottle
- Special comforters (if applicable)

Items can be brought in each day or be left at the centre (including spare clothing). We can let you know when supplies are running low.

Water, fruit and crackers (morning and afternoon tea) sunhats, sunblock, bedding, cow's milk and wipes are provided.

## Meals

Children must bring a named lunch box with food. We encourage parents to provide nutritionally balanced meals appropriate for the age of their child. Water will be available to the children at all times. For infants, please bring enough formula or breast milk for your baby's daily requirements.

## Toys from Home

Cuddly soft toys, pillows or blankets can be brought along to the centre. These will be kept in their cubby so that children can find them whenever they need a cuddle. Security blankets and transitional objects (soft toys etc.) can have huge benefits for a child's emotional well-being. They help children to feel comfortable and secure in a new space and support self-regulation. We encourage children to think about their emotions and decide when they do and don't need their transitional objects throughout the day. Please ensure other toys are not brought to the centre.

## Transition to School

Children will have the opportunity to engage and be supported in learning experiences that promote,

Language and literacy, mathematics, science, digital technologies, self-management and self-regulation, teā o māori, physical education, arts, working theories.

We recognise that skills such as independence, asking for help, socialising in a positive way and confidence to contribute to discussions are important for school readiness. Please approach our team for more information on school readiness for your child. We look forward to working together in supporting your child towards the next step in their learning journey.

## Sleep/Rest Times

All children have the opportunity to sleep or rest during the day according to their individual routines. Each child is allocated a cot or toddler bed, and linen. Linen is laundered weekly and is stored separately in a labelled bag, reserved just for your child. It is not compulsory for your child to sleep or rest, so please discuss your child's needs and your preferences with us.

## Toileting

We provide wipes at Creative Cubs and will follow your child's daily rhythm and your home routines to support with toileting. We check nappies regularly throughout the day and change when and as necessary. Your child will be changed by their primary/key caregiver or if they are unavailable it will be another teacher who they have a special relationship with. Our care-giving routines are treasured as important learning experiences for children, and all care-giving routines are carried out in an unhurried and respectful way.

## Health & Wellbeing

All of our Teachers have current First-Aid Certificates and we have a First-Aid Box.

### Medication

If your child is on any medication please inform one of our staff members who will record the details. You and a staff member must both sign this record or we will be unable to dispense any medication.

All medication must have the child's name written on it. It will be stored in a designated area in the kitchen.

Ongoing medication is dealt with on an individual basis, please talk to the Head Teacher at point of enrolment to go through procedures for storage and administration.

### Specialist Agencies

The school has access to various medical specialist agencies including hearing and eye tests which are carried out several times a year.

Parents should contact the Head Teacher if they feel their child requires special assistance. Appropriate assessments can then be organised in full consultation with parents, teachers and representatives from the specialist agencies.

## Excursions & Trips

An important part of our programme at Creative Cubs is to provide regular excursions within our community. There is a section on the enrolment form for you to sign so that we have permission to take your child on excursions to our local spots. We will also inform you if your child has been out for a walk. Some places within walking distance to our centre include: Sheldon Park and Belfast School. We will provide a permission form and risk assessment for bigger planned excursions which will be arranged by teachers based on children's interests or inquiries. There will sometimes be an additional fee for excursions.

# Emergency Procedures

## Fire/Earthquake Evacuation

Fire, Earthquake and emergency drills are carried out regularly.

## Emergency Closure

Situations may arise that lead to the emergency closure of Creative Cubs. Civil defence emergencies or extreme weather conditions which result in loss of power or water, may mean that we are required to close.

In the event of such emergency closure, children should be collected at parents' earliest convenience. Full fees are payable for up to two days if Creative Cubs is subject to emergency closure.

## Change of Address & Telephone Number

It is your responsibility to make sure we have updated information on the child's file. This information is vital in the case of an emergency.

## Concerns & Complaints

We have a well-structured complaints procedure that enables us to handle any complaints you may have with our service. If you have a complaint, please take the time to read our policy (policy booklet available at the centre, displayed in the foyer, and on our website) so you understand the process and feel confident with the result.

## Contact Details

Address: 796 Main North Road, Belfast

Telephone: (03) 323 7500

Email: [belfast@creativecubs.co.nz](mailto:belfast@creativecubs.co.nz)





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