

Elim Early Learning Centre

WE ARE ALL LEARNERS TOGETHER - COMPETENT AND CAPABLE.

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Kia Ora,

I have been here 6 months now and I have to say that I am really enjoying working with the staff, children and our parents. Our children are exceptionally friendly and are never shy of greeting me when I come into the centre in the mornings. Unfortunately my office is upstairs but my door is open to anyone who would like to pop up for any reason even just to say "hello". My usual hours of work are 9-2.30 pm Monday-Wednesday although this will vary from time to time and I have been known to often stay much longer on the day.



I am now quite familiar with most of the centre's processes and practices, including invoicing. The response to the more detailed invoices has been very good so I will continue to do this. It has been a busy time over the last few months and we have achieved a lot as you will see as you read on-so make yourself a cup of coffee, put your feet up and read on!

"MUCK IN" DAY

On behalf of our staff, children and parents I want to thank the amazing group of parents and friends of the centre who "mucked" in together on Saturday May 3rd to give our centre a "make over" and isn't the result just stunning! The make-over included: painting of the inside of the centre which has given a fresh and spacious feel to the play rooms, a new couch cover and matching cushions, cupboards and gardens tidied, tables and chairs painted, new shelving made and painted, a mud kitchen and shoe rack outside, the Under Two fence painted, fabulous new display boards put up on the walls to display the children's work and to enable the team to give parents/whanau up to date information on what was happening at the centre for their children on the day.

I would also like to thank all those who donated paint, toys, and contributed money as well.

We so appreciate what you have all done to help our centre to move ahead with our mission to provide affordable, flexible, quality childcare and education for our children.

We want to give a special big "thank you" to Michelle and Suzanne who were the inspiration behind this special day.

They had a lot of amazing creative ideas that are now evident in the centre and gave a huge amount of their time to the preparation and organisation of this event, including doing a lot of the work themselves. You are both brilliant and so appreciated!

The children have really enjoyed getting in and trying out all the new equipment as reflected in the photos.





STRATEGIC PLAN

After much work and collaboration we now have a 5 year Strategic plan (2014-2019) which has been adopted by the Early Learning Centre Board. It has been displayed on the Parent Information board in draft form during the consultation stage to give all parents/whanāu an opportunity to read it and have input before it was finalised. Parents were also able to contribute to the Strategic plan via the Client survey which was distributed to parents in February. Our thanks to our parents who completed and returned their client survey form-your feedback has also contributed to our long term planning. Over time there will be opportunity to have input into our policy reviews so don't forget to check out the Parent Information board. Often our parents do not have time to view our policies when they are in the centre so I have decided to send our draft policies out by emails along with the invoices each month. Please read the draft policy as it is important to us that you have the opportunity to have input into all aspects of life in our centre and feel free to send me back a comment or your ideas for any amendments that you would like to see and these will be considered before finalising the policy. If I do not hear back then I will assume that you agree with the draft policy wording.

CUSTOMER SURVEY



I would like to thank our parents who took the time to fill out and return their Survey form. We had 13 surveys returned and the centre achieved a 91 % satisfaction rate reflecting the good work that we do. The feedback that we received provided good insight into what our parents valued about our service and also highlighted some areas for improvement. Our team have discussed the feedback at a recent team meeting and you will see some changes made over the following months. A copy of the collated results will be put on the Parent Notice board for your perusal. Please feel free to discuss the Survey feedback below with Sharon or Merrilyn who will answer any questions that you may have.

Education Programme

There were one or two comments where parents were wondering how their children's educational needs are being met when their children are attending our centre.

Our teachers plan an education programme that is based on Te Whariki (the Ministry of Education guidelines for Early Childhood centres). This is the same as other ECE services including kindergartens. Our teachers assess and evaluate the interests and the needs of the children and plan the daily programme accordingly. The learning stories that are displayed on the walls and in the children's profile books are a reflection of the children's ongoing learning while at the centre. Our children are able to develop at their own individual pace but also alongside their peers in a fun environment where their interests are noticed and extended by the teachers'. The children enjoy sharing the information that our parents/whanau and the children themselves put into their Profile books as often the children's photos taken outside the centre can spark renewed interest that can be developed further in the centre environment leading to more in-depth learning taking place. The Profile book is a shared place where parents can also record their child's exciting experiences outside of the centre. What a great gift for them when they reach 21 years of age!





Language and Literature

Some parents asked for their children to be taught to read and to write their names.

All children in their early years (0-5 yrs) are exposed to a language rich environment during their stay at our centre. They learn a range of pre reading skills in a variety of ways during their daily activities. They learn to recognise their names from their lunch boxes and belongings, their pockets (for notices), their art work (teachers encourage the older children to write their own names on their paintings and collage if they are showing interest), name tags as they go out on excursions and in many more ways. Teachers and the children read stories which gives them opportunities to problem solve, predict what happens next in the story, and also teaches them that 'symbols' have meaning that are not only informative, but can be fun and exciting (rhymes, poetry, nonsensical stories etc).

Children also involve themselves in dramatic/creative play and they can often be seen enacting out stories and activities that have captured their imaginations e.g. the nursery rhymes, something they have seen in a book, real life, or on TV.



Early art work gives children opportunity to develop their pre-writing skills. In the next newsletter I will provide some good information in relation to that.

There are also many activities that encourage our children to develop their numeracy and pre maths skills e.g. counting at mat times (we focus on a number and a letter per fortnight). Teachers plan activities that encourage children to develop numeracy skills in their play e.g. baking, games that involve counting, reading books, signs and many more.

It is important to note that schools do not require children to write prior to going to school as they like to teach them to write themselves when the child first starts so that children all learn the same style of writing. However that being said our teachers do encourage our 4 year olds to practise their developing writing skills on their art work or to practice their letter writing skills as part of their creative expression. Teachers work hard to ensure that our tamariki do develop the necessary skills in readiness for school. Some of these vital skills are the ability to problem solve, participate in peaceful play, the ability to socialise well with others, to speak confidently and clearly and be able to ask others when they have needs to be met, to recognise and take responsibility for their own belongings and many more which we can cover in a future newsletter.

Feedback about a Child's day

Some parents indicated that they would like more feedback about what their child has been doing during their day.

Sometimes this is a challenge when the teacher who was mainly working with your child has gone home for the day. However we have recently had a new black board put up in the centre to write up the activities that have taken place throughout the day for your information. We also have 3 other new display boards, one of which has the month's planned programme and some of the children's learning stories that showcase the children's current interests and learning experiences.



The other board displays the children's art work, so please take the time to check them out.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS



Hu Hu grubs visit Preschool! Thank you, Merrilyn, for bringing these interesting tiny creatures for the children to investigate. They used screw drivers and all manner of implements to help them dig out the grubs from the rotting wood and they really enjoyed holding them in their hands as they examined them more closely and chatted to each other about them. The children were fascinated and had many questions throughout the day and so Merrilyn helped them look up information on the internet to satisfy their curiosity. They learned about where they lived, what they ate, and other interesting facts. Check out the display that has been put up on the wall in the centre.



On the 3 February we went for a walk to the nature play park that has been created and located by Latimer Square. When the children saw the park they excitedly ran to explore it. The concrete tunnel was a favourite with all the children crawling through it or climbing over it. Shelby, Bailey and Chidu were really interested in the pictures of the Canterbury creatures. They had already found some of them in the park and quickly identified them, then the search was on for the ones that were still hidden.

After some intense searching and a bit of help from Helen all the creatures were found! Averie explored the tunnel and sampled the stones in the river. We reluctantly left the park as it was time to go back to preschool for lunch but we will be back to take advantage of this cool play space in the central city. The teachers enjoyed the excitement, curiosity and sense of wonder the children showed as they explored this new place. Taking risks, testing their abilities, sharing discoveries with each other are some of the things the children learned on this trip.



In April Magdalene and Janina took a small group of children to Latimer Square to see William and Kate when they visited our city-there were lots of people and it was very cold! The children really enjoyed watching all the police cars and motorbikes but Magdalene and Janina preferred watching the Royals!

Infants and Toddlers

Our babies and toddlers have been very interested in sensory play over the last few months and Janina and Kylie have planned and provided many interesting experiences for them such as, foam, paint, leaves and water.



The children enjoy exploring these differing tactile experiences and they are very good at keeping their jackets on! They are so focused on experimenting that they don't even notice they are being photographed-notice how their heads are down and they are so focused on their work. They have also had many heuristic play learning opportunities and we have baskets of a variety of items including natural taonga (*treasure*) consisting of shells, stones, and items that are in everyday use by their mums in the kitchen such as pots and pans, ladels, spoons, sieves etc. Refer to the article below on all the learning that is happening for the children in this activity.

It is with much sadness that we say "goodbye" to Fay from our permanent staff. We would like to "thank her" for all her good work with our children and families and I am pleased to report that she has agreed to relieve at our centre from time to time.



HEURISTIC PLAY

At our centre we provide many learning opportunities for our babies in the form of simple baskets of everyday items that children like to explore with all their senses. Here is some good information about this type of learning.



The word 'heuristic' is derived from the Greek word 'eurisko' which means 'serve to discover' or 'reach an understanding of'

Heuristic play experiences provide opportunities for babies and young children to develop knowledge of the natural and real world around them. Babies are naturally curious and enjoy the sensory experience of holding, feeling and mouthing objects, while the older children want to delve deeper and discover what they can do with the objects.

This type of play allows time and space for them to explore, wonder, manipulate, make decisions, develop their ideas, experiment, concentrate, solve problems, and make discoveries about the everyday things they see inside and outside their homes. They have a natural desire to explore and experiment with the different ways that objects interact with each other. A toddler will investigate all the physical possibilities of an object, by rolling, filling, stacking, dumping, fitting things inside each other, balancing and manipulating an object in every possible way! Toddlers who are able to freely explore in this way can make satisfying discoveries about how the world works, by exploring aspects such as gravity, spacial awareness, density, and simple physics, which builds their cognitive development, eye/hand coordination and fine/gross motor skills. It is important that children are able to engage in heuristic play without direction or interference - the role of the adult is to support and observe children during their play.



Heuristic Play Objects

Some examples of things for a heuristic basket are:



- Paper / cardboard objects: Egg cartons, notebook, cardboard tubes, greaseproof paper.
- Wooden objects: Door wedge, small turned bowl, wooden pegs, egg cup, wooden egg, spoons, curtain rings, coaster, bracelet, block, napkin rings, dowel.
- Leather, textile, rubber, or fur objects: knitted toy, bean bag, material pieces, velvet powder puff, coloured ribbons, small purse.
- Rubber objects: Ball, bath plug with chain, door stop, coasters.
- Metal objects: egg cup, curtain rings, measuring spoons, tea strainer, whisk, bells, lemon squeezer, small bowl, small pots.
- Natural objects: grass rope, sheepskin, pumice stone, shells, pine/fir cones, driftwood, large stones/pebbles, corks, bone shoe horn.
- Brushes: Scrubbing brush, pastry brush, baby's hair brush, nail brush, paint brush, shaving brush.

FREE INSULATION

Was your insulation installed before 2000? No insulation? Get it checked now, to keep children warm and healthy this winter! Free insulation and heating assistance is now available for families with a Community Services Card (homeowners and tenants excl Housing NZ) through Community Energy Action Charitable Trust. Don't wait until winter but call now 374 7222 or visit www.cea.co.nz. Conditions apply.



ST JOHNS FIRST AID KIT FUNDRAISER

Our thanks to Suzanne (one of our amazing parents) who is organising this great fundraiser to raise funds for some much needed outside equipment for our centre.



We are making these great emergency first aid kits available to our families and friends to purchase. They are exceptionally great value at a cost of \$40.00 each and would make a superb gift. I have already purchased one myself just after September 4th 2010 and it sits by my bed ready to grab and take with me if there was the need for a quick exit!

LINWOOD FRUIT AND VEGIE CO-OP

The Linwood Fruit and Veggie co-op (friends of our centre made at the recent Community Expo that Merrilyn and I attended) are on a mission to ensure all families can access affordable fruit and vegies each week. They offer large bags of a variety of fresh fruit and vegies for the small cost of only \$10 each week to be paid in advance. These are amazing value for our families. Information about how to access the fruit and vegies is available at the centre at the *sign in desk*. If enough parents were interested they could be delivered to the centre and picked up from here although payment would need to be made independent of the centre.



PARENT/WHANAU SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT IN OUR CENTRE

I would like to give a big "thank you" to our parents and friends of the centre who have made a significant contribution to our centre over the last few months. These include:



- Michelle and Suzanne for their organisation of the "Muck In" day and for their ongoing weekend work over the last few months to give our centre *a new lease of life*. We are feeling so blessed by all you have done and the children are really enjoying their environments *new look* and the new equipment that they can now play with.
- Suzanne for organising a fund raiser so the centre can purchase some much needed outside equipment. She has also designed our new sign at the front of the building and is currently working with us on updating our Information Brochure. We are really grateful to you and it means a lot having your support to get some outstanding tasks done.
- Chanel and Natasha for ensuring the leaflets advertising our centre are delivered around the city. We so appreciate you doing that for us and we are believing that we will soon see some new families using our centre as a result of your amazing efforts!



That is our news for now so please keep warm and happy until next time!

Ka kīte anō

Kind regards and God Bless,

Sharon (Centre Director)