

Settling Policy

RATIONALE

At Karori Childcare Centre (KCC) we recognise that settling into an early learning environment is a significant transition for tamariki and their whānau. A thoughtful, flexible, and responsive settling process supports tamariki to develop a sense of belonging, trust, and emotional security. We acknowledge that every tamaiti and whānau are unique, and therefore settling will be guided by individual needs, culture, routines, and relationships.

GOAL

To support new tamariki and their whānau to settle into Karori Childcare Centre in a way that is respectful, collaborative, and responsive, fostering strong relationships between tamariki, whānau, and kaiako.

PRINCIPLES

- Strong, trusting relationships are central to successful settling.
- Whānau are valued as the child's first teachers.
- Flexibility is essential; settling plans may change in response to the child's needs.

PROCEDURE

Every settling journey is individual. The following outlines a guideline for settling visits; however, the pace and structure may be adapted in consultation with whānau.

Prior to Starting

- Whānau will be invited to meet with the centre manager, or a designated kaiako.
- Whānau will be provided with a Welcome Pack and asked to complete a “Me Sheet” to share important information about their child, including routines, interests, comfort strategies, and cultural preferences.
- All staff are required to read and familiarise themselves with the child’s “Me Sheet” prior to the tamaiti starting.

Visit 1 – Introduction Visit

Duration: 15–30 minutes (whānau present)

- Introductions to kaiako and other tamariki.
- Tour of the centre and learning spaces.
- Discussion about centre routines and philosophy.
- Sharing information about home routines and interests.
- Welcome Pack provided and settling process explained.

Visit 2 – Relationship Building Visit

Duration: 15–45 minutes (whānau present)

- Tamaiti plays alongside their whānau with kaiako support.
- Kaiako engage with the tamaiti and whānau to build rapport.
- Further sharing of information and observations.
- Planning and agreement on next settling steps.

Visit 3 – Short Separation Visit

Duration: 10–15 minutes with whānau present, followed by 30 minutes–1 hour without whānau

- Whānau is supported to say goodbye and reassure the tamaiti they will return.
- Kaiako provides comfort and emotional support as needed.
- Upon return, the whānau will complete a nappy change with a settling kaiako present (where applicable). This supports familiarity with routines, the environment, and relationship building.

If a tamaiti becomes highly distressed and is unable to settle, whānau will be contacted to return, and the settling plan will be reviewed.

Visit 4 – Sleep Visit (Where Applicable)

Duration: Flexible, based on the child's needs and centre ratios

- 10–15 minutes of play with whānau present.
- The sleep routine will be planned collaboratively with whānau. Options may include:
 - whānau prepare the tamaiti for sleep with kaiako present.
 - whānau settles the tamaiti to sleep.
 - whānau remain nearby or in the centre so the tamaiti can wake to them.
 - kaiako manages the full routine and contacts whānau when the tamaiti wakes.

Ongoing Communication

- Kaiako will provide verbal feedback to whānau about how their child's day has gone.
- Ongoing communication is encouraged, and whānau are welcome to share concerns, updates, or changes at any time.
- Settling plans will be reviewed and adapted as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Kaiako will provide responsive, nurturing care and maintain open communication with whānau.
- Whānau are encouraged to actively participate in the settling process and share relevant information.
- Senior Kaiako will oversee the settling process and support kaiako and whānau as required.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects current practice, centre philosophy, and the needs of our community.