

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES



## Scope

The National Code of Conduct applies to licensed early childhood services, including centre-based, home-based, and hospital-based.

## PREAMBLE

The ***Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Education Services*** sets out the standards of conduct every family can rightly expect of us. The standards of conduct are outlined below

We ensure our practices, policies and procedures reflect and uphold children's rights as expressed in the *Code of Children's Rights in ECE*<sup>1</sup>, and we acknowledge *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* as Aotearoa NZ's founding document and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

### 1. We always comply fully with the law

We comply with all relevant regulations and rules as a crucial part of doing well for our community and society, and by everyone in our service.

We make certain that:

- a) All persons involved in managing the service and providing care and education to children know the early childhood regulations and licensing criteria well and take responsibility for ensuring these are met at all times.
- b) Our service is well managed in accordance with all relevant education and other legal requirements and rules, such as child protection, consumer rights, human rights, privacy, health and safety, building and facilities, and employment law.

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Children's Rights in Early Childhood Education <https://www.myece.org.nz/code-childrens-rights-early-childhood-education>

## 2. We demonstrate a strong ethic of care

We care about each child in our care. Caring and nurturing the child is seen as being both an educational goal and fundamental to our service.

### We make sure that:

- a) All adults act to keep children safe by:
  - Ensuring each child is actively-supervised<sup>2</sup>.
  - Scaffolding children's learning - which means we break down parts of a new skill and provide support so children are challenged and experience risk-taking but are safe.
- b) No person while providing care and education is permitted to have a personal electronic device that can take photos or videos unless the device is authorised for essential purposes (such as for communication at a time of emergency). Only service-issued electronic devices are used when taking images or videos of children. The appropriate use of service-issued electronic devices and storing of images and videos of children is clearly outlined in our policies and procedures.
- c) Children's toilets have doors and children have complete privacy from other children and adults when they use a toilet.
- d) Objects and food that are choking hazards for infants and toddlers are not available to them (such as marbles, button batteries, and high-risk choking food such as popcorn, or food such as raw carrot that has not had its textured altered to reduce the risk).
- e) Adults providing care and education are made aware that young children are more vulnerable to heat and rely on them to understand the risk<sup>3</sup>. Our indoor room temperature does not exceed 24°C and procedures are taken to manage risk particularly in summer, including increasing cross-ventilation, closing curtains and blinds to reduce solar heat, and creating shade<sup>4</sup> in outdoor play areas.
- f) Everyone who works at our service and has contact with children is made aware of the communicable diseases that are of greatest risk should they acquire or transmit such diseases (e.g. measles, whooping cough) and are given an opportunity to consider their vaccination status<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Child Supervision Skills for Adults in ECE <https://oece.nz/public/big-issues/death-injury-prevention/supervision-skills/>

<sup>3</sup> Daily Temperatures and Child Hospital Admissions in Aotearoa New Zealand <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/21/9/1236>

<sup>4</sup> Shade and Outdoor Planning for Children's Sun Protection <https://oece.nz/members/service-provider/physical-improvements/shade-outdoor-sun-protection/>

<sup>5</sup> Vaccination and ECE Staff Immunisation <https://oece.nz/public/information/resources/vaccination-immunisation-staff/>

- g) Our enrolment and attendance policies are responsive to children's best interests and flexible to support families in times of emergency or need.
- h) No child is restricted from attending our service for reasons of gender, race, religion, disability and learning needs, or family background.

### **3. We act professionally and are advocates of high-quality early childhood education and care**

We are a professional ECE service that operates in strongly professional ways.

#### We make sure that:

- a) Respectful and professional behaviour is shown by everyone involved in the provision of education and care and the management of our service.
- b) We have good employment practices. We pay employees fairly and treat employees ethically.
- c) Every child receives individual attention and has many shared interactions with their teachers/ educators on each day they attend.
- d) We recognise the status of tangata whenua and practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori.
- e) No child and no parent or caregiver are humiliated or treated as if they lack value or importance.
- f) We view parents and caregivers as the experts on their child and support them in their role.
- g) Parents and caregivers are surveyed<sup>6</sup> at least once every two years regarding the quality of our service, with full anonymity for respondents ensured. The results help to inform our internal review, evaluation, and quality improvement processes.
- h) Our service stays informed of current developments and works to continuously improve its quality for children and families. This includes fostering a learning culture whereby our team members can strive to do and be their best by advancing their skills, knowledge, and understanding of research and best practice.
- i) In our community and nationally, we advocate for the well-being of all young children and for policies and practices that enhance the quality of early childhood education and care in Aotearoa NZ.

### **4. We are transparent and accountable**

We maintain a climate of openness and transparency, and accept that we are accountable to families and to the public as a licensed and publicly-funded service.

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<sup>6</sup> Services may choose to make use of the [ECE Service Parent Survey](https://oece.nz/public/information/resources/parent-survey) model provided by the OECE (online at <https://oece.nz/public/information/resources/parent-survey>) or go through a reputable consumer research company.

We make sure that:

- a) All parents and caregivers feel comfortable to visit at any time their child is attending, or stay and watch or participate.
- b) We tell all parents and caregivers that it is their right to make a complaint and be listened to, and that there will be no negative retaliation or adverse effects on them or their child from speaking-up about their concerns.
- c) Should a child experience harm while in our care we are honest and upfront with the child's parents or caregivers about what happened, we will accept responsibility, and we will act with sensitivity and kindness towards all who are affected.
- d) In the hopefully unlikely event that our service is being investigated for alleged non-compliance or because there has been a serious incident involving a child or adult, we will immediately inform all families of the investigation.
- e) Should our service have its licence downgraded due to non-compliance or receive a written direction from the Ministry of Education to fix an immediate health and safety risk, we will immediately inform all families and meet with them to discuss.
- f) We answer parents' and caregivers' questions about fees, funding, and the financial position of our service honestly. We provide invoices and receipts for fees and other payments in a timely manner.
- g) Current financial records showing revenue from parent fees, funding, and other sources along with details of expenditure, capital reserves and profit are available publicly on our website or for anyone at our service to read.

More copies are available from the OECE

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