



Our Philosophy

We believe in providing quality childcare and educational experiences for rural preschool tamariki (children), in a safe and homely environment. Every child will be greeted by a friendly face and be treated with respect; they will be praised and encouraged in all that they do. We aim to empower tamariki to grow up as confident and competent individuals, being proud of their achievements and developing their curiosity for life!

In recognising children's individuality and varying stages of their development, our daily programme aims to cater for their needs, stages of development and interests. We recognise parents as first teachers and believe in open ended communication in regards to their child's needs, interests and aspirations.

Our centre whānau are welcome to share their own taonga (treasures) and experiences, such as their interests, occupations, bringing pet lambs to the centre for children to feed. These precious moments are a basis of quality learning for children.

Through our centre environment children can build on these experiences, work through new knowledge, test, question and challenge their theories with peers and adults, establishing links to make sense of their world.

We believe children need the opportunity to play and explore the environment in their own time and in their own way, including plentiful opportunities to explore the natural environment. We aim to instil in children a respect for the natural world and knowledge of their place in the wider world. We use sustainable practices such as recycling, composting and having a worm farm. We grow food in our own vegetable garden, we encourage empathy and caring through teaching children to look after our centre pets. Tamariki will have time and space to paint, draw, create, imagine, enjoy books and pictures, sit and chat with a friend, care for a doll, look for bugs, have a swing / slide, ride a bike, climb a hill, play 'hide and seek' with friends and their *kaiako (teachers)*. The indoors and outdoors flow from one to the other and like an open plan home, children are consulted and are able to make choices and decisions about their play and their day.

Within our centre environment, siblings can spend time together irrespective of whether they are four months or four years of age, but respective of their own desire to be together.

We embrace the principles of the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum (Te Whāriki) - Empowerment, Family and Community, Holistic Development and Relationships; and the interwoven essential strands -Well-Being; Belonging; Contribution; Communication and Exploration.

Dunsandel Childcare and Preschool respects the unique position of Māori as Tangata Whenua in Aotearoa / New Zealand. We honour the dual heritage of Aotearoa in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi to acknowledge and empower children and their whānau. To support this we use te reo Māori (language) regularly, respect tikanga Māori (customs and protocols) and provide the children with experiences with natural resources. We form receptive respectful relationships, embracing whanaungatanga with children and their whānau, ensuring we hold high expectations of all. We embrace Te Reo Māori as a living and relevant language, Te Ao Māori and Tikanga Māori as an integral part of our daily life at the centre.