



## **SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY**

March 2011

### **Rationale**

The effectiveness of early childhood education programmes and the related learning environments is enhanced when:

- The uniqueness of each child is acknowledged.
- Programmes respond to individual and special needs (including different ethnic groups *and children or carers with disabilities*) and create a positive learning environment for all participants.
- Parents/ whanau/ caregivers are paramount in the decision making for their child.

### **Aim**

- To assist the parent/ whanau/ caregiver to identify the behaviours that may indicate learning that could be outside the normal range of developmental or educational expectations.
- To inform parents/ whanau/ caregivers of the optional community or medical resources available.
- To provide a learning environment which more fully includes and supports individual children and their parents/ whanau/ caregivers.

### **Rights of the Child**

Every child has a right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Be safe physically and emotionally
- Work/ play without disruption
- Have his/ her work protected and treated with respect
- Be heard/ listened to
- Be helped to solve his/ her own problems (and to be supported until they do)
- Be positively encouraged

### **Guidelines**

1. The individual educational needs (i.e. Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Social, Cultural, and Language developmental needs) of every child should be met during each session.
2. All adults (where practical) attending the session are responsible for implementing individual learning goals.
3. Adults will work in partnership with skilled and specialist personnel, with parents/ whanau/ caregivers, other care providers, groups and agencies in the educational and wider community.
4. Adults working with children do not label or judge children.
5. Parents are encouraged - and the processes within the centre support this process - to communicate information regarding the promotion of the child's learning outcomes.
6. Centres are encouraged to provide advocates/buddies to assure needs and required support are communicated to sessions.

## **Procedures**

***A parent, professional or duty team member may become concerned about a child because of:***

***a) Challenging behaviours***

***b) Suspected developmental delays i.e. milestones not met.***

These concerns may arise as a result of various situations, and these may include:

1. The parents become concerned
2. The duty team become concerned
3. Someone at Playcentre becomes concerned
4. Concerns are raised by an outside professional/ friend/ whanau, out of Playcentre.

### ***1. The Parents/ whanau/ caregiver are concerned.***

The parent(s) may choose to:

- a) Consult a trusted (experienced) Centre member to corroborate or dismiss concerns:  
OR
- b) Contact the Child and Whanau Support for consultation and/ or arrange a visit: OR
- c) Seek help outside of Playcentre e.g. Group Special Education (GSE) – formerly SES.

The parent(s) may choose to raise the concern and any course of action at a Child Evaluation Meeting or prior situation if necessary. The Centre and parents/ whanau should be in agreement with the identified course of action within Centre sessions. An individual plan may be developed for the child after consultation by the parents. The “course of action” will be evaluated and reviewed. Useful feedback will be provided to the parents/ whanau.

### ***2. The duty team becomes concerned***

Firstly, the parent is to be informed of the concern and the parent will determine what steps will be taken and to advise the Duty Team on a course of action, which may include one or more of the following:

- Arrange a formal observation of the child
- Contact the Child and Whanau Support
- Contact the Child’s doctor
- Contact another professional
- A “course of action” identified by the parent/ whanau/ caregiver

Secondly, the Concern may be

- Formally raised at a Session Evaluation or Session Planning Meeting: OR
- Informally discussed with a trusted (experienced) Centre member and/ or the parent.

*Note:* Parent/ whanau/ caregiver and Duty Team to set a time frame and procedure for evaluation and review.

### ***3. Some other person at Playcentre is concerned.***

If a visitor to Playcentre raises a concern, the people initially informed should use discretion and, preferably with the concerned person, inform a trusted (experienced and elected) Centre member and /or parent if they feel able. Prior to any further discussion or action, the parent should be informed that a concern has been raised.

### ***4. Concerns raised by professional/ friend/ whanau outside Playcentre***

A parent may choose not to involve Playcentre if their child has been diagnosed with a special need. In making this choice, parents need to consider whether it would be beneficial for the Centre to have knowledge of the child’s special need(s) or not.

## **Role of the Association Child and Whanau Support**

1. Informal visits are regularly encouraged to build relationships with parents and children.
2. A Centre or a Centre member may request the Child and Whanau Support to visit for a specific concern.  
Refer to the Child and Whanau Support
3. Referrals: The Child and Whanau Support is able to recommend an appropriate service or give contact details.
  - Group Special Education (GSE North) have trained speech language therapists, educational psychologists and early intervention teachers and may be contacted without prior referral of a G.P.
  - The Waitemata Health Child Development Unit, presently at the Wilson Home in Takapuna, have physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, developmental paediatricians, neurodevelopment therapists and speech language therapists. The Child and Whanau Support has referral forms available.
4. Assistance with the implementation of Individual Programmes (IP's) is available through the Child and Whanau Support.
5. Resources:
  - "*Including Everyone – Te Reo Tatiki*" - the Ministry of Education video package and resource folder is available through the Centre's library. This resource provides an in-depth look at Special Needs and includes a comprehensive list of further resources.
  - "*Providing Positive Guidance*" – Learning Media

## **Role of the Child Support Worker**

1. The Association makes provision for child support in the annual budget, this is funded via a levy to centre's.
2. The number of places is reviewed annually and documented in the Education Annual Plan.
3. The Association Child and Whanau Support and other professionals make an assessment/s.
4. A recommendation is made to the Association Convenor and Association Treasurer.
5. Child Support worker hours are allocated for one term at a time.
6. The Child Support Worker is appointed after discussion with the parent and centre. It is recommended that the Child Support Worker is a Playcentre trained adult with no child in attendance at the centre. The person should have Playcentre training or relevant experience. The person should be police vetted by the Association.
7. The responsibilities of the Child Support Worker are outlined in the job description, the employment contract, and the Individual Programme (IP) developed for the child.
8. Sometimes the Child Support Worker will be employed to work with a group of children.

### Glossary of terminology related to Special Needs

IDP/ IEP/ IP	Individual Educational Programme
ESW	Educational Support Worker
GSE	Group Special Education (formerly Specialist Education Services – SES)
CCS	Crippled Children's Society – known as Rainbow House
Paraprofessional	NSPA Child Support Worker: Teacher Aide

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