

Parent Enquiry Booklet



magic garden
early education

Welcome to...



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Welcome parents and whanau to Magic Garden and our community of children, parents, and teachers. This booklet holds information that may answer some of your questions about us, our approach and philosophy.

Our beautiful Centre is divided between 3 rooms each focused on the stage of development of your child. These rooms are led by our team leaders who ensure that your child receives the best possible care and education that we can provide.

The centre is open between 7.30 am and 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday. We close on public holidays. Attendance is required for a minimum of six hours per day, three days a week.

Paul and Jo Blair are the owners of Magic Garden. Paul is the manager and has an amazing team to ensure a thorough, and creative approach is continuously sustained. Under the guidance of our Pedagogical Leader - Adrienne Thomson, we look for systems to support our philosophy of developing a respectful learning community involving children, teachers, and parents.

We follow *Te Whāriki*, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum but we are strongly influenced by the philosophy and practices of Reggio Emilia and the practices of Magda Gerber/RIE. These approaches support the valuing of relationships, use of collaboration, having an environment as the third teacher, encouraging parental involvement, maintaining documentation of children's learning, having an emergent curriculum, and encouraging the child as a self-initiated learner.

We have a very high proportion of qualified teachers (100% qualified band for Ministry of Education purposes) and have the highest possible rating "Very Well Placed" from the Education Review Office.

OUR PHILOSOPHY & VALUES

magic garden a place where relationships matter



We are inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia in Italy, the approach of Magda Gerber, and current research.

Our local curriculum statement shows we prioritise inquiry and exploration, social competence, and foundation skills for literacy and numeracy. We celebrate the wealth of knowledge and diversity our whanau contribute to centre life and humbly join them in a partnership that empowers each child to reach their full potential.

A secure, unhurried, peaceful, carefully curated environment is important for creating optimal learning conditions. We see children as eager to make **connections**, they are curious, they are thinkers, capable of leading their own learning, and being involved in decisions about what concerns them.

We take time to listen and marvel at the creativity and **joy** children bring to their day.

Teachers collaborate with **integrity** to make meaning of children's play and offer new ways to extend their learning. We share meaningful stories of children's experiences, and the ways they express themselves through all their senses, in the company of people who care deeply for them.



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CULTURAL NARRATIVE

Who we are and where we come from...

OUR JOURNEY

Established in November 2000, Magic Garden is located on Carlisle Road, a traditional pathway and significant commuter route. Our families connect to work through East Coast Bays Road to the Bays area and Oteha Valley Road to the Northern Motorway.



OUR ROOTS

Nestled in the northern East Coast Bays, our home has been cherished for generations, initially welcoming settlers from the Tainui waka. This land has a rich history, contested by many iwi over the centuries, including Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Whātua, Waiohūa-Tāmaki, and Marutūāhu groups. Ngā Herenga Waka o Orewa, a non-tribal marae, is our closest marae

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The cliffs of the East Coast Bays once supported many pā sites and villages, thriving with easy access to the Waitematā Harbour and inland waterways like Okura, Deep Creek, and Lucas Creek. Traditional industries included fishing, timber harvesting, weaving, boat building, and orchards.



DIVERSE COMMUNITY

While our local area has a lower population of Māori and Pasifika compared to national averages, it boasts a rich diversity of migrants. At Magic Garden, 18% of our children have English as a second language, and another 18% use a second or third language at home. Our staff also reflects this diversity, with two-thirds speaking a second language.

INCLUSIVITY & EXPRESSION

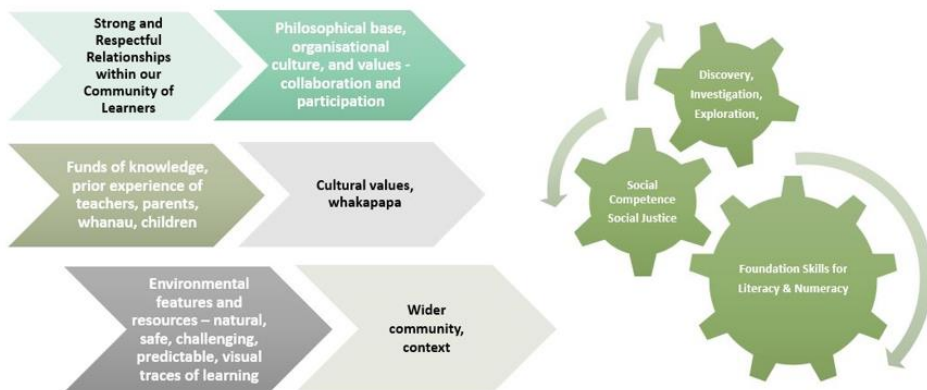
A core concept of our practice is inclusivity. We embrace the idea that a child has '100 languages,' a metaphor for expressing oneself through various forms such as painting, dance, music, gesture, dramatic play, clay, and more. This approach ensures that children can express themselves beyond the constraints of language skills



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Magic Garden is a proud member of Oneroa Kahui Ako, our local community of learning, which networks early childhood centers with primary, intermediate, and secondary schools. We maintain close links with local primary schools such as Sherwood, Torbay, Glamorgan, Oteha Valley, and Long Bay, ensuring our students transition smoothly into their next educational stage.

Our three priorities for learning:



The three key values at Magic Garden are Integrity, Connection & Joy.

Magic Garden creates a nurturing environment where every child can thrive and express themselves in myriad ways by weaving together our rich cultural heritage and diverse communities.



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Infant and Toddler Room

The Infant and Toddler Room has a teacher: child ratio between 1:3 and 1:4 depending on the ages of children attending. Our Infant Room (up to 1 years old) is physically separated from our Toddlers (1-2 years old) to maximise attention, safety and transition needs for our babies. Children transition according to the needs of the child and the room, usually moving to the Over Two Room around two years old. We have a maximum roll of 25 children. All teachers have current First Aid Certificates.

The Infant and Toddler Room has three separate sleep rooms with the children starting in cots and transferring to sleeper beds as they near two years old. The room has two inside play areas, a dual-purpose play/sleep room, two changing areas and an outdoor play space solely for children of this room. Children move freely inside and outside. Internal windows and door gates provide clear visibility for teachers and children and a timer set for 10-minute intervals helps with safe sleep supervision.

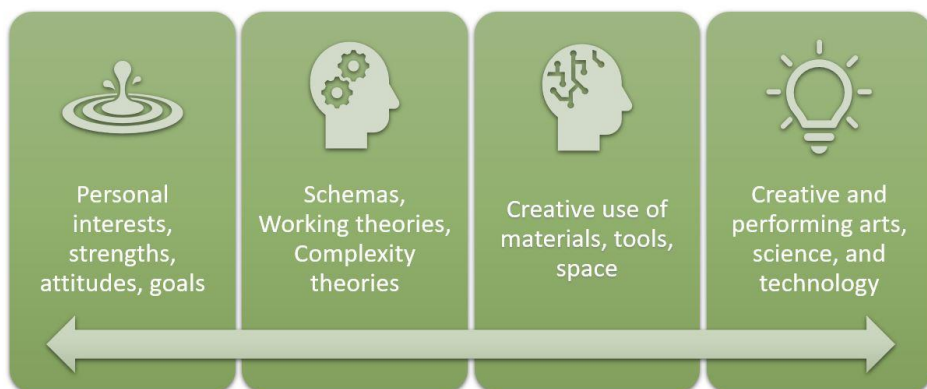
The Magda Gerber/RIE/Pikler approach heavily influences our practice. Children learn on their own, so we don't prop them or hold their hand to help them walk. We don't sit them in highchairs but have chairs or stools that they can get into and out of themselves. Everyday caring routines like feeding or changing nappies can be educational and loving interactions. These caring routines develop the basis of respect, an essential quality in all relationships.

The Reggio Emilia influence can be seen in our documentation style, the use of natural materials, transparency in the room design and the emphasis on relationships.

One of our features is having key teachers for each child. These teachers are assigned before care begins, to enable children and families to feel safe and settled. Our teachers are expected to be observers of children's activities and development. Records of children's behaviour are made daily and from these observations children's interests and strengths are documented and written into learning stories for individual portfolios or room documentation that portrays children's learning. We use Storypark, a 'closed Facebook', as an electronic platform to enhance two-way communication between whanau and teachers and

to supplement our physical portfolios. Our portfolios and Storypark are designed to encourage partnership and involvement with children's learning.

Discovery, Investigation & Exploration



Over Two Room

The Over Two Room is organised to reflect the special characteristics of this age group. Transitions are flexible, taking in the needs and characteristics of the children and usually occurring after the age of two years. The atmosphere is calm, happy, busy, generally quiet, and relaxed. Meaningful, purposeful learning experiences are planned and implemented responding to children's interests, teacher's passions and interests, current events, and seasonal influences. We have orchestrated an environment where a wide variety of open-ended natural materials and household objects are set out aesthetically and orderly, inviting the children to play with purpose, calmness, and deep concentration, individually or in small groups.

Developing social competence is one of the key outcomes for the programme. This is fostered by a quality teaching ratio of 1:6; clear strategies for helping children solve their own conflicts and problems; a daily routine that allows

children plenty of opportunity to practice making choices, taking responsibility for their actions, expressing their views and interests, and having time to follow through on an activity they are engaged in.

Fostering foundation literacy skills is a special characteristic of the room through a culture of storytelling, opportunities for children to represent and create their own stories, active movement through dance and physical exercise and fine motor activities to build strength and dexterity.

Care and education are intertwined. There is no hesitation to give cuddles when needed, special attention during routine caring, and lots of talking. Meals are busy but comfortable times where teachers sit with small groups of children to promote conversation, manners, and good eating habits.

During transition into the room, each child has a key teacher to support their personal and family needs.

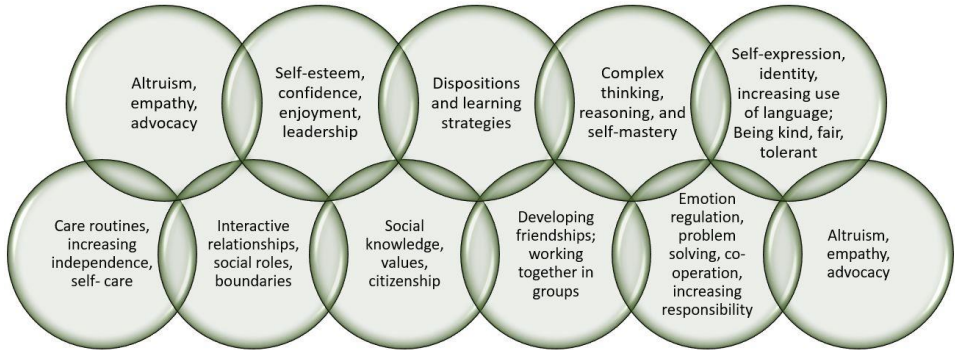
Children's learning is recorded through learning stories, supported by photos and artwork published in children's portfolios or displayed on the walls. Storypark is also used to supplement physical portfolios. Teachers contribute to all portfolios, ensuring a range of perspectives are included.

Children frequently revisit their portfolios, reading their photos as a process of recollection and enjoyment. Portfolios are taken home regularly to be shared with family members and parents are encouraged to add their own stories, photos, and comments.

In addition, programme planning books are prepared to make teaching and learning visible to parents and whanau. These books are displayed on the main desk in the room where parents can easily review the week's activities.

Children generally transition to our Over Three room when they are approximately 3.5 years old. Transitions are subject to availability, readiness of the child and other factors – your team leader will discuss the plan for your child with you.

Social Competence & Social Justice



Over Three Room

The Over Three Room has a maximum roll of 40 children and runs a 1:8 teacher/student ratio. As with our other rooms, the Over Threes are led by a Team Leader supported by an Assistant Team Leader. All teachers have a current First Aid Certificate. Regular and known relievers are employed.

Key teachers are assigned to new children joining the room as the children transition and establish themselves. Transitions are flexible and reflect the overlapping age categories with the varying needs and characteristics of individual children, and varying enrolments at the Room.

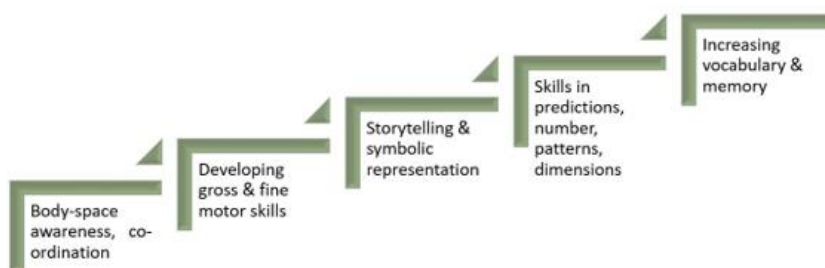
This room shows the influences of Reggio Emilia in its environment of natural objects, accessibility to a large variety of types of play exploration areas and the teachers' attention to detail. Collaboration between teachers and children is important for children's learning. Documentation in portfolios, wall displays and Storypark is well established and children and families have ready access to their portfolios. Support from agencies outside the room is a proven practice. Parents have strong friendships and partnerships with teachers and share in their child's

learning in portfolios. This support is displayed by strong attendance at room events.

Children's competence is developed while teachers work alongside children as co-learners. Discussion using open ended questions is a regular part of teaching. Each day is started by a planning meeting with the children which leads the day's programme. This is an established practice at which all children are encouraged to attend. Small group mat times and lunch times provide quiet group opportunities. Small group exploration areas called 'stations' encourage small group play, a feature of this age. Children are expected to treat their room, relationships and equipment with respect reflecting the patterns of home expectations.

Extra-curricular opportunities in this room including dance and music are explored. Awareness that school approaching is an incentive for an involvement in literacy, mathematics, safe active risk taking, creative exploration, group and individual learning styles and the ability to be a self-initiated learner. A monthly Lunch Box Day is a regular feature in the programme intended to help with school transition.

Foundation Skills for Literacy & Numeracy



Meals

Our Centre provides nutritious morning and afternoon tea and lunches made fresh daily by our in-house chef. A variety of fruit and vegetables is provided at each mealtime. If your child has any special dietary needs these can be discussed at the time of enrolment. Magic Garden's food philosophy is discussed in depth in the blog on our website.

Transition arrangements

We have an established transition process for new children that allows for the variation between children and different cultural perspectives about appropriate age arrangements. Key teachers are assigned to children and parents before care starts to ensure children settle with the most comfort. We expect parents to support this transition by pre-visiting and considering ways to help their child settle into the new environment. Transition visits can be up to 2 weeks prior to enrolment for children who are new to early education environments.

Similar patterns of care may need to be established at home to enable group care to be successful. Cultural differences will need to be recognized and understood and plans may need to be put into place to bridge differences in child rearing practices. At all times dialogue between teachers and parents is to support this approach.

Policies

Some key policies are available to view on our website. All Magic Garden policies are available for viewing in a folder in the reception foyer onsite.

Fees

Our fee structure reflects Magic Garden's focus on long daycare and operating a high-quality program. The key variables are in daycare fees are whether a centre is for profit/not-for-profit, able to access cheap/free rent, the quality of teaching staff (qualified vs unqualified) and the ratio of staff to children. In short, the fees that you pay are for more staff, and higher qualified teachers, than daycares that run at regulatory minimum staff.

A summary of our fees are available on our website: www.magicgarden.co.nz
[ENQUIRIES | Magic Garden](#)

It is recommended that parents read our Fees, Absences & Holidays Policy on our website for further information on key enrolment terms.

Parents must pay a bond equal to one week's fees on acceptance of your enrolment, and one week of fees in advance prior to starting at Magic Garden.

For security reasons all fees must be paid by direct credit or bank transfer to our bank account – **BNZ 02-0192-0509417-00**.

Fees are paid for the 52 weeks Magic Garden is open during the year regardless of statutory holidays, illness or family/whānau vacation times. The reason fees are payable regardless of statutory holidays, illness or family vacations is the Magic Garden has to pay staff regardless of whether your child attends or not.

Government funding (paid to Magic Garden) for children ceases if a child is 'frequently absent'. Frequent absence generally occurs if there is a regular pattern of non-attendance or if a child is away for more than 3 weeks. For parents that want to take children overseas on holiday for several weeks please talk to us first, however fees will continue to be charged for holiday periods.

Work and Income NZ subsidies are available for families on low incomes. All fees are GST inclusive.

A late fee, of \$2 a minute, will be charged if parents collect their child outside of agreed attendance times.

Magic Garden participates in the Governments "20 Hours ECE" scheme for children over 3 years of age. Parents and guardians are required to complete an attestation form stating the days and hours (up to 6 hours per day, 20 hours per week) they want provided by Magic Garden under this scheme.

For further information our parent fees policy is available from the office and in our foyer.

Are you interested in enrolling or joining our waitlist?

If you decide that Magic Garden is the right place for you and your child(ren) please fill in the enquiry form on our website, alternatively you can speak to Paul

(our Centre Manager) or Leeann (our Office Manager) to discuss what places may be available.

Magic Garden is a popular centre and often has a waitlist. Our most popular days are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays, so families that take up four or five days, or who are able to take up a Monday and/or Friday place may be offered places earlier.

If we don't have places available immediately, please let us know if you would like to join our waitlist. Once we accept you for our waitlist our system will send you regular emails to check whether you are still happy to wait or if your needs have changed.

Last update: 6th August 2024