

---

## All you need to know about Kidsfirst Kindergartens

### Do you start children at two years of age?

Yes, we take children at our kindergartens from the age of two – as long as there are spaces available. We are fully equipped and able to change nappies, assist with toilet training, and have quiet space for sleeping if you think your child may need one.

### Do you take children aged under two years?

Our kindergartens are licensed for children aged 2 – 5 years. But we also have two early learning centres (Kidsfirst Niu in Woodham Rd, and Kidsfirst Diamond Harbour) where we are licensed for children aged 0 – 5 years.

### Can my child come if they are not toilet trained?

Absolutely! We are fully equipped and able to change nappies, as long as they are supplied by you. In addition to being able to change nappies, teachers will work with you to support your child when they are learning to use the toilet.

### Can a child stay at kindergarten after they turn five?

Children can stay at kindergarten until their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. Many children go off to school when they turn 5 years old but some do choose to stay in kindergarten. Talk to your head teacher about what is right for you and your child.

### Is there space available now?

Many of our kindergartens are able to take children immediately. In others there can be a wait, but we constantly have children leaving to go to school. You can contact us on 0800 454 373 or email [betterbecause@kidsfirst.org.nz](mailto:betterbecause@kidsfirst.org.nz) to find out more, or you can click [here](#) to fill out a pre-enrolment and get on the wait list now – or ask your head teacher today!

### How long will I have to wait to get a space?

Our head teacher will keep in touch with you while you are on the wait list – and you're always welcome to call in at any time. As soon as there is a space available we will let you know. It helps us if you can remain flexible with the hours/days – that way we can get your child started and build up to your desired hours and days.

### How much does it cost to come to kindergarten?

**Children aged 3 – 5** will have [20 ECE hours](#) - (government-funded hours). You will need to declare if these hours are being split with another ECE service.

☑ **Children aged 2-3** years will also be offered 20 hours free, subsidised by Kidsfirst. Parents of two year olds will have to make a commitment - that when their child turns three, their government-funded [20 ECE hours](#) will be used only at a Kidsfirst service.

☑ **Children aged 2 – 5** who attend more than 20 hours per week will be charged \$6.00 per hour for any additional hours over and above the 20.

☑ **Children aged under two years** will be charged \$6 per hour for all hours enrolled

---

You may be eligible for the WINZ childcare subsidy. You can self-check eligibility online at <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/childcare-subsidy.html>

You can find a copy of our fees policy [here](#), or ask your head teacher for a copy.

From time to time, in some kindergartens, we offer special deals. Ask us about your kindergarten on 0800 454 373 or email us at [betterbecause@kidsfirst.org.nz](mailto:betterbecause@kidsfirst.org.nz).

### What if my child is not a New Zealand citizen?

You can enrol your child regardless of their immigration status, and the 20 hours free is for all children. Some conditions may apply.

### Is there discount for families?

Yes. Families with more than one child attending qualify for a 10% discount for the second child.

### **How often will I get an account?**

If your child is aged 2 – 5 years and attends 20 hours or less, you will not normally receive an account by email or post depending on your preference.

If your child is aged under two years, or attends more than 20 hours each week, you will receive an account fortnightly. If you have any questions about your account you can email [infocare@kidsfirst.org.nz](mailto:infocare@kidsfirst.org.nz), or call 0800 454 373 to speak to our admin crew.

### **Can I spend time at Kindy?**

You're always welcome here! We are here to help each family to find the right balance for them and their child, and we welcome visitors to the kindergarten to extend the children's interests and learning. Whānau often help on excursions, stay for a cuppa and biscuit, read stories, share their skills and passions and show they value their child's education just by being present. We understand the pressures on parents and family too – you can be involved whenever it suits you.

### **What hours are you open?**

Our **kindergartens** operate for 6 hours each day, but each one has a start time that suits the majority of their community. Some start at 8.30am and finish at 2.30pm, and some start at 8.45am or 9am, finishing at 2.45pm or 3pm. Our early learning centre at Diamond Harbour operates for a slightly longer day.

You can click [here](#) to find a kindy near you and check their opening hours – or go to our website [www.kidsfirst.co.nz](http://www.kidsfirst.co.nz).

### **Can I choose my hours?**

Our kindergartens offer either a full day of six hours, or in many cases a morning session – usually four hours. Unfortunately we cannot offer different start and finish times throughout the day - it's either a session or a full day. And we really need your drop-offs and pick-ups to be on time.

### **Can I choose my days?**

Yes! We recommend starting with at least two days (if available) and building up to five days as your child becomes ready.

This gives the teachers time to really get to know you and your child, for your child to make friends, and gives consistency to support their learning each week.

### **Can we have days off? Will we be charged for days we don't attend?**

We don't charge fees if the kindergarten is closed over term break. We do charge if your child is absent for sickness or holidays.

You can find a copy of our fees policy [here](#), or ask your head teacher for a copy.

### **Can I pick my child up early?**

Occasionally you just have to – we understand! Kindergarten operates either a full day or a session. Your start and finish times are determined by the operation of the kindergarten.

### **Are you open in the school holidays?**

A number of our kindergartens and early learning centres are open during the three mid-year terms breaks. If your kindy is not open, we may be able to offer you spaces in another local kindy for the term break. Ask us at [betterbecause@kidsfirst.org.nz](mailto:betterbecause@kidsfirst.org.nz), or call 0800 454 373.

### **Do most children go on to the local Primary School?**

We have close relationships with the local schools to support a successful and happy transition for the whole family when the time comes for our children to go to school. Many of our children do continue their learning journey locally.

### **How many teachers are there at kindergarten?**

For **children over 2** our ratio is one qualified teacher to every 10 children as required by the Ministry of Education. For **children under 2** years old our ratio is one qualified teacher for every 4 children, lower than that required by the Ministry of Education.

### **Do you have mat time?**

We believe in the value of uninterrupted and sustained play. All around you will see children busy at play alongside each other, making choices for play that engage them with the people, the places and the things of our

environment and community – supported in their learning by our fantastic teaching teams. But we often come together for group sessions, storytelling, music, and special occasions with our whānau.

## What will my child learn?

Our kindergartens and early learning centres **follow the New Zealand early childhood curriculum “Te Whāriki”**, which strengthens early learning and lays a strong foundation for later success. Our teachers plan programmes and focus areas around the children, and their whānau’s aspirations for them. Children are encouraged to contribute to the planning, giving them a sense of ownership and a voice.

At Kidsfirst, your child will learn to:

- Take responsibility and make choices
- Practise sharing and co-operation with others
- Persist and not give up
- Communicate and develop relationships with adults and other children
- Be resilient when things don’t work out
- Become independent but not afraid to ask for help
- Develop the ability to manage self
- Begin to learn to write through drawing and painting
- Develop curiosity and develop research skills through being curious
- Develop eco-awareness
- Develop their social consciousness through empathy and communication
- Be creative
- Explore – in the kindergarten and in their community
- Solve problems
- Become culturally aware and confident
- Ask questions about their world, helping them to make sense of it

Your child will enjoy a range of educational and fun experiences including:

- Dramatic play
- Manipulative play-puzzles, blocks, construction and carpentry
- Nature, science experiments and exploration
- Sand and water play
- Adventure play
- Physical outdoor play
- Books, stories and puppetry
- Music making, dance and songs
- Language and social development through conversation
- A range of creative and visual arts-collage, painting, art, dough and baking

You can find out more about your unique local kindergarten by clicking [here](#), or visiting our website [www.kidsfirst.co.nz](http://www.kidsfirst.co.nz)

## How can I see my child’s learning?

Your child will have a profile book at the kindergarten from day one. Learning stories about your child and the learning that is happening at kindy will be put into the book regularly and you can see it any time. You can also take it home from time to time to share with your whānau.

As well as a hard copy, all of our kindergartens and early learning centres use EDUCA – a secure online portal connecting you to your child’s learning. Our teachers will upload your child’s learning stories - straight to your phone or tablet. You and your family can provide comments and inspiration to build on the learning for your child. Your head teacher will tell you all about this when you enrol.

---

## Preparing to start at your kindergarten

You have completed the enrolment process and you have a start date for your child to begin their adventures at kindergarten. Here's some information on how to prepare for your first day.

### Can I visit before my child starts at kindergarten?

Yes! You're always welcome here! We recommend at least two visits with your child to support them in their transition to kindergarten. Talk to your head teacher about the best time for your visits, and take the time to help the teaching team to understand your child.

### What sort of things do the teachers need to know about my child?

Things like:

- special words and ways of communicating
- favourite ways of being comforted
- sleep routines - when and how they like to go to sleep (if necessary)
- toileting routines
- favourite foods and special food needs
- life and family - important things that may be happening or anything that might be upsetting them.
- any special education needs, or early intervention services they are receiving.

### Can I stay on the first day?

Yes! You're always welcome here. When you arrive, ask your head teacher about signing in, help your child to hang their bag and put their lunchbox away.

- encourage your child to get involved in an activity.
- be positive about the day ahead
- give yourself plenty of time to settle your child in
- use a short routine when leaving, such as reading a story together or waving to each other through the window
- It's really important that you tell your child when you're leaving, say goodbye, and then leave straight away. If you're worried, you can always phone, or your teaching team will ring you if they need to. It's normal for a little anxiety at first!

### Will the teachers ring me if my child is unwell or hurt?

If your child becomes unwell, the teaching team will ring you and ask you to come and take your child home. It's a good idea to have a back-up plan in case you can't get there quickly. Make sure your emergency contact person can help if needed. Keep your child at home until they are better to reduce the spread of illness.

If your child is hurt at kindergarten, the teaching team will apply first aid as needed. If the injury needs attention they will call you immediately and get the help needed. Any injury, hurt or scrape will be reported to you at the end of the session. Our teaching team are great at hugs, and in most cases your child will be back at play within minutes!

---

### What do I bring?

- a drink bottle - named
- a sun hat - or a warm hat in winter. Please name all your child's clothes
- a change of clothes, and a bag for sending home dirty clothes
- Warm jacket and gumboots in the winter – we play outside all year round!
- Food – check with your teachers about the kind of foods we encourage children to eat at kindergarten
- spare nappies and wipes
- a bag to hold all these things in - named.

---

### When will my child eat?

Most of our kindergartens have a "rolling kai". That is, the children are supervised to eat when they are hungry rather than at a set time – and they are supported to learn to manage their own snacks/lunches. If your child is really busy and not thinking about food, we'll encourage him/her to eat regularly.

There are times when we will have a group kai – with us all sitting down to share the group time and eat together. We often share fruit at morning and afternoon tea times.

#### **What food do/can children bring?**

We encourage our families to put together a healthy kai for their children - natural, whole foods, fruit and veges that will nourish them and give them the energy they need for a busy day's play. Talk to us more about ideas for lunches – and have a look at what others bring when you come to visit.

Please talk to your head teacher about any food intolerances or life-threatening allergies your child may have.

#### **Will you support my child with toileting?**

Talk to us about how your child is managing toileting. We're more than happy to help and will plan with you to support your child's progress while he/she is at kindy.

#### **Will my child be safe/happy/have fun/ make friends?**

Playfulness, adventure, creativity and exploration are valued ways of being at Kidsfirst – learning is fun! Our skilled and experienced teaching teams are proud to provide a programme for children where we foster a strong sense of belonging. We do this by encouraging children to show Manaakitanga - caring for each other, and by supporting children to get along well with others, and to form and maintain relationships. Kindy kids are often lifelong friends!

---

### **What makes Kindergarten different?**

- **Your child is our number one priority.** We deliberately keep the maximum numbers in our Kindergartens and Early Learning Centres down so we can really get to know each child. Our sessions are calm and children are settled because we pace our day around the children, not the teachers.
  - **You are always welcome here!** Relationships are key for us. Our teachers know each child and their family and create a learning programme based on the child and whānau's aspirations so we can really support each child to reach his/her potential.
  - **Our teachers make the difference!** We offer early childhood education programmes provided by 100% highly-qualified, registered teachers – with access to the resources of one of New Zealand's largest and most experienced early learning organisations – Kidsfirst! Our teachers are supported with a world-class professional learning programme to ensure they bring the very best to our children.
  - **We believe in the value of whānau.** Just as families don't separate children into age groups, we don't either. We believe children of all ages learn with and from each other (Ako), creating opportunities for role-modelling and learning empathy and communication. Lasting relationships start at Kindergarten-their kindergarten whānau.
  - **Our backyards are big and natural** – the best of kiwi back yards where the children connect and interact with nature. Our play areas provide challenges and risk-taking opportunities, have quiet reflective spaces, and provide a variety of experiences. Play spaces here are natural, they reflect our bicultural commitment, and they are planted with natives and fruit trees and vegetables aplenty.
  - **Kidsfirst is New Zealand-owned and not-for-profit**, our funding goes back into our kindergartens – back to your neighbourhood. We have a proud kindergarten history of supporting our local communities for more than 100 years!
-