

What's happening...

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Childspace weekly newsletter



We hope you and your bubble are surviving and thriving at this time. We've recently worked through the logistics of opening our centres for a few children and teachers in alert level 3 and imagine so many of you are also working through this puzzle for your community.

One thing we thought might be of use to you is the letter we sent to all parents on Monday night after the announcement of when the country would return to alert level three. You are welcome to use any parts of this letter that might be useful for your own community. We began by surveying parents to find out who would need to access our services in alert level 3 and then we asked teachers who would like to work in alert level 3. Then we began the process of figuring out how those might look in "bubbles." Please note, this is our rough plan and we are still developing it with our community.

I'm proud that we have been able to handle this in a way that leaves all of our community feeling supported. Please let us know if the letter and [pandemic plan](#) we have used will be useful to you and if there is any other support we might be able to offer you and your community at this time.

Arohanui,
Toni and Robin and the team at Childspace

Toni + Robin

Letter

Re-Opening Plan in Alert Level 3

Kia ora e te whānau,

Following the announcement from government this evening, we are pleased to say that we will be re-opening our centres on Wednesday the 29th of April for those families who need their child to attend Childspace during Alert Level 3. This allows a teacher only day on Tuesday 28th of April to prepare, clean and set up.

Thank you to everybody who responded to our poll over the weekend about attendance plans during Alert Level 3. If your family has not yet indicated their intention please check the message from Lauren on Educa sent on Saturday 18th April, and respond urgently so that we can ensure our planning is accurate and complies with Ministry of Education stipulations for Alert Level 3.

As mentioned in Saturday's post, the two key public health principles that support Alert Level 3 are:

- 1. to minimise the risk that someone gets infected in the first place, and*
- 2. to limit the number of possible contacts people have if they do get infected, to make it easier to rapidly stop further spread.*

The Alert Level 3 approach in an ECE or school environment is designed to limit the number of people that children have contact with based on these principles. And because all the evidence points to children having a lower risk of getting infected and being affected by COVID-19, and it is possible to ensure that children are within the same group each day with no mixing between groups, it is safe from a public health perspective to have a group of children learning together.

At Childspace we can safely create 'bubbles' within our centres at this stage for all families who have indicated that they wish to have their children attend during Alert Level 3. Your Kaiwhakahere (Centre Manager) will be in touch with each family intending to return in Level 3 to confirm details and make arrangements. If your circumstances change during this time, please get in touch with your Kaiwhakahaere as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate your requirements. Thank you also for the lovely messages from many of you; your understanding and community spirit is much appreciated. Our teaching team will continue to support learning and relationship connections for those children who will remain at home in Alert Level 3. We are also committed to providing a valuable service long into the future.

If your child is not attending during Alert Level 3 there will be no requirement to pay fees. For children who are attending during level 3, we request that you resume paying your normal fees. All other enrollment policies remain the same.

Children who were due to start school are welcome to stay with us until their 6th birthday, as legislation has always allowed. If your child was due to transition into one of our centres or between our centres, please speak to your Kaiwhakahaere and we will create a new settling plan together.

As social/physical distancing is not possible in early learning environments, nor is it appropriate for early learning, there will be hugs and human connection when your child returns with us. If this was not safe from a public health perspective in our new bubbles in ECE, we would not have been cleared to re-open. With continued vigilance, the chance of widespread community outbreak is expected to remain low.

When we re-open, we know our centres will be places of safety and wellbeing for our tamariki and whānau. It may be tempting to discuss COVID-19 and everything that is going on in the world with other adults. We respectfully request that any of these adult conversations take place outside of our learning environments. Our focus will be solely on your children (and family) and ensuring you all experience an environment that is as close as possible to your usual Childspace experience and not clouded by outside worries and concerns. The Ministry of Education has given a range of directives regarding re-opening and we have addressed each of these with procedures Childspace will put in place below.

public health measures to reduce the chances of respiratory infections including COVID-19 to be taken in early learning centres during Alert Level 3 are:

Childspace Procedures

People at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled, and the elderly) are encouraged to stay at home due to their lack of ability to physically distance from young children.

If your child is high-risk, or living with somebody who is high-risk, we recommend that they stay at home during L3.

Due to limited capacity, we also require less teachers to maintain safe ratios. We have requested that kaiako who identify as high-risk to stay home.

Indoor temperature which is currently a minimum of 16 degrees Celsius needs to be increased to 18 degrees Celsius. This minimum must be met.

We will keep our heatpumps on when needed and will check settings to ensure they are set at, or higher, than 18 degrees Celsius.

Heatpumps can be left on at the centres overnight on a lower temperature to ensure rooms can easily heat up quickly in the mornings.

Increase the minimum licensed indoor space for children from 2.5 m² per child to at least 3 m² per child. Outdoor requirement of 5 m² remains.

Due to 'bubble' size limits of 10 children, our maximum roll numbers will allow significantly more floor space than required in Alert Level 3. We will ensure each bubble has the correct minimum floor space for the children attending.

The actual number in a facility to be determined according to the ability to manage the space requirements and other public health measures. Initially the number of children must be limited to 10 in an early learning bubble, but this can be increased to 20 once all processes are running smoothly. There can be multiple early learning bubbles on a site but there must be no mixing between bubbles.

We are lucky at Childspace to have small group sizes already and separate facilities for each room at our centres. Each learning space can accommodate a bubble of up to 10 with separate sleeping, nappy changing, outdoor spaces and entrances.

Karori- Nursery and Toddlers

Wilton- Nga Putiputi and Poutama

Northland- Teina and Tuakana

Ngaio- Nursery, Toddlers, Kaukau and Korimako

To limit the amount of people in contact with each bubble, and to ensure consistency of health and safety practices, we will have the same kaiako working with these bubbles throughout Level 3.

Siblings who attend the same centre and teachers who are parents will be in the same bubble.

Parents are asked to keep any sick children at home. If a sick child comes to the centre, send them home.

As per our pandemic plan and regular health policy.

We request that if your child or someone in your household is at all unwell that your child stays away from the centre.

Ensure all children regularly wash and dry their hands.

This is as per our pandemic plan but we will ensure kaiako know this is vital. Children's hands will continue to be washed before and after kai times and with nappy changes/toileting, after using tissues and whenever else needed.

We will wash your child's hands when they arrive and before they leave.

Hand sanitiser is available in each room at our centres. We request that you use this as needed, we recommend when you arrive and before you leave.

Please ask kaiako where this is kept as it may not necessarily be next to the entrance or at the sign-in area due to children's safety.

This is generally in place, as all of our children are enrolled for different hours (compared to having sessional attendance). However, due to limiting teachers interacting with each bubble we may need to reduce opening hours – we are working through this with the usual booked hours of children attending at this time to see if this is possible.

If you know your whānau arrives during what is usually a busy time, please consider coming a bit earlier or a bit later than normal.

To limit the amount of people at the centre at one time, we request that only one person drops children off and picks them up (similar to shopping alone at the supermarket). We also request that school-aged children do not come into the building.

Different bubbles will have different entrances.

We request that all whānau please use common sense around social distancing when you drop off and pick up.

We will continue to observe food safety – meals still provided by kai creators with food safety knowledge and qualifications.

All children will be served their meals in individual

Ensure hand sanitiser is available, with teachers/staff supervising its location and use in order to avoid child access.

Put in place staggered entry and exit times to avoid all children coming into or exiting the centre all at once and parental drop-off at entrance to limit numbers entering site.

Ensure that children have their own food containers and do not give and take food to and from each other. Food can be supplied in accordance with public health guidance.

plates/bowls – there will be no shared kai plates.

Teachers will serve children at all meals. Children will not be allowed to serve themselves at this time.

Due to whānau indications so far, only one kitchen/kai creator will be needed for each bubble. *In time, if one kitchen/kai creator needs to serve two bubbles, consideration will be given to who is touching cutlery and disinfecting kai trays before they change hands.*

Meal breaks should be staggered.

We assume this relates to teacher's meal breaks, only one teacher will be on break using the office at one time.

Put away any toys that cannot be easily wiped down or cleaned frequently

As per our pandemic plan, playdough, water play, messy play or any other type of play that can easily spread germs will not be available.

All toys/resources that are used will be cleaned at the end of each day in hot soapy water or cool bleach water.

We will rotate resources that cannot be cleaned, such as books. A select amount will be out for play each day, then will be put away (clearly labelled in zip lock bags or containers) for seven days following.

Disinfect and clean all surfaces daily.

We will review our regular cleaning schedule with the centre cleaners for the end of each day to ensure we uphold high cleaning standards *(we cannot speak highly enough of our current cleaners, Lily and Clayton, they are the best we have ever had).*

Additional cleaning of surface 'hot spots' throughout the day as a Kaiwhakahaere responsibility or to delegated to a particular kaiako. Such as, door handles, light switches and bathrooms at least once in the middle of the day.

PPE is not required or recommended as necessary in any educational facility by the Public Health Service.

Thank goodness! How awkward would that be in our space?

Gloves will be used when required under normal policies.

Contact tracing registers must be set up to record who is on site in each physical space each day, who visits e.g. parents.

Kaiwhakahaere (or delegated to one Kaiako) will use the tablet to sign children in and out. This is so only one person is using the tablet to reduce potential virus transfer. They will note who dropped off and picked up each day, as well as the time.

The daybook must be used for anyone else who may visit the centre (public health, MOE, management).

Couriers and food delivery will be operating under contactless delivery.

I hope the above gives you assurance that we are taking every practical measure to ensure health and safety in our centres. We will be implementing these along with our usual policies and pandemic procedures; this document can be found in the 'Resources' sections on Educa. We may get more requirements and considerations from the MoE between now and when we re-open, and of course we will share with you any and all information as it arises.

We would like to end with a final note that during this time we have been collecting paragraphs for our next Space magazine about the value and importance of human relationships. Here are a few words from one of our Kaiwhakahaere:

And before it became the token word of 2020, I realized why I felt such a knot in my heart upon closing the centre. We were a 'bubble' without the title. A big beautiful bubble. Sharing space, creativity, ideas, love, kai, energy, and nourishment for the soul. Moments of calm, chaos, laughter, joy. Moments of frustration, moments of strength. We have felt every emotion in the walls of our place.

And now here I was locking the door. Knowing this place would be empty. Knowing our relationships would continue but take on a different form. Knowing we'd miss some of our children's first steps, miss first words, miss the questions and curiosities. Miss out on so many facets of the lives we share with these little beings. And that was a hard realisation, but it just reiterated to me why I do what I do. Why I adore this profession.

Because at our core, we are human. Because we teach with our hearts and live with our souls. We seek out and need connection to sustain our wellbeing and contribute to that of others.

I do it for the children that give love and laughter so effortlessly. I do it for the moments you can connect with families and share a story and a laugh. And I do it for the teachers that show up everyday and give so much of their energy and life so freely. I do it because I see the importance of connectedness and relationships. Because social distancing is weird. Hugs are meant to be given, not restrained. And life is meant to be shared, not lived in isolation.

May we all reconnect with softer hearts, and a rekindled appreciation for our big beautiful bubble.

Your Kaiwhakahere will be in touch as soon as we have been able to work out the full details of actioning this plan for each centre (entrances to use, opening times, bubble size and shape, and which Kaiako and tamariki will be in your child's bubble).

Again, thank you for your community spirit and if you have any questions, concerns, or comments please do not hesitate to email toni@childspace.co.nz, lauren@childspace.co.nz; or your centre kaiwhakahaere directly karori@childspace.co.nz; wilton@childspace.co.nz; northland@childspace.co.nz; nnaio@childspace.co.nz

Kia kaha, e te whānau,

Ngā mihi maioha

Toni, Robin, and Lauren on behalf of all of us here at Childspace.



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