

# Whānau Newsletter

## Term Four 2025

**McKenzie Centre**  
Realising a child's potential

### Welcome to Term Four Whānau



“Ehara taku toa i te roa takitahi engari he toa takitini”  
My success is not from my own strength, but from the strength of many

### Dates for Term 4, 2025

6 October	Term 4 starts
13 and 20 October	Sensory processing/integration workshops with Michael
28 Oct - 3 Nov	Parent Focus - MSD visit
3 and 10 November	Feeding workshops with Chrissy and Maria
21 November	Fire and earthquake drills
17 and 24 November	Toileting workshops
15 December	Whānau end of year celebration
19 December	Last session for the year
27 January 26	Term 1 starts
*6 - 12 Oct *October *November	Mental Health Awareness Week Down syndrome Awareness month Mental Health month

### Staff updates

#### Welcome to:

Siobhan Patterson - our new Interim Service Manager. We are delighted to welcome Siobhan Patterson as our new Interim Service Manager at McKenzie Centre! Most of you already know Siobhan, as she has been a valued Speech Language Therapist with us for the past five years. Siobhan brings energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas, along with a deep passion for supporting children, whānau, and our team. Siobhan shares the team's commitment to working with whānau to help every child achieve their best outcomes. She will continue her speech and language work in sessions where needed, while also stepping into this important leadership role. Siobhan says: "I love working at McKenzie Centre, where everything we do is about empowering our whānau. My focus is on making sure every parent/caregiver and child feels truly heard and supported, while creating a warm and welcoming space for everyone who comes through our doors. My first priority has been to increase staffing so we can continue to offer our high-quality service and extend much-needed input to more whānau. We look forward to walking alongside and supporting you and your tamariki along your pre-school journey."



## Staff updates continued

**Welcome to:** Claire MacDonald - Early Intervention Teacher.



Kia ora e te whānau!! I'm Claire MacDonald and I'm the new Early Intervention Teacher here. I have worked in Early Childhood Education for the past 22 years, and 11 of those were at Frankton Kindergarten. I recently completed my Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching (Early Intervention) as I've always had a passion for this area of teaching. I grew up in Raglan, and I still regularly visit the town as my parents still live out there. I have a seven-year-old son, Bodhi, who is someone that keeps me very busy.

Whānau and friends are so important to me, and this supports my whānau-centred teaching practices. I am really enjoying my new role at McKenzie Centre, and I am learning so much from you all. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to spend time with you and your whānau. I look forward to supporting you and your child through their learning journey. Arohanui, Claire.

### Farewell to:

Beverley Haddon – Executive Lead. Beverley's time here at McKenzie Centre came to an end in August. We would like to thank Beverley for all her hard work and commitment to McKenzie Centre whānau and staff during her time here. We wish her all the best for what lays ahead for her.



## Fabulous news

Mitre 10 Helping Hands will upgrade our carpark fencing and replace our back fence during the Christmas holiday break. They will also move our access ramp to be beside the building so we can have more playing space. A huge thanks to Mitre 10 Helping Hands in advance of their fabulous work.

We really appreciate their support. Look out for our new entrance in the new year.



## Sign IN and OUT every session



We encourage you to stay for the full session. There are a lot of important learning opportunities for you and your child. Please sign in on arrival, and out when you leave, as this is an early childhood licensing requirement from the Ministry of Education.

## Mental Wellness Month

To mark Mental Health Wellness week, 6 to 12 October, we are going to focus on looking after our mental health throughout the month of November. Shanayd is going to plan some calming activities to support your wellbeing.

## Down Syndrome Awareness Month

October is Down Syndrome Awareness month. Its purpose is to raise public awareness of Down Syndrome and advocate for acceptance and inclusion. There is clear evidence that inclusive education leads to better academic and social outcomes for both students with and without a disability. Many children with an intellectual disability however, are not accessing an inclusive education. The NZDSA is running a virtual conference from 3-21 October. Check their website for more info.

## Strategic Plan

We have started to look at our Strategic Plan, and would like thank whānau for their input so far. We hope to have a formal draft ready for you all to read by the end of the term.



## Curriculum updates and areas of focus for term 4



### Music, movement, and time as a group:

This term, we will continue our focus on increasing the participation of tamariki and whānau at music times. The mid-morning routine provides an opportunity to come together as a group and learn through music and movement. When the chimes ring throughout the centre, this signals that we are going to start our music session. We encourage the involvement of parents and whānau as your role modelling is supporting your child's participation and their learning and development.

Music and movement is integral to your child's learning and supporting their development of language, social skills, physical abilities and cultural understandings. We provide a variety of seating options (wiggle cushions, bean bags, peanut balls etc.) as well as headphones, to cater to your child's needs and preferences.

Kaiako are also very keen to learn new songs and waiata that your child enjoys at home with whānau, so please share some of your favourites with us!

### Communication modalities:

Another area of focus this term is to increase engagement with appropriate communication modalities. This includes using a variety of approaches to communicate both verbally and non-verbally, including AAC, New Zealand Sign Language, and visuals. The use of visuals can have a profound affect on your child's communication learning and development, including the ability to express their feelings and needs through appropriate non-verbal ways and to be able to respond to the non-verbal requests of others. If you have any questions around the use of visuals, please ask staff for more information.

### Emotional regulation:

Our third curriculum focus for the term is to support tamariki with emotional regulation by modelling strategies for them and whānau to use. Self-regulation refers to having appropriate control over emotional responses and showing resilience in response to challenges, disappointment or conflict. Learning the skills to regulate emotions requires guidance and support from others to help the individual to become aware of their emotions, developing understanding of what their emotions feel like and what experiences are linked to these emotional responses. Children can then learn strategies to help regulate their emotions through practicing calming activities, such as deep breathing, counting to five, having a calm space to go to, or blowing bubbles. It is important for adults to label emotions, discuss how these make the child feel and model strategies to regulate their emotions. If this is an area that you would like some support around, please talk to staff for more information.



As a team, we enjoy meeting the diverse learning needs of McKenzie Centre children. At the beginning of each term, we plan together as a team to formulate goals for each McKenzie Centre session.

Please check our Te Whāriki Curriculum goals which are on display on the whiteboard beside the sign in sheet. As already mentioned, this term you will find a particular focus on music and movement, increased engagement with communication modalities and supporting emotional regulation.

We will continue to have 'fast focus' workshops during sessions, and these will be facilitated by a range of team members this term. Please take advantage of these workshops as they are a fabulous opportunity for connection and sharing of ideas and resources. Let a team member know if there is a particular topic you would like discussed.



## Health and Safety at McKenzie Centre

### SunSmart:

Now that the UVI levels are rising again, please make sure to pack a hat for you and your tamariki and apply sunscreen. We have spare hats available and also sunblock if necessary. From the SunSmart guidelines: "All babies under 12 months should be kept out of direct sun when UVI levels are three or higher. They should be protected by shade, clothing and broad-brimmed hats. Sunscreen may be used on small areas of a baby's skin but do not rely on sunscreen as the primary method of protection".

Also make sure to pack a drink bottle during these hot summer days, it's important to keep fluids up in the heat.

### Emergency drills:

We practice fire and earthquake drills in session, and lockdown drills with the staff only. These drills are practised every three months. This term we will have our fire, earthquake and lockdown drills on 21 November. This is an early childhood licensing requirement so we are all prepared should an emergency event occur. If you are unsure what to do, please talk with the staff.

### Medication:

If you are bringing any medication, including Paracetamol, Disprin or EpiPens etc. into McKenzie Centre, please leave it in the office for safe-keeping. Little fingers can get into bags left unattended.

### Allergies:

Please let us know if your child has any allergies (food and other) so that we can adjust our planning around safety. Many of you have done this as part of the enrolment procedure but let us know if there are any changes.



**Diversi-TEA celebration  
August 2025**



## Changes to attendance

If you have or would like to make changes to the day that you attend McKenzie Centre, please talk with your contact person and have a chat with Henny in the office. We also need to know if your child's enrolment days/hours at Early Childhood Education Centres have changed as this affects funding claims.

## Loan Items

Please remember to bring back any toys or items that your whānau borrowed. If you're still using them, please touch base with your contact person.



## Early Intervention Fees

We have an Eftpos machine at McKenzie Centre, so you can make payments when you are here. Please see Henny or Lillian who are happy to help you. Thank you for supporting McKenzie Centre with your payment of the Early Intervention Fees. They are essential to the running of our service. The WINZ Childcare Subsidy is available for many families and may cover the entire cost of the Early Intervention Fee. Household income threshold amounts changed on 1 April so if you didn't qualify beforehand, you might do so now. We can help you apply for this, or find another option for you, so that your financial burden is eased. Please see your contact person or the Admin team – we are happy to help. Some people pay us a smaller amount every week – talk to Henny or Lillian and they will help you with this.

If you're a MSD/Work and Income client, you can apply for Childcare Subsidy using RealMe on the SmartStart website, or if you prefer, you can continue to apply through MyMSD or on paper.

## Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures are on a review cycle, so they always remain current and relevant. A full list is available in the yellow "Licence, Policies, ERO Report" folder in the Whānau Room.

Those under review will be shared during Parent Focus week or listed on the wall in the Whānau Room and families' opinions are an important part of this review process. If you want to know more about any policy, procedure or how they are reviewed feel free to ask Lillian.

## Thanks So Much To All Our Volunteers & Sponsors

We are very grateful to the many people and organisations that support McKenzie Centre and the work we do. We could not do what we do without you.



*Best wishes from: Rachael S, Henny, Lillian, Steph, Emma, Rachael F, Richard, Susie, Eram, Victoria, Siobhan, Shanayd, Liesl, Emma G, Chrissy, Michael, Nikki, Muriel, Maria and Claire*