Our Strategic Plan
2026 - 2029

The Tree House
Middlemore Hospital
Staff Childcare Centre Inc

Our Vision

We provide a nurturing and positive haven for tamariki where they are guided to explore, play, and learn through meaningful relationships and experiences. Aroha is at the heart of The Tree House, empowering us as whaanau, kaiako and community to grow together.

Our Values

Ngaakau pai | Positive Whanaungatanga | Relationships Aroha | Love Tupu | Grow

Our Philosophy

We believe tamariki learn and develop best in an early childhood environment that is safe and inclusive, where kaiako view and respect tamariki as competent and capable, holding high aspirations for every tamariki. The kaiako role is as a co-researcher and co-constructor in the learning process, which allows tamariki to explore, question, reflect, problem solve, theorise, and encourages their self-expression. Kaiako document the work of tamariki in a positive way, enabling tamariki to revisit their learning with their whaanau.

Tamariki and whaanau are at the centre of our learning philosophy. We acknowledge that tamariki learn through the relationships they form and experiences they have. We value the collaborative relationships that we have with whaanau and welcome their participation in our programme to ensure we are responsive to their needs. We reflect a whaanau environment for our tamariki with kaiako working as a team and opportunities for tamariki to learn about caring for each other through play with tamariki of different ages and their siblings. We incorporate the Principles, Strands and Goals of Te Whaariki – He Whaariki Maatauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa – The Early Childhood Curriculum, which reflects these holistic ways tamariki learn, grow, and strive to achieve outcomes consistent with Te Ara Poutama Indicators of Quality for Early Childhood Education.

Our Centre and kaiako are also guided by the Educational Leadership Capabilities Framework. This framework informs our approach to leadership development, supporting our kaiako to shape and critically reflect on programmes, individual pathways, overall practice and organisational strengths and needs. From these critical reflections and demonstration of new capabilities, we generate priorities for professional learning and continuous growth, and therefore our leadership

capacity. Quality educational leadership enables innovation and the spread of best practice amongst our kaiako, which results in positive learning outcomes for our tamariki.

The outcomes we work towards with our tamariki focus on supporting them to develop into confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to our community.

Our Mission

To deliver inclusive, high quality early childhood education that is accessible, responsive and inspiring.

Our Centre will provide

- A service that is connected and responsive to our community needs, preferences and resources
- A strong and effective teaching team of caring, qualified, and experienced kaiako
- Secure, consistent relationships between a team of kaiako and tamariki
- Inclusive and innovative learning and teaching practices
- A culture that celebrates diversity and promotes the articles and principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and bicultural learning
- A comfortable warm, well-organised indoor environment and natural, spacious outdoor setting
- Nourishing kai and active play that supports healthy development
- Inspired and committed leadership and governance
- Leadership sustainability with ongoing improvement and innovation.

How are we doing?

We have a well-functioning fully recruited governance committee that has a strong relationship with the Centre Director. There is periodic turnover of committee members due to their tamariki moving into their school years which means recruitment of new members is a regular activity.

Our management structure has clear lines of responsibility and accountability with a competent leadership team of the Centre Director, Curriculum Lead and Room Coordinators. There are fully documented policies and processes covering governance, operations, health and safety and curriculum that are annually reviewed. We have technology and resources in place for improving the efficiency of our operations.

Our team, like our tamariki, are culturally diverse and we celebrate this regularly through events and learning activities. Te Reo Maaori and tikanga are incorporated into everyday routines and programming. Our curriculum is further supported by an excellent outdoor learning environment and high-quality premises.

While there is currently a stable teaching and support staff team, we experience ongoing challenges with attracting qualified staff to comply with the qualified kaiako to student ratios set by the Ministry of Education. The Centre manages these staffing challenges effectively, retaining a reliable pool of relievers and

incentivising appropriate staff development to qualification. Our commitment to staff development and prioritising a positive working environment means we have excellent staff retention with an increasing number of long-serving Kaiako.

Our main income comes from government funding, topped up by parent fees that are purposefully kept low, which adds further importance to maintaining our ratios. We are a community-run organisation and registered charity with not-for-profit status. Our finance is managed by the Centre Director, Treasurer and an external early childhood specialist accountant and is audited annually. Our financial management is very good, and we have a well-resourced centre with monthly resource budgets allocated.

The government has introduced a bill to amend the Education and Training Act 2020 which will impact the early childhood education (ECE) sector once enacted. Additionally, in 2025 the Ministry of Regulations completed a review of ECE regulations. We expect the uncertainty around these changes to ease as detail emerges about their implications. . We have attested to full pay parity for our kaiako which has brought increased funding. We regularly review our position on pay parity, and in line with any changes in government policy. We offer highly competitive salary and conditions which is important given staffing pressures in the Auckland region with its rapid population growth and high cost of living, particularly for our Centre which is in an area of high deprivation.

Our local area has many ECE providers, and most nearby ECE centres offer highly government-subsidised care. We accept tamariki from our local community, but our centre is primarily filled by tamariki of parents who work for Health New Zealand |Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau.

Our strategic priorities 2025-2028

Our strategic priorities were developed in partnership with The Tree House kaiako, tamariki and whaanau to reflect our local needs, aspirations, and values. They are also informed by the National Education and Learning Priorities which remain in place until November 2025 when it expires. The NELP is currently proposed to be removed as part of the wider set of proposed changed in the Education sector.

1. **Workforce Development: Provide an environment and experience that will grow, attract, and retain excellent staff.**
   Our value TUPU
   - Foster an environment and culture where staff feel valued and connected to The Tree House
   - Strengthen staff engagement in their development and Centre performance
   - Empower our staff to utilise Teaching as Inquiry
   - Support career opportunities through visible leadership pathways
   - Proactively manage a pipeline of development
   - Demonstrate effective leadership

2. **Community Connection: Facilitate greater whanaungatanga and whaanau involvement.**
   Our value WHANAUNGATANGA

- Provide clear, relevant and timely communication with parents and whaanau
- Promote and grow our relationships with Health NZ - Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau
- Increase our enrolments and access for whaanau Maaori, Pasifika and tamariki with learning support needs
- Raise awareness and presence in the local community

3. **Sustainability: Maintain a financially and socially responsible Centre that cares for our environment.**
   Our value AROHA
   - Maintain effective financial management
   - Encourage healthy, socially aware and value-driven practices
   - Integrate environmental sustainability into operations and programme planning
   - Enhance Governance Committee retention, succession planning and understanding of the strategic environment
   - Uphold high standards and kaitiakitanga of our physical environment
   - Undertake internal and external evaluation for ongoing operational improvement

4. **Curriculum: Build an engaging programme that meets individual needs, reflects our community and fosters a positive learning experience.**
   Our value NGAAKAU PAI
   - Align teaching and learning with The Tree House strategic plan
   - Align with Te Ara Poutama – Indicators of Quality for early childhood education
   - Continue to implement meaningful te reo and tikanga into our learning programme and everyday life at the Centre
   - Appreciate our diverse cultural community within The Tree House
   - Provide an inclusive curriculum where each learner feels a sense of belonging and is supported to realise their aspirations
   - Identify and address gaps in teaching and learner support capability, confidence and competence
   - Expand age-appropriate teaching and technology utilisation
   - Deliver foundational language, literacy and numeracy skills and a thriving school readiness programme
   - Engagement in deliberate, systematic internal evaluation process and reasoning promotes valued outcomes for all children.

We use a range of evidence and measures to evaluate the implementation of our strategic priorities and actions. Measures are for the period of the plan unless stated otherwise.

1. Workforce Development: Provide an environment and experience that will develop, attract, and retain excellent staff

Our kaiako and management are the primary means by which we achieve our vision. It is critical we maintain an environment where teachers are supported with professional development and continuous improvement is fostered. Through this experience we create opportunities to attract, develop and retain excellent kaiako.

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
Foster an environment and culture where staff feel valued and connected to The Tree House	• Provide regular opportunities for staff to give and receive feedback with management and Governance Committee • Maintain a fit-for-purpose teaching environment where kaiako can use the space to implement their programme planning • Build our Tree House values into all interactions within the Centre including policies, processes, staff meetings, and programme planning • Ensure staff wellbeing is considered and implement opportunities for wellbeing discussion, care, and advocacy. • Staff feel valued and are supported to grow their capability to perform well. • A systematic approach to induction	➢ Education Review Office (ERO) report retains positive findings regarding the relationships and interactions between staff and tamariki ➢ Feedback from staff is positive regarding the Centre environment and culture ➢ **KPI Staff turnover rate is less than 15% per annum** ➢ Maintain membership with EAP for staff ➢ Standing agenda item at Team Meetings will be Wellbeing ➢ **KPI Staff Survey – 80% agree or strongly agree they feel valued for their contributions**
Strengthen staff engagement in their development and Centre performance	• Staff will have regular performance appraisals with individual development plans • Staff will be able to access appropriate professional development in line with their appraisal • Standing agenda item for staff meetings giving opportunity for staff to feedback to their colleagues regarding any professional development they have had • Staff are engaged in Teaching as Inquiry self-review process which will help evaluate how well it is achieving its vision, goals, philosophy, service and learning outcomes for children • Management, leaders and kaiako collaborate to gather a wide range of relevant and authentic data, use it to	➢ All staff will have documented performance appraisals that can evidence discussion of professional development ➢ Exit interviews will be offered with the Governance Committee Chairperson ➢ Staff will participate in internal reviews ➢ Staff will actively engage in Educa posts and webinars ➢ Staff will proactively seek professional development opportunities ➢ **KPI number of professional development opportunities taken up per annum**

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
	identify priorities and actions for improvement, and engage in meaningful decision making. • Kaiako take responsibility for their professional learning.	➢ Staff share their learning from professional development opportunities in agreed forum with the team
Empower our staff to utilise Teaching as Inquiry	• Staff will identify inquiry questions • Staff will collect data and information to formulate a plan to support their inquiry focus • Staff will continuously utilise a self-review process to evaluate effectiveness of the inquiry plan • Staff will implement changes based on the evaluation of the plan	➢ Staff are confident and competent in utilising Teaching as Inquiry
Support career opportunities through visible leadership pathways	• Maintain a tiered management structure to show staff where there are opportunities to grow and career paths within The Tree House.	➢ Where appropriate, recruitment to senior positions can be internal
Proactively manage a pipeline of development	• Actively engage tertiary education providers to promote ECE student placements • Provide positive learning experiences for ECE students • Promote The Tree House as a potential employer on graduation, giving ECE students the opportunity to showcase their ability and use their placement as an interview • Continue to provide scholarships for unqualified employees wanting to complete Bachelor of ECE • Provide professional development opportunities for all staff: o To spark interest in unqualified to complete training o To support development of qualified teachers to maintain best practice o To support management to advance their skills and maintain best practice in ECE	➢ The Centre is a source of regular positive ECE student placements ➢ **KPI At least two staff will have increased their qualifications over the period of this plan**

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
	• Recruit staff who can add value to the vision, goals and values of The Tree House.	
Demonstrate effective leadership	• Build and sustain high trust relationships. • Ensure culturally responsive practice and understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural heritage, using Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation • Plan and think strategically for service provision, workforce development and centre facility • Evaluate practice in relation to outcomes. • Embody The Tree House values and show moral purpose, optimism and resilience. • Leaders seek and use evidence about the effectiveness of professional learning processes in improving practice and children's outcomes • Establish organisational conditions that support debate, negotiation, problem solving, and critical reflection on practice. • Advocate for and alongside children, parents and whaanau to ensure all children have access to high quality inclusive education and care. • Leaders develop, implement and evaluate systems, processes and practices that promote ongoing improvement. • Leaders and Kaiako can explain how the service's curriculum is consistent with the principles of Te Whaariki/NELP/Code of Standards • Leaders mentor and coach kaiako to develop their teaching and leadership capabilities.	➢ Leadership accountabilities as identified in Professional Growth Cycle are achieved ➢ Regular meetings with outcomes of goals to achieve – documenting the progress ➢ Parent survey ➢ ERO Feedback ➢ Consultant feedback ➢ Staff survey ➢ Leadership feedback ➢ Participation in and evaluation of Internal review

2. Community Connection: Facilitate greater whanaungatanga and whaanau involvement.

Our Tree House whaanau of parents, kaiako and tamariki have respectful reciprocal relationships which are strengthened through effective communication. The community of CM Health is integral in our existence as a centre and the foundation of our relationship with CM Health is with our parent whaanau. We are committed in our aim to build our connection with Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau first and then expand to connect with our local Maangere/Papatoetoe community.

Our Priorities	Actions	Measures
Provide clear, relevant and timely communication with parents and whaanau	• Whaanau will receive regular centre updates via newsletters on Educa and texts through Infocare • Learning stories will be communicated to parents via Educa in a timely manner • Face-to-face engagement between staff and whaanau is expected • Increase visibility of Governance Committee members and their role	➢ **KPI 90% of parents and whaanau regularly use Educa** (this will be captured in the Centre Director's monthly report) ➢ **KPI 90% of tamariki receive at least one documented learning update every month** (reported annually) ➢ ERO report has positive findings for the Centre's relationships with whaanau ➢ Centre events are well attended by whaanau and generate positive feedback ➢ Parent survey has positive findings for communication with whaanau – **KPI 80% agree or strongly agree they are informed, receive news and learn about centre events.** ➢ Governance member introductions annually e.g. Christmas Party ➢ Governance presence at major centre events ➢ **KPI AGM attendance metrics.**
Promote and grow our relationships with Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau	• The Governance Committee will utilise networks within CM Health to promote The Tree House. • The Governance Committee and Centre Director will build and maintain relationships with Communications team to ensure involvement in Te Whatu Ora events and celebrations • Utilise opportunities such as advertising through Paanui to promote The Tree House to Te Whatu Ora community. • Maintain positive relationships with Health NZ – Te Whatu Ora Property Managers.	➢ The Tree House maintains a mutually beneficial relationship with Health NZ – Te Whatu Ora.

Our Priorities	Actions	Measures

Increase our access for whaanau Maaori, Pasifika and tamariki with learning support needs	• Promote benefits of The Tree House within Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau to gain enrolments.
	• Utilise Te Whatu Ora staff stories to advertise
	• Consider the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030 in strategic and curriculum planning
	• Partner with parents/whaanau and education leaders to identify barriers to enrolment and strategies to overcome them such as:
	  ○ Recognising identity, diversity, language and culture as critical to the success for Maaori tamariki in education
	  ○ Founding curriculum in language, culture and values for Pasifika learners
	  ○ Recruiting a workforce that reflects our tamariki
	  ○ Identifying aspirations for tamariki and tailor education to support those aspirations
	• Work in partnership with whaanau to enable access to early childhood education
	• Work reciprocally with whaanau to understand their aspirations for learning and equip tamariki with the tools they need
		➢ **KPI Enrolments are maintained at 80 children minimum**
		➢ Review and report annually on the ethnicities of tamariki enrolled at the Centre
		➢ Review and report annually on the ethnicities of the workforce.
		➢ Priority learners should have updated profiles annually.
		➢ Evidence of actions from the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030 in the curriculum.

Raise awareness and presence in the local community	• Utilise local community advertising sources such as Facebook pages, community centres and local papers • Become more visible in local community with day trips for pre-schoolers • Leaders build and maintain a network of supportive-challenging relationships within and beyond the Centre.	➢ Community enrolments reported annually on the Centre Director's annual management plan

3. Sustainability: Maintain a financially and socially responsible centre that cares for our environment.

The Tree House is committed to providing high quality early childhood education whilst maintaining our not-for-profit status. The Governance Committee and management work in partnership, ensuring we have a financially sustainable centre that promotes social and environmental responsibility in our ways of working, learning and being.

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
Maintain effective financial management	• Adequate government funding received by maintaining 80% qualified kaiako ratio • Monthly reporting by Centre Director to Governance Committee on budget variances • Annual auditing maintained and reported on to Charities Commission • Whaanau debts will be managed proactively by Centre administration and Centre Director • Budgets will be maintained and reviewed on an annual basis • Treasurer, Centre Director and Accountant maintain close working relationships with open communication • Creation of advanced administration role with accounting responsibilities to improve separation of duties • Parent fees reviewed as informed by our budget	➢ **KPI 80% funding band maintained based on teacher: child ratios** ➢ Annual budget maintained ➢ **KPI Staff receive competitive salaries** ➢ Advanced administrator role established
Encourage healthy, socially aware and value-driven practices	• Build our Tree House values into all activities and programme planning – Positive, Relationships, Love, Grow • Develop our Healthy Eating strategy for Tree House considering evidence based guidelines and health advice. • Follow Ministry of Health Active Play Guidelines for Under Fives (Three hours of active play day throughout the day)	➢ The Tree House values are widely integrated into all aspects of the Centre ➢ Staff are paid minimum of living wage ➢ Active Play guidelines are followed ➢ Tree House staff are kept abreast of ECE related topics

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
	• Promote visible infection prevention and hygiene practices throughout the Centre. • Ensure staff are all paid minimum of living wage, aiming for competitive teacher salaries • Support social and charitable causes that make a difference in our community • Strategic Gossip regarding ECE is shared with Tree House staff	
Integrate environmental sustainability into operations and programme planning	• Build environmental responsibility into curriculum and programme planning • Ensure the Centre utilises all opportunities to reduce waste where possible • Maintain gardening programme within the centre •	➢ Throughout the Centre's curriculum themes, there will be 4 environmental focussed activities per year
Enhance Governance Committee retention, succession planning and understanding of the strategic environment	• Maintain fully recruited Governance Committee (max 8 members) • Utilise a robust orientation to the Governance Committee to ensure engagement and understanding and buy-in • Be active in succession planning for Governance Committee members, particularly in relation to offices held (i.e. Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) to future proof good quality governance and mitigate loss of institutional knowledge • Maintain Strategic Gossip as a standing agenda item in Governance Committee meetings to promote knowledge and discussion regarding risks/benefits in ECE sector • All Governance Committee members are encouraged to attend a workshop relating to Governance within ECE. If a workshop is not available, the Governance Committee should consider contracting an expert to provide in-house professional development. • Review progress against this plan annually	➢ The Chair reports annually on progress in relation to the vision and goals, and identifies priorities, and actions for the future. ➢ **KPI Governance Committee maintains at least 4 members of which 3 offices are held – Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.** ➢ All Governance Committee members have completed training for Governance.

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
Uphold high standards and kaitiakitanga of our physical environment	• Develop Asset Management Plan to identify and prioritise capital spend over the next 5-10 years • Monthly feedback from Centre Director to GC regarding any physical areas that need attention • Maintain accurate Health and Safety policies and procedures including Risk Register • Utilise Te Whatu Ora facilities in a timely manner for any external building issues/repairs required • Implement regular cleaning and maintenance plan	➢ Asset Management Plan in place ➢ Positive feedback from next ERO review and annual parent survey - **KPI 80% agree or strongly agree they are happy with the centre's facilities and equipment**
Undertake internal and external evaluation for ongoing operational improvement	• Engage an external consultant for guidance and support /audit • Documentation of self-review – gather data • Report quarterly to the Governance committee • Hold meetings with staff to discuss strategies/progress and evaluation • Newsletters to staff and parents	➢ Quarterly reports include action plans for strengthening and developing focus areas ➢ Documentation is up to date ➢ Staff actively contribute to operational improvement

4. Curriculum: Build an engaging programme that meets individual needs, reflects our community and fosters a positive learning experience.

Our curriculum is based on Te Whaariki (the Ministry of Education's early childhood curriculum policy statement). Our learning programme aims to reflect our community by integrating te reo Maaori routinely and celebrating cultural diversity. We respond to individual tamariki strengths and interests, enabling a positive learning environment. We strive to ensure all tamariki develop skills that support their transition to school.

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
Ensure teaching and learning is aligned with The Tree House strategic plan	• Staff will utilise Teaching as Inquiry to align teaching and learning to the strategic plan • Staff will respond to tamariki strengths and interests to create authentic learning experiences • Staff will incorporate our values into teaching and learning • Kaiako practices are consistent with the competencies of Tataiko and Tapasa	• Maintain a positive ERO report on curriculum • Staff practices align with Tataiko and Tapasa
Continue to implement meaningful te reo and tikanga into our learning programme and everyday life at the Centre	• Maintain integration of te reo throughout the curriculum and learning programme • Seek advice from Maaori on how best to include tikanga Maaori in our practices and culture	• **KPI Learning programme will clearly incorporate Te Reo Maaori and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi**
Appreciate our diverse cultural community within The Tree House	• Celebrate our diverse cultural community by utilising our parent and whaanau support to help guide the learning programme • Learning programme to reflect our local community in areas such as language, activities, and food • Staff will plan events in accordance with the Ministry of Education calendar • Identify appropriate celebrations for tamariki and whaanau to uphold their cultural identities • Kaiako integrate the languages and cultures of children throughout the curriculum.	• **KPI Regular celebrations for cultural events such as language weeks and festivals – number of events.** • Tamariki and whaanau cultural identities are documented in Educa 'About Me' page. • Diverse cultures are reflected in the room environment and teaching practises. • Assessment practice ensures information documented about children's learning reflects cultural context in which they live and includes valued knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours.

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
	• Enable all staff to become culturally competent and responsive with our diverse learners	
Provide an inclusive curriculum where each learner feels a sense of belonging and is supported to realise their aspirations	• Staff will partner with family and whaanau to best understand each tamariki identity, language, and culture • Staff will build awareness of bias and low expectations and understand how these impact learners, whaanau and staff • Disabled learners and staff, those with learning support needs, and neurodiverse learners, are safe and included in the Centre and their needs are supported. • Source resources and adopt language that is inclusive of LGBTI+ whaanau	➢ Learning programme and resources include and reflect diverse identities and communities ➢ Learning stories show evidence of a strength-based approach to supporting different learner needs and aspirations.
Expand age-appropriate teaching and technology use	• Physical environment is tailored to meet individual and age group needs • Technology is appropriately utilised as per policy for age group and/or developmental level • Tamariki are provided opportunities appropriate to their learning level as assessed by a qualified teacher	➢ Rooms have learning areas designed for age-appropriate experiences ➢ Technology is very limited in infant and toddler areas and implemented appropriately for pre-school age learning.
Deliver foundational language, literacy and numeracy skills and thriving school readiness programme	• Tamariki in the pre-school group will be actively encouraged to develop school readiness skills such as managing a lunch box, dressing self, toileting independently, holding pencils and crayons • Kaiako will actively engage parents and whaanau to ensure expectations for school readiness are understood and accepted • Parents and whaanau will be provided with opportunities to meet with the Room Coordinator to discuss their child's readiness for school	➢ Parent feedback regarding pre-schoolers is positive ➢ Parents receive regular information regarding their child's school readiness progress and learning goals. ➢ Annual school readiness communication for all preschool whaanau e.g. 4-year-old learning stories being based on readiness skills. ➢ **KPI 80% agree or strongly agree their child is getting good education and care at the centre (parent survey)**

Our priorities	Actions	Measures
Identify and address gaps in teaching and learner support capability, confidence and competence.	➢ Use the National Education and Learning Priorities to assess Centre against national evaluation of performance and quality ➢ Evaluate performance against Code of Standards and Teacher Registration ➢ Professional Development training – with Curriculum Lead, studies towards ECE recognised qualification ➢ Keep up to date with the current ECE information. ➢ Curriculum Lead to actively drive professional development for teachers.	➢ Regular professional development opportunities provided for teachers related to updates or changes in the curriculum ➢ Individual teachers' professional development needs are supported ➢ Working with external ECE agencies e.g. MoE early intervention.