Kirsten

Canterbury

HOMEGROWN KIDS

Tiaki ngā tamariki



Operating Hours

Monday — On request

Tuesday — 7.30am – 5.00pm

Wednesday — 7.30am – 5.00pm

Thursday — 7.30am – 5.00pm

Friday — 7.30am – 5.00pm

Contact us

Enquire Online

Call us

0508 338 2273

Experience

Kia ora, I'm Kirsten. I am a mum to two beautiful daughters — my eldest is Deaf and my youngest is hearing. Becoming a mother to my eldest has deeply shaped who I am as an educator and is the reason I stepped into home-based childcare.

I began working with young children at the age of 13 through church volunteering and babysitting, and over time this grew into a strong passion for teaching. I have spent the past four years working in the Early Childhood sector and hold a Level 7 Bachelor of Teaching in Early Childhood Education.

While studying for my degree, I developed a passion for learning New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) after working with children who had limited or no hearing and no effective means of verbal communication. In the middle of my final year of study, I welcomed my beautiful eldest daughter into the world, and shortly after her birth we discovered she was Deaf. From that moment, learning NZSL became a priority for our entire family.

As my daughter grew, I watched her struggle within larger centre environments — despite best intentions, she often fell through the cracks. Her need for meaningful communication, connection, and understanding was not always met. This experience led me to step away from centre-based care and into home-based education, where I could create a more inclusive, responsive, and supportive environment — not only for her, but for all children.

Because NZSL is one of New Zealand's official languages, I believe every child deserves the opportunity to access early communication, fostering equality, inclusion, and acceptance from a young age. I am committed to advocating for the inclusion of NZSL in early childhood settings so that all children feel seen, heard, and understood.

In our family, we live by a quote from Lilo & Stitch (2002): "Ohana means family, and family means nobody is left behind or forgotten."

My goal with home-based care is to create a nurturing, inclusive environment where all children — Deaf, hearing, and of all abilities — feel valued and supported. By incorporating NZSL into our daily routines, I aim to build empathy, connection, and a strong sense of belonging within our learning community.

Home Environment

Our home base offers a semi-open learning environment where children are encouraged to play, explore, and learn. The space is thoughtfully resourced to support children's individual interests and developmental needs. Within the indoor area, children can enjoy a cosy corner filled with books, cushions, blankets, and plenty of cuddly teddies ready for comfort and quiet moments. There is also a puzzle area, sensory corner, play kitchen, and construction block space, providing a variety of learning experiences. Both indoors and outdoors, there are calm and comfortable spaces where children can relax and recharge.

Our backyard is a beautiful extension of the learning environment, with excellent indoor-outdoor flow that supports active play and exploration. The outdoor area includes an infant and toddler swing, climbing frames, a sandpit, a playground with slides, a 12-foot trampoline, and

a mud kitchen that offers plenty of opportunities for messy and water play. This space encourages children to develop their gross motor skills through running, climbing, and active play in a safe and engaging environment.

In addition to our home setting, we are fortunate to have several local reserves nearby featuring gentle hills and parks. These spaces allow us to go on adventures, enjoy playgrounds, feed the ducks, and have picnics, extending children’s learning beyond the home and into the wider community.
Our daily activities are guided by the interests and needs of the children at the home base. These experiences include mat times, singing, dancing, creative art with paints, messy and water play, construction and building, imaginative play, and shared reading. Through these activities, children are supported to learn, explore, and express themselves in meaningful ways.

Activities:

Regular outings to local parks
Children learn to walk safely together while challenging their bodies through climbing, running, and active play on playground equipment.

As part of our regular programme, our small group enjoy:
Home Grown Kids weekly playgroup
Opportunities to socialise with other children of similar ages through free play, mat time, and craft activities.

Home Grown Kids monthly get-togethers
Group experiences with other educators and children, often focused on nature-based activities.

Childcare Philosophy

My philosophy is grounded in a Montessori-led approach, providing children with calm, semi-structured, and free-

flowing days where independence, kindness, and respect are nurtured. Children are encouraged to care for themselves, others, and their learning environment while being supported to explore, take appropriate risks, and follow their individual interests in a safe and encouraging setting. Through this approach, children develop creativity, resilience, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning — building strong foundations for their future.

As a parent, I deeply value the individuality of each child. Every child brings their own strengths, interests, cultural background, and learning style. I believe children thrive when they are given the freedom to learn through play, hands-on experiences, and purposeful exploration that sparks curiosity and wonder. When children form warm, trusting relationships with educators and peers, they feel safe, valued, and heard, which greatly enhances their ability to learn and grow.

As an educator, my role is to create a nurturing, stimulating, and safe environment that reflects the evolving interests and developmental needs of each child. Guided by Montessori principles, I act as a facilitator — observing, guiding, and extending learning at each child’s pace while supporting the development of essential life skills. I am committed to building open, trusting partnerships with families, recognising that parents and whānau are a child’s first and most important teachers. By working together, we support each child as they navigate their unique developmental journey and celebrate meaningful milestones along the way.

Community Involvement

In the community we love to adventure to new and fun adventures:

- Bush walks

Time spent listening, observing, and appreciating nature, encouraging curiosity and a sense of calm.

- Willow bank

Learning about native animals and participating in feeding experiences.

- Messy Mates

Exploring the benefits of messy play and sensory experiences in a fun, hands-on environment.

- Arion Farm

Discovering farm and native animals and learning how to care for them through feeding and observation.

- Tiny Town

Engaging in role-play within realistic learning spaces such as a supermarket, post office, veterinary clinic, and construction site, supporting imagination, social skills, and real-world understanding.