

# Welcome to the Stellar Room

A very warm welcome to our new children and parents. We hope you will have a wonderful time in the Stellar Room. To help your family settle into our room, we have designed this information booklet in such a way that we believe it lets you know everything you need to know about our room and what we do here. We have a friendly, open-door policy so feel free to ask anything, drop in anytime and stay for a while. You will see happy, sociable children and teachers, energised by and engaged in learning together!!!

## The Stellar Teaching Team



Introducing... Cami Margasoíu      Preschool Pedagogista

Bachelor of Arts Degree  
Diploma of Teaching ECE  
Full Registration

As a Reggio Emilia inspired educator, I place high value of “responding to children’s predisposition to enjoy the unexpected”. Constantly provoking their creative thinking and allowing for a multitude of learning avenues to be explored are aspects I consider quintessential for children’s natural growth.

Introducing... Canaan Quinlivan-Potts      Stellar Lead Teacher

Bachelor of Arts Degree  
Graduate Diploma of Human Resource Management  
Graduate Diploma of Teaching ECE  
Full Registration

As a lifelong learner myself, I seek to facilitate an environment where children feel safe to challenge, query, take risks, ask ‘why?’, and explore their skills as natural researchers, engaging in meaning making about their world and constructing theories to interpret reality, by themselves as well as alongside their peers and teachers. Together, we will engage in research and dialogue to find the answers to our questions.



Introducing... Leone Tuisaula

Stellar Teacher

Bachelor of Education Degree  
Diploma of Teaching ECE  
Provisional Registration

I have had the privilege of working with preschool children since I left secondary school. I have worked in all the various age groups from the babies right up to those who are nearly five! My passion is to encourage our children to become eager explorers of the world around them & confident learners and communicators....



Introducing... Alexandra Quay  
On Maternity Leave

Stellar Teacher

Graduate Diploma of Teaching ECE  
Full Registration

I view children as lifelong learners, and choose to learn alongside them in collaboration, assisting them to search for and make new connections. Thus providing children with opportunities that provoke thought, investigation and exploration.



Introducing... Lenny Wage  
Fixed Term Maternity Leave Cover

Stellar Teacher

A child is a special individual with special skills and potential. I have a passion to develop these skills and bring out their abilities. This involves fostering a positive self-image through extending their strengths and interests. My focus is placed on building the emotional and developmental needs of a child. Thus, a child learns self-discipline; interacting in a socially responsive and responsible way. With my twelve years teaching experience, it is always a joy and a pleasure for me to facilitate learning in a conducive and safe environment.

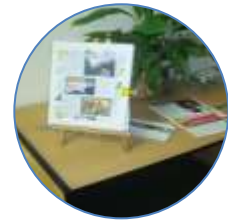


# The Stellar Room - a Virtual Tour

Our classroom is located on the left hand side, opposite reception and the manager's office. A descriptive Flow of the Day can be found on the left hand side wall before entering the room. Next to the Flow of the Day, we have placed our monthly 'Possible Projections'- an outline of the learning experiences that the preschool children and their teachers are investigating.



On the desk situated on the left hand side of the door the following information can be found: Stellar Daily Diary/ Newsletters/ Parents' Committee information. From time to time, we also place other pertinent information in this location. Please check daily.



This desk also contains sunscreen in the summer months. Please apply sunscreen to your child's face and neck and other visible skin areas each morning when you arrive. We also apply sunscreen throughout the day.



To the right hand side of the door is a wall mounted hand sanitiser unit. Please ensure you and your child use this daily, before entering the classroom. This is to help prevent the spread of germs and other bacteria.

As you enter the classroom, you will find an information display board to your right. This area displays our teaching philosophies, the daily food and sleep/rest charts, the Sickness Policy and a whiteboard for daily notices. Please check the notice board daily.



Your child's bag will have an assigned hook with their photo and name beside it. Please ensure your child's bag is not overly full as on busy days the bags are very close together, not leaving much room for manoeuvring things in and out!!!



Located to the left as you enter is the sign-in register. Please sign your child in and out. Please let us know in advance if someone else will be collecting your child. This is particularly important if we have not met this person before or if they are not on the list of people approved to collect your child (nominated by you at the time of enrolment). If someone arrives to collect your child and we have not been notified, we will phone you to confirm this is the case. This is to ensure the safety and protection of your child.



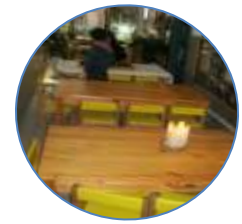
Under the sign-in register, inside the cubby hole is where the Medicine Chart, Illness Register and Accident Register are located. In case of medicine being required, please fill in the Medicine Chart as well as informing a teacher. All medicine needs to go in the kitchen fridge and must not remain in the child's bag. Please also refer to the Medicine Giving Protocol document attached to this document in terms of which medicines we will administer and under what circumstances. If your child becomes unwell during the day, we will telephone you and possibly ask you to collect them. We require to sign the Illness Register when you collect your child. In case of accidents, we will let you know when you arrive and will get you to counter-sign the accident report, taking a copy with you.



On the desk to your left is a water jug and cups that your child has free access to during the day. Water is regularly replenished and the cups washed throughout the day.



Straight ahead of you is the dining area. Children are encouraged to help set the tables for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, taking pride in laying out the cutlery, plates, glasses, water jugs and serving bowls. Morning and afternoon teas are what we call "rolling meals" whereby food and beverages are offered over the course of an hour and a half. Children are able to choose when they would like to eat, determined by when they get hungry and how hungry they are. This is to cater for all children as we have some children who are here at 7.00 am, while others don't arrive until 10.00 am. Closer to the time that your child starts school, we will encourage them to eat later, so that their stomachs begin to adjust to the school timetable for morning tea which is usually around 10.30 am.



Beyond the dining area, is located our "atelier". "Atelier" is the Italian word for "studio". In the Reggio Emilia philosophy, "the atelier and the mini-ateliers are spaces designed to offer daily opportunities for each child and the group of children to encounter a wide variety of materials and expressive languages, and different points of view, where hands, mind, and emotions are all active contemporaneously, giving value to the expressiveness and creativity of each child" (The Municipal infant-toddler centers and pre-schools of Reggio Emilia website, 2010). At all times, a wide range of materials, art mediums and tools are available for the children to work with, for example: clay, paints, water-colours, dyes, pastels, charcoal, pencils, coloured pencils and pens, black artline pens, gold/silver pens, glue guns, recycled and natural collage materials, wire and a range of other materials to use creatively.



Located to the left of the atelier, is the Free Composition area. This area offers children multiple possibilities for arranging and transforming materials to express an idea, thought or support story telling. "Materials that are open-ended and can be transformed have the power to call on children's internal resources, experiences and imagination in multiple ways for multiple purposes" (Curtis and Carter, 2008, p. 62).



Opposite the Free Composition area are our piano and musical instruments. Fortunate to have a piano, the children love to explore the tunes they can create, individually, in pairs or as a larger group. We are privileged to have Leone's strengths as a guitar player, accompanying the children daily during morning meeting and at other times. Background music plays throughout the day and we purposefully provide children with a wide musical genres, both to stimulate their senses as well as encouraging them to discover and appreciate the possible connections between theatricality and musical scores.



Across from the piano, you will find our Construction area, complete with building platform. This area houses our wooden blocks, train set, wooden people and animals and a variety of other construction based materials e.g. mobilo, stickle bricks and tubular connector blocks.



Also located in this area is our laptop. This is freely available for the children to use, providing them with opportunities to explore and develop their competencies in ICT (Information, Communication and Technology). Children can select from a variety of educational computer games (both CD-Roms and internet based learning resources). These support a number of curriculum areas e.g. Letter Getter and [www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com), developing literacy and phonemic awareness, Dinosaur World, developing knowledge around the natural environment and the pre-historic world. Our lap-top is web-enabled but computer usage is monitored by teachers to ensure internet access is appropriate and safe for children and that games are educational in purpose. Time spent on the computer is also monitored and children required to move on to another learning experience if needed.



Adjacent to the Construction area, is our Scientific exploration area, supporting children's developing theories around the natural world and scientific processes. Children have access to rocks, crystals, shells, bugs, dinosaurs, measuring scales, magnifying glasses and non-fiction books on a range of topics. Additional materials are provided and changed regularly, supporting the children's interests at the time.



Our lightbox area is a space for children to explore a broad range of experiences using light as a medium for exploration. Light illuminates materials, offering alternative possibilities and perspectives on how materials can be used, particularly in an open-ended manner.



Across from the lightbox is our tee-pee, a place for children to gather in small, intimate groups, engaging with a range of miniature provocations, used predominantly with the dolls' house. Our dress-up basket is also located here and children revel in the clothing and materials provided, having fun in discovering the ways dress-ups can transform themselves into other characters, from alternate worlds.



## Flow of the Day

N.B. The flow of the day is flexible and adapted to suit the flow of play and exploration of our children. We are flexible to children's needs and parents' requests in relation to food, rest, time and water. Water is offered at all meal times and throughout the day.

### 7.00-9.00am Arrival

The children and their families are welcomed to the centre. The children are invited to get involved in experiences of their own choice (inside and outside). This is also a great time to go and explore the Astron room.

### 9.00-10.45am Rolling Morning Tea

This is a time when children are encouraged to use their self help skills: serving their own fruit, pouring water etc.

### 9.40-10.00 am Morning Meeting Time

The children and teachers come together and discuss aspects that will give their day more predictability. It is also a great time for sharing news and for discussing any aspects of interest. The Morning Meeting is generally concluded with a prayer, done either by the teachers or the children.

### Until 11.00am Small Group Investigation Time

Based on the teachers' observations and children's expressed interests (Morning Meeting) the environment is set up with varied provocations. Children and teachers come together in smaller groups and discuss, experiment, re-visit aspects that are of interest them. Free play experiences inside/ outside

### 11.00 – 12.00 am Free Play Choices/Continued Investigation Time

Children wishing to continue to stay involved in the above mentioned investigative experiences may do so with continued teacher support. Alternatively, other play choices are available inside and outside.

### 12.00-12.30 pm Lunch Time

Children come together after washing their hands, select a seat, sing grace and enjoy a well-balanced and nutritional cooked lunch. Throughout mealtime children are given opportunities to develop reciprocal relationships and gain positive attitudes towards eating in a calm, relaxed manner.

### 12.30-1.15 pm Story Time

After washing their hands children come back on the mat for a quiet story time. The children have a choice whether to stay and listen to all the stories or when/if feeling tired to go and lie down for a sleep in Astron Room.

### 1.15-2.00 pm Siesta Time

All children are encouraged to spend this time lying down, relaxing, quietly reflecting on experiences they were engaged in during the morning, while they listen to soft, relaxing music.

### 2.00- 3.30 pm Free Play Choices (inside and outside)

Children engage in free play set involving activities that can be participated in independently or in small groups. Some children remain sleeping for a part of this time.

### 2.30-3.30 pm Rolling Afternoon Tea

After washing their hands children select a seat, say their prayer and enjoy a healthy snack.

### 3.30 – 4.00 pm Group Time: music, dancing, storytelling

Children and teachers regroup and say goodbye to those who go home. It is a time for sharing stories, singing along and dancing.

### 4.00- 4.15 pm Tidy Up Together

Children and teachers help tidy up the inside and outside environment.

### 4.15-5.15 pm Free Play Choices (inside and outside)

### 5.15-5.30 pm Late Snack in Astron Room

Children complete hand washing, select a seat and say their karakia together. At this time the children have a small snack and drink before they head home.

### 5.30-6.00 pm Free Play and Wind Down

Teachers and children engage in quiet experiences in designated areas of the Astron Room e.g. puzzles, reading, computer games etc

# Stellar Room Transition to School Programme

**Rationale:** To ensure a smooth transition from preschool to primary school by ensuring an effective cooperation between Bright Sparks Childcare preschool teaching team, the child and his/her family and the primary school the child is going to attend.

**Benefits for Children:** The programme will create a sense of continuity between the preschool and the primary educational setting. It will focus on enhancing the children's self-confidence, thus creating a greater sense of trust between preschool teachers, children and their families and primary teachers. It will equip children with the necessary skills that will allow them to succeed academically, physically, emotionally, socially.

**Benefits for Parents:** The programme will give them a more informed understanding and appreciation of the educational system. It will allow them to be actively involved in the education of their own child/dren, also lessening the anxiety induced by the change from preschool to primary, and last but not least, enhancing their confidence in their own child/ren's ability to succeed in a new educational setting. It will also enable parents to have access to unbiased, accurate, comprehensive information about different primary schools, their programs and how suitable they are for their child.

**Benefits for Preschool Teachers:** The transition to school programme will give them an enhanced understanding of the children and their individual needs, will strengthen the rapport with the children's families, and last but not least, will create opportunities for ECE and primary teachers to connect and dialogue for the benefit of the children.

**Implementation:** Preschool experiences that support children with their communication, numeracy, information, problem solving, self-management and competitive, social and co-operative, physical as well as work and study skills:

**Lunchbox Wednesday:** Supports preschool children with their self-help, self-management skills, information skills (as they are expected to rely "healthy eating" messages to their parents), problem-solving skills (opening their lunchbox, unwrapping their sandwich etc)

**Mission Possible Tasks:** The missions encourage children and their families to get involved in open-ended literacy, numeracy, general knowledge experiences which support them with their communication, numeracy, information, problem-solving, co-operative, work and study skills.

**Library Visits:** These visits offer children opportunities to get accustomed to varied reading styles, to enrich their vocabulary, to practice active listening and encourage them to communicate their thoughts and ideas as effectively and creatively as possible. It is also a great opportunity for children to build cooperative relations with others and become aware of individual differences in ability, interests, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic styles. This experience is also set to develop children's interests in the community and world outside.

**Project Time :** Supports children by building upon their natural curiosity and desire to make sense of the world around them. These encounters provide environments which put greater emphasis on stimulating oracy, written language awareness, ability to pose questions and direct the research towards concepts which are of interest to individual children.

By using concrete materials and participating in investigations that are relevant to their own experiences and culture, the children enhance their communication, information, problem-solving, competitive, social, physical, work and study skills.

**Active Movement Sessions:** These weekly sessions through meaningful physical exercises facilitate the development of small and large muscles, coordination, active listening, physical adeptness, general body strength, awareness of own physical limitations and characteristics.

**Group/ Morning Meeting:** It is a time that facilitates the development of self-control in children by revisiting behaviour expectations (Good choices), by encouraging comprehension of general expectations within a collectively shared environment. The purpose of these daily encounters is to gradually develop an understanding and acceptance of themselves as individuals, and of others. These daily encounters strengthen the children's communication, information, problem solving, self-management and competitive, social and co-operative, physical as well as work and study skills.

### Transition to school procedures:

- Establish parents' expectations (discussions during Parent-Teacher interviews or more informal interactions) and put together a list of primary schools our preschool children are most likely to attend..
- Contact the primary schools and ask for information leaflets, website details, open days etc.
- Establish communication with those schools, insisting on a designated liaison person.
- Discuss with primary school liaison person for a potential group orientation visit prior to a specific child's official school visits thus offering children a more relaxed initial interaction

with the primary school setting and its general expectations. These visits will allow children to know what is expected of them by adults in the new program. By facilitating opportunities for the children to become familiar with the new environment well in advance, they will look forward to the new experience with a sense of excitement and anticipation rather than feeling threatened and fearful of what lies ahead.

- Supporting parents and children with their “school visits” when/ if asked by the parents.
- Holding a Transition to Primary Interview with the parents a week prior to the child’s 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, filling out a Transition to School Form. Give one to the parents to keep and one to give to the primary teacher.
- Invite parents and their children to come back for a visit to preschool a few weeks after their child started school, thus allowing preschool teachers to constantly assess the effectiveness of the established transition programme and its procedures.

# Good Choices

In the Stellar Room, we follow some agreed “good choices” which apply to everyone, as part of a collective member of the room. These are as follows:

If it’s cold we wear our jackets, hats and shoes.

If it’s hot we wear our sunhats.

Our feet stay off the furniture.

We tidy up after we finish an activity.

We eat with our mouths closed.

We say: “Stop! I don’t like it. It hurts!” whenever someone hurts us.

We put our books back on the self when we finish reading them.

We do not stand on our books.

We use our quiet voices inside and our loud voices outside.

We use our walking feet inside.

We run outside.

We keep our toys in the bag or we leave them in the car.

If I forget my good choices:

1. If I forget my good choices, my teacher will remind me of the good choices I can make.
2. If I forget my good choices again, I will have to make my play choices in the Quiet area.

# Library Visits

We aim to visit the Henderson Library on a regular basis, taking small groups of children in a taxi van to Thursday story times as well as visiting at other times. We have established a good relationship with Catherine, the children's librarian at Henderson Library and she also comes once a month to read stories to the children here at Bright Sparks. Because we visit the library using public transport, we will seek your written consent to allow your child to go. Library visits are a highlight for children and are always eagerly anticipated. We get out library books and children enjoy reading these in the intervening weeks.

# Local Walks

We support children getting out into their local community by taking them on walks to different places. In the past, we have walked to Te Pai Park, Fruit World (to get lemons to make lemonade) and to the Trusts Stadium (to attend the Waitakere Home & Garden Show). Getting out and about in the local community is an educational experience, offering children opportunities to learn about walking and road safety, exercise, having fun and noticing the small things you don't get to see from the window of a car. When you enrolled your child, you would have granted permission for local walks so permission is not sought as we do not use public transport. If you have any concerns, please speak to one of your child's teachers.

# Active Movement Programme

Active Movement, a Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) initiative for children under five is about engaging in quality physical movement experiences, which develop and enhance the growth of the child. Early childhood experiences of quality physical movement strongly affect the healthy development of a child's brain - as well as their body. Bright Sparks have chosen to offer Active Movement sessions in their centres, employing a specialist practitioner to provide these. Active Movement is designed and run by Kane Hancy who holds a Bachelor of Recreation Sports qualification. The Stellar Children participate in Active Movement sessions once a week and these are eagerly anticipated.

# Illness & Medicine Policy

## Giving Medicine Protocol:

All prescription medicine must be given directly to the teachers or placed in the fridge, on arrival. **DO NOT LEAVE ANY MEDICINE IN BAGS OR BASKETS.** Teachers must be informed if any medicine must be given to the child.

Medication must:

- Be signed for in the Medicine register
- Be in its original container
- Be in the name of the child
- Not exceed the stated dosage

CREAMS: if not prescribed will be given at teachers' discretion.

PAMOL/PARACETAMOL: will be administered with discretion, **ONLY** for a shock or a rapidly rising temperature. Parents' permission is required. The parents will have to arrange for the child to be picked up as soon as possible. If the child's parents cannot be contacted, the stated emergency person will be contacted.

## Illness

Bright Sparks Childcare undertakes to provide a safe and healthy environment for children and staff alike. It is advised that children stay away from the centre until there is no risk of spreading an illness.

Any child who has:

- A high temperature (over 37° C)
- A unidentified rash
- Been vomiting or had diarrhea ( the child must be clear for 48 hours before returning- Doctor's Certificate will be required)
- Inflamed throat, eyes
- Green, runny nose
- Infected sores
- Weeping ears
- Eye infection while weeping
- Any infectious disease- please check Illness Policy for more details

- Head lice- child must be treated for a day before returning to the centre.

Whenever a child becomes ill during the day, the parents will be notified immediately and the child will be isolated (couch/ Sick Bay) from the rest of the children until picked up (as soon as possible).

Please notify the centre of any infections or illnesses: chickenpox, gastroenteritis, measles, conjunctivitis, croup, head lice, meningitis, ringworm etc.

## Lunchbox Wednesday

Supporting children in their transition to school, we offer Lunchbox Wednesday, whereby children bring their lunchboxes from home, learning how to eat food that is similar to what they will experience when going to school. At this stage, Lunchbox Wednesday only includes morning tea so please just pack enough for a midmorning snack. We are looking at moving towards having Lunchbox Wednesday include morning tea and lunch. This is to support children in learning how to “manage” their food consumption over a day, so that when they get to school they know how to save food for later meals.

We support and recommend healthy eating choices so please do not include such items as roll-ups, lollies or other high sugar items. Please do not include a drink bottle as water and/or milk is supplied. Healthy choices could include but are not limited to: yoghurt, cheese/crackers, rice crackers, fruit (either whole or sliced), vegetable sticks and dip, sandwiches (but no peanut butter or nutella), muffins, scones etc. We also support children to practice brushing their own teeth on Lunchbox Wednesday so please remember to include their toothbrushes (however dentists advise that parents support children in brushing their teeth until age eight!). Don't worry about toothpaste as we provide it.

Please do not include any food in your child's lunchbox that contains nuts of any kind. Please check the ingredient list on items such as biscuits and muesli bars. We have a number of children attending who are highly allergic and, because of this, we operate a **NUT-FREE ZONE**.

# Rolling Morning Tea

We offer a rolling morning tea between 9.00 am and 10.30 am. This recognises that children arrive at Bright Sparks at different times and as such are hungry earlier and later than their peers. We also believe that a rolling morning tea is less disruptive to children's learning, providing them with the space and time to carry on with their learning experiences, determined by themselves. We remind and encourage children to eat but understand that some children may not want to do so; children are required to drink a glass of water however.

We offer fruit and vegetables only at morning tea and the children prepare this, cutting the fruit themselves. Children can eat as much fruit as needed to satisfy their appetite and we're noticing a much better rate of lunch consumption as a result!!! This encourages them to differentiate between a snack and a meal.

As part of our rolling morning tea, we ask parents to bring in a ceramic mug that can stay at Bright Sparks. This mug is available to your child's use at morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. This creates a more homely atmosphere.

# Allergies & Food Requirements

We cater for food allergies at Bright Sparks, preparing specific foods for children with allergies which is separate to the menu. We operate a **NUT-FREE ZONE** in our centre and remind parents of this in regards to lunch-box contents. Please talk to your child's teacher or ask to speak to Fria Durano directly, our chef.

# Bringing Breakfast

Recognising that some children are here early, we are happy for your child to have breakfast at Bright Sparks but do not provide it. We do however provide milk, water, bowls and cutlery. Please bring an appropriate breakfast option and we will be more than happy to assist your child in organising this. Breakfast may be consumed from 7.00 am to 7.45 am.

# Celebrating Birthdays

We recognise that birthdays are special events in children's lives and should be celebrated. We are more than happy for parents to bring a birthday cake so that your child can celebrate their birthday with their friends. Parents and relatives are welcome to come. Birthdays are usually celebrated at afternoon tea time. Please liaise with one of your child's teachers at least a week before so we know this will be happening. Please ensure the cake is **NUT-FREE** and check with your child's teachers in terms of any other allergies you may need to be aware of.

Please do not bring individualised party-bags for the children as we believe a shared cake is enough to celebrate a birthday, recognising that these are costly. We also do not want children to miss out if there are not enough bags. You are welcome to bring juice as a special treat but not fizzy drinks.

# Toilet Training

All children learn to toilet train at different times and rates, so please don't be confused by wet clothes or even setbacks at times. If your child is having difficulty with this, please remember to provide at least three changes of clothes so if there are any accidents we can deal with these in a positive, reassuring way. A record of your child's toileting can be found in the bathroom, next to the changing mat.

# Clothing for Preschool

Please provide clothing that is suitable to the season. Please make sure all clothing is clearly labelled. We cannot take responsibility for things that get lost and are not named.

In Summer, please provide shorts, t-shirts, skirts etc. No sleeveless tops please. Please also send swimsuits as children love to play in the water and under the sprinkler. Summer hats need to cover the face and the back of the neck. As per our "Safe in the Sun" policy, please apply sunblock in the morning. The children re-apply this throughout the day.

In Winter, please provide raincoats, jackets, warm hats and gumboots. Children need to be able to get outside and experience the joy of jumping in puddles!!

We do endeavour to place children's clothing back into their bags each day, however we do encourage children to be responsible for their own belongings. If you are missing an item, please ask one of the teachers.

## Bag Hooks

Each child has an assigned hook. Part-time children will be sharing hooks on the days they don't attend. All pre-school children should have their own bag – a medium sized one preferably because as we have limited space for our school bags, big bags, overly full, clutter the locker space and make it difficult for children to access and keep their bags tidy.

## Children's Art Folders

Any artwork completed by your child can be found in the art basket in our Atelier, by the Remida area. If you would like your child to create a birthday card (or other special event) for a member of your family, please feel free to talk to one of your child's teachers who can support your child in creating something special.

We hope that your time at Bright Sparks is a happy one for both you and your child and we welcome any questions or comments you might have.

The Stellar Teaching Team.