



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is an Early Learning Centre?

An Early Learning Centre, often abbreviated as ELC, is a comprehensive educational and childcare facility that seamlessly blends the extended hours of traditional childcare centres with the enriched and structured learning environments found in preschools and kindergartens. These centres are becoming increasingly popular among modern families, providing a holistic solution for both childcare and early childhood education needs.

What sets Early Learning Centres apart is their extended operating hours, accommodating the diverse schedules of today's parents. They cater for children up to school age, ensuring a smooth transition through the critical early years of development. Importantly, they are staffed by qualified early childhood specialists, including university-qualified early childhood teachers, who play a pivotal role in nurturing children's growth and development during these crucial formative years.

One of the standout advantages of Early Learning Centres is their commitment to incorporating the latest research findings in child development into their daily routines. This approach transforms ordinary activities into valuable learning opportunities. By applying evidence-based strategies and age-appropriate curriculum, these centres create a stimulating environment that fosters cognitive, social, and emotional growth in young learners.

In essence, an Early Learning Centre serves as a bridge between the need for reliable childcare and the desire for a strong educational foundation. It offers families the best of both worlds, making it an appealing choice for those seeking a nurturing, stimulating, and developmentally enriching early childhood experience for their children.

## What ages are catered for at the Early Learning & Community Centre?

We provide care for children from the ages of three to school age.

## What are our operating hours?

Our operating hours are from 7.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

## Is the ELCC open year-round?

We are open 48 weeks a year. We are open school holidays. We have a selection of days we are closed throughout the year for staff professional development and learning. Over December and January, we are closed for 2.1 weeks dependent on the yearly calendar.

## What is the capacity of the ELCC?

Our maximum number is 120 and this is broken down amongst four rooms, two long day care and two Kindergarten rooms.

## If I enrol my child at the ELCC do they have an automatic place in the Tenison Woods College Junior School?

The enrolment at the ELCC does not guarantee you a place in Reception at Tenison Woods College. A separate enrolment form must be filled out for the school.



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## What do the children wear to the ELCC?

All children wear a Tenison polo that is also worn in Reception. The children will also need to wear the Tenison broad brimmed hat. We ask that children wear comfortable sport shoes and leggings, shorts or pants that they can easily move in.

## What educational programs do you offer?

We proudly provide a diverse array of educational programs that are thoughtfully curated to cater to the unique needs of each age group. Our programs are meticulously designed to align with the latest recommendations from esteemed authorities such as the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and the South Australian Royal Commission into Early Childhood Services. Furthermore, our offerings are intricately crafted to meet the rigorous standards set forth by the National Quality Standards (NQS) and the recently updated Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF 2.0).

At the ELCC, we are proud to have teachers running all of our rooms, both for our three year-olds and four year-olds. They are supported by our highly experienced Diploma and Certificate III staff. Our Centre also has specialist teachers from Tenison Woods College joining us in the areas of Italian, Sport, Library, Gardening and Music. Our commitment to excellence in education extends across various domains, including early learning, social development and school readiness. We understand the importance of nurturing young minds and providing a solid foundation for their future growth and development. With our comprehensive and research-driven programs, we aim to create a stimulating and enriching environment that fosters the holistic development of every child under our care.

## Do you align or follow a particular educational philosophy or curriculum?

We are guided by a comprehensive approach to education that draws inspiration from various educational philosophies and curricula, emphasising a holistic perspective that includes the Early Years Learning Framework 2.0 (EYLF), National Quality Standard (NQS), Reggio Emilia, Montessori, and Catholic Education. This amalgamation of philosophies enables us to provide a well-rounded educational experience.

The Early Years Learning Framework 2.0 (EYLF) serves as a foundational framework for fostering the development of young learners. It places a strong emphasis on play-based learning, recognising that children learn best when actively engaged in experiences that are both enjoyable and meaningful. This aligns with our belief in the importance of play in early childhood education. The National Quality Standard (NQS) complements EYLF by setting rigorous standards for the quality of early childhood education and care in Australia. It underscores the significance of creating nurturing and safe environments for children, which is paramount in our educational philosophy. *Click [HERE](#) to learn more.*

The Reggio Emilia approach, with its focus on child-led, project-based learning and the promotion of creativity and self-expression, also influences our approach to education. We believe in encouraging children to explore their interests and learn through hands-on experiences, fostering their innate curiosity and love for learning. *Click [HERE](#) to learn more.*



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Montessori principles resonate with us, particularly in promoting independence, self-discipline, and individualised learning. These aspects are vital in helping children develop essential life skills and a sense of autonomy. *Click [HERE](#) to learn more.*

Incorporating elements of Catholic education allows us to infuse moral and ethical values into the curriculum, fostering a sense of community and responsibility among children. It promotes empathy, compassion, and a strong sense of rights and responsibilities. *Click [HERE](#) to learn more.*

We believe connecting children with the natural world not only promotes physical health but also stimulates cognitive and emotional development. Nature play fosters a deep appreciation for the environment and teaches children important life lessons about sustainability and the interconnectedness of all living things. We are so lucky at our site to be surrounded with natural beauty which we explore on a daily basis and create new learning and connection with country.

## **What qualifications do our staff hold?**

- Early Childhood teachers lead all our rooms for three and four year-olds full-time
- Highly experienced Diploma staff are spread across the Centre, making up 50% of our staff
- Certificate III staff support the Teachers and Diploma staff across the Centre
- Trainees are training for their Certificate III in Early Years, they are supported by our staff however do not hold a formal qualification.

All staff take part in continuous professional learning to stay up-to-date with best practices and Early Years regulations in accordance with Australian law and regulations.

## **What ratio do you follow for staff and children?**

We follow the ACECQA regulations for ratios, 1:11. For excursions off our site we follow a 1:4 ratio for Early Steps (3 year-olds) and 1:5 for Kindergarten children.

## **Is there a waiting list for enrolment, and how do I apply?**

Yes, we do have a waiting list for enrolment. You can apply for a place by contacting our Centre directly, on our website or by clicking *[HERE](#)* and filling in an Expression of Interest form. Please email this to [elcbookings@tenison.catholic.edu.au](mailto:elcbookings@tenison.catholic.edu.au) to register your interest in our Centre and be added to our waitlist.

If there is space in the Centre, you will be contacted by our Office staff via email or phone. Generally our Early Steps and Kindergarten places will be offered for mid-year enrolment in March/April and for start of year, in August/September.

## **How many days can I send my child to the ELCC? Is there a minimum?**

### **Early Steps (3 year-olds)**

Two days is the minimum your child must attend, however we would recommend at least three days to support their development and progress. If space, we offer up to five days in Early Steps.



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## **Kindergarten (4 year-olds)**

The Kindergarten program follows the South Australian Universal Access Program, we allow three days maximum of Kindergarten, however if the family prefers, they are able to do two days or two and a half days.

## **4 year-old long day care**

We offer long day care for four year-olds for the extra days they are not in Kindergarten to support our families, these are based on our Centre numbers and are allocated via a waitlist. These days are in our long day care rooms.

## **What is the fee structure for the Early Learning & Community Centre?**

Our fees vary depending on the number of days per week your child attends. Please contact us, refer to our website for detailed fee information or *click [HERE](#)*.

## **Is financial assistance or government subsidies available for childcare fees?**

Yes, eligible families can access government subsidies to help with childcare fees through a Federal Government program, 'Child Care Subsidy' or 'CCS.' CCS is the main way the Australian Government helps families with childcare fees. Providers must be approved by the department to receive CCS on behalf of families. We can provide guidance on the application process or you can *click [HERE](#)* to learn more.

## **What happens when I am offered a place at the ELCC?**

Once you have been contacted by our office staff to confirm your enrolment with us, you will be offered a tour of the Centre with our Director. This will run through the different elements of the Centre and answer any questions you may have. During this visit you will be given an enrolment pack to be completed, more information about the Centre and a questionnaire about your child.

## **How do transition visits work?**

Transition visits are free of charge and run from 9.30am–11.00am and 2.00pm-3.30pm. These visits are a valuable and complimentary transitional phase designed to ease your child's adjustment before their official enrolment in our care program. During these visits, your child has the opportunity to explore our stimulating environment, become familiar with our daily routines, and establish connections with our dedicated educators. We understand that entrusting your little ones with us is a significant decision, which is why we aim to create a comfortable and reassuring experience.

Parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the orientation process as well. You are more than welcome to take a moment for yourself by leaving the room and enjoying a cup of coffee, tea or water while your child begins to acclimate to their new surroundings.

We recommend up to four transition visits and encourage you to attend as many as needed to ensure a smooth transition for both you and your child. Our goal is to provide a supportive and nurturing environment that sets you and your child up for success when officially starting with us!



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## **What happens if my child's day is on a closure or public holiday?**

For permanent bookings, you will receive a reduced rate for public holidays and your child will be marked absent. Swap days are available subject to availability. For ELCC closure days (ie staff development and Christmas/New Year closure) no bookings are entered so there will be no charge. Under the guidelines on the Federal Government's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) children can have up to 42 absence days a year. If the child has over this amount you must produce a sick certificate or legitimate reason why.

## **How can I ease separation anxiety and foster attachment for my child?**

In the early years of a child's life, addressing separation anxiety and fostering healthy attachment is essential for their emotional development. One effective approach is to establish a consistent routine and gradually introduce short separations. Start with brief departures, reassuring your child that you'll return, and gradually extend the duration as they become more comfortable. Maintain open communication, actively listening to their feelings and concerns, and validating their emotions. Creating a secure and loving environment where they feel safe and cherished is key. Encourage independent play and exploration to build their self-confidence. Additionally, involve other trusted carers to help them form attachments with multiple individuals. Ultimately, nurturing a strong bond through love, consistency, and understanding will help ease separation anxiety and promote healthy attachment, providing a solid foundation for their emotional wellbeing in the years to come.

## **What is your approach to promoting diversity and inclusion within the Centre?**

We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse environment that respects all cultures and backgrounds. We have strategies and activities in place to promote diversity and inclusion.

## **What is a Medical Action Plan?**

If your child has a health condition, we kindly request that you provide us with a Medical Action Plan during the enrolment process. A Medical Action Plan is an essential document that should be prepared and endorsed by a qualified medical practitioner. This comprehensive plan outlines crucial details, including the symptoms, underlying causes, and specific instructions for managing and treating your child's unique medical condition. Additionally, the plan should prominently feature your child's name and include a recent photograph to ensure quick and accurate identification. A well-recognised example of such a plan is the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) Action Plan, which serves as a valuable reference for carers and our staff in the event of any health-related emergencies involving your child. This proactive measure helps us maintain the highest standards of care and safety for all children within our facility.

## **How can parents/carers become involved in their child's education at the ELCC?**

We encourage parent/carer involvement through regular communication, parent-teacher meetings, and special events. We also welcome volunteers. If you would like to volunteer in the ELCC you will need to complete the Tenison Woods volunteer pack, available at the ELCC or Front Office at Tenison Woods College, and have either a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or a Catholic Education Police Check. These need to be completed prior to taking part in any excursions etc.



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## **What is your policy on sick children attending the Centre?**

We have a policy in place to protect the health of all children attending our Centre. Children with contagious illnesses are required to stay home until they are well.

## **How do I find my child's Immunisation History Statement?**

You have several convenient options to obtain your child's Immunisation History Statement:

1. **Online Access:** The quickest way to access this important document is through your Medicare online account via myGov. Alternatively, you can use the Express Plus Medicare mobile app for easy retrieval.
2. **Vaccination Provider:** If you're unable to access your child's immunisation history online, simply visit your vaccination provider, and they can print a physical copy of the statement for you.
3. **Phone Request:** Another option is to contact the Australian Immunisation Register and request that they send you a copy of the immunisation history statement by mail. Please be aware that this method may take up to 14 days for the statement to reach your mailbox.

It's essential to note that the 'Blue Book' is no longer considered valid proof. Your child's Immunisation History Statement must indicate 'Immunisation history status: Up to date' as of the date you enrolled. Overseas medical records are also not valid.

If your child's immunisation status is not up to date, you'll need to provide evidence that they are on a catch-up schedule. This information will be reflected on your Immunisation History Statement once you've consulted with your General Practitioner to arrange a catch-up schedule. Ensuring your child's immunisations are current is vital for their health and wellbeing.

If you have any further questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact us directly.