

Early Learning Centre

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW





Early Learning Centre

We have loved watching our child develop friendships, build confidence and grow a genuine love of learning and play. They especially enjoy the wide variety of activities, outdoor play and group learning experiences. Our time at the ELC has sparked a strong sense of curiosity, encouraging inquiry, imagination and discovery, qualities that continue to support them throughout their education journey.

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- Current ELC parent

Recently rated as Exceeding the National Standards, our Early Learning Centre focuses on the development of the whole child, creating a safe and inspiring environment where children feel confident to explore and engage. Our practice is guided by the Early Years Learning Framework, Belonging, Being and Becoming, and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Belonging recognises that children's identities are shaped through their relationships with family, culture and community.

Being emphasises the importance of childhood as a time to experience the present, build relationships and make sense of the world.

Becoming highlights children's rapid growth and evolving skills as they learn to participate fully in society.

These frameworks set high expectations for all children across five learning outcomes and provide a strong sense of identity, connection to the world, wellbeing, confident learning and effective communication.

Our curriculum is grounded in these frameworks and shaped by our local context. We value holistic, interconnected learning across physical, social, emotional, creative, cognitive and language domains.

Our aim throughout each child's time at Ballarat Clarendon College is to build their competence, independence and capacity so they can confidently choose their heart's desire.

Educators at the Early Learning Centre recognise kindergarten as a unique and formative stage. We view every child as capable, curious and full of potential, and believe learning happens best through active exploration, relationships and meaningful engagement.

We work in partnership with families, celebrating the diversity each brings and ensuring every child's identity is reflected in our environment. Our commitment to reconciliation is embedded in daily practice through the inclusion of First Nations perspectives.

While the majority of a child's time in the Early Learning Centre is play-based, this is thoughtfully balanced with explicit, direct instruction. We carefully sequence, plan and teach early literacy and numeracy skills throughout the 3-year-old and 4-year-old programs. This includes the teaching of phonological awareness, vocabulary and early number sequence. We seek to create the foundation upon which children will continue to grow during their time at Clarendon.

Our learning spaces are rich, engaging and responsive to children's interests. Purposeful play and thoughtfully designed experiences support development across literacy, numeracy, science, the arts, physical skills and sustainability, ensuring each child can reach their potential.





Our staff

The Head of Early Learning Centre, together with the dedicated, compassionate and long-standing team of educators, places great importance on trust and respect for everyone involved in each child's learning journey. Each room is led by a Bachelor qualified kindergarten teacher, supported by at least one Diploma qualified co-educator, ensuring a highly skilled and nurturing environment for all children.

All educators are deeply committed to ongoing reflection and continuous improvement in their teaching practice. They participate in regular professional development sessions and stay informed about the latest research and evidence-based approaches to high-quality teaching.

All of our children have thrived in the ELC. They developed a love of learning and exploring from their first weeks, which has carried through to Primary School. The staff have nurtured and supported each child's individual needs, helping them build confidence and reach their developmental goals.
- Current ELC parent



Curriculum

The experiences we design for children, along with the way we organise the classroom, select materials, structure the daily routine and interact with each child, are all intentionally planned to support individual learning. Every child is encouraged to learn at their own pace and in ways that best reflect their strengths, interests and developmental needs.

Each planned learning experience is linked to a child's next developmental steps and draws on key curriculum areas such as literacy, mathematics, science, the arts, music, drama, environmental learning and sustainability.

We strive to offer a balanced environment and a diverse range of experiences, including:

- indoor and outdoor learning
- busy and quiet moments
- open-ended and structured activities
- individual, small-group and whole-group learning
- child initiated and teacher guided experiences
- direct and indirect instruction.

Wellbeing

All decisions we make are first and foremost embedded in the best interests of the children. Children learn best in a safe, calm and predictable environment and we achieve this by providing structure and routine to our day.

Developing social skills and emotional regulation are long-term goals that we do not believe children achieve by trial and error. Our educators support all children in developing their sense of identity, emotional literacy and resilience using social stories, role play, explicit teaching of The Zones of Regulation and through sharing information with parents.

Throughout their time in the Early Learning Centre, all children are supported to develop the language of sharing, inclusion and respect through picture story books and planned learning experiences.



Programs

Bush Kinder program

Our 4-year-old students participate in 10 sessions of Bush Kinder each year. Throughout Terms 2 and 3, the children visit Pax Hill Scout Camp one day a fortnight for around 4 and a half hours. The children's time at Bush Kinder is focussed on them developing their imagination, collaboration, negotiation, resilience and gross motor skills as they navigate the space and create play from their own ideas.

Transition to School program

As part of our focus on a positive transition to Prep, we begin our Transition to School program in Term 3 with our 4-year-old kindergarten children. This includes weekly Junior School experiences, such as visiting the Prep rooms to read a story, recess with the Junior School children and music lessons in the Junior School.

Throughout their time in the Early Learning Centre, students become extremely familiar with the physical environment and faces of the Junior School. We establish routines and independence that sets children up for success when starting Prep.

Days and times

3-year-old ELC program

- for children aged from 3 years
- 2 days (Wed and Fri), 3 days (Mon, Tues, Thurs) and 5 days, 8.35am to 3.20pm during school term time

4 year-old ELC program

- for children aged from 4 years
- 4 days (Mon to Thurs or Tues to Fri) and 5 days, 8.30am to 3.15pm during school term time
- regular excursions and incursions

Holiday program

Conducted by Extend (www.extend.com.au) and hosted in the Junior School. Available to kindergarten children during non-term weeks.

Before and After Care program

Before-Early Learning Centre Care is provided by Early Learning staff between 8.05-8.35am in the Early Learning Centre during term time.

After-Early Learning Centre Care is available from 3.15-6pm for children in our 3-year-old and 4-year-old programs who join the program with students from the Junior School campus.

After-Early Learning Care is conducted by Extend and hosted in the Junior School.

Fee schedule



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From Bush Kinder and special events such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, to the joy of seeing their classmates and educators each day, the ELC offers a unique, well-rounded, whole-child curriculum in every session a child attends.

- Current ELC parent

Tours and questions

We offer private tours at your convenience and warmly invite you to visit our Early Learning Centre.

If you'd like to know more, contact our Admissions Team on +61 3 5330 8312 or admissions@clarendon.vic.edu.au





@ballaratclarendoncollege

clarendon.vic.edu.au