



Early Years Guide

Choosing an early years service

Introduction

Children's learning in their earliest years sets important foundations for life.

When their natural curiosity in the world around them flourishes, there are significant benefits to their communication, confidence and language development.

Catholic Education SA is committed to offering families the chance to partner with us in the development of their children in the early years.

We know that choosing the 'right' place for your child's early learning is a complex decision so we have produced this guide to assist in helping you understand the options, and to help you choose the best one for your family.



Our commitment to every child

To every child in a Catholic School

We are committed to **knowing you** deeply.
We value you as a **capable** and **competent** learner
and will support your **active engagement** in
the learning process.

In **partnership** with you and your family we commit
to **high expectations** for your learning progress,
wellbeing and achievement.

You matter to us.



Types of early learning services

We know your family is unique, that's why our early years services come in many shapes and sizes...

Supported Playgroups in Catholic Education (SPiCE)

SPiCE playgroups are run by a trained coordinator one or two sessions a week in schools. SPiCE is based on the successful Learning Together program which uses a strengths-based approach to engaging with families. The focus of SPiCE is on literacy and numeracy development and on engaging families in their children's learning from birth.

Early Learning Centres

Early Learning Centres provide education and care on a regular basis to children before school age. Run by educators who hold approved qualifications, ELCs also allow eligible families to access the Commonwealth Government Child Care Subsidy.

Preschools

Preschool programs, sometimes called Kindergarten, are offered by a qualified teacher for up to 15 hours per week for each child and the curriculum is also available in early learning centres. Catholic Education South Australia has a number of dedicated preschools available to children in the year before commencing Reception.



Types of early learning services (continued)

Occasional Care

Occasional care services offer education and care to children primarily on a part-time or casual basis for children under school age, with oversight by educators who hold approved qualifications. Our occasional care services are located in our school communities.

Community Playgroups

Community playgroups are usually run by parents or can be run by staff from the school community. Parents and their children engage in play-based activities. These are held once or twice a week.

Little Scientist Project

The Little Scientists project promotes science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in our early years services and the first year of primary school.

Transition to Reception Programs

Our schools welcome your child and family to the first year of primary school. Please contact your chosen school to find out more about the Transition to Reception opportunities they provide. Together we can make the transition into school a smoother process for both your child and your family.



10 questions you may wish to consider

Choosing an early years service for your child can be a complex decision to make.

You more than likely have a lot of questions.

If you're not sure where to start – here's some things you might like to consider when exploring different early years services:

1. What are the strengths or unique qualities that your service offers?
2. What kind of training and qualifications do the educators have?
3. Does the environment feel welcoming and safe to you and your child?
4. Does the service give your child time and space to learn, grow and develop?
5. Does the service provide opportunities for you to be involved in your child's learning?
6. Is there a clear transition program or pathway to the school of your choice?
7. Are your family's values respected by those caring for your child?
8. What are the costs, and am I entitled to any subsidy?
9. How can I help my child transition into this new environment?
10. What does my child need to bring (lunch, hat, nappies, or anything else)?



Let's get started!

**To find an early years service near you,
search our online directory:**

CESA Early Years Directory



Got questions?

If you have a specific question, please send us
an email:

Email us with your specific questions



Useful links:

Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) website



CESA School Directory



@CatholicEducationSA facebook page



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