



Early Learning Q and A for prospective families during COVID-19 restrictions

Q: I would like to see the IGS Early Learning Centre in action. Why can't I take a tour?

A: During COVID-19 restrictions, to help keep our community safe only staff and children may enter our campus. We regret that tours are not possible at this time, and thank you for your understanding.

Q: How can I see inside the ELC?

A: We warmly invite you to take this virtual tour which includes the IGS ELC. You are also welcome to visit the IGS website, which includes many reports on activities inside our centre.

Q: When will it be possible to visit the centre?

A: At this stage in the coronavirus pandemic, we are unable to know when restrictions will be lifted and continue to follow the advice of health and government. We thank you again for your patience. As I'm sure you have many questions, please consult our Frequently Asked Questions document, and don't hesitate to be in touch via our website contact form, or phone 9219 6700.

Q: If I accept a place at this time, how will I know my child will be safe?

A: IGS follows government COVID-19 protocols. We take great care with all of our children. Their health and safety is always a priority.

Q: The IGS Early Learning Centre Program

A: At IGS, our qualified, dedicated and passionate teachers and educators love what they do. We nurture each child's curiosity, self-discovery and creativity in an environment rich in languages, music and vibrant opportunities. Together, we embrace diversity and celebrate personal achievement.

We offer a diverse and stimulating program, supporting each child to reach their full potential using the Early Years Learning Framework as the foundation of our curriculum and practices in the Centre. We are licensed by the Department of Education and meet all 7 quality areas of the National Quality Standards relating to quality early education and care.

Q: When can my child attend the Early Learning Centre?

We are licensed to enrol children from 3 to 6 years of age - an early education and care program for children prior to commencing Kindergarten in Primary School.

If your child is turning 3 in the months from February to May your child is welcome to commence in the year they turn 3 from the date of their birthday.

Q: How many days can my child attend the ELC?

Children can attend the Centre 2, 3 or 5 days each week. If attending 2 days, children attend Mondays and Tuesdays. If attending 3 days, children attend Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Children attend in set groups together with their peers. In this attendance pattern, children have the opportunity to get to know one another as a class group, with the same children attending on the same days as your child - this supports children to develop friendships, relationships and connections in the Centre.

Q: Can my child attend casual days at the Centre?

A: Due to the high levels of enrolment and attendance in the Centre, as well as the nature of care provided to children in the Centre, unfortunately it is not possible to accommodate casual days of attendance at the Centre.

Q: What times does IGS Early Learning operate?

A: IGS Early Learning Centre is licensed to operate from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Q: What times can I drop off and collect my child?

A: All children enrolling to the Centre attend on their enrolled days from 9am until 3.30pm during IGS school terms.

In addition, families requiring longer hours of care for their child can book attendance to before care sessions (from 7.30am to 9am), and or after care sessions (from 3.30pm to 6pm). These sessions are booked separately with an additional fee charge.

Also, families requiring ongoing care for their child during the school holiday periods can book in for their child to attend Early Learning during vacation care periods in the Centre. Vacation Care sessions are at an additional charge.

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Q: Does the Centre close throughout the year?

A: We are open year round with the exception of a brief (approximately three weeks) closure late December to mid January each year. The Centre is closed on NSW gazetted public holidays, and occasionally is closed to enable staff professional development as noted on IGS Term Dates in advance for families.

Q: How are children grouped in the Centre?

A: Our unique Early Learning Centre is located in the heart of IGS School. The Centre has four class groups across ground floor and Level 1 of the campus with the playground adjoining Early Learning classrooms on the ground floor.

At IGS Early Learning, children are grouped according to their age. Two of our classrooms on the ground floor are called Preschool classrooms - these class groups are for our youngest learners, from 3 and 4 years of age.

On Level 1 we have two Transition classrooms - these class groups are for our 4 to 5 year old children in their year prior to school.

Each of our four Early Learning classrooms has up to 30 children in the group.

Q: What is the ratio of staff to children?

A: At IGS Early Learning children and staff enjoy high staff to child ratios with highly experienced, passionate and long serving teachers and educators.

Each of our four Early Learning class groups of up to 30 children is supported by four staff who implement the early learning teaching programs.

Each class group in the Early Learning program is led by a university qualified Early Childhood Teacher working in collaboration with three Educators qualified in early education and care certificate and diploma courses. Many of our Educators are native speakers of the languages taught within Early Learning including French, German, Italian, Japanese and Chinese (Mandarin).

Q: How will I know that my child's learning and development will be encouraged?

A: At IGS, Early Learning curriculum means all the interactions, experiences, routines and events that occur each day – all designed to foster every child's learning and development.

Our Teachers and Educators provide children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success and learning.

Children are encouraged to focus on the process of learning. We support children to experiment, solve problems, and follow through their ideas to completion. We aim for children to have opportunities to contribute to decision making, building a sense of competence and self-esteem.

Our program is balanced with opportunities for children to make choices about the activities they become involved in, and activities that are led and structured by the teachers and educators through small group work, including language and music group activities.

In addition to supporting all children to reach their potential in language, music and the learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework, each child at IGS Early Learning has an individualised learning plan developed collaboratively by their teacher and family. To develop this plan, we keenly work with families to find out:

- What is important to your family that your child experiences at IGS Early Learning?
- Is there an area you would like some help/support with for your child?
- Is there something your child already does well that could be extended?

This information helps us develop a personalised learning plan for your child.

Q: How is learning and development promoted in the Early Learning Centre?

A: "Play is the work of young children."

Research shows us that young children learn best through play - hands on, experiential and active teaching and learning experiences.

The Early Learning program provides children with a variety of creative, open ended and vibrant learning experiences including construction, arts and crafts, reading, writing, drawing, puzzles, sensory experiences and dramatic play.

The daily routine includes blocks of time for children to move freely and make choices and decisions about what and how they would like to play. Within these experiences, children are supported by their teachers to learn social skills, fine motor skills, maths, literacy and creativity.

Educators work alongside children to observe what they are learning, provide assistance, extend and challenge children's development. Children are supported to build on their individual interests, skills and strengths and this often involves deep and meaningful project work on a range of topics.

The activities and play experiences provided support the Early Years Learning Framework outcomes, promoting children's developing sense of identity, their connection and contribution to their world, their sense of well-being and their development as confident and involved learners and effective communicators.

Q: How do children learn a second language at the Centre?

A: Right from the first day, your child will be immersed in the joy of learning another language - this is our school's unique offering!

Upon enrolment, families elect one of 5 languages for their child. We offer French, German, Italian, Japanese and Mandarin.

Children in the Centre are immersed in all cultures and languages during their time at IGS - with specific focus on learning a second language as per the language chosen at enrolment.

Children continuing into IGS primary school continue to learn the language chosen on enrolment in Early Learning.

Children learn a second language in an immersive approach. This mirrors the way native language is acquired - by being surrounded at every opportunity by the language. This means that children from a very early age are exposed to rich language input from their language educators through activities and routines for example meal times.

Our language Educators form part of our classroom staff - children engage with their native speaking language Educator throughout the day in Early Learning.

In addition to our immersive language learning approach, language Educators facilitate small group experiences and activities each day, targeting language learning through activities including rhyme, music, movement, poetry, exploration and games.

Q: How is music taught in the Early Learning program?

A: Music is an integral part of the program and considered the '6th language' of the Centre. Music experiences take place for 20 minutes each day and are taught by our specialist IGS music staff using the Orff Schulwerk method. Children enjoy singing, clapping, dancing, chanting rhymes and making rhythms using their hands or a variety of instruments.

Q: Can my child learn an instrument?

A: Individual music tuition including piano and violin are available for children enrolled in Early Learning. Sessions are arranged between families and IGS music tutors, with a parent or caregiver required to be in attendance for the session.

We suggest exploring individual music tuition once your child has settled into the program.

Q: How will information be shared with me regarding my child, their progress, development and messages relating to the Centre and School?

A: Relationships are an important facet of life at IGS. We encourage our families to be actively involved in meetings, seminars, celebrations and events.

We recognise the importance of regular communication between families and Centre staff. We value sharing information on a daily basis to support the care and education of each child. Families are encouraged and welcome to share information and discuss any questions, feedback or concerns about your child's development or participation in the program. Appointments for parent teacher meetings can also be made for longer discussions.

We use Storypark as an online documentation tool that allows us to privately share with you photos, videos and learning stories of your child in action, growing and developing. It also allows us to keep you up to date with events and activities. As parents, you can view this information individually or with your child.

Families from the ELC are included in school wide communications. A weekly eNewsletter, InFocus, is emailed to all IGS parents and caregivers on Fridays and includes whole school news.

The IGS Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTF) warmly welcomes new parents and caregivers, hosts school community meetings and supports the IGS Community Learning Program, social events and more.

Q: What does my child need to bring to the Centre?

A: At IGS Early Learning Centre we encourage and promote children's independence and provide support to children whenever it is required.

At Early Learning, children bring their morning tea and lunch packed from home. Our teachers help children to learn to recognise their own belongings, and pack away when they are finished - great skills to learn in preparation for going to school.

In addition, children bring a water bottle, broad brimmed hat, bedding (for children requiring a sleep or rest), and a change of clothing.

Children attending the after care program (from 3.30pm) are provided with a healthy, nutritious and varied afternoon tea snack.

IGS includes children with various health and dietary needs - children with allergies and anaphylaxis attend the Centre so we request foods containing nuts are not brought into the Centre.

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Q: My child has a specific health or medical need - how will these needs be supported at Early Learning?

A: The Early Learning Centre welcomes and includes children of diverse backgrounds, abilities and individual needs. This includes children with specific health management plans. If your child has an allergy, anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes or any other health condition diagnosed by a medical practitioner requiring management please make contact with Early Learning as early as possible so that together we can plan for your child's safe and healthy inclusion in the program.

Q: Does my child need to be toilet trained in order to attend the IGS ELC?

A: Each of our classrooms in the Early Learning Centre have children's toilets and hand basins.

Children are supervised and provided support during personal care routines.

We understand that young children are often still learning the process of toilet training around the time of commencement in the program at age 3 years. Unfortunately we do not have nappy change facilities, however, if your child is not fully toilet trained please speak with us as early as possible to talk together about how we can best support your child.

Q: Will my child have to have a sleep each day at the Centre?

A: The daily routine in the Centre program includes opportunities for each child to rest, relax or sleep according to their individual needs and family requests.

Each day after lunch the children are encouraged to rest their bodies to rejuvenate for the rest of the afternoon's activities and play. Children requiring a sleep are provided a comfortable mattress with bedding provided from home; lights are dimmed and quiet music is played to create a cosy, calm, atmosphere.

Some children prefer to relax or have a rest. These children engage in storytelling, yoga and other restful experiences for a short period of time before resuming active play in the program.

Q: What if my child feels upset on arrival? How will my child settle into the program?

A: For some children, commencing at IGS may be the first experience of being cared for by new people other than family and close friends.

The weeks leading up to your child starting in the Centre may be hard, but there are some things you can do to get them ready for this exciting chapter.

- **Build a good relationship** with the educators and teachers at the Centre – this will help us understand your priorities.
- **Ease your child in with visits** and shorter days then slowly adding extra days or hours.
- **Talk with us** to identify ways to help your child settle in, such as providing family photographs to include in the program.
- **Let us know what comforts your child**, e.g. a special toy or blanket, to help them settle down when they're upset.

Our strong focus and priority as children commence in Early Learning is that they feel safe, comfortable and a sense of belonging. We promote close relationships between children and their educators, and also connect children to one another, helping them to make new friends.

We ask all parents and caregivers to say goodbye to their child before leaving, and to contact the Centre anytime for an update regarding how your child has settled in for the day.

Q: My child commenced Early Learning in the Preschool class (3 to 4 year olds). What happens the following year when my child moves into the Transition class (4 to 5 year olds)?

A: Most children commence in Early Learning at 3 years of age (Preschool class) and continue on in a second year attending the Centre in the Transition class (4 to 5 year olds).

Children's enrolment to Transition is automatic once commenced in Preschool. Children's days of attendance in Transition continues in the same enrolment pattern as Preschool, for example, a child attending two days in the Preschool program would automatically continue in Transition attending two days each week.

If your family would like to alter your child's attendance pattern at any stage after commencing in the program (increase or decrease attendance), please contact the Admissions Team to make this request. It may be that your request can be accommodated immediately, or it may be that your child is placed on a wait list until your requested attendance pattern becomes available.

Q: Is there a waiting list for entry to the Early Learning Centre program?

A: Yes there is a waiting list for each of the two years in Early Learning, Preschool and Transition. Preschool is one of our main intakes into the school and the lists tend to be longer for Preschool entry. We begin the Preschool intake in May each year and continue throughout the year, or until all places are full. Our waitlists are ordered by the date of application and the earlier your application date, the sooner you will hear from the Admission team about entry. Most of our places are filled in the year before entry but there is always some availability during the Preschool year itself.

Offers into Transition are made according to availability each year. Please be aware that if you are joining Preschool after the main intake, or Transition at any time, we may be limited in which language and day placement we can offer you.

You are always welcome to ring IGS on 9219 6700 and ask to be put through to Admissions if you'd like further information about this.

Q: If my child attends the Early Learning Centre, are we automatically enrolled to IGS Kindergarten for primary school?

A: All children enrolled in Early Learning are automatically offered a place in Kindergarten. This is a new enrolment process. Generally Kindergarten offers go out towards the end of the first year of the program, that is, while the children are still in Preschool. However, children who join the centre later will get a Kindergarten offer once started. Children moving on from Early Learning to Kindergarten will continue with the same language they started with in Preschool or Transition.

Q: What are the fees and can our family access the Child Care Subsidy relating to attendance at IGS Early Learning?

A: Fees are available on our IGS website. The IGS Early Learning Centre is an approved child care provider for the Child Care Subsidy. Parents are required to register with Centrelink and eligibility depends on your individual circumstances. Subsidy payments are made directly to IGS and are applied to fee accounts throughout the year.

Q: How can I apply for enrolment?

A: We encourage families you to apply early for enrolment. Please view details [here](#).