



**A GOOD
START
COUNTS**

EARLY YEARS CENTRE



WELCOME

Ideally situated on the Highfield Campus at The University of Southampton, the Early Years Centre provides high quality education and childcare for children aged three months to five years. We are open from 8am to 5.45pm for 50 weeks of the year.

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WELCOME TO THE EARLY YEARS CENTRE

The Early Years Centre is part of the University of Southampton and is based on the Highfield Campus. The Centre has been established for over 40 years and has 110 places for children aged 3 months to 5 years. We welcome applications from students & staff, and also from families outside of the University environment.

We are a multi-cultural early years setting, committed to providing the best possible care and early years education for your child. Our ethos is “a good start counts” and this is demonstrated by the sensitivity, thoughtfulness and attention provided by our dedicated team of early years professionals.

The Centre is open for 50 weeks of the year. Our opening times are Monday to Friday 8am to 5.45pm.

We understand that choosing the right setting for your child is a very important decision. We will do all that we can to help in this process by giving you as much information as you need in order to make an informed choice.

We hold regular group tours of the Centre which can be booked upon request. These usually take place once or twice each month.

The Early Years Centre is a popular facility and advanced application is advisable.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

The Early Years Team



“The day I stepped into the Early Years Centre, a profound sense of comfort enveloped my heart. Every detail and gesture exuded warmth & genuine care, creating an atmosphere that embraced us with love.”

M. Monquito (Parent)



"The decision to entrust our 3 children to the Early Years Centre has been one of the best we have made, and for that we are eternally grateful."

Monica (Parent)



WHAT DO WE OFFER?



A safe, secure & nurturing environment.



A designated key person.



Free flow access to a large outdoor area to promote a physically active environment.



Daily activities planned to meet the children's interests and developmental needs in line with the EYFS Framework.



Close partnership with parents.



Weekly co-curricular activities, including Active Kids, Music Sessions, Baby Yoga, and more.



A digital learning journal.



Focused on fun, learning and an active lifestyle.



Easy access and drop off for parents

"I could go on for hours about how my daughter's attendance at the Early Years Centre has helped her well-being and development, and how she treats it as a second home and the staff as a second family."

Charlotte S (Parent)



OUR CENTRE

We know that as a parent it is your priority to find a centre that offers the right environment for your child, and one that understands the importance of gaining the confidence and trust of you and your child. We offer a home from home experience for all families, taking pride that we are a part of the University community.

Our focus is to create a calm and tranquil space where the children feel safe, secure and content. We want all our families to feel welcomed and at peace, knowing that their little ones are being cared for in the most nurturing and inspiring way.

We aim to provide endless opportunities for children to learn, laugh and explore in a safe and supported environment. Our team put the child at the centre of everything we do; always asking ourselves "why?" to ensure that what we are doing is benefiting each child and encouraging their curiosity and critical thinking.

We reflect on our areas and resources and think about the open-ended opportunities they provide, focusing on the child's interests. We seek to extend on children's play to support them through their learning and development, by modelling play, actions, and communication.

We believe children thrive and learn best when they are happy, relaxed, and having fun, therefore encouraging a natural love of learning and curiosity.

We understand that children need to feel a sense of security and belonging when they are away from their parents, and this is a key part of our Centre's ethos.

THE ROOMS



Under Twos

Aged 3 months to 2 years

Our Under Twos are provided with a homely room, which is safe and secure. They have defined areas for mealtimes, messy/creative activities, a home corner, separate sleep room and a cosy quiet area for stories, cuddles, and some down time to calmly play and explore our heuristic and sensory resources and materials. They have easy access at regular times throughout the day to play outside on their beautiful play deck. Outdoor resources encourage physical development.

Our team offer a nurturing and caring environment, meeting each child's individual care routine. An array of activities are planned weekly and encourage children to explore natural and handmade resources and equipment, whilst developing their natural curiosity, explore and investigate.



Toddlers

Aged 2 to 3 years

Toddlers are provided with an environment which encourages their growing independence, allowing them to experiment and explore in a safe and stimulating surroundings.

Activities include construction and small world, creative and imaginative opportunities, outdoor and role play. More consideration is paid to the specific areas of the EYFS and the learning environment. We focus on supporting children to develop their confidence, building positive relationships with their peers and helping them to express their social and emotional skills in order to build positive resilience.



Pre-school

Aged 3 to 5 years

Pre-school children are provided with a stimulating environment that enables each child to reach their full potential.

Activities are planned to promote each child's confidence and independence. The structure of the routine is designed to create an atmosphere which will begin to prepare the children for school. The EYFS Framework is implemented when planning activities to support all children to develop skills in these areas: Physical, Communication & Language, Personal, Social and Emotional, Mathematics, Literacy, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts & Design.

The 3 i's are what helps make and mould our curriculum:

Intention:

The skills and knowledge we want the children to learn

Implementation:

How we are supporting the children with this

Impact:

How we know the children have made progress



School readiness:

We believe that we should prepare children for school by developing their personal, social, and emotional development and communication and language. Before they start school, we aim for children to have learnt key life skills such as, independence, being able to separate from their carer, the ability to express themselves and communicate with others. Also to demonstrate focus and interest in their work and the world around them, and the confidence and curiosity to ask questions. We have less of a focus on academics within the Early Years Centre and more of a focus on learning through play and developing inquisitiveness and a passion for learning. We strongly believe that is it essential for children to develop self-regulation with us in order to manage and express their emotions before joining school.

OUR STAFF

The Centre Manager is key in establishing the individuality and the professionalism of the Centre and is responsible for the day to day running of the setting. The Manager is supported by Early Years Co-Ordinators, a SENDCo, a Client Services Supervisor and a well trained team of qualified Practitioners.

The Centre is committed to employing high quality staff and does so by following the university's safer recruitment policies and procedures, and in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

All staff at the Early Years Centre undertake a full induction and probation period when they first join the Centre. Staff are full supported with their on-going training and development, through the university training provider and the Early Years Partnership.

The staff to child ratios are in line with regulatory guidelines which specifies:



Under 2's

1 adult to 3 children



2 to 3 year olds

1 adult to 5 children



Over 3's

1 adult to 8 children



THE ROLE OF THE KEY PERSON

The Early Years Centre is committed to providing quality and relevant play experiences for your child according to their individual needs.

A key person approach is the most effective way of ensuring that a child has a strong relationship with an adult in the Centre to support their emotional well-being. The key person will help the child to form relationships with their peers and other staff members within the group. They will ensure that each child's individual needs are recognized and met through close observation and monitoring of progress.

Children's learning journals are compiled by the child's key person using an online system. Parents are informed through the online system when a new observation has been added.

The key person is in the best position to share information with parents and carers about their child's experiences in the Centre.

We have a close affiliation with local schools and the key person is instrumental in supporting the children's transition to school by liaising with the children's new teachers and sharing relevant information.



PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

At the Early Years Centre, we recognise that you, as a parent/ carer, are the primary educator of your child. We believe that parents should be centrally involved in your child's experiences and development whilst in our care.

Our aim is to support you in your role and ensure that the transition between home and our Centre is a happy one. The practitioners will work with you to provide quality care for your children, and you are encouraged to contribute your own knowledge, skills and interests.

We have an open door policy and believe that partnership is a two way process. We encourage parent feedback and interaction to ensure that the Centre runs smoothly. You are welcome to contact the Centre if you have any comments or suggestions by email, or you can message us through Famly, our interactive software system.

“I have never had any concerns leaving my children in the Early Years Centre's hands, trusting that they would be safe and loved. And obviously trusting people with your children is the biggest thing you can trust them with”.

E. Kingma (Parent)

Parents are encouraged to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests.



LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Early Years Foundation stage

In January 2024, a revised government framework was introduced in all settings with children aged from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

Every child deserves the best start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its' own right and provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a framework that provides this through planning for 3 Prime Areas and 4 Specific Areas of development. These areas are:

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Specific Areas

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a play based framework comprising of themes and principles which allows all children to reach their full potential by staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and Early Years staff at school.

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.



Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

Each principle applies to all children from birth, and is supported by four commitments that describe how the principles work.

Play is a vital part of children's learning. It helps them to understand the world around them and to develop holistically. It is through play that children learn, develop at their own pace and more importantly have fun. At the Centre children are offered a learning-through-play environment, both indoors and outdoors.



**“Active Children
are healthy, happy,
school ready and
sleep better”**

(UK Chief Medical Officer)



ACTIVE CHILDREN

Every Movement Counts

Here at the Early Years Centre we believe in the importance of “Physical Activity for Early Years” and activities focused on movement is a key part of our planning and routines.

We have a large secure outdoor space for our 2 to 4 year olds with a variety of engaging activities such as a mud kitchen, fairy garden, bug hotel, & pizza baking station. We also have construction areas, lots of bikes, and our staff love to organize ball games & jumping games such as hopscotch!

We encourage the older children to plant flowers and vegetables in our garden beds, and of course be responsible for the follow up watering and caring for our green areas.

We have a wonderful secure outdoor balcony area on our first floor dedicated for our littlest ones up to 2 years old as an outdoor continuous provision area. This means they

also have their own garden to play with sand, water and age appropriate toys.

Movement and physical activity are also incorporated into our daily indoor routines with activities such as:-

- Tummy time for Under 1’s
- Baby Yoga
- Object Play
- Messy Play
- Music & Dance
- Games involving physical movement

We are very lucky to have access to our brand new multi-million pound Sport & Recreation Centre on campus which we use for weekly Active Kid sessions for our Pre-School children and for other activities during the year.





ONLINE LEARNING JOURNEY

A day at our Early Years Centre is carefully planned to give a balance of both child and adult led activities. We adapt the planned activities to tailor to each child's individual needs, and to reflect their practical skills, interests, and developmental needs.

Staff monitor and observe all children and will be able to notice what each child is doing, how they best learn and how we support them to make next steps within their development.

Staff record observations on children's progress & development on our online learning system, on what is known as the child's 'Learning Journey'. Through capturing significant 'moments', this helps staff identify any gaps in areas of development and will further plan to support and guide children in meeting milestones and the relevant ages/stages.

We use our online learning system to capture a photo, a video clip or voice recording as well as written notes on a mobile tablet device. This is then published and will be shared with parents.

In our opinion, the application not only provides a richer learning journey than its paper equivalent, but also offers a more secure way to record and share these learning journeys.



Each child attending the centre has their own unique learning journal on our online learning system. Access is only permitted to staff and families of each individual child. This is a highly secure system that requires individual log in detail and passwords and is monitored regularly.

Our system allows you as parents and as your child's primary educator, to add observations and photographs of your own as well as share comments. We love to hear about learning at home and any 'wow' moments from weekends or family holidays.

Online safety is extremely important to us here at the centre. Before your child starts, we will ask you to sign an agreement consenting to the upload and sharing of joint observations within each room.

In our opinion, the application not only provides a richer learning journey than its paper equivalent, but also offers a more secure way to record and share these learning journeys.

ADDITIONAL WEEKLY ACTIVITIES



Music Session

We offer an age-appropriate music group for all children to encourage and develop a love for music, rhythm and song.

Active Kids

Our Pre-School children attend a weekly sports club which takes place at the newly developed multi-million pound Jubilee Sport & Recreation Centre on our Highfield Campus.

We also hold an annual Sports Day in the summer for our Pre-School leavers.

Diversity & Inclusivity

We recognize and celebrate cultural events and festivals throughout the year. We have developed our own cultural & inclusivity team of staff within the Centre to work on producing a diary of events to involve the children in celebrating these.

Seasonal Events

The children enjoy other special events throughout the year such as:-

- Christmas Market held here at the Centre
- Graduation ceremony for school leavers
- Theatre outings to Tuner Sims on campus
- Charity events such as Red Nose Day and World Book Day

We also hold parent coffee mornings throughout the year.



Your child will have access to appropriate spaces such as:

- A relaxed and calm baby room equipped to develop and explore your baby's five senses
- Homely and welcoming base rooms with a wide range of resources
- Secure and spacious outdoor environment encouraging fresh air, fun and exercise
- Home corner/role play areas
- Sensory room
- A language rich environment including reading areas, creative play and construction corner



We believe that a balanced diet is crucial to a child's physical and mental development.

FOOD AND DRINK

The Early Years Centre regards mealtimes as an important part of your child's day. It is a chance for the children to sit together at a table with a member of staff and learn age appropriate social skills, conversation, and for the older ones, the ability to clear their plates and cups when they have finished.

We believe that a balanced diet is crucial to a child's physical and mental development.

The Early Years Centre use a specialist nursery catering company who produce home-cooked style menus using fresh wholesome ingredients which are full of nutrition and flavour.

The food offers a broad palette of flavours and encourages children to explore a wide variety of food, including British and also dishes from around the world. Where possible they source all their ingredients locally and support independent fruiterers and butchers.

The menus are varied (usually on a 3 week cycle) and are arranged to provide variety to children who attend nursery every day and also to those who are only attending on specific days each week. The menus are designed around the guidance provided by the **Caroline Walker Trust**.

Salt is never added to the meals and the majority of the desserts are fruit-based.

We cater for a variety of dietary needs including children with diagnosed allergies and those with religious restrictions.

Fruit snacks and drinks are also provided in the morning and afternoon.

A sample menu is available upon request by emailing us at eycentre@soton.ac.uk.



PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR NURSERY

“We have nothing but positive things to say about the Early Years Centre. Our children have consistently been cared for with love and attention.”

Eselijn (Parent)



A Few Top Tips!

Provide opportunities for your child to regularly attend playgroups such as Mother & Toddler, Baby Music, Library sessions etc.) before starting Nursery.

These groups enable children to learn to socialise and are proven to help develop their communication skills.

Your child will become familiar with new surroundings and will adjust more easily when meeting new adults and children.

Arrange to leave your child for short periods of time with family or close friends in order to get them used to being with other caring and trustworthy adults.

If your child is used to being left with other adults then they will undoubtedly find it easier to start Nursery and cope with separation from you.

For younger children

Encourage your child to self soothe in their cot at sleep time. This will help with adjusting to a new sleep area and cot/bed.

If you are breastfeeding it often helps to begin encouraging your baby to also use a bottle in the weeks prior to starting. Starting Nursery can often be a little unsettling for young children, and it is helpful if younger children are familiar with the bottle as well as the breast.

For older children

Explain to your child that their key person and staff in the Nursery are there to look after them, and help them. Wherever possible explain to your child why you are leaving them and why they are coming to Nursery.

There are many books available to help in preparation (Big Steps – “I’m starting Nursery”, Pirate Pete books – “I’m starting nursery”).

By the time children join Pre-School, they should ideally be fully toilet trained.

Find out more



To find out about activities in your area, contact your local Family Information Service

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/activities-and-support-for-families/southampton-family-information-service/>
or scan the QR code.



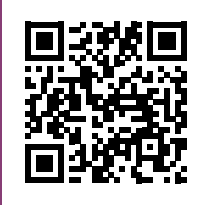
Find out more:

Visit: www.southampton.ac.uk/earlyyearscentre

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**Scan the QR code to
watch our Video Tour**