



GENAZZANO
FCJ COLLEGE

Early Learning Handbook

Ready to take
on tomorrow.

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In 2021, the Genazzano FCJ College Early Learning Centre was assessed and rated by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as 'Exceeding National Quality Standard'. Genazzano FCJ College Early Learning Centre received an outstanding report in regards to all seven areas of the National Quality Standards.

RATED
EXCEEDING
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD





Welcome to Genazzano

Welcome to the Genazzano FCJ College Early Learning Centre (ELC). We are so delighted you have decided to join us and cannot wait to share more about our program and learning environment with you. As you read through this handbook, you will get a sense of who we are at the Genazzano ELC, our vision and values, our learning program and staff – and what makes us unique.



Alison Teece — ELC Director

We are a kindergarten program for children aged 3 to 6 years old. Our program offers families the flexibility to choose their child's days of attendance ranging from three to five days, ensuring they are receiving well beyond their 15 hours of kindergarten.

Our ELC sessions run from 8.15am to 3.45pm each day with formal group learning beginning at 9.00am.

We deliver a personalised approach to learning, offering small class sizes with a maximum of 20 children in each group and only 40 across the whole program.

The ELC is a part of the Genazzano Junior School, which ensures we have a strong school readiness program and can leverage school teaching and learning environments, as well as community resources.

A Genazzano Early Learning Centre education is a wonderful gift and we look forward to providing your child with limitless opportunities to grow as they embark on their journey as a young learner.

Our Values and Vission.

The Genazzano FCJ College Early Learning Centre is a Catholic ELC that embodies the charism of our founders, the sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus and is inspired by Ignatian spirituality.

The College shares with their community a future-oriented and distinctive learning culture guided by reflection, wisdom, and service and empowers young children to transform the world with faithfulness, courage and confidence.

As a childsafe organisation, Genazzano FCJ College is committed to providing a welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible environment where children feel valued, listened to and considered in decisions that affect their lives. All children have the right to be protected from harm and to be treated with dignity, respect and integrity. The need to remove or reduce the

risk of child abuse informs our decision-making concerning children in our care. We have specific policies, procedures, and practices in place to support our school community to achieve these dreams.

Key values and principles of the ELC

- Teachers build secure respectful and reciprocal relationships with the children
- We work in partnership with families
- A commitment to equity and upholding high expectations for all children regardless of circumstance
- Respect for diversity
- Continual engagement in ongoing learning and reflective practice
- Individual learning plans with a focus on children's agency and individual learning style
- A balance of teacher led and play based learning
- A strong early literacy program with a focus on both learning to read and reading to learn
- A purposeful school readiness program that ensures children are confident and prepared for their transition to school



Our ELC Program.



Program Overview

The early learning years are recognised as a critical period of rapid growth and development for young children. The benefit of the Genazzano ELC, is that we can provide a continuity of learning as children move through the ELC and on to Junior School, all in the one setting.

Our program offers a balance of teacher led and child led learning. We value early childhood as a unique and special period preparing children with the tools to be lifelong learners. Our ELC program recognises the importance of a strong school readiness program in supporting a successful transition to school.

The ELC works in partnership with you to provide a specialised kindergarten program that caters for both the individual and group learning needs of children aged 3-6 years old.

We value each child as a competent, capable and unique individual; and as a collaborator in their own learning.

Three learning conversations are held each year to create individual learning plans based on children's interests, strengths, skills and learning dispositions. These learning plans, progress and reflections are shared with each family to ensure there is transparency and collaboration between families and teachers.

Our staff take pride in getting to know every child and family that enrolls in our ELC. We acknowledge families as the children's first teachers and therefore highly value working in partnership together.

The teacher will meet with each family individually to gain an understanding of what each child knows, what they can do and what they understand. This is an opportunity to share your child's interests and strengths and to build a relationship with the teaching team. We will also use this time to gain an understanding of family practices, values and beliefs. EAL (English as an Additional Language) support can be arranged if required.

We will communicate with you regularly prior to commencement, throughout transition and during your time in the ELC and guide you through the transition process. Families have the opportunity to attend orientation sessions with their child in the year prior to attendance, in addition to orientation sessions at the commencement of the school year.

Families have access to online platforms that provide daily updates of children's experiences in the program; and individual observations allow each family to view their child's experiences and contribute to the learning process.

Our Learning Approach

Genazzano FCJ College is currently undergoing authorisation to become a PYP school.

The PYP curriculum focuses on building children's skills and dispositions as internationally minded, creative learners investigating and problem solving through play and guided enquiry; and provides the perfect blend of teacher led and child led learning opportunities. This approach aligns with the aims of the Genazzano ELC – to ensure all ELC children become confident, resilient and focused learners.

In the Genazzano ELC, teachers work alongside children on inquiry projects that encourage problem solving, experimentation, innovation and learning from mistakes. Children's

independence, confidence, creativity and adaptability are encouraged, as they are inspired by meaningful, deep connections to their learning experiences.

Language, literacy, numeracy and science are key components of the learning program across both ELC3 and ELC4; and are embedded across play based and structured learning experiences. Some of the specialist experiences we offer include Library, Music, Perceptual Motor Program (PMP), Mandarin and Art.

Children are given opportunities to share stories about their world and learning and a continuity of learning between home and the ELC is fostered.

Children are introduced to group learning expectations and develop an understanding of working as part of a learning community.

The learning environment we create enhances children's physical, cognitive, social wellbeing and emotional skills. We focus on the development of children's thinking skills, executive functioning skills, emotional resilience and social skills.

Individual learning goals, along with program plans and assessment are developed for each child, to enhance individual and group learning outcomes; and foster independence, resilience and confidence.

Genazzano FCJ College is a candidate school for the PYP. We are pursuing authorisation as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy – a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education – that we believe is important for our students.*

**Only schools authorised by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorisation will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes visit <http://www.ibo.org>.*

“The learning environment we create enhances children's physical, cognitive, social well-being and emotional skills and focuses on the development of self-regulation, emotional resilience and social skills.”

Learning Activities

Children are given key responsibilities in the program and provided opportunities to be responsible for daily jobs such as acknowledgement of country, prayer, compost bin, calendar, lights and lunch jobs.

The children engage in a range of open-ended learning experiences designed to maximise learning and stimulate curiosity, wonder and exploration. The outdoor environment provides opportunities for social interactions and mixing of the ELC3 and ELC4 programs.

The teachers and co educators use intentional teaching strategies to support, scaffold and consolidate children developing their knowledge, skills, approaches and abilities.

Activities include imaginative play, arts and craft, construction, loose parts play, sand pit, climbing frames, group games and more.

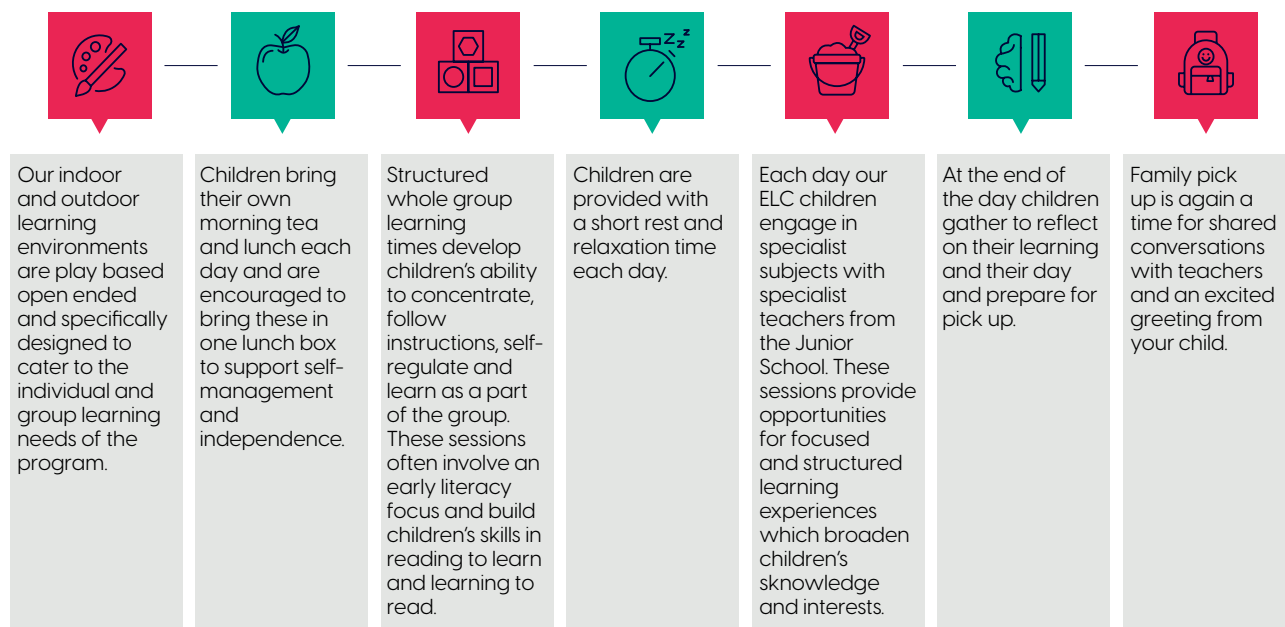
Each term we connect incursions and excursions to our inquiry project exploration to deepen the children's understanding of how their learning in the classroom is linked to the broader community. The children engage in a variety of exciting opportunities that

take them walking or taking transportation to expand their understanding of the world around them.

A Typical Day

A typical day in the ELC starts with drop off. This is an opportunity for families to share information about your child. Children put their bags in their lockers and organise their snack, lunch and drink.

The day starts with a structured morning meeting in which children and their teachers share information and discuss the day ahead. Specialist subjects are scheduled across the week based on a fortnightly format.



Our ELC program has two groups of learners; our Kinder class and our Pre-prep class.

When to start Kinder

Each child is different and we recommend carefully considering your child's readiness before commencing in the ELC.

Your child must be 3 years of age on or before 30 April to be eligible to attend kindergarten in that year. If you enrol early, your child's place will be held until they turn 3 years old and fees will only apply once they can start attending.

If your child is born between 1 January and 30 April, your child can begin kindergarten in the year they turn 3 or 4.

When to Start Pre-Prep

Each child is different and we recommend carefully considering your child's readiness before commencing in the ELC.

Your child must be 4 years of age on or before 30 April to be eligible to attend our Pre-Prep program in that year.

If your child is born between 1 January and 30 April, your child can begin Pre- Prep in the year they turn 4 or 5.

GOSH

Genazzano's Out of School Hours Program (GOSH) is administered, organised and supervised by Camp Australia, a national provider of quality care, activities and entertainment for children.

The program runs from 7.00am - 8.15am and 3.45pm - 6.00pm each school day. A specialist room within the Grange Hill Building is provided for the ELC children to gather to engage in play based activities.

On days when formal classes conclude prior to 3.45pm, the GOSH Program runs from the finish of lessons until 6.00pm.

Transitions.

Transition and orientation sessions are designed to provide a smooth and happy beginning to each child's learning journey. Transitions commence in Term Four of the year before a child will attend the program.

These transitions provide opportunities for families to explore the program with their child and encourage family discussions leading into this new experience. In the first two weeks of Term One, orientation sessions involve staggered starts and shortened sessions in ELC3 and for any new ELC4 children as needed. This allows children to begin with a manageable and positive experience as they get to know their new environment and teachers.

Research suggests two years of formal early learning, is optimal for the forming of neural pathways and social skills. Two years of learning allows children the time to develop and consolidate the necessary skills to prepare them not just for school but also for life.

Starting in the ELC Kinder Program provides the opportunity for children to begin their formal learning in a supportive and nurturing environment. Our teachers understand the developmental needs of this age group and routines and tasks are broken down to support learning and provide consistency and predictability.

The ELC is positioned in the Junior Grange Hill building. Our Kinder and Pre-Prep children begin to build their sense of belonging to the school community from their first days of kinder.

As we access the specialist programs in the library and art room, children are learning to navigate the school environment and feel safe and supported. We often engage in learning experiences in the schoolgrounds, accessing the playgrounds, fields and performance facilities.

In addition, the ELC children often engage in fun learning experiences with the Prep children throughout the year. A more formalised school readiness and transition program begins in Term Three when children are introduced to the Junior School team and engage in Junior School activities.



ELC Hours

The ELC operates from 8.15am to 3.45pm each day. The extended hours are optional, with the ELC doors opening at 8.15am each morning and families are welcome to arrive anywhere from 8.15am to 9.00am. At 9.00am, the children begin their formal group learning session.

At 3.00pm, the ELC doors will be open for pick up, and families can collect their child anytime between 3.00pm and 3.45pm.



Celebrations

Celebrations are an important and enjoyable component of our ELC program. The ELC and the Junior School celebrate family events such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparent's Day as a whole College community. Children and families also enjoy sharing birthday celebrations and events such as Easter and Christmas.

Providing Food

The Director and all staff of the ELC understand the serious risk of allergies and the risk of anaphylaxis and prioritise the health and safety of all children in their care. The following items are not to be included in a student's snacks or lunch box; packets of nuts, nut bars, muesli bars with whole nuts, cakes or slices with peanut butter, Nutella or nuts and peanut butter or Nutella sandwiches.

To ensure a safe and inclusive environment, we ask families to discuss any arrangements for sharing food or gifts to the class with the teaching team well in advance, so preparations can be tailored to the group needs.

The Director or teacher will advise families of a selection of approved food items that can be shared for celebrations or events such as birthdays, Easter and Christmas.

Information regarding any food items to be shared with children in the ELC will be provided to families in advance.

Our Staff.

The ELC Team includes a Director, and ELC3 and ELC4 teams who collaborate with the Prep Teacher and other Junior School staff to plan and implement the program using PYP.

The ELC program also utilises the specialist teachers of the College and engages in Library, Mandarin, Perceptual Motor Program (PMP), Art and Performance Psychology. These specialist experiences broaden children's learning and focus on key learning curriculums.



What I love about being an ELC teacher

Alison Teece – ELC Director

"Beginning children's formal learning and setting their journey as successful and engaged learners for life is a magical opportunity. Working alongside families to share in the joyful and challenging experiences of early learning is very rewarding."

- Bachelor of Early Childhood and Master of Educational Leadership
- Over 30 years' experience in the early years' sector as a teacher, leader and consultant
- Started at Genazzano in June 2021



Our Community.

Families are encouraged to participate in College community social events organised by the College and family representatives.

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The College benefits from both the Genazzano Mothers' Association and Genazzano Fathers' Association, in recognition of the different but equally important roles played by parents in the upbringing and education of their children.

The associations offer tremendous support to the College and provide parents a ready-made network of friendship, professional connections and shared parental experiences.

At the start of each school year, the Mothers' and Fathers' Associations collaborate with the College for the GenWelcomes event, where hundreds of current parents and community members welcome new families to the College. Celebrating the new College year, this spectacular event is held on Circular Drive at the entrance of the historic Wardell Building.

The ELC is an important part of our Junior School and all families are invited to share in celebrating special occasions at the College like Mother's Day, Father's Day and more. Keep an eye out for invitations and dates on our intranet, GenConnect.

Our Stay and Play program begins in term two and provides an opportunity for families to come into the classroom to develop a deeper understanding of their children's learning. We also encourage families to come in and share special skills or cultural celebrations with the group.

In addition, families are often asked to participate in excursions. Incursions and excursions are usually arranged to extend the children's learning in the program based on current projects and interests and vary year to year.





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