

# Frequently Asked Questions

## About Us

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What makes Gowrie NSW centres unique?

For over 75 years Gowrie NSW has greatly contributed to the richness of early and middle childhood education across NSW. With a focus on research and contemporary pedagogical methodology, Gowrie NSW has been at the forefront of providing support for children and families through inclusive practice.

What can you look forward to?

- A community, not-for-profit centre
- Brand new, purpose-built centre with carefully planned environments complete with specifically designed resources to promote children's thinking and curiosity
- A commitment to the Key Educator Approach; that is, each child receives one educator that they are more closely connected with to build their sense of belonging in the service. Key Educators develop a deep understanding of their children and their families. The Key Educator Approach is based on neuroscience and attachment theory. It is a proven method in nurturing healthy brain development.
- A progressive culture for providing a considered, respectful, values-based approach across all our undertakings
- Principles of sustainability entrenched in the daily operation of all centres

Why are the first five years of childhood so important?

Research shows us that children who start ahead most likely stay ahead. Significantly, children's brains are 90% developed by the age of five. Differences in children's development are evident by age two and have a tendency not to close over time. The early years provide the foundation for the rest of a child's life.

Children are born wanting to learn and the best learning happens in warm, positive and supportive environments; That's why high-quality early learning experiences are so important. By providing these environments, we're giving children the best opportunities to reach their full potential.

How do I contact the centre?

- Phone: (02) 6370 9710
- Email: [lithgow@gowriensw.com.au](mailto:lithgow@gowriensw.com.au)
- Centre Manager: Leanda Rodham

What are your opening hours?

Lithgow Early Education and Care is open from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks a year. We close for two weeks over the Christmas and new year period.

Where are you located?

Our address is 88 Landa St, Bowenfels NSW 2790.

## Fees and Benefits

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What are the daily fees and what do they include?

The daily fees are:

0 to 2 years – \$95.00 per day

2 to 3 years – \$90.00 per day

3 to 5 years – \$85.00 per day

This includes:

- Nappies and wet wipes
- All meals – breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack
- Bottles
- Cot-sheets and bed linen
- Sunscreen
- Gowrie NSW sun-safety hat

We ask that families bring their own formula.

Do you provide meals?

Yes, our centre has an onsite commercial kitchen where our qualified chef will prepare fresh and nutritious meals each day. We offer breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack. This cost is included in our daily fee.

Do I still need to pay if my child is sick?

Yes, fees still apply for sick days. The Child Care Subsidy covers up to 42 absent days a year. If you exceed this amount, any additional sick days may be covered if you supply evidentiary documentation such as a medical certificate.

Do I need to pay for Public Holidays?

No, fees are not charged for statutory public holidays.

What happens if I am late picking up my child?

A late collection fee of \$25 plus \$1 per minute per child for the first 10 minutes, increasing to \$5 per minute thereafter will apply.

What government rebates and benefits are available to families?

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment offered by the Australian Government for which you may be eligible. To find out if you are eligible for CSS visit the Department of Human Services website:

<http://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

## Educational Programs

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All our programs at Lithgow Early Education and Care Centre are based on children's strengths, knowledge, interests, concepts, and cultural backgrounds. The National Quality Framework stipulates that learning occurs best through play based experiences. Some examples of what this can look like:

- Enjoyable and engaging experiences providing opportunity for inquiry, exploration, discovery and problem-solving
- Active engagement with people, objects and representations
- Educators plan experiences and provocations based on children's emerging concepts and thinking
- Educators help provide rich play experiences by sourcing materials and creating environments which engage children's sense of curiosity, wonder and investigation
- Opportunities are provided for the development of a wide range of skill areas: social, emotional, cognitive, creative and physical

Extensive early childhood research shows that for children under the age of five years, play provides the best vehicle for learning. Children are more likely to persist at something in which they are interested in and play-based learning provides a great context for acknowledging children's interests.

Our educators are required to observe, understand and document children's interests and learning to effectively scaffold their learning. Families are encouraged to participate in this process to ensure children achieve the best learning outcomes.

### Will you be preparing my child for primary school?

Yes, our school readiness program begins from the moment children enter our centre. Building children's confidence, strong sense of self, conflict resolution skills, creativity and collaboration are part of our program from the start. Throughout their time at Lithgow Early Education and Care Centre, children will have many opportunities to engage with literacy and numeracy. This will also be scaffolded and extended upon. Specifically, in children's final preschool years, we run a dedicated Transition to School Program for children and their families. This program is delivered by Early Childhood Teachers in consultation with local primary school and will extend children's social and emotional skills to build sound foundations for primary school. Children will build their confidence and resilience levels, become accustomed with school routines and lunchboxes, learn how to work in teams, develop independence and much more.

For more information about our Transition to School Program, please enquire with our Centre Manager and Early Childhood Teachers based in the preschool rooms.

## Environments

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What are your age groups and classroom sizes?

Gowrie NSW Lithgow Education and Care caters for children aged from 6 weeks to 6 years. There are five classrooms', however we are currently only utilising 3 whilst we build the service capacity. The age groups in each room vary each year according to our family's needs and waitlist. Our current room set up is:

- 0-2 years: 12 children
- 0-2 years: 12 children
- 2-3 years: 20 children
- 3-6 years: 20 children

Classroom sizes may vary each year according to our waitlist and the needs of our existing families. We work to ensure that each classroom has a group size that is suitable for the children's ages, development and individual needs.

What is the educator to child ratios?

The minimum child ratios set out by the NSW State Government are detailed in the below table.

Age of Children	Educator to Child Ratio in NSW
Birth to 24 months	1:4
Over 24 months and less than 36 months	1:5
Over 36 months and including preschool age	1: 10

Ratios are calculated by assessing the age ranges across the entire centre, not by individual rooms. This means, that in a mixed age room, the educator to child ratio for a younger group of children does not need to be applied to the older group of children.

What are your main learning environments?

We have three main indoor classrooms all specifically designed for the age groupings in each room. All of our indoor play spaces use natural materials and soft colourings that support our commitment to a calm and well-resourced learning environment for children.

We have a large outdoor play area to ensure children have plenty of access to gross motor and physical play, even in the colder Lithgow weather. We have a separate play area for our younger and older children as we know that older and younger children have different developmental needs in outdoor play.

We support multi-aged groupings throughout certain parts of the day; we use our multi-purpose spaces for these times so that all children have a sense of belonging within all areas of Gowrie NSW Lithgow Early Education and Care Centre.

## Enrolment Process

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How do I enrol at a Gowrie NSW Early Education and Care centre?

When families wish to enrol at a Gowrie NSW centre, our Centre Managers will invite you to take a tour of the centre first, so you can see the environment where your child will be educated and cared for. Our Centre Managers will then provide an enrolment pack that covers everything you need to know about the centre.

To book in a tour, visit our Centre's webpage:

<https://www.gowriensw.com.au/our-centres/gowrie-nsw-lithgow/2-uncategorised/494-book-a-tour-gowrie-nsw-lithgow>

Is there a waitlist and how is it managed?

Families may wish to put their name on our waitlist for future enrolments. These waitlists are regularly reviewed, and families are contacted once a place becomes available. To register for our waitlist, please let the Centre Manager know on your tour. Alternatively, you may phone (02) 8594 4200 or email [enrolments@gowriensw.com.au](mailto:enrolments@gowriensw.com.au).

How do I withdraw my enrolment?

You will be required to give four week's written notice to your Centre Manager either by written letter or email.

## Your Child's First Day

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### What time should I arrive?

Families are welcome to arrive at a time that is convenient to them. We feel it is important that families establish a routine and arrive at the time that they would normally be dropping off their child in the future.

### What do I need to pack in my child's bag?

At Gowrie, we try to provide all the essentials for your child's day. Here's a general guide to help:

- Change of clothes (when involved with hands-on play-based learning, your child may get a little messy!)
- Comfort item such as a toy or blanket (if required)
- Dummy in a sealed, named container (if required)
- Expressed milk (if required)
- We will provide a sun safe hat which covers your child's face, neck and ears

### Do I need to pack sunscreen?

As a sun-safe organisation we provide child-friendly sunscreen, however if your child has sensitive skin please feel free to provide your preferred brand. We ask that all parents apply sunscreen to their child on arrival.

### What's the best way to say goodbye to my child?

It is important to establish a goodbye routine that works for you and your child that is consistent throughout their time in care. A goodbye routine may include a small play activity, a reminder that you will return later for pick-up and a cuddle before leaving. This helps manage a child's expectations about their routine as well as strengthens their sense of security.

### If my child is upset, how do you settle them after I leave?

If your child becomes upset after drop-off, your child's Key Educator and other educators will be there to nurture them through this process. Educators will reassure children that their family will return and encourage them to explore the environment and engage in experiences. Most importantly, educators will stay close to your child, giving them lots of affection and building a close relationship to help them feel safe and confident in their environments.

Educators also use StoryPark, a parent communication app, to communicate what your child is learning throughout the day. If you choose to reply on this medium, educators may show your child any replies that you might make, especially for older age groups that are involved in updating StoryPark.

For more information on separation anxiety, please speak to your centre manager for additional resources and fact sheets.

### What will you do with my child on their first day?

In the first three years of a child's life, secure relationships are especially essential to healthy brain development. On your child's first day we will begin this journey by focusing on building strong bonds between your child and their Key Educator, other educators and children in their room. It is also important

children feel safe in their environment; educators will support children in this process by gradually introducing new surroundings, establishing routines and providing fun, engaging learning experiences.

## Health, Safety and Wellbeing

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My child requires medication, how do you manage this?

All medication must be given to centre staff to manage directly. Our centres have formal processes in place to support children who require short or long-term medications as well as health management plans for children with any known medical conditions. Please speak further with your centre staff regarding this.

What if my child gets sick or has an accident? What are the child care service's responsibilities?

Centres are required to inform families if their child is sick or injured while at the centre. In some cases, they will also need to notify a state or territory regulator. This includes if a child has a serious injury, trauma or illness which would require urgent medical attention, including the need for emergency services or going to hospital. Because of this, it is important to keep your contact details and other emergency contacts at up to date should the need arise to contact you in an emergency.

What are my responsibilities if my child is sick?

Our centres do all they can to prevent illnesses and the spread of infections, this includes thorough cleaning, hand washing and other infection control strategies. Unfortunately, children will still get sick from time to time. Sometimes parents will be asked to keep their child at home to stop the spread of infectious diseases.

The National Health and Medical Research Council publication, *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services*, has a list of the recommended time you will need to keep your child at home when they're sick to help centres and families work together to reduce the risk of illnesses spreading further. Please speak to your Centre Manager about specific illness and their exclusion periods.

How do you manage the behaviour of my child and other children?

Children make attempts to meet their needs and wants by expressing their emotions in a variety of ways. As children are attempting to understand the world they live in, there are times they find this challenging and require support and guidance from an adult.

Our educators implement several techniques to positively guide children's behaviour, this will look different for each child. Our aim is to support children so they are able to regulate their own behaviour. Our strategies consider other impacts on children's behaviour such as the learning environment, daily routines and children's interests. Our Centre Manager and educators have a range of additional resources and fact sheets on positive behaviour guidance, and tips on how to handle challenging behaviour in the home so please let them know if you would like these.

## Families and Communities

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How do I give feedback to the service?

We welcome feedback through conversation, in writing via email or letter, or on our Complaints and Family Feedback Form. Gowrie NSW is committed to fair and effective resolutions to all concerns and complaints in a timely manner and is committed to the continuous improvement of the environment and programs we provide.