

ELC Virtual Tour Voice Over Script Center-Wide Information

Slide 1: Title Page

Welcome to the virtual tour of the Early Learning Campus at the University of Louisville. We are located at 409 Reg Smith Circle near Bette Johnson Hall on the Belknap Campus. Our Program serves children of the faculty, staff, and students of the University of Louisville and residents of Family Scholar House and the Old Louisville neighborhood. We care for children ages six weeks to pre-kindergarten.

Our curriculum approach is based on practices developed in a small town in Northern Italy named Reggio Emilia. The Reggio approach is emulated around the world and is prized for its effective focus on young children as capable learners who explore, wonder, test, and create to build knowledge. Major tenets of the Reggio approach include an emphasis on relationships with children and families, inclusion of natural materials and open-ended loose parts, and the use of Art and Music to expand children's communication and appreciation for beauty. Our building was specifically designed to support our Reggio-inspired curriculum approach.

Slide 2: NAEYC Accreditation

We work hard to ensure that our program meets the gold standards of quality in this country. We are committed to continual program enhancements and are proud to be one of the few centers in this area to hold accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Slide 3: Five Stars

In addition to national accreditation, the ELC holds five out of five stars in the Kentucky Childcare Quality Rating System. Stars are based on quality across all areas of operation, including teaching practices, classroom environments, health and safety, curriculum, family engagement, and program management.

Slide 4: First Floor Piazza

When you enter the building, you will find yourself in a small entry way with an electronic pad for logging your child in and out of the center. Your fingerprint will connect you to your child's records. When you are finished, the pad will unlock the magnetic inner doors.

After logging in on the pad, you enter through a second set of double doors and pass through a short hallway with the front desk and business manager office on the left side and the Assistant Director, Program Coordinator, and Director offices on the right. This short hallway opens into the first-floor piazza, which is similar to a town square in Italy. This is typically a gathering

space where families can chat or classrooms come together for projects. Children's art and documentation of their learning is displayed in all piazzas and on hallway walls.

Six classroom doors and the kitchen open onto the piazza or the short hallway in the north corner. Our youngest children are in first-floor classrooms so that they do not have to navigate flights of stairs before they are ready. All ELC classrooms, with the exception of our Sweet Peas room, are very large and provide plenty of space for children to move and play in whole groups, small groups or individually. Each classroom has a counter and kitchen sink and a bathroom connected to the room.

During COVID pre-cautions, we are not using the fingerprint pad to avoid spread of the virus. At this time, families do not enter the building but drop their children off at the inner set of doors after completing a daily health screening.

While we continue front door drop off and pick up as COVID precautions, we will use the first-floor piazza space for social distancing as children move to the front door to go home at the end of the day.

Slide 5: First Floor Piazza

The study of nature, light, and shadow is another major tenet of the Reggio approach. Our facility has many windows to allow plenty of natural light. The building's various window shapes were designed to look like a child's shape sorter toy. Our ceiling lights are halogen, rather than fluorescent, to more closely mimic the natural light spectrum and to avoid flickering and popping, which can be stressful to children with sensory integration issues. There is a large light shaft on the third floor, above a translucent floor in the second-floor piazza. This lets natural light come all the way down from the roof to the first floor. It is also very interesting to stand in the first-floor piazza watching people on the second-floor walk across the ceiling!

Slide 6: Our Teaching Staff

Our outstanding teaching staff are dedicated early childhood professionals who are well-versed in best practices, NAEYC standards, and Quality and Environmental Rating Scales. They give our children love and individualized attention to support learning and a positive sense of self. Each classroom team consists of a Lead Teacher and two to three teaching Assistants or Aides.

Our Lead Teachers work with their teams to develop weekly lesson plans based on the children's interests and skill levels. Each team follows a predictable daily schedule so that the children feel secure and confident. Lesson plans are posted and shared with families each week and each classroom team creates a monthly newsletter for enrolled families.

The Lead Teacher meets with families for individualized conferences at least twice per year in the fall and spring and more often as needed. We use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, the

Child Observation Record, and the Developmental Milestones Checklists to assess strengths and areas for growth. We also use the Brigance Kindergarten Readiness Screener in our prek classrooms. If the family or teaching staff notice possible developmental concerns, our Program Coordinator is available to assist with resources and additional strategies. We use Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey as a strengths-based approach to help children build self-regulation and problem-solving skills as the foundation to positive relationships.

Our Lead Teachers hold degrees ranging from Associate's to Master's and have many years of experience working with young children. Our Assistant Teachers also hold certifications or degrees in the field ranging from Child Development Associate to Master's Degrees. Our Teaching Aides are entering the field of early childhood education. Many of them are seeking Child Development Associates or a degree in the field. We are also fortunate to have very talented student workers on our staff, many of whom are seeking degrees in early childhood education. They assist in classrooms and fill in for absent staff as needed.

We maintain excellent staff to child ratios, which are often lower than state requirements. We maintain ratios of 1 teacher for four infants, 1 teacher for six toddlers, and 1 teacher for ten preschoolers.

Slide 7: Our Administrative and Support Staff

Our families directly communicate with their children's teaching teams to discuss learning, classroom events, and their child's needs. When they have questions about anything at the center-wide level, our administrative team is happy to help.

Our Program Coordinator, Paige Shank, works with families and classrooms to support children who may have special needs or struggle with positive behavior. She has many connections and can help families connect to local resources as needed. Paige is also our contact for questions about the Waiting List. She holds a Master's Degree in Social Work and had 30 years of experience working with children and families prior to joining the ELC.

Our Unit Business Manager, Andrea Welch, is the contact for payment and account questions, childcare subsidy contracts, and all things financial. Andrea holds a degree in finance and is our go-to person for all things financial.

The Dietary Manager, Mary Hay, is highly trained in nutrition and has a passion for ensuring that children eat healthy meals to support growth and development. She would be happy to talk with you, if your child has special dietary needs.

Slide 8: Our Administrative Staff

Terrie Robinson, our Assistant Director, handles the day-to-day operations of the ELC such as staff scheduling, training coordination, and regulatory compliance. She is a problem-solver

extraordinaire and is well-versed in all aspects of ELC operations. Terrie holds a Master's Degree in Education and taught for many years before moving into administration.

I am Dr. Jill Jacobi-Vessels, the Director of the ELC. I work with our team to develop the ELC vision, build respectful and collaborative relationships with our families, set and achieve goals, and create policies that adhere to the gold standards in the field. I hold a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education and a Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning with an emphasis on early childhood. I have administered quality children's programs for nearly thirty years, working in military, public, and private settings.

Slide 9: Second Floor Piazza

The second-floor piazza is accessible via two stairwells located in the corners of the building or the elevator. The second-floor piazza is filled with natural light from the large windowed shaft that reaches to the third-floor. Children's art and documentation of classroom projects and events cover the walls and hang from the ceilings. There is a piano with color-coded keys so that children can create their own music and write it down using matching colored markers. We also have a large supply of multi-cultural instruments, including steel drums, maracas, rhythm sticks, bongos, castanets, rain sticks, floor toms, tic tac drums, djembes, shakers, and tambourines.

Slide 10: Playground

Every class has scheduled playground time twice per day and time in the third-floor gross motor area. Infants and toddlers may go on a buggy walk. Our playground is divided by fencing to create two areas, one for the younger children and one for the older children. There are developmentally appropriate climbing structures in each area and the surface is covered with deep mulch. We have an area with permanent drums and a xylophone, a short ball hoop, and a covered sandbox. Small raised garden beds are located around the edges so that children can plant flowers and herbs. We supplement the built-in materials by bringing new items out and planning teacher-supported activities.

Slide 11: Third Floor Gross Motor Area

The third floor is a large open space so that children have room to run, jump, and play ball. One area is dedicated to tricycle use. Another area is covered with thick gymnastics mats for tumbling and rolling. A third, smaller and less busy space allows for children to play individually or in small groups. The greenhouse door is located on the south end of the third floor. Other doors lead to the rooftop garden.

Slide 12: Rooftop Garden and Greenhouse

The rooftop garden and greenhouse provide children opportunities to plant seeds and grow flowers and vegetables, watch birds, and play in the fresh air. The spaces between the garden

beds are filled with flat pavers. There are wicker chairs and tables to create a place to relax and unwind.

Slide 13: Art and Music

Art and music are very important elements of a Reggio-inspired curriculum. Young children do not yet have fully developed verbal skills and so may not be able to express themselves in that way. Art and music are languages in themselves and allow new ways for expression.

We also want to ensure that our children appreciate beauty and creativity from cultures around the world. Our Art and Music teacher, or Atelierista, teaches basic art techniques and shares masterpieces from around the world. The in-depth creative experiences are tailored to meet individual skill levels and interests and teach children how to communicate their ideas with others. Art materials may include clay, various types of paints and brushes, glue, collage materials, fabrics, papers, markers, crayons, and items from nature.

Music experiences include opportunities to build listening skills, dance, hear a wide variety of music, use of many instruments including onsite instruments such as cellos and a tympany drum, visiting musicians, discussion of music terms, and creating tempos. The Atelierista works collaboratively with classroom teaching staff to ensure that art and music are embedded in daily activities.

Slide 14: Learning Provocations

Our staff observe the children's interests and skill levels to develop play-based learning that captures their excitement and supports next-level learning. We use a variety of loose parts and natural materials to create open-ended play opportunities, called provocations. Some provocations may represent a small world such as the ocean or dinosaurs in a forest. Others might re-create scenes from a recently read book. Provocations might simply invite children to explore or invent. Teachers often lead children through extended projects based on their interests, working together to find new information and think in new ways. We incorporate math, science, literacy, fine and gross motor, self-help, and social skills into our play spaces and projects. Teaching staff stay close to observe, interact, assist or add complexity as needed.

Play-based learning is active and sometimes messy. Children should be dressed to play and get dirty. They should wear shoes that enclose the toes and heels for safety. An extra set of clothes is needed for spills and accidents.

Slide 15: Federal Food Program/Meals and Naps

Our Dietary Manager serves breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. All meals meet the nutrition requirements of the Federal Food Program. Our menus emphasize fruits, vegetables, and lean meats with limited sugar and no juices. Drinks include milk and water. We provide all food for the children but can accommodate special dietary needs with documentation from a medical provider. We are a totally nut-free facility due to severe allergies. Mothers who are nursing are

welcome to use our Nursing Nook, a private area with a rocker and one-way windows into the infant rooms.

The children are all offered an opportunity to nap following lunch. If they are not interested in sleeping, they are encouraged to rest their bodies while they play quietly or read books. Infants under 12 months sleep based on their own needs rather than a scheduled time. Children 12-months and older will need to bring crib-sized bedding for their cots. Bedding will be sent home each week for laundering.

Slide 16: COVID Precautions

We typically allow families to visit the ELC whenever they would like, however, access to the building is currently limited as a COVID precaution. Families drop their children off at the front door and staff 'buddies' escort the children to their classrooms. We conduct health screenings upon arrival and check temperatures throughout the day. We wash hands frequently, practice social distancing, and clean high-touch surfaces multiple times each day. Our staff wear masks. Children three-years-old and older have the option of wearing a mask. We will encourage them to wear their masks but cannot insist. We work closely with our medical advisors and the Health Department and strictly follow requirements for quarantining. Our staff get tested each month. Many staff members have received the optional vaccine.

Slide 17: Tuition and Fees

Our current fee schedule, which is based on classroom assignment, is available in the Family Handbook, which is posted on our website at Louisville.edu/education/elc. The second or more child in the same family receives a \$5 per week discount. Children typically transition from one classroom to the next in mid-August for the start of the new school year.

All of our spaces are for full-time care. We do not have part-time rates but families may choose to pick up their children earlier or not attend based on their own needs. After six months, each enrolled child will have up to two weeks of available vacation per school year. We do not charge fees for used vacation weeks. Unused vacation weeks do not roll over into the next school year.

Slide 18: Hours of Operation and Calendar

The ELC is open from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. We follow the University schedule and so are closed for the major US holidays and the university-approved winter holidays, typically from Christmas to after the New Year. We are also closed for one week in August for mandatory staff training and preparation for the new school year. We do not charge families for the winter holiday break or for the week of closure in August.

We maintain a drop off no later than 9:45 AM policy for all children except those under one year. This helps us provide consistency and implement a high-quality curriculum. Children may be picked up at any time but must be picked up no later than 5:30 PM.

Slide 19: Research and Clinical Teacher Preparation Model School

The ELC is a model school that plays a critical role in the preparation of effective new teachers. UofL students seeking degrees in early childhood education and music therapy may have courses on site in our studio space. They may observe classrooms through the one-way mirror windows or enter to teach a planned activity under the guidance of their instructor and our teaching staff. Students in other fields such as nursing or social work may also complete course assignments at the ELC. Our children frequently benefit from this relationship with UofL students and have enjoyed student-led family drumming circles, small group activities, and learning through music.

Slide 20: How to Apply for Our Waiting List.

If you are interested in enrolling your child, you must first apply for our waiting list. The form is posted on our website at Louisville.edu/education/elc. Please read the Family Handbook, which is also posted on our website, before applying to be certain that the ELC is a good fit for your family's needs. You may send completed waiting list applications, along with the \$100 non-refundable application fee, to Early Learning Campus, 409 Reg Smith Circle, Louisville, KY 40208. We will send a confirmation of receipt.

Most of our spaces become available in mid-August, when our graduating preschoolers leave us to go to kindergarten and the younger children move up to fill in the vacancies. Some spaces occasionally become available during the school year as families move away. Priority placement is given to siblings of children already enrolled. In addition, the ELC was created through a partnership between UofL and Family Scholar House. Family Scholar House owns a predetermined number of spaces. If they do not need all of their reserved spaces, they release them so that families on the waiting list can fill the vacancies.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to predict how long it will take to receive an offer of a space as there are many variables that come into play, including how many people are ahead of you on the list, the number of open spaces, and whether or not the people ahead of you accept an offer, and currently, COVID group size restrictions. In pre-COVID times, it could take a year to a year and a half to get an offer for an infant or toddler. Preschool spaces tend to take a little less time. Families further down on the list are often able to get in because the timing was not good for other families.

Slide 21: Family Engagement and Involvement

We value our partnership with families and know that we serve the children best when we have strong and positive relationships with the adults in their lives. We offer multiple events each

year to bring families together and share learning. Some family events include monthly coffee hours, Drive-In Movie Night on the third-floor, Spring Festival, Open House, and New Family Reception.

Our ELC Family Organization, or EFO, is a wonderful way to become involved in supporting other ELC families and our staff. This is a parent-led organization that coordinates many events, such as meeting on Waterfront Wednesdays, gathering on the Quad for movies, helping with ELC repairs, and twice-yearly fundraisers to support conference attendance for staff and the purchase of additional art supplies. The group usually meets each month. All families are invited to attend.

Slide 22: Contact Information

If you have a question regarding your account or anything financial, please send an email to elcbusi@louisville.edu. All other questions or requests should be sent to elcadmin@louisville.edu.

Our front desk phone number is (502) 852-3521. If you have questions and would like to talk, we ask that you call between the hours of 10:00 AM and 3:30 PM so that we can give you proper time and attention. We are very busy in the early morning and late afternoons, helping families with drop off and pick up of children. Of course, if you have an emergency, you may call at any time.

Slide 23: If you would like more information about specific classrooms, please view the Infant/Toddler Classroom Tour or the Preschool Classroom Tour. Thank you for Your Interest. We hope to have an opportunity to work with you and your children.