



Minutes

Early Learning Subcommittee Meeting

May 25, 2023, 7.30 pm,

online via Zoom

Council's Early Learning Subcommittee is a forum for preschool parents, carers and communities in ACT schools. The ELSC supports and advocates for parent engagement in early learning and public education, and promotes the benefits of quality, early years play-based learning.

Register for subcommittee meetings (or download minutes) here: [Meeting summaries](#).

Contact the Early Learning Officer via [email](#) or phone 02 6241 5759.

Explore Council's resources [website/EL](#).

1. Open

7.35 pm

Meeting opened online, MS welcomed attendees

conducted an Acknowledgement of Country.

Early learning subcommittee background summary.

Announcements: Council's [free training](#) for association members.

2. Early Learning events: creating signature events for early years

Events can help associations engage families. Each year is dotted with a range of national events that associations can leverage for exposure, resources, expertise, and sometimes even funding. Annual events allow community capacity to develop, traditions to emerge, and organiser resources can be customised and handed over to new organisers.

le [Children's Week](#) promotes childhood and children's rights, (so every year features a different article from the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). Small grant funding applications are accepted from July for events planned for Oct-Nov (perfect for orientation activities).

Next year's enrolled starters consider inviting new students and families to an event ie bookweek parade.

Sharing stories The P&C or preschool association members' stories about 'what this event means to me/us' are a precursor for communities to reflect on, and share, their own stories. The meaning of some events won't be familiar to everyone, and it's easy to take event significance for granted. Sharing stories is a way to explore meaning and build community.

See Council's pre-filled annual [Content Planner for Early Learning](#). A customisable planner for association activity messaging. Good planning provides time for feedback and creative innovation.

Discussion

NP noted that some event timings ie International Mud Day (June 29), aren't helpful for the southern hemisphere, needs to be reallocated to summer.

Neville Bonner Primary holds a signature Book Fair. Book donations are received throughout the year and filed A-Z in the storeroom. Other activities on the day include a bake stall and this year

they had an early learning corner for the very young ones while parents were browsing books. They're considering hosting storytime sessions in future to build on this opportunity. At their school disco, they're looking for ways to engage further with the (preschool & kindy) parents as they're required to stay for the event. Maybe a parent lounge as it can get noisy. NP said they also did a Mother's Day stall which went really well. There was a lot of enthusiasm from the children and it was quite profitable. A lot of knickknacks that children were very, very excited to purchase. Things like market day is also a highlight. Being able to schedule those sorts of things on dates that will recur, so once we've done it the first time we just refine it for the next year. We try not to do too much, maybe one event per term, so not taxing our volunteers too much. Then we've got some flexibility to do things on short notice.

3. Enrolment in Preschool (and Kinder) 2024 starters

With preschool/school enrolment open (Apr 28-June 2). Parent associations (PPAs/P&Cs) can acknowledge and support the school's newest EL parents. Parents tell us that it's easy to miss this deadline and late offers can have consequences for booking OSHC and location options. Consider scheduling a friendly reminder to parents and/or local playgroups.

- Share the message about enrolment dates and deadlines. Council's post to Facebook. Share an invitation to connect.
- Ask the school parent community, 'do you know someone turning 3 or 4 years old this year?' ACT preschool is free for children in the year before school. Enrol online via the ACT Education Directorate before June --.'
- Parents/carers of 2-3 YO's - Children turning 4 by April 30, 2024 (unless eligible for early entry – turning 3)

School Readiness

Preschool parents often ask 'is my child ready for school?' Every year the school readiness topic prompts questions at the 'transition to school' parent forum. Parents preparing their children to start preschool or kindy benefit most from reassurance and support from the school community.

Schools will help with questions about starting school and P&Cs have a valuable role providing the community support that is so important for children and families.

Council's [webpage](#) has a 'resource guide' for families starting school and a list of books to read with children about starting school. P&Cs may consider purchasing books to read with children about starting school to loan to newly enrolled families.

A MailChimp subscription helps manage the distribution of P&C information via opt-in newsletter. More securely and reliably than class carer systems of volunteers. Parents are invited to subscribe and self-manage their details through a secure mailing list. Families are often seeking playdates prior to starting school or preschool especially if they're less familiar with the area. Relationships play a key role in a smooth transitions.

Raisingchildren.net.au provides concise information about preschooler milestones and reliable information on 3-5 year development.

Discussion

NP: My experience is coming from the Early Childhood space into schools. I've been on the other side of that transition - the getting ready, implementing those school readiness programs. It really is a case of 'can you open your lunchbox?' And 'can you walk into a space and say, Hi, my name is Nichola, can I sit with you'. Where we've had opportunities to engage with schools to see what the expectations of the schools are, and being able to temper the expectations of parents.

At the school's parent info sessions last year, about this time of the year, only three parents came. We haven't done it this time. I know the school's doing tours by individual bookings if parents are interested, but come October, November, there's school orientation and visits. That's when the big conversations are had. From my perspective, as an ECT, there's the school readiness stuff – 'enjoy your school holidays, make sure that you talk and open up their lunchbox'. It's quite an interesting opportunity because the school gets bombarded with the questions but they don't tend to come to P&C.

The children are four and a half, maybe five and it's not uni, you'll be okay. With all the disruption that children have had over the last three years, I think it's helpful to say that, 'they will be alright'. Even if they missed three weeks of school, or couldn't take the lid off the yoghurt.

At preschool, credibility is a tricky thing. It needs to come from the teachers, because the school has a status and a level of respect afforded to it that the early childhood centers don't quite have. Same regulations, same curriculum. Same qualifications needed to teach in the space...

4. Grant template

Grant application basics [auto-fill template](#).

This basic template records essential information to keep ready for grant applications. With space to list ideas to add to the next committee meeting agenda.

Council's [free training](#) includes a grant writing workshop in term 3, Tuesday 5 September, online 7.00-8.30 pm. Invite your committee members to get together for the session.

5. ELO report since February meeting

- a. **Volunteer Week morning tea:** Council's Volunteer Week morning tea inaugural event.
- b. Early Learning Subcommittee [Meeting summaries](#)
- c. Annual content planner for early learning activities
- d. Promote online enrolment for preschool
- e. Exit surveys for member training and events

Meeting closed 8.30pm

Job Profit & Loss Statement

1/07/2022 To 23/05/2023

ABN: 53 870 517 949

Email: admin@actparents.org.au

Account Name	Selected Period
EL	Early Learning
Expense	
Audit/Accounting (MYOB)	\$125.00
Dues & Subscriptions	\$353.64
Internet & Web Development	\$399.18
Insurance	\$50.00
Photocopying	\$39.00
Postage	\$21.00
Stationery & Office Supplies	\$272.00
Telephone Expenses	\$122.00
Wages & Salaries	\$30,180.95
Superannuation	\$3,169.01
Workers Comp Insurance	\$313.68
Staff & Member Training/Conferences	\$350.00
Total Expense	\$35,395.46
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$35,395.46

Early Learning Subcommittee Terms of Reference

- Promote the importance of preschool education to ACT families,
- Support parent engagement in early years learning,
- Support families to complete online enrolment for preschool,
- Provide information, training and support services to associations
- Advise Council Executive and meetings on policy and matters relating to ACT preschool/early childhood education,
- Provide input to Council submissions on preschool issues,
- Provide representatives on behalf of Council to related external forums, committees, advisory/working groups or task forces.
- Provide updates to the Education Directorate on activities
- Maintain the early learning subcommittee.