

# earlybird

educare@8MP



## Family Handbook - 2021

# Welcome!

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We're so happy that you are considering joining the Earlybird Family. This introductory pack is designed to provide you with the high-level information you will need to partner with us in supporting your child's early learning and development journey at Earlybird ☺

You'll find the topics below covered in the pages which follow:

- **2021-2022 key dates**
- **Fees and Enrolment Process**
- **Our Team**
- **Our Educational Programme**
- **Daily Routines: Operating Hours, Nap Times, Meals**
- **Extramurals and Family Engagement**
- **Health and Safety @Earlybird**

Please feel free to reach out to us at [8MP@earlybirdeducare.co.za](mailto:8MP@earlybirdeducare.co.za) or to call us on 071-539-0839 if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to partnering with you to support the preparation of your child for the adventure of life which awaits them!

Kind regards,



Meg and The Earlybird Team



# 2021-2022 Key Dates

- **Enrolment Tours**

Based on the latest construction completion date estimates for the building, we are aiming to conduct tours of the centre (providing opportunities to meet our principal and teachers and visit the classrooms and playground) for interested families from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> of August 2021. Keep an eye on the events calendar on our website for updates.

- **Acclimation Days: 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> August 2021**

If your little one is going to be starting with us for the first time in September 2021, you are welcome to bring them in to the centre for an 'acclimation day' on either Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of August so that they can meet their teacher and some of their classmates and get used to their classroom and the school environment before the learning programme officially commences on **Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2021**.

- **2021 December Break**

Earlybird Educare@8MP is intended to serve working parents and as such it is open throughout the year and does not close during standard school holidays. We only close on public holidays and over the December Builders' Break.

This year, Earlybird Educare@8MP will close for the annual break at 17:30 on the afternoon of **Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2021** and will re-open at 07:00 on **Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2022**.



# 2021 Fees

## Our fees are structured as follows:

- **Registration Fee** - R 950 once-off which includes a Earlybird t-shirt, backpack, all stationery your child needs for the year and a set of personal Earlybird bedding for use at nap time. After the first child in a family has registered, the subsequent siblings will not be required to pay the standard registration fee. The registration fee and the first month's school fee must be paid in advance of the child's first day starting at the educare centre.
- **Monthly Fee** – This covers our full-day educare offering (from 07:00-17:30), five-days a week, including a nutritious breakfast and lunch meal prepared fresh in our on-site kitchen daily. Fees are calculated by the FirstRand Human Capital team according to a sliding scale linked to pay; contact your Human Capital Business Partner for further details.
- Fees are subject to **annual increases** in line with any increases in our cost of provision.
- **Up-front payment discounts** are available at roughly -8% for annual and -4% for bi-annual lump-sum fee payments.
- A **half-day attendance option** is available at 75% of the standard monthly fee. Half-day pick-up times vary by age group as follows: Blue Group - 12:00 ;Green Group - 12:15 ; Yellow Group - 12:30 ;Red Group - 12:45 ; Orange Group - 13:00.
- **Paused enrolment:** families may pause enrolment for their child for up to a maximum of 3-months. A space-retainer fee of 75% of the standard monthly fee is required to hold the child's spot open over the paused enrolment period.
- **One calendar month's notice is required for dis-enrolment** and families who wish to re-enrol their child after a period of disenrollment will need to pay the registration fee again in order to re-enrol.







# Earlybird's Enrolment Process

- **STEP 1:**

Attend one of our advertised MS Teams Parents' Evenings or book an appointment to talk to us using the ["schedule a visit" button on our website.](#)

- **STEP 2:**

[Complete our online enrolment form](#) (you need to fill out and submit one full form for each child you wish to enrol). Doing so constitutes an 'expression of interest' and does not entail any kind of binding commitment on your part. Your Human Capital Business Partner will confirm your eligibility once your application has been received.

- **STEP 3:**

You will be invited to schedule an appointment/tour: If you are satisfied after you have had a chance to talk with the centre's principal and your child's prospective teacher, you can sign our enrolment contract and upload the required documents for your child (birth certificate and clinic / vaccination card).

- **STEP 4:**

Activate the debit order mandate for the monthly fee and settle the registration and first month's fee invoices which you will receive via email (these payments can be made via EFT).

- **STEP 5:**

Join the family WhatsApp group for your child's class and find a time to talk to your child's teacher or the centre principal about preparing your little one for their first day.



# Our Team

## We're here for you!

Our Central team exists to provide support to our centres and the families of all of our enrolled children. We are in the process of vetting an excellent pool of applicants for the principal and teaching team positions at Earlybird@8MP and will share the successful candidate's profiles with you as soon as our hiring process is completed.

### **Megan Blair, CEO and Head of Curriculum**

A former teacher and Fulbright scholarship recipient, Meg holds a Masters of Public Policy in Education Policy and draws on her experience from both the practical and academic side of the education aisle as she works with the Earlybird team to build a network of affordable, high-quality educare centres across South Africa.



### **Michelle Dos Santos, Head of Training and Centre Management**

Michelle has 12 years of experience setting up and running high-quality early childhood development centres. She is an excellent teacher who loves children and has three boys of her own. She holds a B.Ed in Foundation Phase Education.



### **Palesa Mkhize, Head of Business Development**

Palesa has 10 years experience in investment banking and asset management specializing in the financing and management of infrastructure and affordable housing. She is passionate about early childhood and uses her experience and networks to further Earlybird's growth into new properties and communities.



### **James Munnik, Head of Finance and Operations**

James is a Chartered Accountant (SA) with an Honours Degree in Finance who is committed to applying his skills and knowledge for social good. Among his varied experience are financial management roles in affordable education, renewable energy, and franchising. His time at SPARK Schools, in particular, provided him with great insight into the mechanics behind delivering a consistently high-quality product at rapid scale.

For regular updates on happenings at our educare centres, follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EarlybirdEducare/>

For links to the latest, rigorous research in early childhood development, follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/earlybirdeduc>



# Our Educational Programme



Read more here:

<https://earlybirdeducare.co.za/our-educational-approach/>





# Our Educational Programme

## Language, Literacy and Creative Expression

### - Creative Expression -

1. Engages in music, art, and dramatic play

### - Oral Language Development -

2. Receptive and expressive vocabulary development
3. Coherent expression of personal ideas, thoughts, and feelings

### - Emergent Literacy -

4. Response to text
5. Phonological Awareness
6. Phoneme-grapheme correspondence

### - Emergent Writing -

7. Print awareness / concepts
8. Tracing, transcription and writing

## Early Maths and Scientific Reasoning

### - Quantitative Concepts -

9. Estimation
10. Verbal and object counting
11. Numeral recognition, depiction and quantity correspondence
12. Relative magnitude and Measurement

### - Geometry and Spatial Relationships -

13. Shape recognition and manipulation
14. Position, Directions and Time

### - Reasoning -

15. Classification
16. Planning
17. Hypothesis Formation

## Physical and Social Emotional Wellbeing

### - Social Emotional Development -

18. Self regulation
19. Response to expectations
20. Positive sense of self and cultural identity
21. Persistence in the face of challenges

### - Physical Development -

22. Gross motor coordination
23. Fine motor coordination



## Getting ready for 'big school'....

Our curriculum is underpinned by 23 Objectives for Development and Learning (ODLs) which are mapped to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). All of our 23 ODLs have been demonstrated by research as foundational to children's successful transition to and functioning in primary school and beyond.

Each ODL has been broken down into a series of 'steps' which a child is expected to progress through on their way to mastering that particular Objective. All activities and games on our teaching guide, Bird Seed, which take place during the three structured learning periods in the day (Hands-on STEM, Expression Session, and Story Fun) are mapped to a particular learning and development 'step'.

We conduct regular observational assessment to track children's development and learning and keep open lines of communication with families regarding each child's progress and achievements. We are available to discuss your child's individual needs at any stage.

## Read more at:

<https://earlybirdeducare.co.za/learning-programmes/>





# Daily Routines

Earlybird@8MP will operate from 7am – 5:30pm.

Our daily routine varies by age-group, but the graphic below gives you a sense of the general flow of each day:



## Unstructured learning experiences each day:

- **Free Choice** the “Plan, Do, Review” technique is used to build children’s autonomy and executive functions during this play-based learning period in the day.
- **Outdoor Play** is a time for gross motor development, exploration and boisterous, messy fun.

## Semi-structured learning experiences each day:

- **Morning Circle** provides a time for social-emotional check-in.
- **Sensory / Imaginary Play** is an opportunity for fantasy and role play, drama games, open-ended scenarios.
- **Wrap-up and Home Time** is a window for reflection on today’s events and preparation for tomorrow.

## Structured learning experiences each day:

- **Story Fun** is our main vehicle for language and emergent literacy development.
- **Hands-on STEM** is an opportunity to encourage curiosity, building, reasoning and foundational mathematical skills through carefully designed activities and games.
- **Expression Session** is all about creativity and getting kids to express themselves in lots of different ways.



# Family Engagement

## Quarterly Events and Bi-annual Parents' Evenings

Please keep an eye on your email and the parents' WhatsApp group for your child's class as we will be sending out invites to various family engagement events throughout the year (COVID infection controls permitting).

We also host a parents' evening at the beginning and in the middle of each school year and we hope you will be able to attend. You are always welcome in your child's classroom and we encourage you to make time for a weekly chat with your child's teacher... either during drop-off or pick-up time, or over WhatsApp.

Please let your child's teacher and principal know if there is anything in particular (at home or at school) which your child is battling with.



# Nap Times and Sleep Safety

Napping is a necessary part of the preschool day and we work hard to ensure sleep routines are kept consistent.

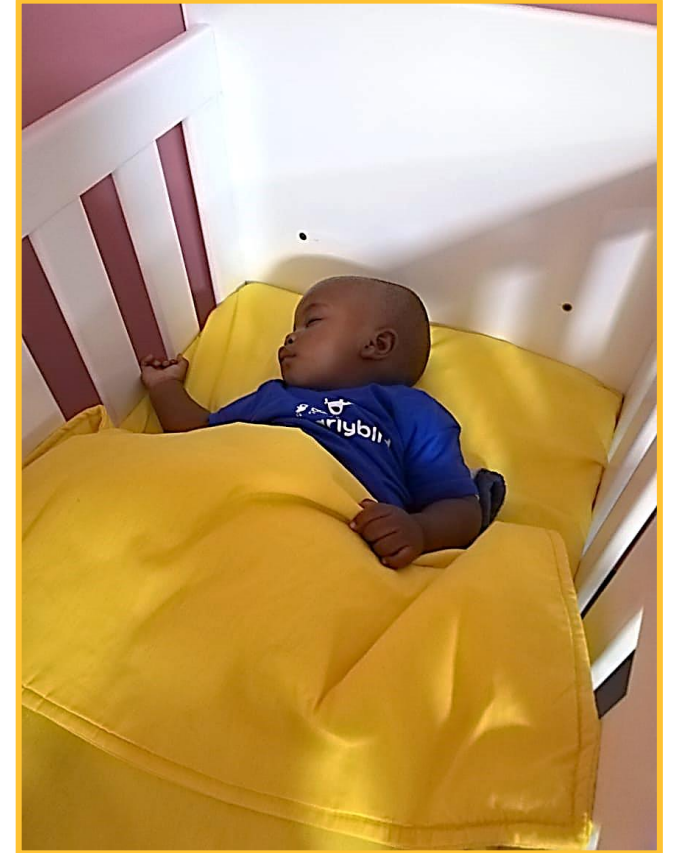
For children under 12-months, Earlybird supplies cots with clear side panels to ensure no visual impediments to baby monitoring. Custom-fit, covered mattresses are also provided. Any external bedding or sleep toys provided by families will be vetted by teachers to ensure it does not pose a SIDS risk.

Age-determined day naps are dictated by a baby's ultradian rhythms, which are experienced roughly every few hours. Once night feeds are no longer required (around 6 months of age), a baby's natural rhythm is typically to sleep for about 10-12 hours at night in addition to regular day naps. Babies are more sensitive to sensory input because they have an immature nervous system. Strategies to sooth babies and help them get to sleep include rocking, walking in pram, soft white noise, swaddling/slings. Establishing a day sleep routine is key, between 6 and 9 months most babies are having two to three short naps. We are sure to wake babies by 16:30 so that bedtime can be kept.

- **NAP TIMES for Blue Group: 09:00 – 09:45 (optional) ; 12:00 – 13:30 ; 15:15 – 16:00 (optional)**
- **NAP TIME for Green Group: 12:15 – 14:00**
- **NAP TIME for Yellow Group: 12:30 – 14:00**
- **NAP TIME for Red Group: 12:45 – 14:00**
- **NAP TIME for Orange Group: 13:00 – 14:00**

For children over 9-months old, Earlybird supplies stretchers which comply with health and safety regulations (elevated above the floor) and ensure children can nap comfortably during the school day.

We provide individually labeled bedding for each child (which is issued upon payment of registration fee) and are very strict about weekly washing of bedding on-site.





# Meals

**Breakfast and Lunch are included as part of our monthly school fees.**

We have partnered with a registered dietician to design seasonal, nutritious weekly meal plans which are age-appropriate and delicious!

[You can view an example of our summer menu here \(viewable via VPN\).](#)

Families of enrolled children are expected to supply two healthy snacks for their children to eat during the morning and afternoon snack-time sessions

Families of enrolled children in Blue Group will receive detailed updates on their child's feeding, nappy-changing, and sleep patterns from their class teacher on a daily basis via a dedicated "message book".

Families of enrolled children in Green, Yellow, Red, and Orange Groups will receive daily updates via the class WhatsApp groups.



# Extramurals

We have paused all extramurals as part of our COVID-19 protocols, but we will send out information regarding extramural options as soon as it becomes safe to offer these services again.

Our extramural service provider partners include:

- Playball, Junior Jive, Clamber Club





# Health and Safety @Earlybird

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The health and safety of children is of paramount importance at all Earlybird Educare Centres. We work hard every day to ensure that our Educare Centres are safe and healthy places for children, their families, our staff, visitors, and volunteers. We take a 'prevention-first' approach by identifying key-concern risks and making everyone at our Educare Centres aware of the associated health and safety issues and prevention measures.

We ask that all families of enrolled children partner with us in our health and safety efforts by:

- Meeting with your child's Principal and Teachers to provide details of any allergies, sensitivities or medical conditions your child may have.
- Ensuring all health insurance, GP, and other medical information relating to your child is up to date in the educare centre's records.
- Ensuring strict adherence to the educare centre's child drop-off and pick-up procedures.
- Engaging with all communications shared by the educare centre staff and Earlybird central team.
- Logging any medication brought to the centre for your child with your child's teacher.
- Talking to your child about road safety, water safety, and fire safety.
- Encouraging the development of [a strong sense of bodily autonomy](#) in your child.
- Reading through Earlybird's [Health and Safety Policy Document](#)
- Reading through Earlybird's [Child Protection Policy Document](#)
- Responding rapidly to any emergency evacuation (SMS-based) notification sent to you by the educare centre.

## COVID-19 Protocols

Please familiarise yourself with the infection control protocols in-place at all Earlybird Educare centres [by watching this overview video](#).

