

ELC INFORMATION PACK
(INTERNET)

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1. INTRODUCTION TO EARLY LEARNING CENTRE (ELC)

Childhood is a special time, an important time when children are learning every minute - even if they don't realise it. But childhood doesn't last forever and we want children to get the most out of it.

Adults have little free time these days so it is important for our customers to know they can come to ELC and be sure of finding what they want with help from people they can trust, and in an environment they know their kids will enjoy.

At ELC we want children to have fun, both in our store and at home. We can help them to do so through our toys and to make the most of this special time. ELC is a place where children are encouraged to explore their surroundings, play with toys, interact with people around them, discover things at their own pace and generally have a great time.

In the first initiative of its kind in Britain, every Tuesday morning ELC store shut their tills and throw open their doors for an hour and a half of free play. Children can play-test our toys before buying and there is always an opportunity to "get messy" with paints, pens, scissors and glue.

The Playtime scheme was born out of our desire to promote ELC's philosophy of 'learning through play! Playtime provides parents and carers with the opportunity to spend quality time playing with children in an environment that is geared towards play.

Trialled during Summer 2000 and launched in September 2001 after consultation with the Pre-school Learning Alliance, playtime is a new and integral part of the ELC experience for parents and children alike.

2. What Do We Do?

Whether you are a parent, gifter, relative, carer or grandparent you are always welcome at Early Learning Centre. With so much choice on the high street, Early Learning Centre is viewed as a sanctuary for those who want to give more than the latest fad to children. Whether it's art and crafts, sports, technology or books we'll always be able to help customers choose the perfect toy.

We have a team of buyers who have specific categories of toys to buy. They have to answer three key questions before electing to stock a toy at ELC:

- Will a child learn?
- Will a child be safe?
- Will a child have fun?

Only when there are big ticks against each of these will the toy make it into our shops both online and off-line.

We have selected partners who can add to our toy offering, such as Mega Bloks and Leapad - companies who have the same values of fun, safety and learning as well as committed safety records similar to ELC.

3. Stores, Staff and Policies

The primary distribution channel for Early Learning Centre toys is 212 stores in the UK and Ireland. These range from 1000-5000 square feet and are predominately located in the centre of towns and cities. We have stores in all the major shopping centres throughout the UK.

Additionally, Early Learning Centre products are available to buy in:

Over 300 Sainsbury stores nationwide
53 Debenhams store nationwide

One of the fastest growing areas of our business is Mail Order. We print over 10 million catalogues and brochures each year, which highlight the best of our product range. The catalogue is a key reason that the mail order side of our business has grown by over 100% in the past two years.

As you now know, we also sell products in our online shop! However, as you can see, there is a mass of content above and beyond the shop - including activities for children and guidance for gifters.

We also have 36 franchise stores in 3 continents across the world, from Gibraltar to Dubai. Five new stores will be opening in Australia in October 2001.

Our staff are the biggest factor in our success. They are all incredibly well trained and knowledgeable about toys and child development, and are very willing and enthusiastic to help as many of our customers as possible with any queries they may have. We value our staff and continue to invest in them so that at ELC, customers can be sure that they are in safe hands.

We have an extremely flexible returns policy at Early Learning Centre. All our products are made to the highest standards. However, if a customer experiences any problems with a toy, we will happily refund the cost of the purchase (with proof of purchase) or exchange the toy. Also, if a child has been given two of anything for Birthday or Christmas, we will exchange one for another toy.

Customer Services is essential to our success. We have a dedicated customer service team of 15, based at our Swindon HQ, who are all

responsible for all head office contact with customers. Customers can write, phone, fax and e-mail any issues they might have and we will respond promptly and efficiently, to solve your questions and queries.

4a. Childhood Development Stage - By 4 months

Physical Development

- Sleeps approximately 6 hours during the night without waking
- Sleeps approximately 14-17 hours throughout entire days
- Weight 10-19 pounds
- Length 23-28 inches

Motor Skills

- Ability to lift head and chest approximately 8 inches off the floor when lying on tummy
- Ability to follow moving object or person with eyes
- Ability to turn head side to side when on tummy
- Ability to hold hands open or loosely fist
- Ability to wiggle and kick arms and legs
- Ability to roll over from their tummy onto their back
- Ability to grasp rattle or finger
- Ability to lift head when held on caregiver's shoulder

Intellectual Development

- Turns head towards bright colours and lights
- Responds to human voice, rattle and bell
- Plays with hands, toes and fingers
- Explores objects with mouth
- Recognises both bottle and breast
- Social and Emotional skills
- Crying with tears and use of facial expression
- Beginning to make cooing and gurgling sounds
- Responds to 'peek a boo' games
- Returns smiles
- Loves to be touched, held close and will generally quieten down with a soothing voice

4b. Childhood Development Stage - By 8 Months

Physical Development

- Sleeps approximately 11-13 hours per night
- Requires approximately 2-3 naps a day
- Weight 14-24 pounds
- Length 25-30 inches
- First teeth beginning to appear
- True eye colour is established
- Hair Growth beginning to cover head

Motor Skills

- Ability to hold head steady whilst sitting up with little help from care giver
- Ability to drink from and hold cup with caregivers help
- Ability to move objects from one hand to another
- Ability to shake rattle
- Ability to reach sitting position if caregiver holds hands
- Ability to roll over from back to tummy and tummy to back
- Ability to use finger and thumb to pick up objects
- Ability to raise up on arms and knees into crawling position;
- Rocks back and forth but may not move forward
- Ability to bounce when held in a standing position
- Ability to sit in high chair
- Ability to reach and grasp for objects
- Ability to explore using mouth and banging through objects

Intellectual Development

- Learns with a multi-sensory approach (smell, taste, touch, sound and hearing)
- Babbles aggressively to impersonate talking
- Searches for objects that have been hidden or a ball which has rolled out of sight
- Opens mouth for spoon
- Explores objects thoroughly by touching, shaking, banging and using their mouth
- Recognises familiar objects, faces and names

Social and Emotional Skills

- Impersonates actions and facial expressions given by caregiver
- Smiles at themselves in the mirror
- Screams when annoyed
- Responds with laughs and squeals
- Loves being tickled and touched
- Displays distress when toy is taken away from them
- Displays fear of falling from stairs or table
- Displays anxiety when separated from caregivers
- Differentiates between strangers and family members

4c. Childhood Development Stage - By 12 Months

Physical Development

- Sleeps 11-13 hours a day
- Majority of infants will require a morning nap, however occasionally requiring both morning and afternoon
- Weight 17-28 pounds
- Length 27-33 inches
- Beginning to refuse bottle and breast

Motor Skills

- Ability to feed themselves small finger foods such as raisins and breadcrumbs
- Ability to use first finger to poke or point
- Ability to place small blocks into a container
- Ability to knock two blocks together
- Ability to sit well without support
- Ability to crawl on hands and knees
- Ability to pull themselves up to stand or take steps using furniture
- Ability to co-operate with dressing by offering caregivers feet and arms
- Ability to walk with one hand held
- Ability to stand alone momentarily
- Ability to open and close cupboard doors and drawers

Intellectual Development

- Says first word
- Says da-da or ma-ma or equivalent
- Displays interest in picture books
- Displays interest in conversations
- Begins placing objects alongside each other and into groups.
- Begins clapping hands, waving goodbye and hello when prompted by caregiver
- Attempts to accomplish simple goals
- Displays clear demands such as raising arms when wanting to be lifted
- Begins to dance or bounce to music

Social and Emotional Skills

- Displays clear affection to familiar caregivers
- Displays apprehension about strangers
- Displays clear imitation of actions such as speaking on the telephone and eating with a knife and fork
- Loves watching themselves in the mirror
- Begins offering objects to others. However, expects them to be returned
- Possibility of becoming attached to a favourite toy or blanket
- Displays clear likes and dislikes by pushing things away they do not like
- Displays understanding of simple commands

4d. Childhood Development Stage - By 18 Months

Physical Development

- Weight: 17-30 pounds
- Length: 26-35 inches

Motor Skills

- Ability to crawl very well
- Ability to stand alone and sit down
- Ability to gesture towards what they want
- Ability to push and pull things
- Ability to pull off clothing such as hats, socks, gloves
- Ability to turn the pages of a book
- Ability to flush the toilet
- Ability to hold spoon whilst eating. However, has difficulty with getting full spoon into mouth
- Ability to hold pencil and scribble only with little control
- Ability to walk without help
- Ability to stack two blocks
- Ability to carry two objects in each hand whilst walking

Intellectual Development

- Likes poking, twisting and squeezing things
- Enjoys rolling the ball to others on request, but expects it to be a game and continue
- Says approximately 8-20 words that you can understand
- Looks at a person when they are talking
- Understands and follows instructions and requests
- Identifies objects in books
- Asks for things by pointing or using one word
- Says 'hi' and 'bye' when reminded
- Looks for hidden objects with determination

Social and Emotional Development

- Enjoys being held
- Enjoys being read to whilst being shown pictures

- Imitates sounds of animals, telephones, coughs and sneezes
- Enjoys an audience, especially with applause
- Enjoys having their own play time, in general on the floor with toys and books
- Enjoys observing their environment and points things out with a hope that their caregiver will inform them what things are.

4e. Childhood Development Stage - Between 18 and 24 Months

Physical Development

- Weight 20-32 pounds
- Length 30-37 inches
- Begins having some control over bladder and bowels
- Complete control will not take place until around 3 years

Motor Skills

- Ability to walk well
- Ability to run, however has difficulty stopping and turning
- Ability to drink from a straw
- Ability to feed themselves with a spoon
- Ability to help caregiver when washing their hands
- Ability to stack 4-6 blocks
- Ability to take steps backwards
- Ability to bend over to retrieve objects without falling over
- Ability to sit on and move around on small wheeled riding toys

Intellectual Development

- Listens to and understands short rhymes
- Points to ears, eyes and nose when asked
- Begins using the words 'please' and 'thank you' when prompted
- Begins to show independence by saying 'no'
- Displays signs of impatience, wants things right away
- Often uses the words me and mine
- Attempts to do things all alone
- Refers to themselves by name

Social and Emotional Development

- Very possessive
- Gets very angry and has regular temper tantrums
- Acts shy around strangers
- Enjoys exploring, gets into everything and requires constant supervision
- Enjoys plenty of adult attention
- Comforts a distressed friend or caregiver

- Generally unable to remember rules
- Shows affection via kisses and hugs
- Often becomes physically aggressive by slapping and hitting
- Enjoys pretending