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[News](#) > [Queensland](#) > [Central Queensland](#) > [Community](#)

## Melissa Webster to open First 5 Years Childcare in Retro Street, Emerald

At a young age, Melissa Webster was involved in childcare and now, she's putting her passion and skills to use through a new childcare centre in Emerald. Read the full details here.

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Playscape for sensory and sustainable education.

At a young age, Melissa Webster was involved in childcare and now, she's putting her passion and skills to use through a new childcare centre in Emerald.

First 5 Years Emerald will be opening early to mid-2023 on Retro Street, Emerald, with the building process for the centre due to start in the next few months.

The centre will care for 93 children aged between zero and five years old.

First 5 Years Emerald managing director Ms Webster has been involved in the early childcare since she was a child herself, helping her parents with the centre they constructed, maintained and managed in the town she was raised in.

“I have always had a passion for early years education,” Ms Webster said.

“My parents built, owned and operated one of the first long day care centres in the town I grew up in.

“I remember being four or five years old and helping my grandma in the kitchen make sandwiches for the children.

“I loved everything about it.

“I have owned and run businesses in Australia and internationally. I have always been driven back to early education.”

Ms Webster said the mission of First 5 Years was to provide high quality early childhood education to rural, regional and remote areas of Australia.

“We want to give all children, no matter their location, the opportunity to access the best quality education and care,” she said.

“We create beautiful environments, recruit the best people and implement a method of learning that aligns with the community.”



Development Application image of the First 5 Years Emerald child care centre.

Enrolments aren't open yet but an expression of interest form is available on the group's Facebook page.

Ms Webster predicts there will be a large number of enrolments.

Child care is an important topic that affects not just parents with children between zero and five years but also the local and national economy, jobs, and early learning development and education.

“Our research showed there was an under supply of childcare places in Emerald,” Ms Webster said.

“The ratio was five point two children for every one child care place.

“This was confirmed when we spent time in the community, talked to business owners and most importantly, families.

“All the centres in Emerald are good.

“If parents chose our centre it's because their beliefs, values and aspirations for their children align with our nature, sustainability and play based learning philosophy.

“It’s about the “feel” they get when they walk in, the environment, the staff, can they see their baby, toddler or child enjoying our centre.

“The centre will provide extra supply of childcare places, much needed in Emerald.

“It will enable more parents and carers to return to the workforce, further education or other pursuits.

“It will provide children with important developmental support in the early years of their life.”

The business’ hours have not been determined yet, but Ms Webster said they were planning their hours around what best suited the public.

“We will be doing our best to operate in line with the needs of the community,” Ms Webster said.

“It will be long day care so early morning to early evening.

“Hours of operation will be confirmed closer to opening.”

Ms Webster recommended anyone with questions about the centre visit the First 5 Years Emerald Facebook page to stay informed about the child care centre progression and any other information.