

Dear Families of the Early Learning Center,

For those of you that were not able to join us at the meeting earlier this week, I want to catch you up on the discussions we have been having regarding the Early Learning Center (ELC). And for all our families, I want to update you on where we currently are today. On, Monday, January 11, Granger Community Church (GCC) met with families of the Early Learning Center to communicate the following:

In this new season we all find ourselves in, the Lead Team of Granger Community Church has been doing lots of praying and processing regarding what God is wanting us to say “Yes!” to in order to most effectively reach the hundreds of thousands of unchurched people in our community. Right now we are enthusiastic and energized and at peace about where God has placed us as a church, and what He’s leading us to focus on—to throw all of our time, energy, attention and resources towards—and it’s these three things for kids, students and all generations: weekly gatherings, events and groups.

The challenging part of having this level of clarity on what we are saying “Yes!” to, is that it means that we must say “No” to some other great ministry opportunities and initiatives. And the ministry that will be most impacted by this renewed focus is the Early Learning Center (ELC). By deciding to give a whole-hearted commitment to weekly gatherings, events and groups, for those already in our church and to reach all we can who are far from God, it means that we will no longer be continuing the Early Learning Center. As a leadership team we’ve made the extremely difficult decision to close the ELC at the conclusion of this school year, in June. This was a very painful decision to make—the ELC is and has been from its beginning a very special community, a family of teachers and educators that have served our young children so well. You should know that this decision was discussed and prayed through with due diligence over many months—with several of our Lead Team members being proud parents of current and former ELC students. That said, we know it still doesn’t lessen the pain and disappointment you will feel at hearing this news.

It has become clear to us, after meeting with families and receiving many letters and emails that questions have arisen. For many involved, it’s an ongoing struggle to gain clarity and understanding on the “WHY” behind this tough decision. After much prayer and further processing as a Leadership Team and Board of Directors this week, there are two things in particular we hope to make more clear:

1. We as the Leadership Team and Board of Directors continue to be at peace with and affirm the decision for the Early Learning Center to no longer operate as a part of Granger Community Church in this next season of ministry. Why? We believe God is calling us to reallocate all of our time, energy, attention and resources (tangible and intangible) towards three things for kids, students and all generations: weekly gatherings, events and groups. Even more specifically, we have come to recognize that there are major gaps in the broader perspective of our overall church across several ministries, age groups and phases of life. In the world we live in, every generation and phase of life is experiencing greater levels of disconnection from God and from each other. With this growing awareness, there has been an ever-increasing sense of urgency that we must fill those gaps in order to reach our desperate community with the Gospel message like never before. Several of these holes of opportunity that we are compelled to responsibly address are areas such as: marriage help, revitalizing life groups, Biblical literacy, young adult ministry, faith application training, missions at multiple levels, family faith experiences and other felt-need events, intentional workshops and training on relevant topics in our community, worship nights, connection events and a multitude of online opportunities. In order to meet these needs, we must reallocate our finite resources, our staff, and our focus, in new ways, fully recognizing the ELC has been an amazing ministry of Granger Community Church over the last nine years.
2. While we aren’t changing the decision for the Early Learning Center to no longer operate as a part of Granger Community Church, we’re willing to further process the possibility of the ELC existing outside of GCC. Though we already had previously discussed this alternative with ELC leadership, feedback received from the family meeting, as well as letters and emails, demonstrate there’s a clear passion and willingness from those involved to do “whatever it takes” (raising money, volunteering, etc.) to see the ELC live on. We want to help and are again optimistic about this possibility, which was always part of our Leadership Team and Board of Director’s hope and dream.

As we lean in collaboratively to processing the possibility of the ELC existing in a different capacity, apart from Granger Community Church, we’ll keep you updated of any further developments. Because we are still in discussions about this possibility, we are postponing any broader video announcement this weekend to our church until we have more clarity of next steps. Again, we recognize this is sad and difficult news to process. We’ve loved serving all the ELC children and families. If you have further questions or wish to volunteer solutions to explore the ELC’s future possibilities, please contact Director Mandy Gibbons at mgibbons@grangerchurch.com.

Ted Bryant, Lead Team and Board of Directors of Granger Community Church