



EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

www.moray.gov.uk/elc



YOUR CHOICES

*A parents guide
to early years
in Moray.*

moray
council

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INTRODUCTION

Across Moray we have a very strong Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) team that have a range of experience. Our team is continually growing and developing and we are very excited to welcome you, as new parents to be part of our community. Our ELC team comprises of a range of professionals that work centrally, in the field and within the nurseries to provide a quality experience for our youngest of learners.

Our vision in Moray is – ELC Moray; working together to build a better future for our children.

The values that underpin this are:

- Fun
- Engaging
- Kind
- Inclusive
- Nurturing

Children’s experiences within their early years have a major impact on their future years. The first five years of a child’s life are the most important in shaping their future health, happiness, growth, development and learning.

Children’s brains develop depending on what experiences they have at a very young age. Between birth and

five years old 90% of a child’s brain development occurs. By age three a child’s brain is estimated to be about twice as active as an adult’s brain. Parents and carers have the biggest influence on their child’s early learning.

The time they spend with other children and in early learning and childcare (ELC) is the second biggest influence on their early life – we understand that makes your choice at this stage of your child’s life extremely important.

In Moray we believe that all children deserve the best possible start in life so they can grow into healthy, happy and confident adults who in turn achieve great things.

We hope this guide helps you make the decisions on early learning and childcare that are right for you and your child.

ENTITLEMENT

All three and four year olds and eligible two year olds in Moray will be entitled to receive 1,140 funded hours of ELC from August 2021.

You can use these hours with a maximum of two providers up to 50 weeks of the year (known as year round provision), 46 weeks, or term-time only if that suits you better. The maximum amount of time your child should spend in an early years centre per day is ten hours.

Funded terms start in August, January and April and your child will be entitled to a place following their 3rd birthday and continue to be eligible until they reach school age.

The funding for this provision goes directly from Moray Council to the nursery or childminder – even if you change provider at any point in the year the funding will follow your child to their new nursery or childminder – so you don't need to do anything other than register with any new provider.

Two year old eligibility

Your two year old will be eligible if at any point since their second birthday they have been looked after; under a kinship care order; under a guardianship order; or you receive any of the following:

Income Support	Job Seekers Allowance (income based)	Employment Support Allowance (income based)	
Universal Credit	Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credits and income is under £16,105	Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your income is under £7,500; or, the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)	Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999



CHOOSING CHILDCARE

Choosing the right childcare for your child can seem overwhelming. As a parent you want to ensure that your child is safe and happy in an environment which is fun, educational and nurturing. You also need it to suit your family requirements.

Quality early learning and childcare is important in providing a strong platform to allow your child to grow and develop in the years ahead.

There are different types of ELC and picking one that suits your child and your family life is key for your own peace of mind and your child's happiness.

The next few pages introduce some of the things you might want to consider when choosing what's right for you.





QUALITY

Whichever childcare setting you choose, you want to ensure that your child is being cared for in a professional environment by staff who want to do the best for your child. Choosing a high-quality nursery or childminder will help reassure you that this is the case.

Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate regulates and inspects children's day care services in Scotland. They also jointly inspect with other regulators to check how well different organisations in Moray work to support adults and children.

The Care Inspectorate grades nurseries and childminders on a scale of 1-6 on quality of care and support; quality of environment; quality of staffing and quality of management and leadership.

1. Unsatisfactory
2. Weak
3. Adequate
4. Good
5. Very Good
6. Excellent

You can look up any registered ELC setting and childminder's most recent inspection report online: www.careinspectorate.com.

Education Scotland

Education Scotland aims to promote improvement and innovation in ELC settings. Their inspectors focus on quality of learning and children's achievement including literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing using a number of quality indicators.

ELC settings also take part in a self-evaluation as part of this inspection and will use a guide called '*How good is our early learning and childcare?*'. Inspection reports can be found online: www.education.gov.scot.



Quality assurance and staffing

You may want to check what quality assurance procedure a nursery or

childminder follows. All nurseries in Moray work in partnership with a Continuous Improvement Officer and 2 Early Years teachers. Our childminders are supported by a Development Officer to ensure effective partnership working.

Everyone working with young children in Scotland needs to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) – they regulate the workforce in Scotland and ensure services are being provided by trusted, skilled and confident staff.



CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Curriculum for Excellence is intended to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, including skills for learning, life and work.

Children in Scotland should be following the curriculum for excellence from 3 to 18 years old in order to prepare them for school and life beyond.

Realising the ambition

Being Me is a leading document across the Early Level and presents key information about the characteristics of child development. Children accessing high quality ELC provision in Moray should be supported by practitioners that have an awareness and knowledge of Realising the Ambition. The guidance supports practitioners to explore the range of interactions, experiences and spaces we need to provide for babies and young children to help them learn and grow best from their earliest days through to being a young child in early primary school.

Child-centred pedagogy in practice

Sensitive interactions – honing skill of stepping in and stepping back

Flexible experiences – learn from the child to inform practice

Variety of spaces – outdoors and inside



Informed by the child's **actions, emotions and words**
What needs to **stay** to reinforce development and learning?
What needs to **change** to inspire learning and development?

Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme

The scheme aims to support the health and wellbeing of young children and to instil healthy behaviours for life.

Our shared ambition is to ensure all early learning and childcare children in Moray are in receipt of the milk and healthy snack scheme, embedding the habit of regular consumption of high-quality dairy produce and fruit and vegetables from an early age.

The advantage to parents is that this scheme is fully funded which means any fruit, vegetables or milk will not be an additional cost when your child starts nursery.



YOUR NEEDS

Flexibility / Times

What hours and days will you require ELC? Remember to factor in travel times for dropping off and picking up if you're then going on to work. Will you be travelling at peak times or around school hours? Do you have varying work patterns?

All of this should be considered when finding out more about the opening times of a nursery or working hours of a childminder.

Funded providers may be open year round (for 50 weeks of the year) and may be operational 8am-6pm or longer – each funded provider has different opening and session times, you should check these before you register.

Childminders often work evenings and may offer holiday care as well – you should enquire with your preferred setting for their availability.



Location

Do you want your nursery or childminder to be close to where you work or study or home? Who will be picking your child up from nursery or childminder and where are they coming from? If you're sharing this responsibility does the location suit everyone?

Enrolling at an ELC service doesn't guarantee a place at that school. ELC services in Moray don't have automatic enrolment at a primary school catchment area and registering at a school nursery doesn't guarantee a place at the associated primary school. Nurseries are clustered by Associated School Group (ASG), which is the secondary school catchment.



Costs

Ask about any additional costs you may have to pay. This could include additional snacks, nappies, late collection and registration fees or wrap around hours, if available.

If you want to use more hours than your funded place entitles you to you should factor this additional cost in to your choice of ELC setting. If there's space available you may be able to pay for additional hours.

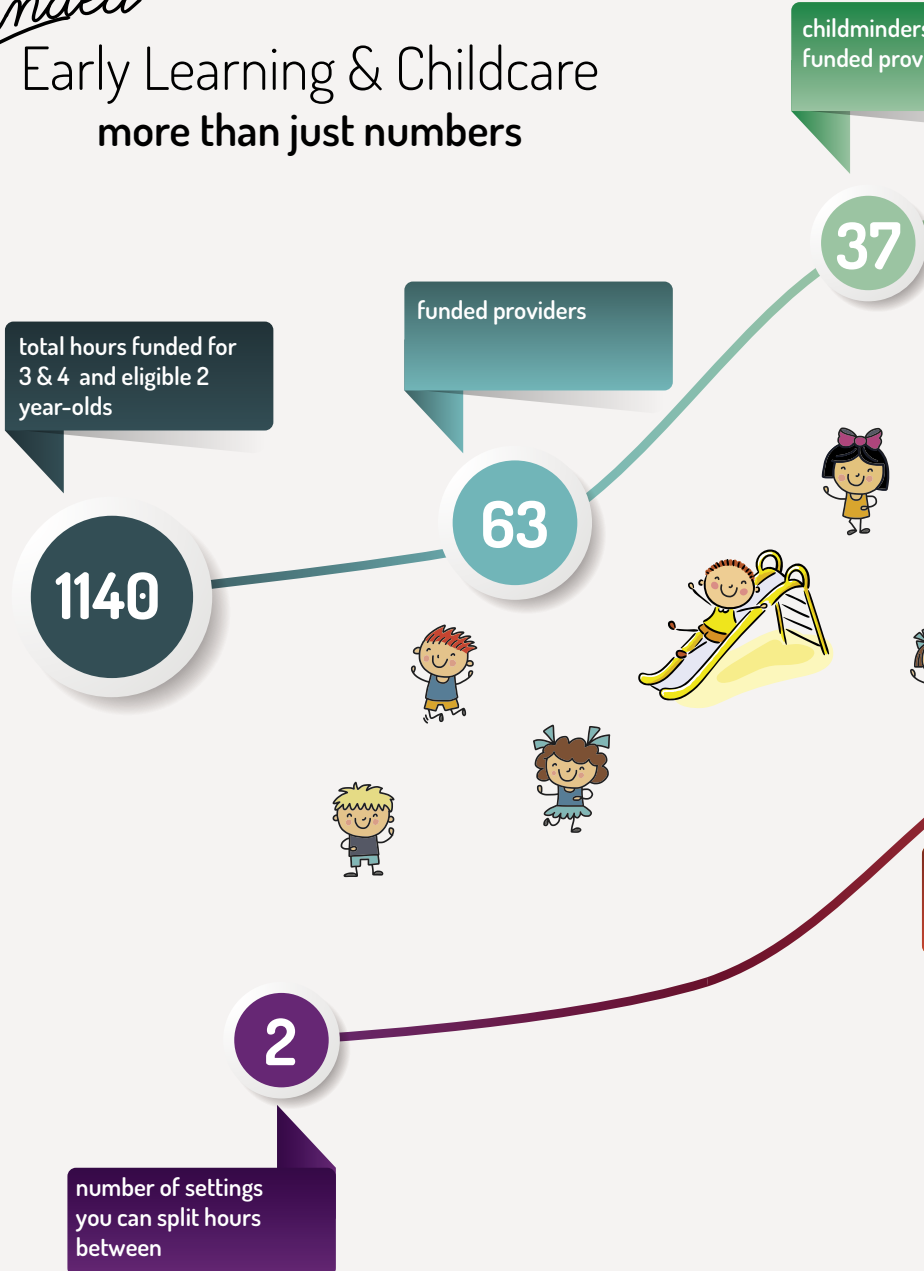
Working families in Moray may be able to get further assistance with childcare costs through the Tax-Free Childcare scheme – for every £8 you pay in, the UK Government will add an extra £2 up to £2,000 per child per year.

If you're entitled to Working Tax Credit you can claim back up to 70% of your childcare costs, depending on your income or up to 85% if you're entitled to Universal Tax Credit. Tax credits can be used to help pay registered childminders, nurseries, nannies and out-of-school clubs.

All of the above schemes are detailed on: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

funded

Early Learning & Childcare more than just numbers



s in
ision

hours per week if
using term-time

30

23^{.75}
over 50 weeks
or
25
over 48 weeks

hours per week if using
year round

10

maximum number of
funded hours in a
setting per day



www.moray.gov.uk/ELC

YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS AND PERSONALITY

What is your child like? Do they thrive outdoors? You might want to consider an outdoor nursery. Are they happier with more one-to-one care and a smaller group of children? Perhaps a childminder is for you. Is your child sociable and happy to make friends in a larger group? A nursery can offer that.

Perhaps your child hasn't experienced the above options and you'd like to encourage them to be more confident. All nurseries and childminders should be happy for you to visit them so you can find a good 'fit' for your child. The choice is ultimately yours and you should be happy with your decision.

Our ELC services offer either year round or term time models that allow you to consider your individual needs with a large degree of flexibility. Alternatively you could opt for a blended model of childminder/nursery or possibly split your funding between two nurseries. Further information can be found when you register your child.

Food

All children receiving their 1,140 funded hours over lunchtime are entitled to a funded meal. You may wish to enquire how this works in the setting you're interested in.

Many settings, including partners, offer lunches and light teas, following a four weekly cycle. Copies of the menus can be taken home so you know exactly what's coming up for lunch! Our school kitchens provide the majority of lunches for ELC children across Moray although some of our partner services provide their own healthy and nutritious options. Those services that provide lunches are registered with environmental health.

Additional Support Needs and Inclusion

If your child has additional support needs you may wish to ask how these needs will be met. Every ELC service has access to an Early Intervention teacher who can support the nursery and your child to ensure they achieve their potential.

All professionals supporting your child will work in partnership with you and your chosen setting(nursery or childminder) to ensure a plan is in place to best support your child. This might mean a child's plan is coordinated. This would happen when multiple partnership agencies, for example a health service, education psychologists or social work, work together to meet the needs of the child and family. When multiple agencies work in partnership with children and their families this is often referred to as the team around the child and the aim is to coordinate support and work together to provide the right support at the right time for each individual.

TYPES OF CHILDCARE

There are a number of different types of childcare and you will know which suits your child and family life best. You can split your funded hours between two settings if you want/need to and the setting you are interested in can offer this choice.

You can use your funded hours with the providers below.

Childminders

Childminders look after children in their own home and often offer care for children of different ages – sometimes from babies right through to starting secondary school, which means siblings could be looked after together.

Most childminders provide care between 8am-6pm but some work early mornings, evenings and weekends.

Childminders can provide flexible hours as well as school pick-ups and drop offs and holiday cover too.

Childminders provide your child with the care, fun and learning you'd find in a nursery but delivered in a home environment. Childminders often make the most of local parks, playgrounds and community centres.

Nurseries / play groups / pre school / outdoor nurseries

ELC services across Moray come under a range of different names however they all have to be registered with Care Inspectorate as a Day Care of Children's Services.

Whether you choose a nursery which could be solely outdoors, a nursery which offers indoor and outdoor, a play group or pre-school you can be assured that they are run by teams of qualified staff that take a holistic approach. The staff teams respond to your child's interests and tailor their needs to ensure development through a range of experiences that suit all abilities.

ELC services have flexible hours and offer a variety of different service models to meet the needs of your family.

Out of school care clubs

Out of School Care Clubs in Moray come under a range of services;

- Care Inspectorate Registered day-care/outdoor nurseries that take school-aged children before and after school and during the school holidays.
- Holiday playschemes running at local schools for all or part of the holidays (these may be run by the school or other organisations).
- Sports-based schemes often running at local leisure centres.
- Shorter, activity-based sessions running for a few days at local venues such as a church hall often run by volunteers.

The times and days of the week they run can vary. Some run every holiday, all year-round or others only in the summer.

Most Clubs work under the approach of Play work, Play work is an approach to working with children in which children determine and control the content and intent of their play, rather than it being led or directed. The play process for children includes exploration, trying out things, testing boundaries of ability as they grow, learning from successes and mistakes to build resilience and adaptability.

Nannies

Nannies care for your child/children in your family home. They can provide you with very flexible childcare including late nights and weekends. You are responsible for paying them a monthly salary so may choose to have them live in your home, all or part of the week, or travel into work each day. They are able to provide your child with 1:1 attention in their own home. Your nanny will support your child's daily routine and activities by tailoring their care to your family's individual needs (e.g. nursery/school pick up & drop off, extra-curricular activities, play dates and day trips).

NURSERY SERVICE MODELS

All of our ELC services across Moray are managed by a Nursery Manager or Team Lead. Some nurseries are open year round (apart from two weeks at Christmas and New Year) while others are term-time only, 30 hours a week. Some may also offer a 46 week option with holidays at Christmas and New Year, Easter, Summer and October – with this choice you would receive 25 hours a week in an ELC setting. You should select your preferred times during registration.

If you're using your funded entitlement year round (50 weeks) you will be entitled to 23.75 hours a week. Another option is the 46 week model, which offers 25 hours each week.

You may be able to purchase extra hours with funded providers if there is availability.

It should be noted that your child doesn't have to be within the primary school catchment however the allocation of places may depend on the criteria on page 25.

Additional information

To ensure we meet Care Inspectorate standards we have to maintain ratios within our nurseries.

Staffing ratios in nurseries are as follows:

Age (in years) ratio	Adult to child
Under twos	1 to 3
Two to three	1 to 5
Three to four	1 to 8



WHO SHOULD I CHOOSE?

The choice of provision is entirely up to you. You should register at the ELC provision you would prefer your child to attend - each provision will have a limited number of places available. You should list a second and third choice of provision on your online registration form to give yourself more chance of obtaining a place in a setting you want.

Once you've identified your choice(s) of setting please make contact to find out their own individual admissions process.

A list of providers who offer places for your funded 1,140 hours can be found at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_116586.html or by contacting Moray Council.

Bear in mind that you don't need to choose the nursery closest to where you live. We appreciate it may be more appropriate for your child to attend a setting closer to where you work or closer to other family members. A place at these settings can't be guaranteed, however, as child in the secondary school catchment area will be given priority, but it's your choice where you apply.

If you want to split your hours between nurseries or childminders you should submit a registration form to both.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Registration

Once you've chosen the best option for you and your child you should access the online registration form <https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/request/elcreg>. If you do not have the technology to access the registration form electronically then you can phone 01343 563374 to have a paper copy sent.

You should register in January for starting in August, January and April of the following year – there is one registration for the whole year.

You will need to upload your child's birth certificate and proof of address when registering online. Parents will be asked to make 3 choices when they complete online registration so please give consideration to this when making a decision about your ELC provision.

If you move into the area after registration week don't worry as our online application form is still available.

Allocation of places

All funded Early Learning & Childcare settings are currently asked to prioritise the allocation of places based on the following criteria:

1. Child with existing attendance at nursery
2. Child resident in secondary catchment and sibling at nursery
3. Child resident in secondary catchment
4. Child with Coordinated Support Plan and/or assessment by Education Authority
5. Child out with secondary catchment and sibling at nursery
6. Child out with secondary catchment

Priority within any of the six categories will be given to older children first, and then to those resident closest to the requested provision using the straight line method.

The timescale for allocation of places is as follows:

Eligible start date	Allocation schedule
August	By Easter holidays
January	November or December
April	February or March

Please note: you will not receive a letter if your choice of Early Learning & Childcare nursery is full. You will automatically be contacted by the nursery you listed as your next choice. If all of your choices are full, we will contact you with alternative options.

A list of providers can be found here http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_116586.html by clicking on Choosing an Early Learning & Childcare Provider tab.

More information about ELC in Moray can be found here; <https://sites.google.com/my.glow.scot/elcmoray/home>

WHAT NEXT?

Once you've registered and after your child becomes eligible. You'll receive a letter from the setting you have been allocated a place in confirming the days and times your child will be there.

You should also receive information on what you and your child can expect on their first few days in the setting – this may include details of a transition period, where your child could be in for shorter days when starting to get them used to the change in their life.

If you don't receive this information prior to the term starting you should contact your nursery or childminder to request the details.

Before you know it, it will be time for your little one to start nursery or with their childminder and they will astound you every day with how much they'll learn!

Starting School

Full details on how to register your child for school are available from your catchment area Primary School or online.



Deferred entry

If your child's fifth birthday falls between the date that the school term begins in August and the last day of the following February you can choose to delay their enrolment until the following August.

Things to consider when choosing to defer entry:

- You must discuss your request with your child's early learning and childcare provider as well as the primary school they would be attending.
- The final decision will be a shared one between you and the Education team that support your child.

If deferred entry has been agreed with Moray Council you will still have your Early Learning & Childcare hours funded until your child starts school.

Early entry

If your child is under 4½ years old you can make a request for "early entry" to education. The Early Entry Assessment Team will assess your child and make a recommendation as to whether school education is suitable for them at this stage.

Any requests for early entry should be made by sending a letter to:

Education
Moray Council, Council Office,
High Street, ELGIN
IV30 1BX

01343 563374

education@moray.gov.uk

WORKING IN ELC

Our early learning and childcare workers play a hugely valuable role in shaping the lives of future generations – from support workers through to early years practitioners and right up to nursery managers this progressive career is one that can help Moray’s children to become the best they can possibly be.

If you have passion, enthusiasm and love the idea of working with children, this could be the career for you. Returning to work or considering a career change after having a child can be a daunting prospect. Working for an employer that understands the demands of a young family can ease that transition.

If you would like to stay at home with your own children while working to fit in with school hours and holidays perhaps becoming a childminder may be right for you and your family. Childminders are self-employed and care for children in their own home – you could choose your own working days and hours.

Working with under-fives in a nursery or day care centre is also a career option which may allow you to achieve the all-important work/life balance.

Why not try volunteering to see if you like it? You never know, you may go on to inspire a whole generation of young people!

Find out more about your ELC career options at:

www.childcarecareersscotland.scot



Contacts

For further information and help on any of the topics in this guide please contact Moray Council's Education department.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the nursery you're interested in directly.

Our friendly team are here to help you make the choices that are right for you and your family.

Education, Moray Council, Council Office, High Street, ELGIN

IV30 1BX

01343 563374

education@moray.gov.uk

www.moray.gov.uk/elc

<https://sites.google.com/my.glow.scot/elcmoray/home>

