

# Early Learning and Childcare in a Nutshell



## About funded Early Learning and Childcare

From August 2020, all 3- and 4-year olds, can have up to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC for short) a year. You don't have to pay for it.

1140 hours is roughly the same amount of time as primary school hours.<sup>1</sup>

Some 2-year olds can have ELC too.<sup>2</sup>

## What and why

ELC includes nurseries, playgroups and childminders and so on: the places children go to before they start school.

Because ELC makes a big difference to children and really boosts what they learn at home, **all** children in their early years are being given the same chance to meet other children, make friends, play and learn.

You'll also get the chance to take part in activities, and to tell staff about your child such as their likes/dislikes/routines.

ELC can give you opportunities too: you can use the 1140 hours to work, train, study or just have a bit more time.



# 1140 hours

## It's your choice

The ELC is an **offer**. You don't have to take it up. You can choose:

- Whether or not to take up the ELC for your child
- Whether to take up some or all of the 1140 hours (you don't have to use all 1140 hours to get ELC for your child)
- Where your child has ELC: as long as the provider has space, is willing to be a funded ELC provider and meets the National Standard (more on this later). Your council can give you a list of all ELC providers in your area
- The type of sessions your child attends. This can be year-round or term-time, full-day or part-day, as long as the provider has those sessions available
- The type of ELC you think will suit your child – council or private nursery, childminder, woodland learning, playgroup or something else. Your child can go to a mix of different kinds of ELC, such as childminder and nursery

It's fine for the ELC to be in a different council area from where you/your child live. You may want your child to be somewhere near to where you work or study, or their grandparents. Just check with the ELC provider and the other council. They will explain how it works in their area.

The main thing is for your child to feel loved, happy and secure when they are not with you.

## Making sure it's right for your child

Wherever your child is, you'll want to know that:

- It's fun, friendly and safe
- Your child is being well looked after
- Your child is getting the chance to learn and develop

And also, what to expect of any ELC provider you choose.

The Parent Club website (see link at end) has lots of tips about what to think about when choosing where your child goes: what to ask, what to expect, when to put your child's name down and so on.

To make sure all ELC is good quality, all providers **must**:

- Meet the National Standard (more about this below)
- Make sure staff are well trained and really want to work with children (and their parents/carers)
- Base what they do on what children do best: playing, and learning through play including being outside in nature
- Give children the chance to try out different things and choose for themselves



## Quality ELC

The National Standard has ten conditions which ELC providers must meet including:

- Giving children the chance to play outside every day
- Encouraging children to learn and develop through play and linking this into what comes next (primary school)
- Providing healthy meals and snacks and making sure that these meet each child's needs (to fit with their culture/diet)
- Making reasonable adjustments for children who need extra support, for example because of disability
- Making sure that parents are involved and in touch with staff so that children get the most out of ELC
- Good or better Care Inspectorate standards

## How ELC is paid for

- You don't pay for these 1140 hours of ELC
- The Scottish Government pays the money direct to councils. Councils meet the costs of their own school nurseries or pay other providers direct
- Children attending this ELC are entitled to milk and a healthy snack, and a healthy meal every day



## What parents pay for

- You may have the option of paying for extra outings, activities or snacks during the 1140 hours. Please speak to your setting or parent council if you find these costs hard to meet as there may be funding to help
- If you need more than 1140 hours of ELC for your child, you pay for these extra hours as agreed with the provider. This could include wraparound care
- If your child is not eligible for ELC (for example, because they are under 2) you pay for childcare as agreed with your provider
- You may be able to get a cash payment of £250 for each child (Best Start Early Learning and Childcare grant) to help with starting ELC and/or moving from ELC to Primary 1. You can find out more at: [mygov.scot/best-start-grant](https://mygov.scot/best-start-grant)



## More about ELC

There's more information about ELC at the Scottish Government's Parent Club: [parentclub.scot/elc](https://parentclub.scot/elc)

For information in your local area, contact your local council direct.

ELC is the first step on your child's learning journey.

To find out what comes next see NPFS Nutshells:

### **Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell**

[npfs.org.uk/2019/06/cfe-in-a-nutshell-2](https://npfs.org.uk/2019/06/cfe-in-a-nutshell-2)

### **Senior phase in a Nutshell**

[npfs.org.uk/2019/06/senior-phase-in-a-nutshell](https://npfs.org.uk/2019/06/senior-phase-in-a-nutshell)

### **Wider achievement in a Nutshell**

[npfs.org.uk/2019/06/wider-achievement-in-a-nutshell](https://npfs.org.uk/2019/06/wider-achievement-in-a-nutshell)

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, different councils have different arrangements as they phase this ELC in. Speak to your council about how ELC works in your area.

<sup>2</sup> A 2-year old is eligible for this ELC from the start of the first term after their second birthday, if they are looked after, if their parent/carer receives certain benefits, or is a kinship carer or parent-appointed guardian.



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**Parent Club**



OCT 2019