



Funding for Early Learning and Childcare

Session 2025-26

West Partnership
cross boundary agreement

Background

All children aged 3 and 4, as well as eligible 2-year-olds, are entitled to access increased free early learning and childcare provision. Each child is provided with 1,140 hours each year, which can be accessed in either Council-run nurseries or private nurseries and childminders which meet the required criteria.

The ability for families to access high quality funded early learning and childcare with the setting of their choice is known as Funding Follows the Child.

The West Partnership – which is made up of 8 Councils – has designed a cross boundary funding protocol to support the implementation of Funding Follows the Child. As well as the 8 local authorities that make up the West Partnership (Glasgow, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, South Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire), neighbouring local authorities in Argyll and Bute and East, North and South Ayrshire Councils operate in line with this protocol, however access and processes may differ.

This means that, where physical and financial capacity allows, these councils will work together to support families to access their funded hours in a different Council area from where they live.



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath



Procedure and timeline

Please Note:

- Resident Authority:** authority parent/carer and child live in.
- Host Authority:** authority in which your child attends/is seeking to attend Funded Provider setting.
- All Funded Providers:** private, voluntary, third sector and childminders in contract with the host authority to provide funded ELC
- Parents/carers can ask a Funded Provider working in partnership with any of the Councils above to make a request to the Council where they live for cross boundary funding.
 - All requests made before the deadline are considered at a meeting in May each year.
 - Late applications will be considered from the first Monday following receipt of the application by the host authority or effective funding date if later.
 - Once a decision is made, families will be notified.

February 28:*	Closing date for new session applications
End of May/June:	Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Group make decision
End of July:	Parents/carers informed of funding request outcome

*or appropriate deadline for host authority

Eligibility

In line with Scottish Government guidance, all eligible 2, 3 and 4 years olds become eligible for Funding as follows:*

If your child is born between:	They will be eligible for a funded early learning & childcare place from the term noted below
1 March to 31 August	Autumn term (August)
1 September to 31 December	Spring term (January)
1 January to last day in February	Summer term (April)

In accordance with Scottish Government guidance, children become eligible to access their statutory entitlement from the beginning of the term following either their 2nd or 3rd birthday. Please note, individual authorities may provide early access to the entitlement, however, this should be confirmed with each individual authority in advance. Funded Providers should contact the host authority to check the funding start date arrangements for all children requesting cross boundary funding and ensure this is communicated to parents.

Children who meet the criteria for Eligible 2 year old funding will receive their funding the term after their 2nd birthday or, the first term after the parent starts receiving those benefits.

Children aged 2 years are eligible for a funded place if a parent is in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Job Seeker's Allowance
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit where household take-home pay, is £850* a month or less
- Additionally, any child aged 2 or over is eligible for funded ELC where they are or have been looked after by the Council, or are the subject of a kinship care order or the subject of a guardianship order, along with children whose parents have been care experienced in the past. Please get in touch with your local authority for more information.

** This applies to children who have turned two on or after 1st March 2025.*

The income threshold for Universal Credit can vary annually, therefore you should check the following website for the most up to date information on eligibility for funded ELC <https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare-for-2-year-olds>.

Deferred Entry Cross Boundary Funding

If you wish to defer your child's school start date, it is important you ensure you follow your resident authority application process on school deferrals. More information on school deferrals will be available from your resident authority.

Where you have applied for your child to defer their school start date, you should continue to follow the existing arrangements to apply for cross-boundary funding. You should contact the Funded Provider you wish your child to attend and they will submit an application for funding on your behalf.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

It is important that your child's Funded Provider has details of your correct address. Please make sure you let them know in advance of any move, providing the required evidence, otherwise your funding could be affected.

Inter-Authority Cross Boundary Funding Parent/Carer and Funded Provider Frequently Asked Questions

Please read this leaflet in conjunction with host authority funding process

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| <p>1 My child is 3 years old, when can I have a funded nursery place from for my child?</p> | <p>When a funded place has been approved by the local authority where you live, funding will be granted for your child from the term following the child's 3rd birthday in line with Scottish Government guidance. Some local authorities may fund earlier than this. You can ask the Funded Provider to check this for you or you can contact the local authority where you live for details of their policy.</p> |
| <p>2 If my 2 year old child is entitled to funding when can I have a funded nursery place from for my child?</p> | <p>When a funded place has been approved by the local authority where you live, funding will be granted in the Funded Provider setting from the term following your child's second birthday in line with Scottish Government guidance.</p> |
| <p>3 Do I have to apply for a "cross boundary" place or does the Funded Provider apply on my behalf?</p> | <p>"Cross Boundary" requests have to be made by the parent/carers or Funded Provider by the closing date for applications in the Council area where the child will attend.</p> |
| <p>4 Can I apply for cross boundary funding at any time throughout the school session?</p> | <p>Yes. Requests for cross boundary funding are considered in May/June each year. Requests received after the deadline will be considered at other points in the year, although there is no guarantee that late applications will be approved.</p> |
| <p>5 If there is a delay in my current nursery submitting a funding application to be considered by the local authority where I live, will the funding be backdated to the eligible funding start date?</p> | <p>Late applications for funding will be considered from the first Monday following receipt of the application by the host authority or effective funding date if later.</p> |
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<p>6 What are my options if I am not granted a funded place out with the council area where I live, in order to get a funded place for my child?</p>	<p>If a cross boundary place cannot be provided, you should contact the council where you live to discuss what other provision is available to access your child's 1140 hours.</p>
<p>7 My child has attended a private nursery since he was 1 year old. The nursery is out with the local authority area where I live. He will turn 3 in March: will I be entitled to a funded place from the following session commencing August? How do I access funding?</p>	<p>A request for cross boundary funding has to be submitted before the closing date of the council area where the private nursery is and will be considered at the West Partnership Cross Boundary Admission Group Meeting in May of each year.</p>
<p>8 If I am successful in applying for a cross boundary nursery place - when will my child aged 3 start nursery?</p>	<p>A child can start in a Funded Provider Nursery when the parent/carer wishes if a place is available. When a request for cross boundary funding is granted, Cross Boundary funding will commence from the term following the child's 3rd birthday in line with Scottish Government guidance. Some local authorities may fund earlier than this. You can ask the Funded Provider to check this for you or you can contact the local authority where you live for details of their policy.</p>
<p>9 Will my child be provided with lunch and a snack at their Funded Provider?</p>	<p>Yes. Children will be provided with 1 free meal, 1 free snack and milk every day.</p>

More information

To find out more about cross boundary funding, contact your local authority.

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL	Community Services: Early Years, Argyll House, 91 Alexandra Parade, DUNOON, PA23 8AJ Tel: 01369 708503 Email: earlyyears@argyll-bute.gov.uk
EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL	Education Service – Early Years Central Team, Crosshouse Campus, Playingfield Road, CROSSHOUSE, KA2 0JJ Tel: 07385 394774 Email: EarlyYearsAdmissions@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL	Education Service, Early Years, The Marina, Suite F4, Strathkelvin Place, KIRKINTILLOCH, G66 1XT Tel: 0300 123 4510 extension: 8707 Email: earlyyears@eastdunbarton.gov.uk
EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL	ELC Administration Team, 211 Main Street, BARRHEAD, G78 1SY Tel: 0141 577 3288 Email: elcfundedproviders@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL	Early Learning and Childcare Services, City Chambers East Building, 40 John Street, GLASGOW, G1 1JL Tel: 0141 287 4453 Email: EducationELC@glasgow.gov.uk
INVERCLYDE COUNCIL	Education Services, Wallace Place, GREENOCK, PA15 1JB Tel: 01475 717171 Email: EYHQ@inverclyde.gov.uk
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL	Education, Cunninghame House, IRVINE, KA12 8EE Tel: 01294 324067 Email: educationfundingteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk
NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL	Education & Families, Early Learning & Childcare, Civic Centre, Windmillhill Street, MOTHERWELL, ML1 1AB Tel: 01236 812281 Email: elc@northlan.gov.uk
RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL	Children's Services, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, PAISLEY, PA1 1TZ Tel: 0300 300 0170 Email: elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk
SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL	Early Years Team, County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, SOUTH AYRSHIRE, KA7 1DR, Tel: 01292 612162 Email: edservicesELC@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL	Education Resources, Almada Street, HAMILTON, ML3 0AE Tel: 0303 123 1023 Email: earlyyears@southlanarkshire.gov.uk
WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL	Education, Learning & Attainment, Second Floor, West Dunbartonshire Council, 16 Church Street, DUMBARTON, G82 1QL Tel: 01389 737309 Email: earlyyears@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

West Partnership

