

Early Learning & Childcare Expansion (ELC)

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

What is my child entitled to?

All 3 and 4 years olds and some eligible 2 year olds (see below) are currently entitled to 600 hours per annum Early Learning & Childcare.

From August 2020, if your child is three or four years old or an eligible two year old they will be entitled to 1140 hours of funded hours of Early Learning & Childcare a year paid for by the Scottish Government.

Why am I not eligible yet?

By 2020 the Scottish Government requires local authorities to offer 1140 hours of funded ELC a year. This is a big change for Moray ELC settings. We are phasing in the number of children eligible for 1140 hours to ensure a sustainable and manageable introduction of the expansion. Some children have been receiving the increased hours since 2018 in phased pilot areas.

Check the [Moray Council website](#) to see when your postcode is eligible for 1140 hours of ELC.

Postcodes

The postcodes for phasing were selected using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, an approach that has been approved by the Scottish Government.

Funding

The funding for the expansion of Early Learning & Childcare is coming directly from the Scottish Government.

This means all letters, information events, the funded places and free nursery meals are all being funded through the money allocated by the Scottish Government specifically for the expansion.

Is my two year old eligible?

Your two year old will be entitled to funded ELC hours if at any point since their second birthday they have been looked after; under a kinship care order; under a guardianship order (all eligible from the day after second birthday); or you receive any of the following (eligible from the term after second birthday):

- **Income Support**
- **Job Seekers Allowance (income based)**
- **Employment Support Allowance (income based)**
- **Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance**
- **State Pension Credit**
- **Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credits and in come is under £16,105**
- **Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your income is under £7,320; 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**
- **Universal credit**

Where can I use my funded hours?

You can use your funded hours at a nursery run by Moray Council and at a nursery, playgroup or childminder who is in partnership with the Council (subject to spaces being available). To find out more about what each setting can offer have a look at our [parent's guide for early years](#) in Moray.

Which Moray settings offer funded hours places?

You can view all Early Learning & Childcare provision on [Moray Council's website](#) or by contacting the Education and Social Care team via email educationandsocialcare@moray.gov.uk or by phone 01343 563374.

When will the funded hours be available?

Different settings will have varying hours of availability and different patterns of provision. Some may offer an AM or PM slot, and some may be able to offer you full day care. You should check with your preferred provider for their availability.

Moray Council nurseries will offer a flexible pattern of provision with some settings having the potential to open 8am-6pm with a variety of session times available. This will be in areas where there is demand for such hours and where there may be gaps in provision available from partner providers.

Some nurseries operate year round and some are term time only – you should check with your preferred provider.

Can I split my hours between more than one provider?

Yes, you can split your hours between up to two different settings (including a Childminder); you should state how you wish to split this allocation on your registration form. We would advise a minimum of two days at any setting.

How are places allocated?

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

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

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 centre is full. You will automatically be contacted by the centre you listed as your next choice. If all of your choices are full, we will contact you with alternative options.

My child has additional support needs – will they be supported?

Yes, they will be supported – if you have any concerns about this or to discuss your child's specific needs you should contact your preferred provider in the first instance. Your child's health visitor may already have raised this with you and a support plan will be put in place prior to them starting nursery.

Is my child entitled to a free nursery meal?

All children accessing their funded hours will be entitled to a free meal from August 2020. This could be a breakfast, lunch or evening meal depending on when the funded hours are being taken.

Some settings provide their meals in line with the six weekly school meals cycle – these nursery menus can be found on our website.

Does my child have to go to an ELC provision in their primary school catchment area?

No, they don't. We appreciate that it may be more appropriate for your child to attend a setting closer to where you work for their Early Learning & Childcare or closer to other family members. A place at these settings can't be guaranteed, as children in the catchment area will be given priority, but it is your choice where you apply.

Will there be any costs for me?

If you wish for your child to attend an ELC setting for more than their funded hours you will need to pay for those extra hours. Currently additional wrap around hours aren't provided at local authority nurseries but may be in future if there is a demand for it.

Snacks may also be charged to parents. Please discuss meals, snacks and any other applicable charges with the Nursery Manager/Childminder.

What happens if I want to defer entry to primary school?

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:

- The decision must be based on assessment of your child's wellbeing.
- 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 practitioners supporting 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.

I don't want to use all 1,140 hours – will I still get partial hours funded?

Yes, you can choose how much of the funded entitlement you want to use and which days you use these.

If you wish to increase or change your hours please let your Provider know – suitable notice is required.

How do I apply for the funded hours and when?

You can contact any Provider to visit the setting and to discuss accessing your ELC hours.

You should complete the registration form available on Moray Council's website or from any Early Learning & Childcare provider and return it to the first choice of centre you would like your child to attend during registration in January. If you move into the area after registration week please contact your preferred nursery to find out if they have availability.

You should make a choice of first, second and third choice setting in case you're not able to get a place in your first choice of provider.

You should not apply for more hours than you intend to use – for example, if you intend to use two full days and a half day you should not apply for five days. This potentially stops another child from attending and your provider may be acting fraudulently if they claim for these additional hours.

How should I raise a concern with an Early Learning & Childcare setting?

If you have concerns about an Early Learning & Childcare setting your child attends we would suggest you take the following steps:

- Raise any concerns with your child's named worker in the first instance
- If you feel your concerns have not been addressed within a reasonable timeframe, ask to meet and discuss these with the manager of the setting
- If you feel your concerns have still not been resolved, again ask to meet with the manager to agree reasonable steps to resolve the situation
- If you do not feel you have received a satisfactory response please contact the Moray Council Early Years team to discuss next steps

The managers of Early Learning & Childcare settings will always strive to put your child's needs first and will work with you to allay any fears you have and try and resolve any concerns you raise.

It is good practice to always follow up any conversation where you have concerns with a written confirmation (via email educationandsocialcare@moray.gov.uk or by phone 01343 563374) within a day or two of any meeting taking place.

How much notice do I have to give if I want to move my child to a different ELC setting?

You should provide reasonable notice if you wish to cease your child's funded ELC place, including if you are moving to a different provider. Settings may ask for up to 4 weeks' notice of your intention to move to a different provider.