

## **Early Learning & Childcare Expansion Starting From August 2018**

### *Frequently Asked Questions for Parents*

#### **What is my child entitled to?**

If your child is three or four years old they are currently entitled to 600 funded hours of Early Learning & Childcare a year paid for by the Scottish Government. Some two years olds are also eligible for this (see below).

From August 2018 three and four year olds in certain areas will be entitled to 1,140 hours a year. This will also be open to some two year olds who meet the eligibility criteria below.

#### **Is my child entitled to 1,140 hours?**

From August 2018 if you live in one of the phase one postcode areas your child will be entitled to 1,140 hours of funded Early Learning & Childcare. If you don't live in one of these postcode areas your child will still be entitled to 600 hours. Phase two postcodes for the 1,140 hours entitlement will be eligible for an August 2019 start. All three and four year olds and eligible two years will be entitled to receive 1,140 hours by August 2020.

You can check when your postcode becomes eligible using our [online postcode checker](#) – under the Eligibility for Increased ELC provision tab.

#### **Why am I not eligible yet?**

By 2020 the Scottish Government requires local authorities to be able to offer 1140 hours of funded ELC a year, this is a big change for Moray ELC settings and we need to phase in the number of children eligible to ensure a sustainable and manageable introduction of the increased hours.

#### **Postcodes**

The postcodes for phasing have been selected using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, an approach that has been approved by the Scottish Government. We've started with very few postcodes in 2018 as we need to grow our workforce and develop what will become a new Early Years' service across Moray, but a larger number of postcodes will be added from August 2019, with the new service available for all families from August 2020.

#### **Funding**

The funding for the expansion of Early Learning & Childcare is coming from the Scottish Government, who has asked all Local Authorities to phase the implementation of the expanded hours prioritising children and families that might benefit most from the additional hours.

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 eligible 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):

<b>Income Support</b>	<b>Job Seekers Allowance (income based)</b>	<b>Employment Support Allowance (income based)</b>	<b>Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance</b>
<b>State Pension Credit</b>	<b>Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credits and income is under £16,105</b>	<b>Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your income is under £6,420; or, the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)</b>	<b>Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</b>
<b>Universal credit</b>			

## Where can I use my funded hours?

You can use your funded hours (either 600 or 1,140) at the following settings (subject to spaces being available):

**Childminders** : look after children in their own home. They should provide your child with lots of care and personal development. Childminders often make the most of local parks, playgrounds and community centres. The childminder must be in partnership with Moray Council. Currently childminders in Moray are contracted with the Council to provide Early Learning & Childcare to two year olds only.

**Nurseries & playgroups** : are often run by a team of staff, sometimes led by a manager or perhaps a committee, who will plan your child's curriculum based learning experience to ensure development through activities that suit all abilities. There are a number of different nurseries and playgroups in Moray, including Moray Council nurseries, private nurseries, outdoor nurseries and nurseries managed by the third sector. All of which must be in partnership with Moray Council and registered with the Care Inspectorate.

## Which Moray settings offer funded hours places?

All Early Learning & Childcare provision is available to view on [Moray Council's website](#) or by contacting the Education and Social Care team (contacts below).

### **When will the funded hours be available?**

Currently different settings will have varying hours of availability. Some may offer an AM or PM slot, some are able to offer two sessions within the one day or you may be able to get full day care. You should check with your preferred provider for their availability.

Moray Council nurseries will be moving to a flexible delivery model with some settings having the potential to open 8am-6pm and a variety of pick-up and drop-off times will be 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 for their operating schedule.

### **Can I split my hours between more than one provider?**

Yes, you can split your hours between up to two different settings – 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 at centre
2. Child resident in secondary catchment and sibling at centre
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 at centre
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 using the straight line method.

The timescale for allocation of places is as follows:

<b>Eligible start date</b>	<b>Allocation schedule</b>
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 taking up their 1,140 hours of free Early Learning & Childcare who are in a funded place over lunchtime will be entitled to a free nursery meal. You don't have to take this nursery meal and may provide a packed lunch if you prefer – your nursery or childminder will ask for your preference prior to start date.

The nursery meals provided run on a six weekly cycle in line with the school meals – [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 more than the funded hours they are currently entitled to you will have to pay for any extra hours if attending a partner provider for these hours. Currently wrap around hours can't be provided at local authority nurseries but may be in future if there is a demand for it and partner providers aren't able to provide those hours. Snacks may also be charged to parents.

### **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:

- There must be a sound educational need to defer.
- 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 and Social Care team.

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.

### **How do I apply for the funded 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 week in January. If you move into the area after registration week please contact your preferred nursery to find out if they have availability.