



EARLY LEARNING  
& CHILDCARE  
[www.moray.gov.uk/elc](http://www.moray.gov.uk/elc)

# YOUR CHOICES

*A parents guide  
to early years  
in Moray.*

**moray**  
council

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# INTRODUCTION

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.

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.



*funded*

# Early Learning & Childcare more than just numbers

total hours funded for  
3 & 4 and eligible 2  
year-olds

1140

childminders in  
moray

100+

funded provi

58

2

number of settings  
you can split hours  
between

3

minimum number of  
hours in a setting per  
day

iders

hours per week if  
using term-time

30

hours per week if using  
46 weeks

25

23.75

10

maximum number of  
hours in a setting per  
day

hours per week if using  
year round

funded  
lunch

[www.moray.gov.uk/ELC](http://www.moray.gov.uk/ELC)



D-0323



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 2020.

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.

All children are entitled to their funded places at the start of the term following their third 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)	Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance
State Pension 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 £6,420; 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			



# 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.

We hope it helps.







## 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 to make sure that they meet the National Standards. 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](http://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](http://www.education.gov.scot).

### *Quality Assurance and Staffing*

You may want to check what quality assurance procedure a nursery or childminder follows. All nurseries and childminders in Moray have access to a Continuous Improvement Officer and qualified teacher through Moray Council.

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.

Low staff turnover is a good pointer of a quality ELC setting – if staff are happy in their roles they're more likely to provide a safe, secure and happy environment for your child as well. You could ask how long staff have been at the nursery or a childminder and any additional training they're able to access – this will give you an indication of how valued staff are.



# 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.









## 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?

Moray Council nurseries don't have 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 snacks, nappies, late collection and registration fees or wrap around hours 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](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk).

## **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.

## *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.

In local authority nurseries lunches follow a six weekly cycle and copies of the menus can be taken home so you know exactly what's coming up for lunch!

There may be charges for snacks and you should check these with the nursery or childminder before registering to make sure they don't come as a surprise.

## *Additional Support Needs and Inclusion*

If your child has additional support needs you may wish to ask how these needs will be met.

Your health visitor will liaise with you and your chosen setting (nursery or childminder) and a co-ordinated support plan (CSP) will be put in place. This plan co-ordinates the support provided to your child by various partner agencies, for example health service, educational psychologists or social work.



# 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.

You can use your funded hours with the providers below.

## *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 as well. 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. Due to the small numbers cared for by childminders children receive the individual attention and secure attachment young children need while encouraging independence and skills development.

Childminders can care for up to six children under the age of 16, of these a maximum of three can be pre-school with no more than one under 12 months old – these numbers should include the childminder's own children.

Childminders must be registered with the Care Inspectorate and may undertake additional training to increase their personal development and improve the quality of care they provide.

From August 2020 childminders must hold a minimum of Grade 4 with the Care Inspectorate and a qualification of SCQF level 7 or above (or working towards) in order to offer funded ELC places.

(\*funded ELC is currently available with childminders, who are in partnership with Moray Council.)



**Nurseries\***

are run by a team of staff who will plan your child’s learning experience to ensure development through activities that suit all abilities.

Day nurseries help prepare children for when they start school and familiarise children with routines and provide a safe environment for children to learn about themselves and the world around them.

Nurseries care for a large group of children so it can be a great way for children to mix and socialise with lots of children their own age, helping them to gain confidence and increase their social skills.

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

Local authority nurseries in Moray are managed by a Nursery Manager and some are associated with a primary school. Your child does not have to be within the primary school catchment area to attend the nursery, however the allocation of places may depend on the criteria on page 23.

Some nurseries are open year round (apart from two weeks at Christmas and New Year) while others are term-time only. 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. Where your preferred nursery is open term-time and you would like year round provision you may be able to use a hub nursery during holiday times. Please enquire about this with Education and Social Care (contact details on back page). You should select your preferred times during registration.

If you’re using your funded entitlement year round you will be entitled to 22 hours a week and if you’re using it term-time only you will be entitled to 30 hours a week. You may be able to purchase extra hours with funded providers if there is availability.

(\*funded ELC is available for three and four years olds only at local authority nurseries but also for eligible two year olds at some partner providers.)

### *Playgroups\**

are sessions of play which are traditionally organised and run by volunteers and/or parents, however many playgroups now run as a day nursery and are run by qualified staff, sometimes governed by a board or committee.

These playgroups are registered with the Care Inspectorate and can provide the same level of learning and care as day nurseries and childminders.

Activities such as art, craft, music, movement, storytime and more encourage children to socialise with each other while learning as they would in all ELC settings.

(\*funded ELC is available with those playgroups registered with Moray Council to provide for three and four years olds and eligible two year olds.)

You **cannot** use your funded ELC entitlement to pay for the below.

### *Out of School Care Clubs*

are for school age children and offer a safe environment for children before and/or after school hours. These are sometimes run by a playgroup or nursery as a breakfast or after school club.

### *Care in the child's home*

or sitter services can introduce parents to a child carer who looks after children and young people up to the age of 16 in the child's own home.

### *Nannies*

are employed directly by a family and may live-in. They often take on extra household duties and care for only the children of the family they're employed by.



## 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 registration form to give yourself more chance of obtaining a place in a setting you want.

A list of providers who offer places for your funded 1,140 hours can be found at [www.moray.gov.uk/elc](http://www.moray.gov.uk/elc) 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 attend the provision you would like to register for during registration week in January – the date of this each year will be posted online in advance.

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 can collect a registration form there or download it from Moray Council's website. You will need to provide your child's birth certificate and proof of address when registering.

If you move into the area after registration week please contact your preferred nursery to find out if they have availability.

## 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 outwith secondary catchment and sibling at 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 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.



## WHAT NEXT?

Once you've registered 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:

- 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.

### *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 & Social Care  
Moray Council, Council Office,  
High Street, ELGIN  
IV30 1BX

01343 563374

[educationandsocialcare@moray.gov.uk](mailto:educationandsocialcare@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.elcacademy.scot](http://www.elcacademy.scot) or

[www.childcarecareersscotland.scot](http://www.childcarecareersscotland.scot)



## *Contacts*

For further information and help on any of the topics in this guide please contact Moray Council's Education and Social Care 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 & Social Care  
Moray Council, Council Office,  
High Street, ELGIN  
IV30 1BX

01343 563374

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