



Improving Lives Together
Ambition Compassion Integrity



A Guide to Early Learning and Childcare

**in Perth and Kinross
2025-2026**

Education & Children's Services

Throughout this guidance, the word 'parent' should be interpreted as including the child's carer or legal guardian.

Please note, this information is correct at time of going to print.

Updated information is available from the Schools' Support Team:

Tel **01738 476200**

Email ECSSchools@pkc.gov.uk

or on the Perth & Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk 



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Introduction

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is an important stage in a child's development and helps children to learn as they play. A good-quality early learning and childcare experience builds on the valuable learning that takes place in and around the home, before children start primary school. It also develops the learning of other essential skills that they will rely on in later life.

From August 2020 all 3-5 year olds, and eligible 2 year olds, will be entitled to 1140 funded hours of ELC per year in Scotland, an increase from 600 funded hours. There are currently 48 nursery classes based in primary schools in Perth and Kinross.

Nursery classes in Inch View, Letham, Pitlochry, Luncarty and St Dominic's primary schools offer additional childcare provision. Separate guidance on all aspects of funded provision within Perth and Kinross is available from the Childcare & Family Information Service: Email Childcare@pkc.gov.uk

In addition to local authority managed nurseries, Education & Children's Services is currently in partnership with a number of childminders and funded provider settings which provide quality ELC within the private, voluntary and independent sector.

A full list of both local authority-managed schools and classes, and funded providers is given at the end of this guidance.

This information is intended to help you and your child get the most out of the ELC experience by answering the most frequently asked questions we receive. Full details of the Council's policy on ELC are contained in the Policy & Guidelines for Admission to Nursery Schools and Classes available to view on the Council's website www.pkc.gov.uk

The term '*funded provider*' refers to public, private and third party providers, including childminders, who meet the [National Standard](#) and are willing to enter into a contract with the local authority.

Questions and Answers

1 What is the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare?

The Scottish Government announced that from August 2020 the entitlement will increase to 1140 hours per year of funded ELC.

2 Why is this happening?

We recognise the great job parents and carers are doing, and these additional funded hours are intended to support child development and continue to have fun and learn outside of their home with experienced and trained staff. The settings are a safe environment where every child will be well looked after, giving parents and carers the opportunity to return to work, train and/or study.

The expansion of ELC is driven by the following principles:

- **Quality** - the expansion will ensure a high-quality experience for all children, which complements other early years and educational activity to close the attainment gap, and recognises the value of those we entrust to give our children the best start in life.
- **Flexibility** - the expansion will support more parents and carers in work, training or study, through greater choice of provider and patterns of provision that are better aligned with working patterns whilst delivering this in a way that ensures a high-quality experience for the child.
- **Accessibility** - ELC capacity is sufficient and is as conveniently geographically located as possible to support families and enable parents and carers to work, train and study, while also appropriately meeting the needs of children who require additional support and parents who request ELC through the medium of Gaelic.
- **Affordability** - the expansion will increase access to affordable ELC which will help to reduce barriers to participating in the labour market which parents and carers may currently face.

3 What does this mean for my child?

All 3-5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds will be entitled to access up to 1140 hours of funded ELC per year with a funded provider from August 2020. This means you will be able to access the entitlement in a setting of your choice, dependent on availability, and there will be a variety of attendance options across Perth and Kinross. Further information on providers and attendance options are available

Perth & Kinross Council understand every family's circumstances are different and have ensured that a variety of funded ELC options will be available. By working closely with funded providers the Council has tried to ensure parents can access funded hours in the way which best meets their family's needs.

Due to the unique nature of Perth and Kinross's geography we have created 11 ELC communities. The communities ensure there are choices available across the authority and allows for prioritisation of local authority nursery classes; these are listed below:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Aberfeldy |  North Perth |
|  Auchterarder |  Pitlochry |
|  Blairgowrie |  Scone |
|  Carse of Gowrie |  South Perth and Earn |
|  Crieff |  Strathtay (Bankfoot, Luncarty, Murthly, Stanley) |
|  Kinross | |

Each of these communities will have access to a mix of attendance options at local authority, funded provider setting and childminder offering flexibility of choice. Each community will have at least one setting offering extended year and extended day provision.

Local authority settings will offer a variety of attendance patterns offering term time, 45-week or 50-week options as appropriate, some of which will be open 8.00 am - 6.00 pm. A breakdown of these options is shown below and a breakdown of attendance patterns per setting is available on page 14.

Perth and Kinross Council Early Learning and Childcare Class Attendance Options

Term Time Model - Option 1

30 hours per week over 38 weeks. Approximately 9.00 am - 3.00 pm. This attendance pattern provides ELC provision across the school term time only.



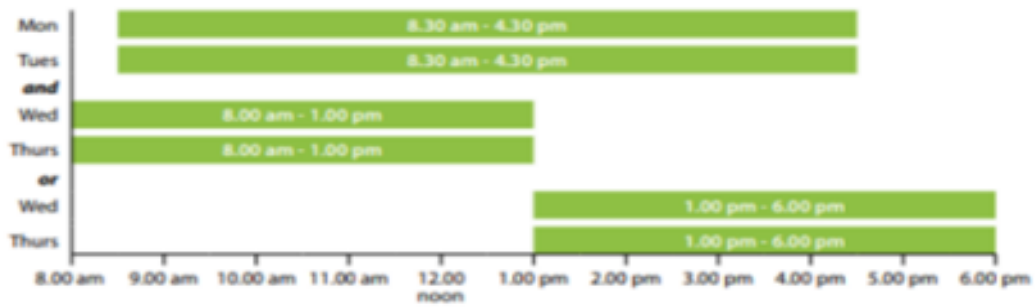
45-Week Model

26 hours per week over 45 weeks. Settings offering this attendance pattern will be open between 8.00 am - 6.00 pm. Settings operating this attendance pattern will offer provision over the full school term and also the first week of October holiday, first week of Easter holiday and first three weeks of summer holidays following on from the last day of term. All settings will be closed during in-service days and for two weeks over Christmas.

Attendance options include:

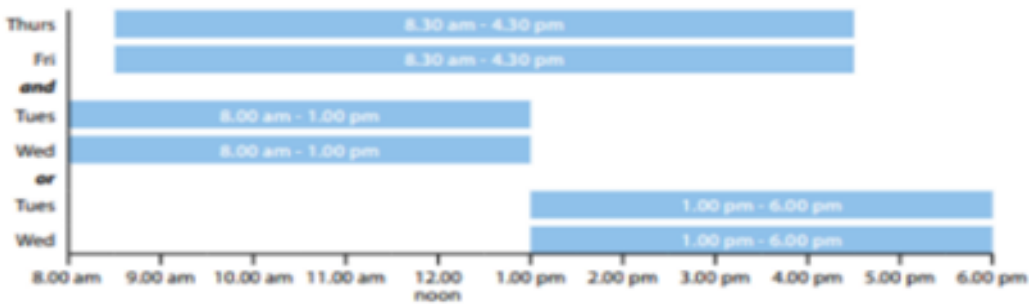
Option 2

- Two full days, Monday and Tuesday, 8.30 am - 4.30 pm;
- and the choice of either: Wednesday and Thursday 8.00 am - 1.00 pm; **or** Wednesday and Thursday 1.00 pm - 6.00 pm.



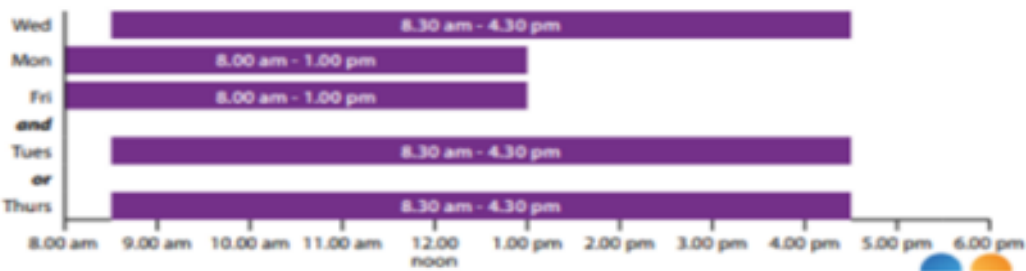
Option 3

- Two full days, Thursday and Friday 8.30 am - 4.30 pm;
- and the choice of either: Tuesday and Wednesday 8.00 am - 1.00 pm; **or** Tuesday and Wednesday 1.00 pm - 6.00 pm.



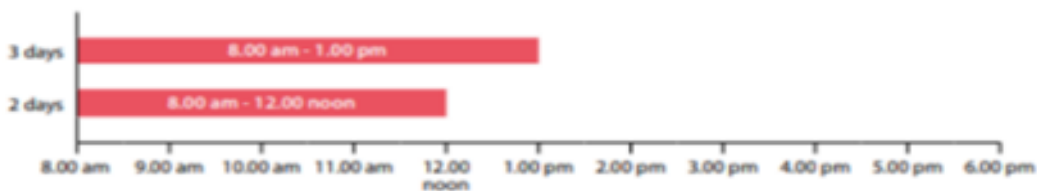
Option 4

- One full day, Wednesday 8.30 am - 4.30 pm, plus two five-hour sessions on Monday and Friday 8.00 am - 1.00 pm;
- and the choice of either Tuesday or Thursday 8.30 am - 4.30 pm.



50-Week Model - Option 5

23 hours per week over 50 weeks. The attendance pattern is three days 8.00 am - 1.00 pm and two days 8.00 am - 12.00 noon. This option includes full year access to ELC with two weeks shutdown over Christmas.



Questions and Answers

For further information on attendance options available at funded provider settings and childminders, please contact these settings directly. [Nursery locality and attendance patterns - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](#) has information with what each setting offers.

4 Is my 2 year old child eligible for a funded place?

Your 2 year old may be eligible for a Strong Start place if you are in receipt of the eligible benefits listed on the [Strong Start](#) page.

Your 2 year old child may also be eligible from the point they are looked after, under a Kinship Care order, or with a parent appointed guardian. Advice is available from your allocated Social Worker. Children of parents who are also care-experienced are now eligible for a Strong Start place. Further information can be found through the Strong Start page link above, or from your allocated social worker.

5 Choosing the right Early Learning and Childcare

There are a variety of options when choosing ELC for your child which may seem daunting. To help you with this the Scottish Government Parent Club has prepared a guide on ["Things to consider when choosing ELC"](#) to give you information to make a decision on choosing the right provider(s).

Perth & Kinross Council recognises that families have a variety of needs and preferences for accessing ELC. Parents, therefore, are entitled to apply for a place in more than one setting. The allocation of split funding places will be dependent on both settings being able to offer the hours requested. Children are entitled to a maximum of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare per year. Application takes place on the local authority website and/or by contacting the funded provider. Some funded provider settings and childminders can offer additional hours for childcare purposes and you should talk to them directly about this.

If you decide to take up your child's allocation of 1140 hours early learning and childcare with a childminder or funded provider setting, the provider will advise you of the funding arrangements.

Funding for the place is provided by the Scottish Government and is paid directly by the Council to the provider. The provider will explain this in more detail.

Perth and Kinross will offer 1140 hours of ELC with the funded providers listed below. As referred to in the introduction, all funded providers must enter into a contract with Perth & Kinross Council and meet the National Standards to deliver these hours.

Details of our Funded Provider settings are available on [Find my nearest childcare providers - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](#).

Questions and Answers

Childminders

A childminder looks after children in the childminder's own home and can often provide very flexible care. Most childminders look after children from a few months old up to primary school age.

Local Authority Nurseries

A local authority nursery provides care for children across the age range of 2 to 5 years using funded hours.

Funded Provider Settings

A Funded Provider setting provides care for young children across the age range birth to 5 years. There are different types of nurseries with different ways of operating so it is essential that parents look for one which best suits the needs of both child and family.

6 Does my 3-5 year old child have to access and attend the full 1140 hours ELC place?

No, from August 2020, all 3-5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds in Scotland are entitled to 1140 hours of funded ELC, however it is not mandatory for your child to use these should you wish not to take them, therefore less hours can be taken or none at all. However, it is thought that a quality experience of early learning and childcare can bring many benefits, including a smoother transition into primary school as well as an enhanced opportunity for success in learning.

The maximum amount of funded hours your child can access in a day is 8 hours in a local authority nursery and 10 hours in a funded provider setting.

Please note should you wish not to use your full entitlement, funded hours cannot be banked and used at a later date.

7 Funding Follows the Child

Funding Follows the Child is guidance introduced by the Scottish Government which provides greater choice and flexibility for parents to decide how they use their funded ELC hours. It ensures parents will not be required to pay any upfront or top-up fees in relation to the funded hours, and are not required to purchase additional hours, unless required by families, beyond the funded hours in order to access their child's funded entitlement at a setting.

8 When will my child be able to access their funded hours?

You are entitled to apply to any funded provider for your 3-5 year old child's funded ELC place. Your child is entitled to access the funded hours starting the term after their third birthday.

Funded places begin at three times throughout the year: August, January and April. Please refer to the [Nursery Admissions Policy and Guidelines](#) for more information. For more information regarding start dates within

funded provider settings or childminders, please contact the provider directly. Contact details are available at the end of this document.

Questions and Answers

9 My child has a nursery place, do I have to register again?

Parents who wish to retain their place in a local authority nursery are required to choose their attendance pattern from the new options available. Registration opens on 6 January 2025 on the [Perth & Kinross Council website](#).

10 Will my child receive meals and snacks?

Each child is entitled to one meal and one snack (including a cup of milk) per day during their funded session across all funded provider settings.

Each meal and snack will be healthy and nutritionally balanced as per the [Setting the Table](#) guidance provided by the Scottish Government.

Within local authority settings, meals will be provided by Tayside Contracts, menu adaptations and dietary requirements will be made accordingly. Please contact your setting of choice directly to discuss any special dietary requirement needs. Please also outline these at the point of application.

Where the split placement is being used for your child, we will work with the funded providers to ensure your child receives their meals and snack entitlement.

11 Can my child attend more than just the funded hours?

Should you require more hours than the funding allows you will be able to access these at a cost directly in a funded provider setting or childminder setting. Your child can attend more than the funded hours in a funded provider setting and childminder setting, however these will be chargeable and based on the provider's availability. Please contact your provider of choice directly who can advise further.

Nursery classes in Inch View, Letham, Pitlochry, Luncarty and St Dominic's primary schools offer additional childcare provision. Separate guidance on all aspects of childcare provision within Perth and Kinross is available from the [Childcare & Family Information Service](#).

12 Can my child access their funded hours with more than one provider?

Yes, this is called a '*Split Funded Place*'. In Perth and Kinross your child's funding can be accessed in several different settings, to best accommodate your family and your child's needs. This can be across all funded provider types, please refer to section 7 of this guidance for funded provider types.

More than one funded provider can be accessed per day, however this must be at the end of the session. Should another funded provider be used before the session ends the funding for these hours will be sacrificed. For example, if using a term time attendance pattern (9.00 am - 3.00 pm) and the child is collected by a childminder or funded provider setting at 1.00 pm, the two hours of funding would be sacrificed.

If a parent is seeking a split funded place, they will be required to complete an application form for each establishment they are seeking a place within. Please note that if splitting local authority places you can

do so by applying to both settings, via the one [online application form](#) . Please see application guidance and FAQs prior to completing the form.

Parents should be made aware that although every effort will be made to meet their needs, there is no guarantee that it will be possible to offer split funded places in every case. The allocation of a split funded place will be dependent upon both of the establishments being able to offer the hours requested.

Places with funded provider settings and childminders are allocated in accordance with the providers ' Admissions Policy and a copy can be obtained from the individual setting.

13 Can my child access the funded hours in another local authority area?

The funded hours can be taken anywhere in Scotland with a local authority registered funded provider who is compliant with the National Standards based on availability of places.

Perth & Kinross Council has funding arrangements with other Councils. This means that parents may send their children to early learning and childcare centres outside Perth and Kinross and still qualify for a funded early learning and childcare place.

You will need to check with the relevant setting regarding the availability of places and funding arrangements.

14 Does my 3-5 year old child need to be toilet trained before he/she can start nursery?

No, this is not a requirement but it would help staff greatly if your child was toilet trained. As initial registration is in January and enrolment in March/April, your child may not be toilet trained at this time. However, it is quite possible that by the start of the school session in August they will be, so do not worry about this at registration or enrolment. If the situation is that your child is not yet fully toilet trained please do discuss this with the staff at your chosen nursery who will deal with this sensitively. Funded providers will be equipped for changing children and toileting procedures including changing will be shared with parents.

Questions and Answers

15 Additional Support Needs and Inclusion

The Inclusion Team can provide children with additional support needs help in nursery to support their learning and development and you will have regular opportunities to meet with your child's key worker to discuss how they are developing both at home and in the ELC setting. If you have concerns about any aspect of your child's development speak to your child's key worker.

Children might need extra help to be able to take part in ELC or get the most from their time there. Some children may need a lot of support while others may need only a small amount as each child is an individual.

There is no one way to support children in ELC but working in partnership with families is vital so you will be involved right from the start. The support will depend on your child's needs and also what they enjoy doing. Support is usually provided by the nursery team through normal play experiences that take place. Depending on your child's needs support may include:

- *changing the nursery environment to suit a child's needs, eg having quieter areas if they have a hearing impairment;*
- *using visuals to help a child understand their day and manage transitions;*
- *providing strategies or a quiet space to help children manage their emotions;*
- *staff adapting the language they use to help children understand;*
- *adapting materials to a child's needs;*
- *1-to-1 or in a group, with a Teacher, Early Childhood Practitioner, Play Assistant or Pupil Support Assistant;*

Some children will also have other professionals involved, eg Speech & Language Therapist, Hearing Impaired Teacher, Early Years Inclusion staff, Occupational Therapists. All professionals will work closely with yourself and the ELC team to ensure that your child is being well supported at both home and in their setting.

For further information see:

<https://enquire.org.uk>

<https://parent-to-parent.org/>

Questions and Answers

16 How do I apply for a funded place and when will I know if my child has a place?

If you wish to apply to a funded provider setting and/or childminder for a funded place, please contact them directly to find out how to apply.

If you wish to apply for a local authority 3-5 year old nursery place the application process can be accessed online at https://my.pkc.gov.uk/service/ELC_Apply.

The initial application process will open on 6 January 2025 until 28 February 2025 and places will be allocated on 24 March if you meet the 28 February deadline above. You can however apply for nursery places throughout the year. Please refer to the Perth & Kinross Council [Policy and Guidelines for Admission to Nursery Classes and Early Childhood Centres](#) for further information.

17 Does my child need to start primary school this year?

In Scotland children who are five before the start of the school session in August **must** start school in August.

Alternatively, parents can make arrangements to home educate their child.

Parents whose child will be five years of age between the start of the school session in August and the last day of February in the following year have the choice of when their child will start school. Children whose parents choose for them to start school in the August after their 5th birthday will be eligible for an additional funded year of ELC.

18 Early Learning and Childcare Funded Providers 2025-2026

A list of funded providers is available to view at [Nursery locality and attendance patterns - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](#)

Each ELC setting offers something slightly different in terms of environment and some offer a variety of attendance patterns. To find out more regarding your chosen setting, please contact the setting directly.

Each nursery provision will have a defined community please note this may differ from the primary school catchment area. Communities are agreed and registered with the Schools' Support Team within Education & Children's Services. All nurseries managed by Education & Children's Services are nondenominational.

Please be aware that a place in a nursery class does not give children priority in gaining a place in the same school when enrolling for Primary 1.

Early Learning and Childcare Attendance Patterns per Community

Information can be found here: [Nursery locations and attendance patterns - Perth & Kinross Council](#)

How do I find out more about Early Learning and Childcare for my child?

Funded provider settings and childminders establish their own priority categories and dates for registration. Details of their admission procedures can be obtained by contacting the individual setting. Please contact the funded provider directly to discuss any matters in relation to their setting.

Further information on ELC can be obtained from Education & Children's Services:

Tel **01738 476200** Email ELCApplications@pkc.gov.uk

In addition, our Childcare & Family Information Service can supply further details of services offered by funded provider settings together with a full range of childcare services within Perth and Kinross including childminders and out of school care:

Tel **0845 601 4477**  Email Childcare@pkc.gov.uk

The Council also offers an Early Years Inclusion Service providing educational support to children with additional support needs including working with their families, ELC establishments and agencies. The Early Years Inclusion Co-ordinator can be contacted on the following telephone number:

Tel **01738 472372**

Our funded provider settings and local authority nursery classes are currently inspected by Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (known as the Care Inspectorate), and Education Scotland.

The staff follow national guidelines for the education of children aged 3-5 years, and eligible 2 year olds, that encourage learning through play and the service must meet standards laid down by Education Scotland.

Our funded childminders are currently inspected by Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (known as the Care Inspectorate).

A Blueprint for 2020:

[Funding Follows the Child Principles and Practice Funding](#)

[Follows the Child Operating Guidance Funding Follows the](#)

[Child Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Perth & Kinross Council Early Learning and Childcare](#)

[Perth & Kinross Council 1140 Hours of Free ELC for 3-5 Year Olds](#)

[Perth & Kinross Council 1140 Hours of Free ELC for Eligible 2 Year Olds](#)

[The Scottish Government](#)

[The Care Inspectorate](#)

[Education Scotland](#)

[Early Years Scotland](#)

[Scottish Childminding Association](#)

[Scottish Government Parent Club](#)

[Scottish Government Play, Talk, Read](#)

[Parenting Across Scotland](#)

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

www.pkc.gov.uk