

Early Learning and Childcare

Delivery Plan 2024-2027



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Introduction

The City of Edinburgh Council has a statutory duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, to prepare and publish an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Delivery Plan which will detail the delivery of ELC across Edinburgh.

It is informed by, and builds on the biennial consultations held with parents and carers.

National Context

Since August 2021 all local authorities have been offering 1140 hours of funded ELC to all eligible two-year-olds and children who are three years old (the term after their third birthday) up to starting school age.

Flexibility and choice are fundamental to the ELC offer, and families can access high quality, funded ELC that meets their needs.

Local Context

The City of Edinburgh Council started planning for the delivery of 1140 funded hours of ELC in March 2017 and has fully supported the aims of delivering funded hours to help reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve long term outcomes for children and families.



Our Vision, Value & Aims

Edinburgh Learns for Life

Our goal is for all Edinburgh's children to thrive and take their places as highly skilled workers in a world-class City. To achieve this, we must provide them with what they need to develop excellent skills for learning, life and work. Our approaches are designed to remove barriers including but not limited to socio-economic factors, disability, race and religion. It is a vision that is both ambitious and inclusive.

Our vision is to ensure all our children have the best start in life. Their voices are heard, they are loved, well cared for and experience high quality opportunities to have fun, play and learn. We value and follow the City of Edinburgh Council Behaviors of Respect, Integrity and Flexibility in our approach to improving our service. Our aim is for all our children in ELC settings to experience high quality play and learning experiences. To achieve this, we need to have a reflective, knowledgeable, and skilled workforce.





Quality of Provision



Quality of Provision

- The local authority is the guarantor of quality ensuring that settings are meeting the National Standard as set out in “[Funding follows the child and the National Standards for ELC providers](#)”
- The City of Edinburgh Council is dedicated to delivering high quality education, including ELC for all children and young people, in partnership with parents and communities.
- A culture of continuous improvement underpins all activity and is the responsibility of all staff working within schools and early years settings and this is supported by our Quality Improvement team. Our shared goal is to enhance outcomes for all learners, ensuring children achieve and attain their potential.
- Improving quality is supported through effective self-evaluation, effective use of data and research, effective planning and innovative practice.

Quality of provision

The National Standard for Funded ELC outlines the requirements for providers to have Care Inspectorate quality evaluations of 'Good' or better across all themes. The Care Inspectorate evaluates the following:

- Quality of Care, Play and Learning
- Quality of Our Setting
- Quality of Our Leadership
- Quality of Our Staff Team

The information opposite outlines the quality of provision in Edinburgh

If a setting received Care Inspectorate evaluations below 'Good', or where any criteria from the ELC National Standards have not been met, the provider enters a Service Improvement Period (SIP) which is overseen by the local authority. Officers from the local authority provide continuous support and challenge to all providers to support quality delivery of ELC and offer advice and guidance when improvement is required.

102 Local Authority Settings

97% evaluated Good or better

7 Local Authority Forest Kindergartens

100% evaluated Good or better*

98 Private Providers

79% evaluated Good or better

33 Childminders

96% evaluated Good or better

* 1 Forest Kindergarten has been inspected.

The Importance of Play

Early learning and childcare providers should ensure that all children have play experiences as part of their daily lives, as enshrined in Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) of the UNCRC. To ensure consistency of high-quality experiences the City of Edinburgh Council have developed a Play and Learning framework to support all funded providers.

Edinburgh Learns – Early Learning and Childcare ‘Play and Learning Framework’

“Play at this time is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep significance”

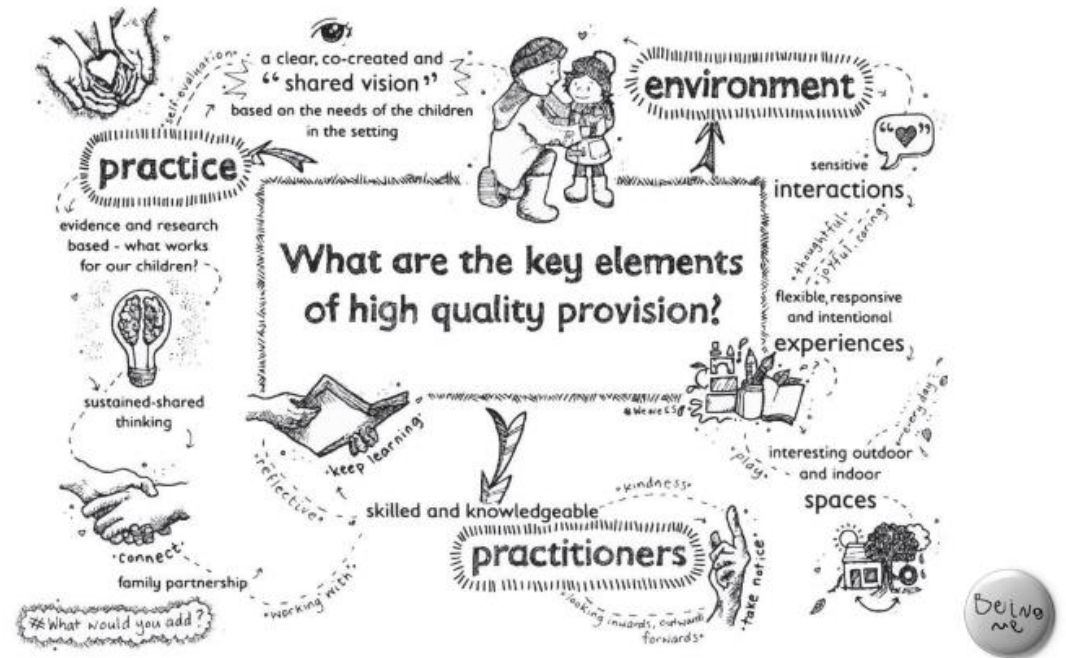
(Friedrich Froebel)



Early Years has a rich theory to draw upon which underpins practice.

“Play is an intrinsic part of human nature and development. For babies and children, the essential role of play is well documented. Through play a child develop their cognitive, social, emotional and physical capabilities”

(Realising the Ambition: Being Me 2020)



Outdoors

'It is our vision that children in Scotland ELC sector will spend as much time outdoors as they do indoors, and time outdoors will happen every day, in every setting'

(Scottish Government)



Our guiding principles

High-quality EC is essential for children’s development, setting a strong foundation for lifelong learning, well-being and success. Here are some of our guiding principles we expect all out settings to have:

- A child centered approach to care and learning.
- Safe and nurturing environments.
- Highly skilled and responsive staff.
- Inclusive and equitable practice.
- Play based and inquiry led learning.
- Effective partnership with families and communities.
- Strong leadership for continuous improvement.

Care Inspectorate Quality Themes

Care, Play and Learning	Environment	Leadership	Staffing
Nurturing care and support	Quality of the setting for care, play and learning	Quality assurance and improvement are led well	Staff skills, knowledge and values
Children are safe and protected	Children experience high quality facilities	Leadership of play and learning	Staff recruitment
Play and learning Family engagement		Leadership and management of staff and resources	Staff deployment
Effective transitions			

“High quality Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) requires a focus on pedagogy and practice, built upon a shared understanding of the image of the developing child.”

(European Commission 2014: 9, cited in Scottish Government 2020: 14)

Current Provision in Edinburgh – August 2024

Funded ELC is provided for approximately 11,000 children aged from 2 years to starting school age.

- Provision is available as follows:
- 102 local authority setting
- 7 local authority Forest Kindergartens
- 98 private, voluntary and independent sector settings
- 33 childminders

Edinburgh Council also provides discretionary ELC to children who are not eligible for funded hours. This includes places for:

- Two-year-olds who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation
- Two-year-olds who have been supported through the Family Nurse Partnership program
- Children under three years old on the Child Protection Register

Our delivery plan for 1140 funded hours was set up to maintain 65% of our provision in local authority settings 35% of provision in our partner settings. The full range of providers is available on [Find early learning and childcare – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)



Provision cont'd

The provision of ELC in Edinburgh is spread across the City and recorded within High School Learning Communities.

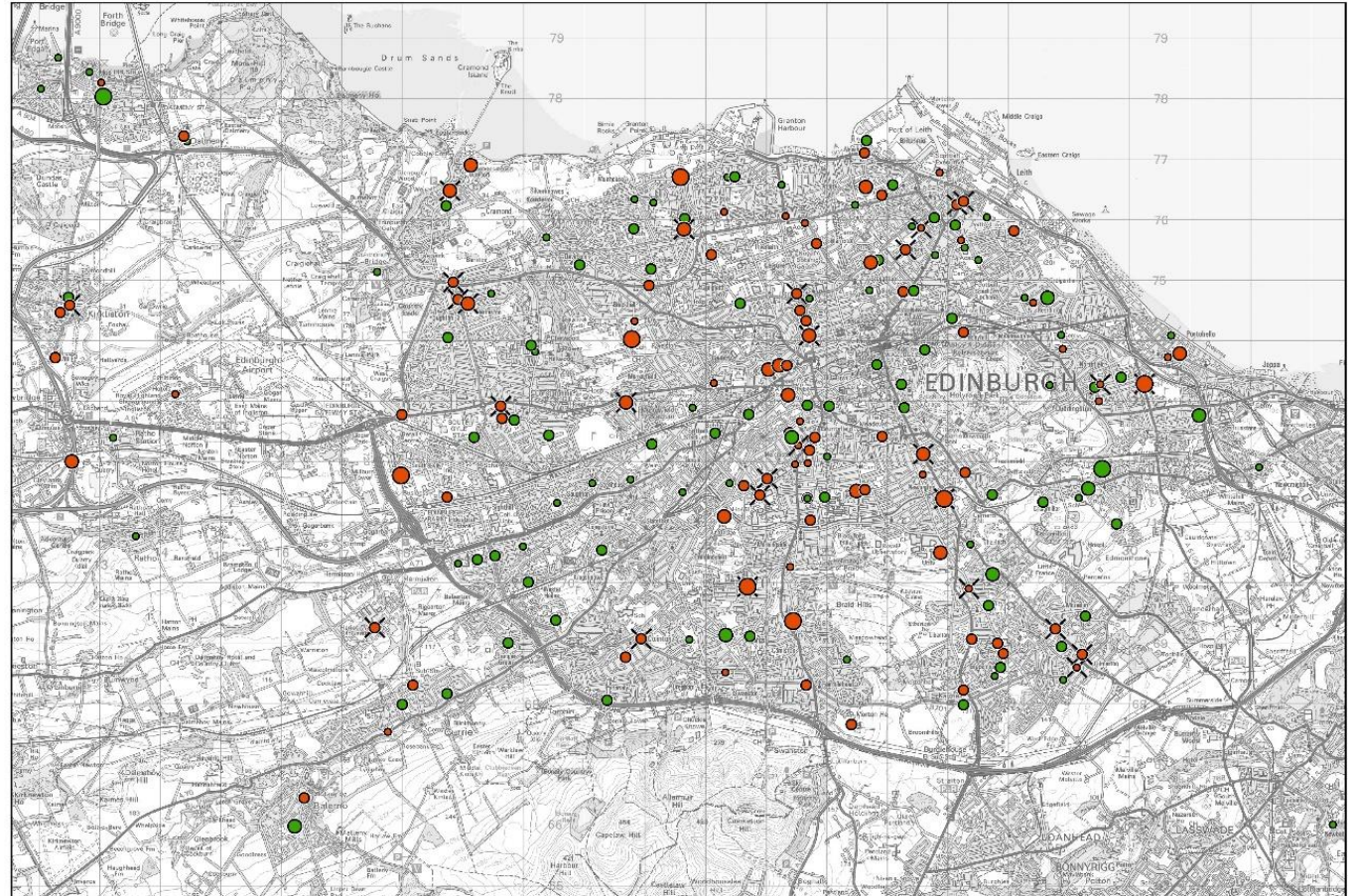
North East Locality	North West Locality	South East Locality	South West Locality
Castlebrae High	Broughton High	Boroughmuir	Balerno
Drummond	Craigmount High	High	Community
Community High	Craigroyston	James	High
Leith Academy	Community High	Gillespie's	Currie High
Portobello High	Forrester High	High	Firrhill High
	Queensferry High	Gracemount	Tynecastle
	The Royal High	High	High
	Trinity Academy	Liberton High	Wester
			Hailes High

Provision cont'd

Parents can access their child's funded entitlement through the following delivery models in local authority settings:

- All day provision during term time, aligned with the school day 09:00 – 15:00
- 4hrs 30mins morning or afternoon, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks per year
- 10rs, Monday and Tuesday + Flexi Fridays or 10hrs Wednesday and Thursday + Flexi Fridays, 50 weeks per year

Local Authority and Partner Provider Nurseries



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Provision cont'd

From August 2024, parents will have the option to purchase additional hours in settings open 50 weeks per year 08:00 to 18:00 (*see table for costs*)

Private, Voluntary or Independent providers who are in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council to deliver funded ELC may offer these models or their own throughout the year.

Cross boundary places from August 2024 – parents from other local authorities who would like their child to have a funded place in Edinburgh will be able to access this in one of our local authority settings and places will be allocated in line with our admissions policy criteria.

Age Group	Cost to purchase per hour
Children aged 2 years old	£6.10*
Children aged 3 years to starting school	£5.60*

Partnership with Parents and the Community

Research shows that when parents are engaged in their children's learning there are improved outcomes for children. Building strong partnership with parents and with the community that children live in, will continue to be a key focus for the Early Years Service. The national parenting strategy 2022 highlights the importance of communities *'helping parents to be the very best they can be to make a positive difference to children and young people'* Our evidenced based parenting programs in particular Peep LT, will continue to be developed to ensure this aim is sustained.

Our Key Themes for Developments 2024-2027

In line with statutory guidance, Edinburgh Early Years Service consults with families every two years to ensure their needs are reflected in service planning and delivery. Based on our consultation with parents/carers and our evaluation of the early year's expansion to 1140 hours, the key themes for development over the next 3 years will be:

- How we deliver Early Learning and Childcare?
- How we ensure Quality?
- How we support and develop our workforce?
- How we communicate, engage and consult?

Improvement Activity	This is how we will do it	By whom / By when	Evidence of impact
Flexibility of available funded places	Review the delivery models available to parents/carers	All full year setting from August 2024	Parents/carers will report greater satisfaction with the options available for them to access their funded entitlement.
Affordability of Early Learning and Childcare	Introduce the options for parents/carers to purchase additional hours. Create school holiday hubs in full year settings for children attending term time only settings.	All full year settings from August 2024	Parents/carers will have more options to access affordable ELC
Christmas opening	Reduce the number of settings open during the Christmas break when parents/carers traditional require less childcare	The Early Years team from December 2024	Children attending settings during the Christmas holiday period will be able to do so in a setting with a greater number of peers.
Cross Boundary	Limit places from non-Edinburgh residents to our local authority settings.	The Early Years team from August 2024	Early Years resources will be allocated more efficiently

Improvement Projects



Improvement Activity	This is how we will do it	By whom / By when	Evidence of impact
Attendance in early years settings	Work with parents and carers to highlight the benefits of children accessing their full funded entitlement to ELC	All LA early years settings by June 2027	The percentage of children accessing their full entitlement will increase from 88% to 95%
Parental engagement and involvement	Develop a parental engagement and involvement delivery plan	Early years, lifelong learning and wider achievement team along with parent representation by June 2025	Parental surveys show an increase in satisfaction with the level of engagement and support from early years settings.
Reducing Health and Wellbeing inequalities	Work together with health professionals to address inequalities related to speech and language and social development	Early years, NHS and other relevant services by June 2027	Improvements in child health data and attainment in P1
Developing our workforce	Introduce creative approaches to leadership development for our senior staff	Early Years Officers and Head of Centres by June 2026	Senior leaders in our standalone settings have a breadth of experience leading in different types of settings.
Quality of Provision (Exemplary ELC and Flagship FK)	Create 4 workstreams to take forward improvement work in the quality of children's experience, environments, leadership and staffing in our settings.	The Early Years team and all settings by June 2027	Settings evaluated good or better in Care, Learning and Support will increase from 97% to 100% and those evaluated Very Good or Better will increase from 65% to 85%.