



Your Ref: ELC 2020/21
Our Ref: AMQu/LB/FL
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Dear Parent / Carer,

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) – Session 2020/21

We hope you are well in these difficult times. We are writing on behalf of Aberdeen City Council's Early Years team to update you on your admissions application made to the Local Authority setting of your choice for your child/children.

The planned work to deliver the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from 600 hours to 1140 hours has been disrupted due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions and the ongoing response to the pandemic. Regrettably, the delay caused by this disruption to the ELC expansion capital programme and the need for physical distancing arrangements when nursery settings return mean we are unable to provide additional hours of ELC. The Scottish Government recognises the impact of the pandemic on the ELC expansion programme and has temporarily removed the statutory duty to offer expanded hours.

We recognise this news will be disappointing for families and that this has been and continues to be a challenging time for us all. Under the present conditions, the Early Years Team are aspiring to deliver up to 600 hours within our Local Authority ELC settings, where possible. Early Learning and Childcare providers based in Aberdeen who have applied to Aberdeen City Council to become a Funded Provider to deliver ELC expansion may be able to deliver additional hours. Please contact the provider directly to confirm what model of provision they are able to offer, if you wish to pursue this option.

The Early Years Team are planning for the reopening of Local Authority ELC settings, following the publication of the First Minister's four stage route map outlining the Scottish Government's plan for the easing of restrictions. It is anticipated that settings will reopen on the 11 August 2020.

There are several considerations that will need to be accounted for in the reopening of settings:

- Safe working practices
- Implementation of physical / social distancing measures
- Health, hygiene and safety protocols
- Availability of staff (some members maybe shielding or self-isolating)
- Staggered drop off and pick up times (minimising gathering of groups)

The aforementioned considerations do mean we will have to think differently about how we deliver ELC. This will also look differently across our ELC settings, accounting for the variety of buildings across our learning estate and access to outdoor spaces.

The Scottish Government will be publishing new guidance for ELC / nurseries on 15th June 2020 on how to manage and reduce the risk of the virus, and this will inform plans for Local Authority ELC / nurseries and our Funded Providers.

To deliver our aspiration of up to 600 hours in these changed circumstances we will be contacting you again to ask you about your requirements. We will try our very best to offer families their first choice but ask parents/carers to please be aware that this may not always be possible and that offers will be made in line with Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy 2020 and Scottish Government guidance.

Schools will be contacting families directly this month, June 2020, to ascertain your requirement. Once we have gathered information from all parents, we will be able to provide each of you with greater detail about what sessions we can offer.

In the meantime, if you require further information, please see following pages:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/coronavirus-covid-19/schools-fags>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-re-opening-schools-guide/>
<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/reopening-schools-fags>
<https://news.gov.scot/news/safe-return-to-schools-and-nurseries>

We would like to thank for your co-operation and understanding at this time.

Kind regards,

LOUISE BEATON AND FIONA LAWRIE
Service Manager - Early Years