



Hillbank Early Childhood Centre
North West Kilmarnock Area Centre
Western Road
Kilmarnock
KA3 1NQ
August 2025 -August 2026

Telephone No:	01563 521064
Email:	eaHillbank.ECC@eastayrshire.org.uk
Centre Blog:	Hillbank Early Childhood Centre – East Ayrshire Council Establishment
Centre App:	
Denominational Status (if any):	Non-Denominational
Centre Roll:	52 full-time equivalent places 32 (3-5 years) 20 (2-3 years)

SECTION 1

Welcome to Hillbank Early Childhood Centre where staff look forward to working with you in partnership with East Ayrshire Council to ensure children have the best possible start in life. We aim to provide an inclusive, safe, happy and nurturing environment where everyone feels welcomed and respected. I hope you find the information in our handbook useful.

At Hillbank Early Childhood Centre, Nurture Principles are embedded in all aspects of our practice within the centre, and we take pride in our relationships with not only children and their families but also colleagues and partners from other agencies to ensure that all children get support at the right time.

We strive to create a rich learning environment, following the Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition. We provide experiences which build on each child's prior learning, and is informed by staff observation, assessment and recording of children's progress.

We look forward to working in partnership with you and your child as they embark on their learning journey at Hillbank Early Childhood Centre.

If you require further information regarding Hillbank Early Childhood Centre, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,
Lee Boyd,
Head of Centre.

HOURS OF OPENING

8.00am – 6.00 pm

DAILY SESSIONS

The patterns we offer at Hillbank Early Childhood Centre for children aged 2-3 years

Model 2: 1140 hours is 4 hours 45 minutes across 48 weeks: a long morning 8.00am to 12.45pm

The patterns we offer at Hillbank Early Childhood Centre for children aged 3-5 years

Model 2: 1140 hours is 4 hours 45 minutes across 48 weeks: a long morning 8.00am to 12.45pm or a long afternoon 1.15pm to 6.00pm.

Model 3: 1140 hours across 48 weeks. Monday and Tuesday full days 9.5 hours per day between 8.00am and 6.00pm and Wednesday 8.00am to 12.45pm or Wednesday 1.15 to 6.00pm and Thursday and Friday full days.

Model 4: 1140 hours as a Blended Model or Split placement provides a combination ELC package of time:

Blended model - an ECC or funded ELC provider and with a participating childminder or split placement between 2 different ELC settings i.e. ECC and funded ELC provider.

At Hillbank Early Childhood Centre, our shared vision is:

To work in partnership with parents, carers and the community to enable all our children to be healthy, happy and included, in a nurturing and safe environment, supporting all our children to have the best start in life.

Values and Aims:

At Hillbank ECC we are fully committed to delivering the Scottish Government ambition for making Scotland the best place for children to grow up in and learn and giving our children the best start in life. To achieve this we will

Provide a nurturing and welcoming environment and that is inclusive for all children and their families underpinned by the ethos of Rights Respecting Schools.

Support children to understand their emotions and learn ways to regulate their emotions and build resilience.

Offer a holistic programme ensuring, depth, breadth, challenge and progression of learning experiences and opportunities that support children to achieve their full potential.

Work in partnership with our families, offering support, guidance and learning opportunities through a variety of approaches and work together to continuously improve the service.

Work in collaboration with a variety of agencies to ensure we can provide the appropriate support for children and their families at the right time.

Our aims reflect the key principals of the Health and Social Care Standards of

- Dignity and respect.
- Compassion
- To be included
- Responsive care and support
- Wellbeing

and we practice and self-evaluate using the National practice guidance for Early Years in Scotland namely Realising the Ambition—being me and A Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare sectors: early learning and childcare.

General Information

Currently information is shared mainly through our Learning Journals or our School App, telephone, email and at drop off and pick up time. There are also notice boards in the foyer. Newsletters, fliers and progress meetings provide information both about the Centre and about events within the community. Our Learning Journals are proving to be very successful in capturing children learning and progress. All parents can access their individual child's profile by providing a personal e-mail at registration. We would be very grateful if parents/guardians log on at least monthly to view your child's progress and achievements, please leave comments on their learning journal; this is very much appreciated. Parent/guardians can also upload pictures and stories about their child's achievements at home too. If you have any difficulty with logging on please speak to a staff member and we can assist you.

Hillbank Early Childhood Centre plays an important role within our local community. We strive to maintain close links with key agencies within the local community; and seek to develop these links wherever possible. We actively encourage parental and community involvement. We have links with all local Primary Schools.

We have links with Social Services, Psychological Services, and Health: Health Visiting Service, Community Paediatrics, Visual Impairment Team, Speech and Language Department, Rainbow House, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Department,

Community Police, Women's Aid, Housing. Within the North West Kilmarnock Area Centre we lead a regular Rag bag appeal and work closely with the local Foodbank

Transition from Home to Nursery

All our transitions are planned to consider the children's individual needs. Transitions are now recognised as central to young children's experiences and well-being. We support parents and carers and children during this time to ensure transitions are as smooth as possible.

During transitions parents and carers are encouraged to support their child during their initial enrolment period, gradually increasing the time within each session. We recognise that all children have different needs and consider this during this time. We have developed a Care Plan where the child's key worker and parent/carers meet during the transition period and discuss in more detail the child's individual needs.

Transition from Nursery to Primary

At Hillbank Early Childhood Centre we continue to develop good communication with local Primary Schools. Parents are advised to enrol their child within their catchment area in the first instance if considering a placement request. Children who transfer to primary school from the Centre have the opportunity to meet with their teacher. Primary 1 teachers visit prior to children starting school, this has proved to be invaluable.

Parents and carers can access our transition policy which is located within our Policy folder at the front entrance of the building. Should your child transfer to our establishment from another centre, or vice versa, it is best practice for establishments to share assessment information gathered to ensure smooth transition and continued progress.

We work closely with staff in receiving Primary Schools, to ensure a seamless transition to Primary 1. There are 6 primary schools listed below within the local area, which the majority of our children attend on leaving the early years setting.

In accordance with East Ayrshire Council's policies and procedures we assist in a range of ways to ensure an effective transition from our Early Childhood Centre to Primary School for children who have been identified as requiring Additional Support for Learning. Transition and support planning takes place at an early stage, involving parents/carers, key staff from the Early Childhood Centre, Primary School and professionals who may provide support to your child.

Associated primary schools

Hillhead Primary
2 Kilmaurs Road

Kilmarnock

Tel No. 01563 521504

Loanhead Primary
Dick Road

Kilmarnock

Tel no. 01563 522938

Mount Carmel Primary
Meiklewood Road

Kilmarnock

Tel No. 01563 525897

St Andrews Primary and Early
Childhood Centre

Grassyards Road

Kilmarnock

Tel No 01563 533555

Onthank Primary and ECC

Meiklewood Road

Kilmarnock

Tel No. 01563 525477

James Hamilton Primary and ECC

Sutherland Drive

Kilmarnock

Tel No. 01563 533221

STAFF TEAM

JOB TITLE

Lee Boyd	Head of Centre
Lyn Maloney	Depute Manager
Christine Tonner	Equity and Excellence Lead
Linzi Douglas	Senior Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Lorraine Morrison	Senior Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Fiona Cameron	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner (Job Share)
Emma Muir	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Nicole McMichael	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Chelsea Gray	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Kayleigh Turnbull	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Jodie Smith	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Connie Austin	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Isla Neilson	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Irene Jenson	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Jamieleigh Clark	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner (Job Share)
Erin Jones	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner (Job Share)
Kerri McCoy	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner (Job Share)
Lyndsay Aird	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner
Grace Wallace	Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner (Job Share)
Chloe McGinney	Early Learning and Childcare Support Assistant
Jenna Dolan	Early Learning and Childcare Support Assistant
Jean Handling	Senior Clerical Assistant
Emma Parker	Clerical Assistant
Jennifer Adams	Catering Assistant (Part-time)
Naidine Gibb	Catering Assistant (Part-time)

The provisions made for children and young people with additional support needs.

Hillbank Early Childhood Centre provides an inclusive learning environment for all children. Every child has the right to be included and supported. The Additional Support Needs Coordinator is Lee Boyd (Head of Centre).

We work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure each child's individual needs are supported and respected. We acknowledge that parents and carers play an important part in formulating any care plan or individual learning plan which will help support the child's development and interests. A full health care plan and a risk assessment is completed, if necessary, prior to a child attending the centre, this ensures that all the relevant information is available and recorded to make sure your child's individual needs and requirements are fully met. As we operate an inclusive service all our playrooms can support children with additional and complex needs. Some of our staff have attended training in moving and handling and have accessed specific training to support children with additional needs. We work with visiting specialists to ensure children receive the best care and educational programmes that will support the child's individual needs and interests.

Advice and support may be sought from other professionals.

The Educational Psychologist visits the Centre to work with staff to ensure the most effective support possible is in place for each child. Their role is often giving advice and the sharing of expertise with staff. Staff may discuss the support needs of individual children with the psychologist in order to ensure that support plans are appropriate to the individual needs of the children. Parental consent is always sought.

Some children may have more complex needs may require additional support through the Team with the Family meetings. Parents are fully involved within this process and are supported through a multi-agency team to ensure the child's individual needs are considered and the best level of support is available.

Public holidays 2025

- **Wednesday 1 January 2025**
- **Thursday 2 January 2025**
- **Friday 18 April 2025**
- **Monday 21 April 2025**
- **Monday 5 May 2025**
- **Friday 19 September 2025**
- **Monday 22 September 2025**
- **Thursday 25 December 2025**
- **Friday 26 December 2025**
- **Monday 29 December 2025**
- **Tuesday 30 December 2025**
- **Wednesday 31 December 2025**



School holidays 2025/26

Please note that all dates are inclusive.

Date	Holiday
August	
Monday 18 August 2025	In-service day
Tuesday 19 August 2025	In-service day
Wednesday 20 August 2025	Pupils return
September	
Friday 19 September to Monday 22 September 2025	Local holidays (Ayr Gold Cup weekend)
Tuesday 23 September 2025	Pupils return
October	
Monday 13 October to Friday 17 October 2025	October holidays
Monday 20 October 2025	In-service day
Tuesday 21 October 2025	Pupils return
December/January	
Monday 22 December 2025 to Friday 2 January 2026	Christmas and New Year
Monday 5 January 2026	Pupils return
February	
Monday 9 February 2026	Local holiday
Tuesday 10 February 2026	In-service day
Wednesday 11 February 2026	Pupils return
April	
Friday 3 April to Friday 17 April 2026	Easter holidays (Good Friday – 3 April 2026)
Monday 20 April 2026	Pupils return
May	
Monday 4 May 2026	Local holiday (May Day)
Tuesday 5 May 2026	Pupils return
Thursday 7 May 2026	In-service day
Friday 8 May 2026	Pupils return
June/July/August	
Monday 29 June to Friday 14 August 2026	Summer holidays
Monday 17 August 2026	In-service day
Tuesday 18 August 2026	In-service day
Wednesday 19 August 2026	Pupils return

Attendance and Reporting Absence

In our Centre we note attendance twice a day - morning and afternoon and either a phone call or a text is sent to parents if their child is absent and we are unaware why. If your child is not going to be attending, please let us know by 9.15 am on the first day of absence, if we have not heard from you we will contact you by phone or text as per our attendance policy. We keep a register for all children signing them in on arrival and out at departure.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Children are encouraged to play together, share and turn take. Staff encourage children to respect others' feelings and support children to manage their own behaviour. Staff communicate with children in ways which are appropriate to their age, abilities and level of development. The use of praise and encouragement reinforces positive behaviour and helps children build confidence and self-esteem. We understand that a child's age and stage of development can play an important factor in their behaviour and we look at different strategies and support which we can deploy within the playrooms.

We recognise that at times children can display emotional behaviour whether they are with us or at home, therefore it is important that we work with you to support your child at this time. Within the 3-5 playroom, we help to promote positive behaviour and the development of good social skills through small and large groups. This develops interpersonal skills, strengthens relationships and enhances self-confidence while allowing the children and staff members to have fun together. Our golden promises are posted within each playroom and we ask all parents and carers to share these at home reinforcing and promoting a positive attitude.

Our Golden Promises:

“Walking feet, Listening ears, Quiet voices and Gentle hands”

Dress Code

Children have the best fun and learning, when they are doing creative and activity-based play. We always try to make sure they wear aprons, but it can be messy fun, so please dress your child in suitable clothing. Please also make sure that your child has suitable outdoor clothing as outdoor learning takes place on a daily basis. Polo shirts and sweatshirts can be purchased locally with the Hillbank logo embroidered on them, but this is entirely optional.

Security and Visitors

We consider that the safety and wellbeing of children and staff at Hillbank Early Childhood Centre is of paramount importance. All adults working in our Early Childhood Centre have a PVG, the PVG scheme is a membership scheme for people working with children or protected adults. It's a legal requirement to join the scheme if you're doing a regulated role, and prior to employment with EAC. All staff working in our Early Childhood Centre wear name badges for identification and all students and visitors will also be expected to do so.

- All visitors are required to sign in and out for the duration of their visit. A log book is situated at the front entrance for visitors to sign in and out.
- There is a secure entry system, which is used to access the front entrance to Hillbank Early Childhood Centre.
- Anyone entering the Centre is met by a member of staff.
- During the session if children go on an outing they are signed in and out and if visiting different rooms or accessing the garden to comply with health and safety a head count is constantly applied.
- No child will be allowed to leave the establishment unless accompanied by a known responsible adult who is at least 16 years of age and who is noted on their contact sheet.
- In the interests of child safety, if an emergency situation arises and your child is to be collected by someone not known to the HOC or staff members a password is agreed which has to be given on arrival.
- If your child is not able to attend you must notify the Centre as soon as possible.
- CCTV cameras enhance the security as does the perimeter fencing.

Complaints Handling

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of provision you should contact the Head of Centre in the first instance. Our aim is to resolve any complaint as soon as possible at the first point of contact. If you remain dissatisfied, leaflets are available outlining stage 2 of East Ayrshire Council's "complaints handling procedure" and can be found on the local authority website. You also have the right to contact the Care Inspectorate should you feel that your complaint has not been resolved.

- online at www.careinspectorate.com
- by email enquiries@careinspectorate.com
- by phone on 0845 600 9527
- by letter, or by visiting any of their offices

Emergency Procedures / Medical matters

We have a robust fire evacuation procedure and contingency plans in situ to ensure the health and safety of all children, staff and visitors to the centre. We have fire wardens and controllers who are trained in the safe evacuation of the premises. We have trained first aiders who are on the premises and can administer basic first aid treatment if required.

We follow the Care Inspectorate document "*Management of medication in day care of children and childminding services*". This guidance supports safe and effective practice of our management of all medicines.

The procedure for the administration of all medicines is fully discussed during the induction process.

Data Protection

At Hillbank ECC we follow the Data Protection Policy as outlined by East Ayrshire Council. East Ayrshire Council creates, collects and processes personal information about children and we are bound by the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

We collect information from children, their parents and guardians and we may also receive information from other sources, such as previous ECC. All information is stored securely and we do not share it apart from the circumstances described below, or where the law requires us to do so. Under the Act, we are known as the *Data Controller* and the information we collect is needed for a number of reasons which include, but is not limited to:

- Monitoring and reporting on absence.
- Supporting teaching and learning.
- Monitoring and reporting on your child's progress.
- Providing appropriate care.
- Assessing how well your child's school/centre is doing.

The information we collect will also include details such as contact address or phone numbers and data such as ethnic group, additional support needs and any relevant medical information. Occasionally, we may make information available to other organisations, for example:

- To other schools/centres if you move away.
- To the Scottish Government and its agencies.

Parent Council

We are looking to getting this up and running again in the new term and we will welcome all new members. We appreciate the time you give to support the nursery. This is a great opportunity for parents and carers to be involved in the life of the Centre and very much helps to take forward initiatives.

The Curriculum

Hillbank Early Childhood Centre follows National Guidelines from documents outlined by the Scottish Government to plan and deliver child led experiences:

- Realising the Ambition – being me
- The Curriculum for Excellence
- Health and Social Care Standards.
- Getting it Right for Every Child.
- United Nation Convention Rights of the Child.
- A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children.

These guidelines assist us to provide a curriculum which is fun, broad, balanced and responsive to children's individual needs and interests, whilst delivering skills and knowledge for learning, life and future work.

Our indoor and outdoor learning environments in both the Butterfly (2-3 years old) and Sunshine (3-5 years old) playrooms are accessible for all children and provide experiences across the curriculum which promote curiosity, enquiry and creativity.

Our practice is centred around child-led learning experiences. Planning takes place every 4 weeks. In the Butterfly Room staff plan learning experiences based on observation and tracking of children and evaluate the experiences to plan possible next steps. Our Sunshine room staff plan in the moment, following the children and scaffolding their play and learning as they pursue their own interests, explore and learn.

Both our playrooms are literacy rich environments with displays, labelled resources, environmental print and a range of story and factual books. Children have daily song experiences, cosy areas to enjoy looking at books and a range of resources to make marks with throughout play. Children in the Sunshine Room are encouraged to recognise their own name and 'sign in' at the start of their session.

Throughout play children have opportunities to recognise numbers, shapes and count as well as exploring measure, time and money in their own play scenarios as they develop understanding of maths in their own daily lives.

Children's learning and significant achievements are recorded in their own individual online learning journal. Parents are encouraged to comment on learning and add learning from home. Children's play and learning is displayed in the playrooms and corridor for parents and visitors to view.

Documents

Hillbank Early Childhood Centre follows Realising the Ambition-being me which supports and informs our practice in working with young children.

We deliver child-centred pedagogy in practice which incorporates: Observations and following the interests of the child, observation interpretation and documentation of learning, sensitive interactions, flexible experiences, variety of spaces and responsive and intentional planning informed by the child's actions emotions and words.



We uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principle that children should be valued and respected at all levels and have the right to have their views heard and acted upon. This means that all adults and agencies should ensure when supporting young children that their views are “given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (UN, 1989, Article 12).

Routines

Our daily routines are consistent and predictable for the children. Through observation and responsive planning, staff can support the child's learning and plan their next steps. For some children, encountering new or different environments can be stressful. Routines help young children feel secure as they come to know what is happening, and what will happen next.

Respectful Relationships

At Hillbank Early Learning and Childcare Centre, relationships are at the heart of everything we do, we respect all children as able individuals in their own right. With kind and nurturing support, our children develop the ability to form secure relationships and grow in confidence which promotes positive emotional and social development. We work in partnership with parents, respecting them as children's primary educators, and strive to build relationships where children's individual needs and interests are shared.

Responsive Care

We know and accept our children as unique individuals. Our nurturing responses and interactions help children to make sense of the world and know that we are reliable trustworthy, and responsive to their needs.

Curriculum for Excellence

At Hillbank Early Childhood Centre, we ensure that we provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and responsive to children's individual needs and interests, supporting our children to learn and develop at their own pace. We follow the principles of "A Curriculum for Excellence". Supporting our children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Butterfly Room

The importance of play
"...play at this time is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep significance"
(Froebel, 1826)

Our Butterfly room is the main room currently for our two year olds. The resources are planned to follow the children's interests and observations of children's development. We offer a variety of experiences and activities that promote children to lead their own learning. Outdoor play is available to the children daily.

Sunshine Room

Our Sunshine room currently supports children aged three to five years old. Here children are offered activities and experiences that follow their interests but will also develop their curiosity and inquiry, that will help develop a love for lifelong learning. Children are at the heart of everything we do, and the children very much lead the staff in their learning.

Responsive and intentional learning

Within Hillbank Early Learning and Childcare Centre, we provide both responsive and intentional learning for children in our day-to-day practice. Responsive and intentional planning approaches start with our observations and interpretations of the child's actions, emotions and words. This tells us what the child needs for us to provide in their learning environment.

Nurturing Environment

Nurture principles are at the heart of everything we do.

Nurture Principles and the Principles in Practice

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem.
4. Language as a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transitions in children's lives.

Health and Wellbeing

At Hillbank Early Learning and Childcare Centre, we recognise the importance of health and wellbeing for everyone, children, families and staff. To support this,

We provide daily opportunities for children to engage in active outdoor learning.

We believe in developing strong relationships with not only children's families but also our community and colleagues in partner agencies.

We offer regular planned opportunities for children to promote health and wellbeing, independence and social skills, through daily snack, welcome time and outdoor play.

SHANARRI principles are embedded throughout daily routine.

Achievement and Improvement

From our most recent inspection report in September 2024, we were awarded the following grades:

How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good
How good is our setting?	Very Good
How good is our leadership?	Very Good
How good is our staff team?	Good

Assessment

Ongoing assessment through observing and tracking children in play allows us to plan meaningful play experiences based on children's individual stage of development, interests and what they already know to challenge and extend learning.

Children's progress is carefully monitored using appropriate trackers individual to them, progression pathways from Realising the Ambition: being me and the Benchmarks and Experiences and Outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence (Early Level).

Reporting to Parents and Carers

Meetings to discuss child's progress take place twice a year but staff are available daily if parents have any concerns or questions. When children move on to another centre or to primary school, we will create a Transition report and ensure all tracking moves with them.

A care plan is completed within 28 days after each child has started nursery with parents and carers. This allows pertinent information to be shared with regards to the child's individual needs and interests; this allows a starting point for each child's learning.

Section 7 Further Information

If you require further information please contact

Head of Centre

Lee Boyd on 01563 521064 or

lee.boyd@eastayrshire.org.uk

Head of Education Linda McAulay-Griffiths, East Ayrshire Council

Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU

Telephone Number: 01563 576126

Strategic Education Manager (Early Intervention)

Audrey Hill, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London

Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU

Telephone Number: 01563 576118