



NURSERIES & CHILDCARE RE-OPENING

Health and safety Q&A

Not having access to childcare has made this a really difficult few months for a lot of parents. As nurseries and other childcare settings reopen, your feelings might be a mix of relief at having childcare again, and worry about how they will work when they reopen. This is perfectly natural. Family life has been very difficult for a while now, and getting back into the swing of going to nursery might feel strange.

To help ease your worries and prepare your wee one to go back or to start at nursery or with a childminder we have answers to some health & safety questions you may have.

Can my child use more than one ELC setting?

If needed, to ensure access to childcare, you can now use more than one childcare setting. So for example, you can send your child to nursery in the morning and a childminder in the afternoon, if they can't stay in the same setting. However, it's best to stick to one setting if you can. If you do use two or more settings, you should let all settings know of your arrangements.

Will my child's childcare setting be safe?

Young children are less likely to be affected by or transmit the virus, and there has been a great deal of work at each ELC setting across Scotland to make sure they're safe. Each setting must carry out a risk assessment that they'll be able to share with you. They will have strict policies on hygiene and ventilation, and children will be helped to wash their hands regularly. They may also make more use of outdoor space. Children will work in groups to limit contacts. Your child's setting will be happy to talk you through all the new procedures they have in place to help you feel more comfortable.

What about physical distancing?

Children under 12 don't need to physically distance with other children or adults. This means children can play together and staff can, for example, change nappies, hold kids' hands and give them a hug.

Some settings might keep children in groups and limit the interaction between other children. Your setting can let you know if they'll be doing this.

However, staff and parents will need to physically distance from each other, which is why some things, such as pick up and drop off, may change to ensure this can happen.

Every ELC setting will have its own guidelines so contact your child's setting to learn more.

Will my child have to wear a face covering to nursery?

No, they won't need to wear face coverings. The guidance on wearing face masks is that under 5s shouldn't be wearing them. If your child is over 5 and wants to wear a face covering, then you can speak to your nursery.

What if there is an outbreak at my child's ELC setting?

All childcare settings will be on the lookout for potential outbreaks. This means that if you or your child shows symptoms of coronavirus you should book a test immediately and follow self-isolation guidelines. All settings will have plans in place if there is an outbreak and Health Protection Scotland will prioritise the outbreaks through "Test and Protect".

My child has been shielding, can they go back to early learning and childcare?

Yes. Children who are coming out of shielding can go back from 1 August 2020 if you want them to. However, it's best to talk to your GP or healthcare team first. If they are happy for your child to attend, you should also talk to the nursery or childminder about any extra precautions they may need to take.

My child has additional support needs, can they go back?

Children with additional support needs can go back as well. Just speak to your early learning and childcare setting about any worries you have.

I have heard my child will be in a 'bubble' at nursery, what does that mean?

Until 10 August, children in ELC settings will be in "bubbles" or cohorts of 8 other children. After this, given the ongoing suppression of the virus and updated scientific advice, this will no longer be required.

Settings will still ensure that the children play together in groups, and that where possible those groups are consistent, and are looked after by the same staff members. This will avoid



children coming into contact with too many other people at once.

The appropriate size of groups will depend on the age and overall number of children, and the layout of the ELC setting. However, it would be reasonable to expect children to be managed in groups up to the size encountered in primary school, for example 25 to 30 children.

Will children still get snacks and meals at nursery?

If your childcare setting usually provides meals and snacks, this can continue, although they may change the way they do this to make sure eating areas stay clean and hygienic.

Will my child be able to play with and share toys? Is this play safe?

Yes. The setting will be responsible for keeping toys and equipment the children use clean and hygienic. This includes resources like playdough and water. Some settings might swap some of the toys or materials that they normally have for others that are easier to keep clean.

Can my child bring their own toys with them?

Some ELC settings may ask children not to bring their own toys into the setting with them. However, if your child has a favourite toy that helps settle them, you can ask the nursery or childminder if it's okay for them to bring it along.

What changes to drop offs might there be?

To encourage physical distancing amongst adults there may be staggered drop offs to stop parents all dropping off their wee ones at the same time. Those travelling by car may be asked to park further away.

It is likely that you'll have to do the drop off outdoors, as settings have been asked to limit adults coming into the building. Each ELC setting will have their own plans in place to manage this, so they will be in touch to let you know.

Can I visit my child's early learning and childcare setting?

All settings will still have physical distancing restrictions in place for adults. So your child's ELC setting won't encourage parents to enter the building, unless you really need to, to help them settle in.

This may mean changes to things like drop offs and pickups. They will be more keen than ever for you to be involved with your child's care, so contact them to find out how you can talk to them and keep up to date with what is going on.

There is lots more information and advice at www.parentclub.com/startback