



Early Years in Fife

Early Learning & Childcare

Applying for an ELC place
for children 3 and 4 years old
2025/26



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www.fife.gov.uk/elcplaces

Fife Council offers funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to all 3- and 4-year-olds from the first intake after their qualifying birthday until they are due to start school. This can be up to 1140 hours per year in most settings.

Across our ELC settings we offer different session times, so you will have more choice.

Also, families may be able to share their 1140 funded hours between different ELC settings.

What are my options?

There are several different ways for families to access their ELC entitlement. These include:

- private ELC settings that are in partnership with Fife Council.
- playgroups that are in partnership with Fife Council.
- childminders who are in partnership with Fife Council.
- Fife Council ELC settings, term time.
- Fife Council ELC settings, across the whole year.

When should my child start ELC?

Every child is entitled to an ELC place from the first intake after their third birthday.

That means:

- **Starting ELC in August 2025**
Your child must be three before 31 August 2025.
- **Starting ELC in January 2026**
Your child must be three before 31 December 2025.
- **Starting ELC in April 2026**
Your child must be three before the last day of February 2026.

What session types are available in a Fife Council ELC setting?

- 6hrs Mon - Fri (Term Time)
- 4hrs 40mins am Mon - Fri (49 weeks)
- 4hrs 40mins pm Mon - Fri (49 weeks)
- 10hrs Mon and Tues, Wed am (46 weeks)
- Wed pm, 10hrs Thurs and Fri (46 weeks)

How do I apply for a Fife Council ELC place?

You should only complete one Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) application form, per child, to apply for Fife Council ELC provision. Online application forms for 3 and 4 year old placements for academic year 2025-26 can be found at fife.gov.uk/elcplaces.

A paper version can be collected from, and handed into, your first choice Fife Council ELC setting. All applications must be submitted by **31 January 2025**.

How do I make my choices for a Fife Council ELC setting?

Fife Council is working hard to ensure places are matched to the needs of children and families. You are free to make an application to the ELC setting of your choice.

Please check your preferred ELC setting will be offering the session times you are looking for. You can find a list of nurseries and the sessions offered at fife.gov.uk/elcplaces

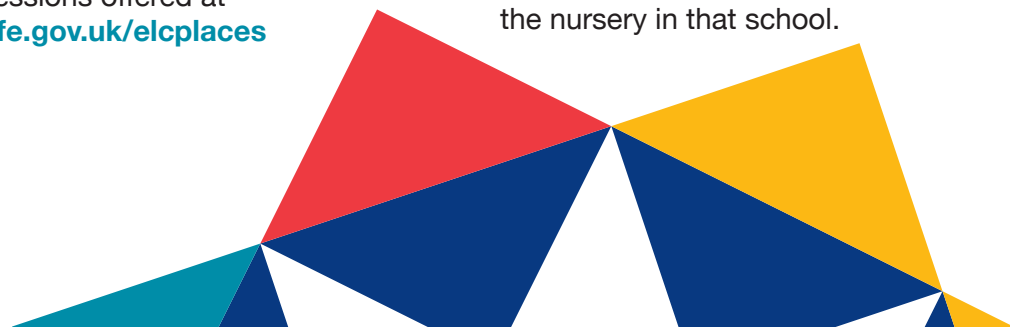
For a place in a Fife Council ELC setting you are asked to provide up to five choices on your application form. The more choices you put on your form, the greater the chance you will be offered one of your preferences. However, please note that you should only put choices on your form that you may accept if offered.

Will I get my first choice?

Some nurseries or session times will be oversubscribed. If we are unable to offer your first choice, we will then look at your other choices to see if we can offer you one of these.

An admissions policy is in place to ensure fairness when allocating places - this can be found at fife.gov.uk/elcplaces

Please note that the place you are offered may not be your local Primary School ELC setting, as nursery admissions do not operate in the same way as school catchment areas. In addition, children with siblings in a specific Primary School may not always be offered a space in the nursery in that school.



Where do I apply for a Fife ELC place?

Application forms are available from all Fife Council nurseries, or online at fife.gov.uk/elcplaces

Online applications are submitted electronically. Paper applications should be returned to your first choice Fife Council ELC setting, along with any proof requested.

Applications must be received by 31 January 2025 for any child applying to attend any Fife Council ELC setting between August 2025 and July 2026.

If your child has additional support needs, please contact the headteacher of your first choice ELC setting.

You will be notified by end of March 2025 to inform you if (and where) your child has been offered a place within a Fife Council setting.

How do I apply for a funded ELC place at my preferred private nursery, playgroup or childminder?

You will be able to apply for a funded early learning and childcare place at your preferred private nursery, playgroup or childminder, if they are in partnership with Fife Council.

Applications for private nurseries, playgroups and childminders in partnership with Fife Council should be made directly with these individual establishments and services.

A list of all current funded providers is available at fife.gov.uk/elcplaces

It may be possible to share hours between different Early Learning and Childcare providers, up to a total of 1140 hours per annum. For example, this may be between an ELC setting and a childminder. You can state this on the application form.

