

Background

Alyth Primary School was one of the first local authority early phasing settings for all families in Perth and Kinross.

Mrs Letford's Story - Headteacher

Has the expansion of early learning and childcare (ELC) had a positive impact on your setting?

The expansion to ELC has gone well and has been a very smooth transition, a key factor to the success of this was having positive staff on board. The positivity has been strengthened with the increased intake as they enjoy working with the children and see them more often. Positive feedback has been received from parents, some were initially apprehensive, however this was overcome by highlighting the benefits without pressuring them, and some families couldn't believe their luck!

Have you noticed any difference in the children following the implementation of the expansion?

There has been a noticeable difference in the confidence of the children, particularly Strong Start two year olds. Staff have more time to plan in advance for all age groups and the additional hours gives them more time to work with and get to know each child.

Expansion of ELC Case Study Alyth Primary School Perth and Kinross

What opportunities has the expansion provided for your setting?

There has been an increase in staff which has created a career path within the nursery. The expansion has also created opportunities for the children to try different foods. There has been an increase in meal uptake and there are no issues with having one option for lunch, instead it has provided an opportunity for the children to try different foods.

What advice would you give to anyone considering a career in early learning and childcare?

The job is very rewarding and satisfying when receiving positive feedback from parents. There are many programme opportunities available such as Men in Childcare, Modern Apprenticeships and Learn to Teach.

What information would you give to parents considering sending their child to early learning and childcare?

Attend 'stay and play' sessions where these are available. Go to the nursery and gather information on what's available, the PEEP parenting opportunities website is also very useful. To help manage expectations find out

if your child is entitled to a Strong Start Two placement. These have been popular and parents are delighted with their child's progress.

Additional comments

There has been an improvement in the wellbeing of parents which has had a positive effect on the children. Parents have also become more involved in the events organised at the nursery, such as 'Welly Wednesday'.

Member of Staff Stories

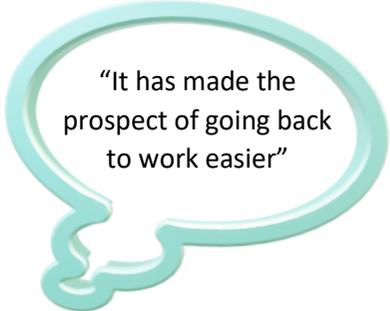
What opportunities has the expansion of ELC provided to you?

Staff Member A: Promotion to a Senior ECP. More jobs have been created and staff have been able to work as a larger team which has been better for the children as there is a variety of adults.

Staff Member B: My working hours are suited to me and provides the opportunity to complete paperwork, tidy up and prepare for the next day.



"Parents are delighted with their child's progress."



"It has made the prospect of going back to work easier"

What do you most enjoy/find rewarding about your job?

Staff Member A: Seeing the children develop and progress. This is a great personal achievement.

Staff Member B: Seeing the children grow, develop, learn new things, become independent and transition into school.

What advice would you give anyone considering a career in early learning and childcare?

Staff Member A: The job is hard work however it's worth doing. Complete training and learn as much as you can, be open minded and flexible.

Staff Member B: Try and get work experience, it's not what everyone thinks it is. Don't try to do all of the studying at once, a lot of practical experience is needed.

What information would you give to parents considering sending their child to nursery?

Staff Member A: Parents can stay until their child is settled in. Attend the induction days and get a feel for the setting.

Staff Member B: Practice leaving the children with another adult other than parents/grandparents. Practice simple actions such as putting shoes/jackets on and visit the nursery first.

Additional comments

Children attending the setting all day are far more confident and makes the transition to primary one a breeze including the lunchtime

Expansion of ELC Case Study Alyth Primary School Perth and Kinross

experience. Children are getting more one to one time and attendance is increasing, potentially as this is the same as school time.



Parent Stories

Why did you choose to send your child to this nursery?

Parent Y: The nursery is local, staff are very supportive and friendly. It should ease his transition to school.

Parent Z: It is close to home.

What does your child most enjoy about nursery?

Parent Y: He seems to enjoy all aspects of nursery.

Parent Z: She's made a couple of friends. She enjoys the drawing/writing table. She enjoys being outside i.e. 'Welly Wednesday'.

What opportunities has the expansion of ELC provided for you as a parent?

Parent Y: We are both able to go to work daily, which has helped our family a lot.

Parent Z: It has made the prospect of going back to work easier with no family/friend support the longer hours available mean I have more hours to offer in my search.

What advice would you give to other parents considering sending their child to nursery?

Parent Y: I would encourage parents to take advantage of the extra hours and go back to work, the nursery is fantastic for the children, they are safe and learning a lot.

Parent Z: Talk to your child, explain what is happening. Explain the good and bad. Be patient as they adjust. Strike up a relationship with teachers, keep open communication with them.

Additional comments

Childcare is hard to find and expensive when you do find it. The increased hours mean a parent has more hours to work, which helps find a job a bit more. The patience and high level of care at Alyth Nursery from the staff is second to none.



Background

Just 4 Kidz, Alyth were one of the first early phasing partner provider settings for all families in Perth and Kinross.

Marie's Story - Manager

Has the expansion of early learning and childcare had a positive impact on your setting?

Just 4 Kidz has seen a positive impact with the expansion of early learning and childcare having been able to provide more choice for parents offering 45 and 50 week attendance models in addition to the term time model previously offered. There has been an increase in children to the nursery as well as an increase in staff to accommodate the growth.

Have you noticed any difference in the children following the implementation of the expansion?

The hours have allowed the children to embed routines easier as they are in for longer, have continuous learning as in some cases there is no/reduced holiday break, and have become more confident. This has allowed the staff to get to know the children better too.



Expansion of ELC Case Study Just 4 Kidz Nursery, Alyth Perth and Kinross

What opportunities has the expansion provided for your setting?

Staff were able to increase their hours and additional staff have been employed to cope with demand this has allowed flexibility for maternity leave cover. More Modern Apprentices have also been employed as a 'grow your own' approach and for future planning.

Due to the increase of children in the setting an additional building was resourced nearby to use for lunches. This has been a success, and everyone wants to stay for lunch, including two year olds. The children enjoy this as they are eating with their friends and as there is only one choice this encourages them to eat more as everyone is having the same. There is also a salad bar where the children can choose what they want, and use the utensils themselves.

The expansion of early learning and childcare has also seen an impact on the 0-2 rooms as well, these are busier as parents are planning ahead. Pick up times are now staggered which has allowed staff more time to speak to parents.

What advice would you give to anyone considering a career in early learning and childcare?

A job in early learning and childcare is rewarding. However, it is challenging and covers a huge range of responsibilities therefore life and work experience is essential.

What information would you give to parents sending their child to early learning and childcare?

Visit the nursery to see what's available. This will give a personal feeling about the setting to see if it's right for you and your child/children.

Additional comments

Split placements are available using the blended model however these children often struggle to settle. Just 4 Kidz try to work with the other settings the children attend to ensure their education is catered for.

With the changes to attendance models staff are now able to choose when they take their annual leave as this was previously set with the term time model.

Changes can be made to annual activities such as graduation days, day trips etc. as these can take place during different times of the year.



Parent Stories

Why did you choose to send your child to this nursery?

Parent A: Close to home and peers, small and comforting environment, great inspection report and reputation.

Parent B: Recommendations, location proximity to home and work.

Parent C: Lovely nursery with flexible hours for working parents.

What does your child most enjoy about nursery?

Parent A: Variety, values, environment, staff and peers.

Parent B: Risky play and lunchtime eating with friends.

Parent C: To play with her friends and the ladies. She also enjoys art and crafts and playing outdoors.

What opportunities has the expansion of ELC provided for you as a parent?

Parent A: Less financial strain and able to work.

Parent B: Allowing me to return to work as now youngest (9 months) is attending Just 4 Kidz which we would be unable to afford without 1140 scheme.

Parent C: I now don't have to rely on grandparents to look after her while I'm at work.

Expansion to ELC Case Study Just 4 Kidz Nursery, Alyth Perth and Kinross

What advice would you give to other parents considering sending their child to nursery?

Parent A: So many benefits to child's development.

Parent B: Do it! A safe, happy environment to play and learn. Great sociability for child. Allows a separation which is healthy for both the child and primary caregiver.

Parent C: It really helps bring your child on in leaps and bounds. My daughter loves coming to nursery.

Additional comments

1140 hours was a real-life saver for those of us earning enough not to be entitled to other benefits. But still requiring the aid to return to work.

Members of Staff Stories

What do you most enjoy/find rewarding about your job?

Staff Member Y: Seeing the children flourish and progress in their learning, as well as them showing their work to staff and parents with pride.

Staff Member Z: Watching the children progress and develop as time goes by. Hearing parents say their child has been talking about what they have learned that day.

What advice would you give anyone considering a career in early learning and childcare?

Staff Member Y: Be open minded and be willing to change with the ever changing nursery life.

Staff Member Z: Enjoy learning and continue to learn at home as well as in your work place.

What information would you give to parents considering sending their child to nursery?

Staff Member Y: Go and have a look at the nursery and chat with the staff to see if the nursery suits your needs and wants for your child.

Staff Member Z: Don't be afraid to ask questions – no question is a silly question. Visit the nursery and have a good look around.

Additional comments

The hot meals have been a big success with the children and have helped develop social skills and have helped them to use and practice cutlery skills.



Background

The expansion of early learning and childcare means the number of hours children are entitled to is increasing from 600 to 1140 funded hours by August 2020. Within Perth and Kinross this is being implemented using a phased approach. As at August 2019, 34 settings were part of the phased implementation trial. Based on this information feedback has been collected from settings highlighting the positive impact this has had so far on the children, settings, staff, and parents and carers.



Impact on children

"[The expansion has] provided the children who attend for the 5 full sessions extra learning opportunities to support all areas of their development such as learning and understanding English, achieving milestone goals and enriching their opportunities to reach their potential to give them a great start to their education. It has also provided the children with a good lunchtime routine including healthy lunches."

Perth and Kinross Council Expansion of ELC Case Study

"For staff and children there is greater consistency and continuity in comparison to the previous year whereby children were not taking their places on a daily basis but rather days or sessions spread out resulting in many missing out on the continuity of experiences and learning. Now this does not happen as there are no day gaps in their attendance. Staff also have fewer children to work with as there are 24 children continuously compared with before whereby over the week there could be up to 38 children over the varying days. Children are continuously engaged in the planning of their learning with staff and they can see/experience the outcomes and plans more readily due to the increase in their Nursery experience on a daily basis. This will also benefit their transition into the school for P1 especially any ASN children as there will be more time for this over the year in comparison to before."

"Children have "blossomed," become more confident and are much more chatty in Nursery. One child has a much more positive attitude to her learning. Children are finding and maintaining new friendships. For particular children who are vulnerable, the placement is providing them with a safe space to thrive and a cooked meal every day. Some have been better able to regulate their behaviour thanks to consistent boundaries and adult role models."

"[The children] are in a nurturing and safe environment with positive routines and experiences. They are building positive relationships with other children and staff which has helped settle some of the children who before only attended 600 hours."

"Children have "blossomed", become more confident and are much more chatty"

"A safe space to thrive"

"Children are continuously engaged in the planning of their learning"



Impact on a setting

“As the same children are in every day we have been able to ensure consistency in the experiences they are offered. We have also been able to plan more flexibly using interactions with the children or observations of their engagement to support a more individualised curriculum. There has also been opportunities for the children to gain access to both indoor and outdoor environments in a more flexible way due to the increased staffing. Previously we only had one ECP and therefore the children had to be inside or outside, with the increased hours for nursery we have been allocated an additional ECP and this allows for greater choice for the children.”

Perth and Kinross Council Expansion to ELC Case Study

Impact on parents and carers

The attendance models available have provided support for parents where those who were unable to afford to pay for additional hours have more flexibility to work. The consistency and stability of the placements is making a positive difference to separating from their children at drop off, with children noticeably more settled and requesting to stay for lunch. Also during the summer holidays the models have helped keep nursery children in a routine and also gives the parent the chance to spend some precious one-to-one time with older children.

Impact on staff

“Staff in the setting are reporting positively about planning for children’s learning when they have a consistent group of children in full time. They are able to be more responsive in their planning in the knowledge that the children whose interests have been followed will be in every day in the same setting. There are more quality observations both in terms of the time afforded to observe significant learning and in the volume of observations recorded in profile folders. Staff have also reported they are able to carry out the direct learning and teaching of vocabulary – a closing the gap focus – over more frequent and shorter inputs. Staff have more time to interact with children e.g. learning conversations and feel overall they “know” them better. There is now a much larger group of children having a lunch in the school dinner hall which is very popular with children and again gives staff more time to interact over a mealtime.”

“Mum has been able to return to work, all thanks to the extra hours of early learning and childcare being provided for their children.”

“Mum has been able to return to college as a result. She successfully completed an HNC last year and has now enrolled for her HND.”

“One kinship carer is receiving much needed respite as a result of this placement and one carer of a LAC [Looked After Child] is able to continue in her own employment.”

“Mum was able to increase her hours at work.”

“Mum is able to spend quality time bonding with a new baby in the family whilst her older child is thriving at Nursery.”

“One parent is reporting positively about the difference this placement is making to her and her other daughters mental health and ability to cope at home.”

