



ELC Newsletter, Issue 42, August 2025

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Education Scotland

How can we create a Language and Communication Supportive Environment in Early Learning and Childcare settings?

Tax free childcare message to schools

We would like to ask for your support in sharing important information with families that could help them **save significantly on childcare costs**.

Many parents may not be aware that if they're using **Tax-Free Childcare** or receiving **Universal Credit**, they could be eligible for financial support to help cover childcare expenses.

Key Information for Families:

- Families could claim up to **£500 every three months** (that's **£2,000 a year**) per child.
- For children with disabilities, this support could increase to **£1,000 every three months** (up to **£4,000 a year**).
- Eligibility depends on factors such as employment status, income, the child's age, and immigration status.

Important: Tax-Free Childcare cannot be used at the same time as Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Universal Credit, or childcare vouchers. Families should explore which option is best for them.

Where the Benefit Can Be Used:

This support can be applied to a wide range of childcare services, including:

- Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for additional hours
- Kids Clubs
- Wraparound Care
- Childminders
- Nurseries
- Out of School Care

Please share this link with families to help them check eligibility and apply: <https://www.gov.uk/get-tax-free-childcare>

More information on help with the costs of childcare can be found on the Perth & Kinross Council website:

Your help in spreading the word could make a real difference to families in your setting.

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Story Safari Pilot Update

Story Safari is a 5-week programme developed to introduce specific activities to promote key areas of child development but also offers an opportunity for parents to learn more about their child's development, through reading and play.

During the February In-set day we consulted with practitioners to develop the Story Safari programme so that it included family learning. We reviewed the feedback and used this to update the Story Safari Programme. The working group have created a revised Story Safari Programme targeted to children attending Strong Start 2 provision, we have created a practitioners handbook as well as providing a resource box to support the delivery of the group as well as five Play at Home bags, which each contain a Dear Zoo Book, puppet and an activity pack that supports learning opportunities within the home. Each week the home activities follow what has been covered in the session. Within the programme we incorporated the new national [Chatting Together](#) messages.

Seven ELC setting volunteered to pilot the programme during Term 4. The impact and feedback from the pilot sessions were mainly positive 25 children and parents/carers attended the programme; 18 evaluations were returned and 22 pre and post tracker data were collected.

The Chatting Together messages were well received with parents reporting an increase in confidence great for providing ideas of how the support their child's development at home as helpful. All parents shared they had an improved understanding of the importance of singing & sharing books to their child's development. Parents felt more confident to provide play opportunities in the home which supported their children's development.

Using selected developmental tracker statements relevant to SS2 and the activities included in the Story Safari - Dear Zoo programme. As a result of attending the programme there were improvements for all 12 tracker statements. This varied across the tracker statements this ranged from 18% of children showing an improvement in developing an

understanding of their own and other's space to 63% of children showing an improvement naming pictures in a familiar book



Feedback from parents

"I have enjoyed coming to the group and I feel that this has helped my child to develop a range of skills"

"I love the bags; they have helped me to be organised to take a little time to play. Reading the same story has helped my child to predict which animal comes next."

"C is not a strong speaker but since coming to groups C is more open and confident to speak."

"I am using the cushions from my couch to build a bus, and I have made a cardboard steering wheel"

If you would like to find out more about Story Safari or how your ELC setting can be involved our next training is on 22nd January 16.00-17.30 or speak to your Early Years Teacher.

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Early Learning & Childcare

ELC Applications for Local Authority Settings

With the start of the new session, the PKC Applications Team would like to provide a few reminders to ELC staff to support keeping information as up to date as possible and to provide an efficient service to service-users.

Ensure that you are checking the “Current Placement” section within the setting report regularly and inform the applications team straight away if there are any discrepancies.

Inform the applications team promptly of any children who have left or are leaving your setting and the date of their last day. There may be applications for other children waiting for places in specific settings or attendance models that can be processed when space is freed up. This will also ensure that the council does not claim funding for children no longer attending ELC within a local authority setting.

Where children accessing Strong Start places are turning three years old, please be aware that the normal procedures apply to beginning their ante-preschool placement. They will remain within the system as a Strong Start placement until the start of the following term. Transition experiences can continue to be managed within the setting as required.

Children beginning in August who are also turning three years old in August must not have a start date until the date of their actual birthday or after.

Where special arrangements have been agreed with the central Early Years or Inclusion teams regarding a child’s individual ELC place, please ensure that the Applications team are also kept informed if relevant to the capacity within the nursery.

We would also like to share that Emma Roe, Management Assistant within the ELC Applications team, is leaving us in August when she makes a move to Edinburgh. We wish her all the best and thank her for the support she has provided over the last few years.

As Emma moves on, we appreciate your patience during the transition period as her replacement becomes familiar with the application system and procedures. We ask that all ELC staff refer to the applications guides below to re-familiarise themselves with procedures and to support direct communication with families to reduce the number of queries coming into the central team during this time.

[Guide to Early Learning Childcare 2025-26](#)

[Nursery Policy Guidelines 2025 26](#)

[ELC Application FAQ 25-26 Public](#)

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ELC Tracker Submission dates

Session 2025/26 submission dates for the ELC tracker are as follows:

- 28th November
- 6th March
- 29th May

Further information including updates to the ELC Tracking Padlet will be shared shortly.

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Nursery Snack

From August 2025, adherence to the updated [Setting the Table](#) guidance is now expected to be in place within all ELC settings. Please ensure that all snack and meal offerings in your setting are aligned to the nutritional standards set out in the document and underpinned by current research.

You may find the [Nursery Snack Checklist](#), created by Tayside Contracts to support settings with snack planning in line with Setting the Table, useful as a checklist as you embed the updates into daily provision.

This document, and a range of other resources, are available on the [Early Years Food and Nutrition](#) padlet to enhance your offer, and support best practice across settings in Perth and Kinross.

























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Leadership, Learning & Development

Leadership, Learning & Development Offer 2025-26

[+ Add event](#)

 AUG 1 NOV 30 Communication Champion Introduction Training Fri, 1 Aug, All day	 AUG 12 MAY 30 ELC Leadership and Management Programme Tue, 12 Aug, All day	 ENDING Y AUG 18 SEP 1 Solihull Approach - Foundation Training Mon, 18 Aug, 09:30	 AUG 26 Child Protection Recognition and Response Tue, 26 Aug, 18:30
 AUG 27 Connecting with Parents Wed, 27 Aug, 09:30	 AUG 27 Trauma Informed Practice to a Skilled Level Wed, 27 Aug, 16:00	 AUG 28 SEP 25 Positive Relationships Thu, 28 Aug, 18:30	 SEP 1-30 Learning to read in the Early Years Practical Workshop Mon, 1 Sept, All day
 SEP 1 Story Safari Mon, 1 Sept, 16:00	 SEP 2 0-3 Practitioner Network Tue, 2 Sept, 15:00	 SEP 2 Introduction to Child Development Tue, 2 Sept, 18:30	 SEP 9 TayMaths Spotlight - Maths Outdoors Tue, 9 Sept, 16:00
 SEP 10 OCT 29 Supporting the Learning and Development of Boys in the Wed, 10 Sept, 15:30	 SEP 15 Child Protection Officer Training Mon, 15 Sept, 09:30	 SEP 15 CIRCLE Up, Up and Away Workshop Mon, 15 Sept, 15:30	 SEP 18 Observations and Communication for Thu, 18 Sept, 09:30
 SEP 18 MAY 12 Senior Practitioner Development Programme Thu, 18 Sept, 15:30	 SEP 23 Play on Pedals Tue, 23 Sept, 09:00	 SEP 25 Outdoor Play and Learning at Westbank ELC Thu, 25 Sept, 15:30	 SEP 25 Trauma Informed Practice to Informed Level (1) Thu, 25 Sept, 16:00
 SEP 29 Introduction to Leadership and Management Mon, 29 Sept, 18:30	 OCT 2 ELC Induction Thu, 2 Oct, 18:00	 OCT 27 Introduction to Pre Registration for Childminding Mon, 27 Oct, 09:30	 OCT 27 Introduction to Pre Registration for Childminding Mon, 27 Oct, 18:30

We are delighted to share that the updated Leadership, Learning and Development Offer 2025-26 is now available by visiting the Education & Learning Hub

[Visit E&L Hub](#)
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Care Inspectorate Bespoke Offer

We're pleased to invite you to a **bespoke professional learning session** delivered by the **Care Inspectorate Improvement Team**, titled:

Observations and Communication for Improvement
18 & 19 September, 2 HS.

Target Audience: ELC, Out of School Care, Childminders

This two-part session is designed to strengthen our quality improvement practices and support the work we do across the service.

Day 1 – Thursday (Full Day)

- **Morning Session:** Explore what it feels like for children in your setting and learn how to focus observations to inform planning and service improvement.
- **Afternoon Session:** Return to your own or a nearby setting to carry out observations using the tools introduced in the morning. If travel is an issue, please arrange a suitable alternative setting.
-

Day 2 – Friday (Half Day, ends at 12:30)

- Engage in reflective discussions and learn effective ways to communicate practice insights with colleagues, ensuring high-

quality care and learning for children.

This is a valuable opportunity to enhance your observational skills and collaborative practice. We look forward to your participation!

[Book now](#)

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First Aid Dates for ELC

Emergency First Aid at Work (including Emergency Paediatric First Aid) - evenings

This course is a one-day attended course. This course meets the criteria for Emergency Paediatric First Aid and is the practical skills training for Paediatric First Aid and First Aid at Work Requalification. This course is suitable for lower risk workplaces such as office, primary schools, or nurseries.

[Book your evening place now](#)

Emergency First Aid at Work (including Emergency Paediatric First Aid) - daytime

There are limited places still available on some of the daytime First Aid courses also.

[Book your daytime place now](#)

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**Parenting & Family
Learning**

Group Teen Triple P



Group Teen Triple P

Teen Triple P is a parenting programme for parents of teenagers aged 12-16 years old.

Teen Triple P can help you

- Build a better relationship with your child
- Reduce conflict
- Keep your teenager safe
- Be realistic about parenting
- Take care of yourself

Upcoming Group Sessions

Virtual Group - Microsoft Teams	Every Tuesday 9th September – 28th November (Telephone sessions over October Holidays)	10.00am - 12.30pm
Perth Grammar School, Perth	Every Wednesday Evening 29th October – 10th December	5pm – 7.30pm

For more information, please email Parenting@pkc.gov.uk



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[Read more and book](#)

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Speakeasy Bitesize Sessions – Perth Grammar School

Supporting Parents & Carers 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Join us for a series of Speakeasy Bitesize sessions at Perth Grammar School, designed to support parents and carers of young people with useful insights and open conversations around key issues facing young people today.

Running monthly from August to November, each session explores a different, relevant theme in a relaxed and supportive environment:

- **28th August** – Understanding the Adolescent Brain
- **25th September** – The Online World
- **30th October** – Culture

- **27th November** – Gender Equality

These evening sessions are open to all parents and carers in the community – come to one or all four!

For more information on the programme please see our [website](#) or contact the team directly parenting@pkc.gov.uk. Any applications can be made by a professional or directly from the family.

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Care Inspectorate

Keeping children safe



Care Inspectorate launched the **Simoa** (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) campaign in August 2021 to help support the sector and reduce the number of incidents of children leaving settings unaccompanied by an adult. They also produced a series of **practice notes** to support improvement and to help ELC staff keep children safe.

Care Inspectorate ask all ELC services to please raise awareness of the SIMOA campaign across your setting or networks as this campaign helps you consider the child's relationships and safety. It is also strongly encourage you to consider the physical environment in your setting and the supervision of children by your staff.

You can review the [Simoa](#) campaign tools and [practice notes](#) on The Hub website. They will help to remind all ELC staff to be aware of how and why children could leave a setting without a responsible adult and actions to prevent these incidents from happening.

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Save the date

Save the date for the next ELC webinar on Tuesday 30 September, where Care Inspectorate will be highlighting the importance of fostering a positive, family-centred culture, and how meaningful relationships and strong connections begin with families accessing their childcare setting. Registration details will become available in September.

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Calling all employers, managers & supervisors Remember the new 3 month rule for registration

Do you know that new staff must apply for SSSC registration within three months of starting their role and be registered within six months?

Depending on the information provided, an application can take a bit longer as we may need to get more information or carry out additional checks. We will keep you up to date as the application progresses but it will help your new staff if they get their applications in as soon as possible.

Have you downloaded our #SSSCregistered poster for your office? It's a great reminder of the importance of getting your new staff registered in time.

[Find out more about employer's responsibilities](#)

[Download your free poster](#)

Changes to notifications employers receive when an employment record changes

When an employee ends or adds a new employment to their registration we send an email to countersignatories who have asked to receive these notifications. For larger organisations this can result in lots of emails.

We listened to your feedback and changed our process.

[Read about the new process](#)



How can we create a Language and Communication Supportive Environment in Early Learning and Childcare settings?

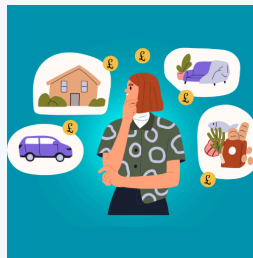
This short practical guide for early years leads, centre managers and early years teachers, child-minders and practitioners describes the interactions, experiences and spaces that can support language and communication development for all babies and young children in the places where they play and learn.

Language and communication supportive environments provide the responsive **interactions**, language-rich **experiences** and appropriate physical **spaces** and resources that together support early language and communication development for all babies and children. This is especially important for young children at increased risk of language and communication difficulties but also provides a strong foundation of support for children with developmental differences and for children with English as an additional language.

This resource also describes what is needed to establish, embed and sustain a language and communication supportive environment in any early learning and childcare setting.

Downloadable version

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