



# Attendance and ELC

## Information Note to support policy development

August 2024

# Copyright

Crown copyright 2024.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, visit the [National Archives website](#).

Please [contact us](#) if you would like to know more about Education Scotland publications.

First published Month 2024.

[Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Education Scotland or any other government department.]

# Contents

[Right-click contents list to update contents field.]

Copyright.....	2
Contents.....	3
Attendance in Early Learning and Childcare.....	4

# Attendance in Early Learning and Childcare

Children in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings across Scotland attend a variety of types of settings that offer different attendance patterns. This includes settings who offer term time or full year attendance patterns. Children may access their entitlement across a week in more than one setting. This is known as a blended placement. This blended placement may take place in more than one nursery, or with a childminder for part of the week. The guidance within this document focuses on the statutory nature of attendance for children attending school. Although attendance in ELC is not statutory, there are still steps that can be taken to support children and families to maximise their attendance. This can help them benefit from high-quality ELC that supports their progress and helps to close the poverty related gap in children's outcomes.

Leaders and practitioners working in ELC will be aware of the variety of allocated attendance patterns that children have within their setting. As practitioners or teams reflect on children's attendance, recognition should be given to the impact different attendance patterns can have on children's overall attendance. For example, a child who attends a 52 week setting, full time, may have more instances of absence than those attending term time. This could be for family holidays or spending time with grandparents, for example. Recognition should be given to the positive impact on children's wellbeing and first hand life experiences that some instances of absence can give, especially for children who attend settings for full year or extended hours. It is important to work with families to identify the reasons for absence, which will allow the appropriate supports to be put in place, if this is required.

Some additional points to consider when reflecting on attendance in ELC:

- Working with parents and families to understand their needs at the point of registration will help ensure that the attendance pattern they are allocated is most likely to meet their needs. For example, where available, offering a pattern that supports the parent while they are working.
- Although attendance is not statutory in ELC, from a wellbeing and child protection point of view, processes for recording attendance must be aligned

to child protection and safeguarding guidance. This will allow practitioners to identify children who are regularly not attending or have an unexpected instance of absence. Appropriate steps can then be taken to understand why this is the case and action taken to support the child and family in a way that meets their needs. Settings should be guided by their local child protection and safeguarding guidance.

- Reviewing attendance records and data can help you to check if you are meeting the needs of families. For example, a child has been offered two and half days at the end of the week but consistently only attends on one of these days. This could be because the parent only works at the beginning of the week and would rather spend the time at the end of the week with their child.
- ELC settings work extremely hard to build positive relationships with children and their families throughout their time in ELC. It is important that at points of transition that ELC leaders and practitioners are able to work together with primary colleagues. This is a key opportunity to share what has worked in supporting those children and families who don't attend on a regular basis, or who may have been identified as being at risk of not attending school regularly.