



Early Learning and Childcare in Highland

keep up-to-date ~ share best practice

We welcome all staff and children back to settings across Highland. Thanks to you all for the huge amount of work which has gone into supporting children and families since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic will have had a unique impact on each child and their family. As you settle back into a 'new normal' way of working, please bear in mind this quote from Realising the Ambition –

“Research suggests that high quality ELC/school settings can reduce the impact of adversity on children. If children experience consistent, positive relationships from key adults, they are more likely to grow up resilient in their wider world.”

EYESO Support

High quality ELC provision and the EYESO commitment to supporting settings remains a priority as we welcome back children and their families. As the safety of children and staff is paramount, the way in which we all work has evolved and the EYESOs have had to find new and creative ways of engaging with ELC managers and staff.

Your link EYESO will be available to support settings in continuing to develop quality in the following ways

Communication:

- Emails. Phone calls. Meetings with SMT (online), Drop in sessions on Google Meet/Microsoft Teams
- Essential visits only
- Blog updates, FAQ, information and guidance

Training:

- [Digital Calendar](#) for live and recorded training events
- Online virtual in-house training
- CPD (CPL) training on the [ELC blog](#)

Reopening Guidance

The most recent guidance on the reopening of ELC settings can be found using the following links:

- [Guidance for childminding services](#)
- [Guidance for early learning and childcare services](#)
- [Guidance for fully outdoor childcare services](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)



Highland Digital School Hub

The Highland School Digital Hub includes a section dedicated to Early Learning and Childcare. This contains useful advice for staff and families, training links and recordings. Find out more by visiting the site [here](#).

Staff Updates

We say a fond farewell to Jacqui MacLennan, EYESO in the Mid area, who has returned to her teaching post in Teanassie. We would like to thank Jacqui for the support she gave ELC settings in the Mid over the past 18 months and for her contributions to the work of the EYESO team. We welcome back Ashley Bartlett following her secondment in Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

Angela Bain, Childcare Commissioner for the North, has left Highland Council to join the Care Inspectorate Team. We wish her all the best in her exciting new role and she will be missed by the ELC Team.



Wednesdays

An update from the SLT team:

Last term we ran a course of six sessions on google meet jointly planned with the Speech and Language Therapy Team and the EYESOs focusing on the Words Up Early Key messages. It was lovely to see people from across Highland and from a wide variety of sessions committed to thinking about supporting children's language and communication through their interaction in their environments. If you missed these, some are recorded and can be found [here](#) (under Realising the Ambition).

We are planning to run more of these sessions over the coming academic year: the sessions are likely to be twilight sessions and will be recorded so you will be able to dip in and out or catch up on them when you can. Watch this space for more information in the coming weeks.

Just Ask

The [Just Ask](#) enquiry line is for parents, carers, children, young people, and those who work with them. The phone line is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm to 4pm.

The updated phone number is 0300 303 1365.



Staff usually available are:

- Autism Practitioner
- Community Learning Disability Nurses
- Dietitians
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Educational Psychologists
- School Nurses
- Pre-school Home Visiting Teachers
- Primary Mental Health Workers



Singing



In line with guidance from the Highland Council Health and Safety team, singing is not permitted in local authority settings - indoors or outdoors. This provides an important opportunity for settings to encourage parents to sing with their child through family engagement activities.

You will find lots of Learning at Home activities which encourage singing on the [Bumps to Bairns](#) website.

Staff Wellbeing

“To give our youngest the best we must strive to be at our best. And to do this it’s important for us as a workforce to look after ourselves and each other.” – Realising the Ambition

The following links provide support and guidance to help practitioners look after their own wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond:

- [ELC Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Highland Psychological Services Information and Resources](#)
- [Realising the Ambition Bitesize Session – Self and Team Care](#)



Outdoor Learning Bitesize Sessions



Have you been playing and learning more outdoors with your children? Struggling with ideas and what to do next? Over the next few weeks, there will be a series of online bitesize sessions to support the delivery of outdoor learning in your settings and community. This will include practical advice as well as examples of outdoor learning and play experiences from practitioners across Highland. The first session will take place on Tuesday the 1st of September from 4pm until 5pm and is open to all staff working in the early years. The session can be accessed via google meet at this link meet.google.com/rst-xsfk-yqk

EASEYS for ASN

The purpose of the [EASEYS for ASN](#) is to provide a variety of practical ideas and support strategies for staff working in Early Learning and Childcare Settings (ELC) and parents & carers. The Pre-school Home Visiting Teachers (PSHVT) have created a selection of very helpful advice sheets on a number of topics related to Additional Support Needs (ASN), some of which are particularly relevant at the moment including:

- Transition supports
- Supporting inclusion for Early learning and Childcare expansion
- Feelings in me, feelings in you



Gàidhlig nan Òg

Tha [Gàidhlig nan Òg](#) a’ toirt pailteas ghoireasan air diofar chuspairean do phàrantan/luchd-cùraim agus luchd-obrach sna tràth-bhliadhnachan. Cuidichidh na goireasan iad Gàidhlig a chleachdadh san dachaigh agus ann an suidheachaidhean tràth-bhliadhnachan ann an dòigh a tha feumail ach spòrsail.



Com-pàirteachas aig Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain

Dh'obraich luchd-obrach, clann agus pàrantan aig Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain còmhla airson an raon-cluiche aca a leasachadh. Chlàraich iad beachdan na cloinne agus thug teaghlaichean seachad goireasan mar cuibhlichean, taidhearan, fiodh, seann chlàran-àireimh agus pìoban. Tron chluiche aca, tha a' chlann a' leasachadh sgilean cudromach mar sgilean cruthachail agus mac-meanmna.

Le stiùireadh a' moladh gum bu chòir clann a bhith a' cluiche a-muigh leis gu bheil sinn air tilleadh gu ELC, tha a' chlann aig Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain a' cur seachad a' chuid as motha den ùine aca a-muigh a' leasachadh sgilean sònraichte thairis air a' churraicealam.



Partnership Working at Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain

Staff, children and parents at Cròileagan Inbhir Pheofharain have worked together to make improvements to their outdoor area. The children mindmapped their ideas and families donated loose parts such as steering wheels, tyres, wood, old number plates and pipes. This has allowed the children to develop their creativity and imagination during their play.

With current guidance advising settings to make the most of their outdoor spaces during the return to ELC, the children who attend Cròileagan are able to spend the majority of their time outdoors developing skills across the curriculum.



BSGP agus BSGI ag Obair Còmhla



Fhad 's a bha na sgoiltean dùinte is e fìor dhùbhlann a bha ann dhuinn a' Ghàidhlig a chumail a' dol leis a' chloinn aig an taigh, gu h-àraid anns na dachaighean far nach robh duine ga bruidhinn. Chunnaic sinn bho na ceisteachain a chuir sinn a-mach gu pàrantan gur e seo a bu mhotha a bha a' cur dragh orra. Mar sin, bha sinn cho taingeil ceangal a dhèanamh ri BSGI tro Lena Walker ann an Sgioba Leasachaidh an Fhoghlaim gus co-obrachadh a chur air dòigh eadar an dà sgoil. Dh'obraich EYPs ann am BSGP agus BSGI air planaichean a sgrìobhadh a bhiodh feumail do phàrantan gus taic a thoirt dhan chloinn aig an taigh. Bha bhidiothan agus goireasan an lùib nam planaichean agus fhuair sinn fios air ais bho phàrantan gun robh e cho feumail plana-seachdain a bhith aca far an robh a h-uile goireas a dh'fheumadh iad ri làimh. Rinn e feum mhòr dhuinn mar sgoiltean ceangal a dhèanamh ri chèile agus bha an luchd-obrach a' cleachdadh nam planaichean gus gnìomhan a chur air dòigh le clann is pàrantan anns na Meet a bha a' gabhail àite tron t-seachdain le pàrantan, clann is EYPs. Tha sinn am beachd leantainn oirnn leis a' cho-obrachadh seo oir tha e cho feumail dhuinn planaichean a bhith againn far a bheil bogadh is cluich air am fighe a-steach ann an dòigh adhartach, ciallach.

BSGP and BSGI Working Together

EYPs at BSGP and BSGI worked together during lockdown to support children's language learning through a series of plans linked to different themes. Resources and videos were linked into each plan to assist parents in supporting their children to continue learning Gaelic. This was particularly beneficial for families with no Gaelic in the home environment and the themes linked into weekly Meet sessions run by EYPs. Since schools have reopened, the staff have continued to plan together to ensure immersion and play principles are at the core of their planning.