



Early Learning and Childcare in Highland

keep up-to-date ~ share best practice

Welcome back after the holidays. We hope you have had a lovely time and are excited for the year ahead.

This year there are new guidance documents on the **Outdoor Environment** for learning. These new guidance documents help settings with their outdoor provision.

'Issues and Options for outdoor provision of early learning and childcare in the Northern Alliance' (October, 2018) explains that there are four generic outdoor settings:

- **Building with free flow:** The outdoor space is registered to support the additional 20% capacity, enabled by 'freeflow' to the building and the quality of environment.
- **100% outside:** this experience focuses on a service which is wholly outdoors, enabled by supportive environments, staff skills, parental participation and the right kit.
- **Building with an outdoor play space:** Outdoor space is ancillary to the building but not registered to support additional capacity.
- Bower Busy Bees and Noss ELC have **Buildings with a 'satellite forest' nearby**. This is across two bases. One is a building. The other is a landscape space off site. This allows blended experiences.



Bower Busy Bees



Noss Secret Forest



Watten ELC

Congratulations to Watten ELC who recently attained 'outstanding' Award from ECCO Schools Scotland and achieved a grade 6 for Quality of Care and Support from Care Inspectorate. They have a building with free flow to outside and children can choose when they play outside.

'Out to Play' (Dec 2018) By Inspiring Scotland offers more GREAT practical guidance for creating outdoor play experiences in ELC.

https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/out_to_play.pdf



Gender Equal Play

This is an excellent guide which gives advice and examples from practice to practitioners in ELC on how to support gender equality in their settings. This is particularly important during the current expansion of funded ELC provision which means more staff are needed. This also provides an unprecedented opportunity to attract more males into the profession and this document can help with this.



<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/836970/gender-equal-play-in-early-learning-and-childcare.pdf>

Profiling and Reporting dates for your diary:

N.B. Managers and Head Teachers only!

1st April Golspie

4th April Fort William

24th April Dingwall

30th April VC or Skype

Emerging Literacy dates:

7th June Inverness

10th June Golspie

11th & 12th June Dingwall

13th June Fort William

14th June Inverness

Welcome to Jacqui McLennan, EYESO for the Mid Area, who will be working for 3½ days a week. She has come from an Early Level Class at Teanassie, a rural cluster school, where she had nursery and P1 children together. She is looking forward to going around different places and supporting staff.

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Congratulations to Ashley Bartlett on the birth of Elspeth on New Year's Day.

The EYESO team recently met with Education Scotland Lead Officers in Early Learning and Childcare, Jackie Maley and Barbara Daly. They discussed Quality in ELC Settings and key messages from recent inspections (see page 3).

EYESOs meet with Care Inspectors on a regular basis to co-ordinate best practice.

Upcoming curricular ideas:

25 Jan - Robbie Burns Day

Jan + Feb - RSPB bird watch

25th February - Safer Internet Day

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk>

26 Jan - 2 Feb - Storytelling Week

29th January - Up Helly Aa

<https://elchighland.com/>

Key messages from ELC inspections:



QI 1.3 Key strengths

- Positive efforts to develop a shared vision, values and aims – relevant to setting community
- Commitment to improve work of the setting
- Leadership developing at all levels
- Use of self-evaluation to evaluate and improve the quality of provision
- Pace of change and focus on outcomes
- Awareness of current thinking in ELC

QI 1.3 Areas for improvement

- Sharing vision, values and aims with children in a developmentally appropriate way
- The need to look outward
- Self-evaluation – formalised and systematic and linked to outcomes for children
- Impact of staffing on strategic planning

QI 2.3 Key strengths

- Children's engagement
- Nurturing interactions and positive relationships
- Defined pedagogy
- Ongoing developments including loose parts and use of natural resources – creativity, curiosity and inquiry
- Children leading and talking about their learning – use of floor books as a tool

QI 2.3 Areas for improvement

- Use of national guidance to support development of environments and quality of planning
- Build on interactions – questioning and commentary
- High quality observation and assessment based on significant learning to ensure progression
- Use of assessment information
- Development of a language of learning

QI 3.1 Key strengths

- Promote and ensure wellbeing and inclusion of children – treated as individuals
- Strong, positive relationships with children and families
- Increasing knowledge and use of national wellbeing indicators
- Children involved in making decisions
- Fulfilment of statutory duties

QI 3.1 Areas for improvement

- Knowledge and use of national wellbeing indicators with children and families
- Use of data to secure positive outcomes
- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Planning to best meet individual needs

QI 3.2 Key strengths

- 67% of settings evaluated good or better
- Appropriate focus on early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing
- Range of approaches used to record and articulate children's progress – value added
- Identification of potential barriers to learning and tailored interventions put in place including collaboration with other agencies