

3 – 5 years ELC Information & Application Guidance for August 2025 / 2026

Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement

Children aged 3 to 4 years are entitled to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare (ELC). This is on a pro-rata basis depending on your child's birthday and intake. Inverclyde Council fund a child's entitled ELC from the **term after their 3rd Birthday**

Date of Birth Range	Intake Term
1 March – 31 March	AUGUST
1 April – 30 April	
1 May – 31 May	
1 June – 30 June	
1 July – 31 July	
1 August – 31 August	
1 September – 30 September	JANUARY
1 October – 31 October	
1 November – 30 November	
1 December – 31 December	
1 January – 31 January	APRIL
1 February – last day February	

APPLYING FOR A 3-5 YEAR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PLACE

You must complete an application form if your child is eligible for a funded ELC place. Inverclyde Council offers a variety of models in their local authority establishments and also through Approved Funded Provider Childminders and Private / Voluntary and Independent Nurseries within the Inverclyde area. This offers flexibility to access your child's entitled ELC place.

There is an application window for 3–5-year applications to be presented at the annual allocations panel – Application forms will only be available at the start of the new term in January for the coming year that your child would be entitled to a 3–5-year ELC place. Application forms that are submitted between the 6 January and 17 January will be presented at the Annual Admissions Panel which is held around late March / April each year and you will receive your child's allocated ELC place by email in late May

APPLICATION FORMS SUBMITTED	PRESENTED AT	ALLOCATED PLACES RELEASED
6 January 2025 – 17 January 2025	Annual Allocation Panel	18 March 2025
18 January 2025 – 4 April 2025 – will be classed as a late application	Post Admissions panel	22 May 2025

HOW EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IS DELIVERED

Local Authority Establishment

Local Authority establishments, delivery ELC in Nursery Classes / Schools, Early Learning Centre's and Family Centre's. There are a variety of models and are available either term time or extended year.

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Mon – Fri 6 hours per day over 38 wks Over term time	2 ½ days Mon & Tues, Wed (am) / Extended year	2 ½ days Wed (pm) Thu – Fri / Extended year	5 x am Mon – Fri / Extended year	5 x pm Mon – Fri / Extended year

Approved Funded Provider Childminder

Childminders will all operate differently and set their own operational hours for delivering early learning and childcare hours. It would be your responsibility to make contact and discuss your needs before submitting an application form.

Full ELC hours	This is where you can access your ELC hours fully delivered with a childminder
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Blended Care hours	<p>This is where you can access your ELC hours split between a childminder and another funded provider setting. A blended care place will be delivered as term time and will be 15 hours at each provider only. PVI and Local Authority establishments will deliver 15 hours of ELC as 2 ½ days or 5 half sessions this will be individual to each establishment.</p> <p>Example1: Blended 1 - 9am - 3pm Mon & Tues & 9am - 12pm / Wed</p> <p>Example 2: Blended 3 – 9am - 12pm / Mon - Fri</p>
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For more information, please see leaflet all about Childminders and how they deliver ELC hours

Approved Funded Provider Private / Voluntary / Independent Nursery

PVI settings will all operate differently and set their own operational hours for delivering early learning and childcare hours. Some PVI providers will have their own application process. It would be your responsibility to make contact and discuss your needs before submitting an application form.

Do not reside in Inverclyde Council but wish to take your child’s entitled hours at an Inverclyde ELC provider

This would be classed as a Cross Boundary Application – this is where you are requesting to access your child’s entitled hours in different local authority from which you reside.

The application form should be completed. This application is then taken to the cross-boundary admission panel and is presented to the Council that you reside for consideration – This is a different process and timeline to Inverclyde residents - Please refer to the cross-boundary leaflet for further information and process.

APPLICATION FORM

Application forms are only available from Local Authority / Approved Childminder or Approved PVI provider Applications Forms must be submitted to the first-choice provider.

COMPLETING MANDATORY SECTION IN ELC APPLICATION FORM

1a	<p>This section must be fully completed to register your child. You must produce proof of your child’s date of birth in the form of a birth certificate and proof of your residing address. We will only accept - council tax bill / tenancy agreement or lawyer letter with a completion of house purchase - Forms will not be accepted if this proof is not produced at the time of submitting the form – Arrangements in place for childcare purposes, cannot be taken as a child’s residing address</p>
1b	<p>Family details – This information must reflect any parent named on your child’s birth certificate and must be completed.</p> <p>Please ensure you have up to date information and an email address is stated – You will receive your ELC offer to your email address.</p>
1c	<p>All information relating to your child’s health must be completed and brought to the attention of the provider. Doctor and Health Visitor details must be completed, or the application form will not be accepted.</p>
2a	<p>Only complete if you have another child who is in a deferred or pre-school year in the same establishment you are applying to as your first choice ELC establishment.</p>
2b	<p>This is for information only – You may or may not know this at this point. ELC places and Primary School places have no connection.</p>
3	<p>You must indicate at least 3 choices in priority order of establishment and model of attendance. This can at a Local authority establishment / Approved Funded Provider Childminder or Approved Funded provider Private / Voluntary or Independent Nursery or across 2 providers this would be a blended or split place.</p> <p>Please note, we will always aim to ensure preferred choices are allocated, however, there is no guarantee of this. Applicants may find that the preferred establishment / operating model is full. In this situation, in ensuring the authority meets its statutory duty, an alternative place will be offered that is not stated on the application form submitted. Every attempt will be made to offer a suitable place within the Early Learning and Childcare defined area ,however, this is not guaranteed.</p>
4	<p>Please initial each individual box that you have read and understood requirements / information before submitting the application form – If you do not understand or require further information, please contact the provider where they will be able to assist you.</p> <p>By signing the form, you are indicating that the information you have submitted its correct and that any false information given will put at risk any ELC place offered. agree to inform the provider of any changes to my circumstances as this may also affect any place offered.</p>