

Agenda Item	22.
Report No	CLH 59/19

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Care, Learning and Housing

**Date:** 21 August 2019

**Report Title:** Early Years Update

**Report By:** Chief Executive

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report will provide Members with information on the recent developments in early years including the expansion of early learning and childcare programme.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note and acknowledge the developments and progress in early years
- ii. Note and acknowledge the risks to the ELC programme

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource: The early learning and childcare expansion programme has been fully funded by the Scottish Government
- 3.2 Legal: There is a legal requirement to provide early learning and childcare in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): 1140 hours of early learning and childcare will enable more parents to return to work, study or education
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever: Opportunities for outdoor provision are being explored
- 3.5 Risk: The risk to programme delivery remains in terms of workforce and infrastructure requirements as detailed in the report
- 3.6 Gaelic: Fluent Gaelic speakers are a requirement for the early learning and childcare workforce and there remains a risk that we will not be able to employ adequate staff

## 4. Introduction

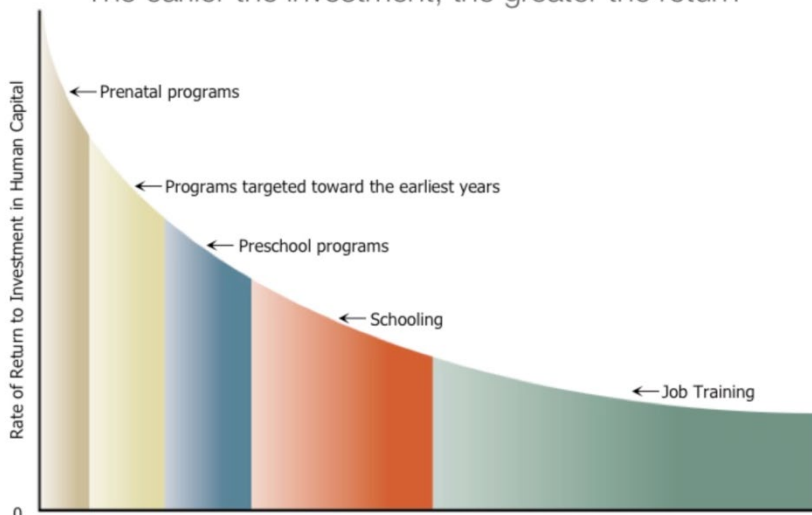
- 4.1 The earliest years of a child's life offer real opportunities for us to work collaboratively to ensure that all children get the best start in life. We know that adverse experiences will impact on children's health and wellbeing and this knowledge means that we should ensure that we do all we can to enhance provision and put children at the centre of all decisions that we make.
- 4.2 The universal services of maternity, health visiting and education provide pathways on which we can build enhanced provision and we have developed many resources and support that assist journeys through transitions for children and families. This includes access to baby massage, Words up, Bumps to Bairns and Developmental Overviews to name a few.

## 5. Early Years and ELC

- 5.1 The expansion of provision brings with it welcome opportunities to improve the quality of early learning and childcare (ELC) in our settings. Comparisons of ratings for our ELC settings with those made nationally by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland show that while we hold our own in terms of quality, there is much work to be done to move securely into "very good" and "excellent" judgements.
- 5.2 Making this progress is important because of the enormous potential of early years to set foundations for a lifetime of wellbeing. In so doing we can partially offset the effects of deprivation or Adverse Childhood Experiences provided intervention is delivered early and effectively.
- 5.3 The research by Walter Heckman has established the cost effectiveness, and overall effectiveness of investment in the first 5 years of life, shown in his famous Heckman Curve, below

### EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS A SMART INVESTMENT

The earlier the investment, the greater the return



The work in Highland is further guided by a research review summarised in Appendix 1.

- 5.4 The emphasis in the expansion programme is on providing more ELC for children, and the benefits for families are clear. However, a wide range of research is also clear that the benefits for children themselves are seen (and last) only if the expanded ELC provision is of the highest quality. Low quality provision has no more effect on children's development than no provision at all.
- 5.5 Highland has taken a "quality first" approach to expansion with a focus on the child's experience, while also delivering the workforce and capital requirements for 1140 hours of provision. The following is an indicative list of some key streams of work we are undertaking:
- 5.6 Capacity building  
Work over the last three years has gradually reformed the approach to continuous professional development (CPD) in Highland ELC from the relatively expensive provision of "courses" to an approach based on robust self-evaluation and flexible provision of training, often in-house, to early years practitioners (EYPs) and setting managers. As such it now aligns with the intentions and structure of the Education Improvement Framework. Early Years Education Support Officers (EYESOs) who are the peripatetic nursery teachers, along with our CALA partners, have led on this process. Next session will have a particular focus on responding to additional support needs and building Positive Relationships. This CPD offer will align closely with the new Scottish Government policy driver for early years, expected in the autumn.
- 5.7 Streamlining processes  
The EYESO team have been working for the last year or so to streamline and improve the approaches in settings to planning and observing children's learning. ELC settings have been supported to move from a universal and paper heavy approach to using more responsive planning with children using, for example, floor-books. Head Teachers and other setting managers have been provided with a range of tools to support the quality of these key processes and monitor the effects of improvements.
- 5.8 Outdoor Learning  
Members will be aware of a growing movement in Scotland towards outdoor learning and its many benefits for children. Such a move needs to be towards high quality experiences, and there is more to this than simply going outside. Two EYESOs have been working with Stramash Enterprise to develop a train-the-trainers approach that can rapidly spread the necessary skills across Highland.
- 5.9 Multi-agency collaboration  
Research evidence shows that a key part of the effectiveness of ELC settings comes from the quality of interactions between adults and children. The EYESO team and ELC staff, along with CALA and other partners have been working to roll out Words Up, an initiative by our Speech and Language therapists that helps EYPs and parents to

establish positive interactions and communication with their children to improve language, attachment and emotional development. This work has been commended by Education Scotland nationally, with evidence of impact on staff confidence and behaviour and on children's outcomes.

#### 5.10 Prevention and early intervention

Across Highland we are establishing an integrated and principled approach to prevention and early intervention for children from pre-birth into the early years of Primary School. Midwives now work with families on attachment and language development from the 12-week scan onwards, and our Health Visitors provide comprehensive and holistic assessment and intervention. These build the foundations for work in ELC to be effective for all children.

Multi-agency groups have developed a range of tools to support this in Highland. For example, the website [bumps2bairns.com](http://bumps2bairns.com) provides advice to families and practitioners on how to address concerns with child development from a wide range of specialists without requiring referral. Parents and others with concerns have a direct link from this resource to open telephone consultations with specialists if required. Uptake is high – bumps2bairns has just over 50 000 views per year.

#### 5.11 Smooth transitions and individualised learning

Health Visitors complete a developmental assessment at 27-30 months, and key information from this is with parental consent, passed on to ELC settings to help prepare to meet the needs of children. Within settings, EYPs use the Developmental Overviews as part of continuous profiling to build a picture with families of a child's development and where further help might be needed. These Overviews are passed on to P1 teachers at transition so that they can ensure a classroom environment that meets all needs. This forms the foundation of Emerging Literacy, a developmental approach to learning that aims to ensure seamless transition in learning from nursery into primary school.

The emphasis in the expansion programme in Highland has been, and must remain, the experiences of children. ELC staff are encouraged to continually reflect on how changes in provision, staffing, flexibility or routines impact on the children. An example tool to help them do this is shown in Appendix 2.

## **6. Milton Holiday Club**

6.1 We know that one of the greatest impacts on health and wellbeing is poverty, and the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out the government's intention to eradicate child poverty by 2030. Whilst this is a pledge to get to that point, what matters now is that not having enough money means that life is harder, basic needs cannot be met and this is a very real threat to children's health, wellbeing and ability for them to grow and flourish.

6.2 We also understand the implications of rural poverty in Highland that impacts on our communities and services and this includes recognised holiday hunger that threatens children all across Scotland.

- 6.3 With this in mind we were approached by a representative of the Scottish Government to consider a project that would aim to tackle holiday hunger in Highland. A very quick bid was submitted that was successful and has received full government backing. This has meant that we are now in the process of running a holiday club in Milton, the aim of which is to ensure that children in an area of recognised rural deprivation are provided with childcare and are able to access a meal over the summer holiday. Activities are also being provided and once a week there will be a community meal for parents and carers to join.
- 6.4 A huge amount of work has gone into the preparation and running of this provision and staff have been prepared to commit additional resources, fully backed by the Area C&L manager. Two Scottish Government ministers will be visiting the project towards the end of the summer.

## **7. ELC Expansion Programme**

7.1 The expansion programme continues to evolve. As we move nearer to full implementation next year there is need for a clear focus on the potential demand for places and the available supply. Parental consultation is key to establish a funding following the child approach however; the Scottish Government understand that this does not mean every parental request is able to be delivered. The focus is on being able to advise parents of what the available offer is in a particular area.

7.2 Two pieces of secondary legislation to support the ELC expansion programme have been approved for the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The first order removes the minimum session length for funded ELC and increases the maximum session from 8 hours to 10. This is intended to offer greater flexibility and means a setting who wishes to, or is required to, can extend to whole day provision. This will take effect from August 2019.

The second order will formally change legislation from August 2020 to increase the amount of funded ELC that children are entitled to from 600 to 1140 hours.

7.3 We welcome the Councils endorsement of the school capital programme as this has a huge impact on the delivery of ELC. We have just over a year until full implementation of the offer of 1140 hours for all eligible 2 year olds and 3 and 4s and as there have already been significant delays we will need to look at contingency plans to ensure an offer of a place to all children by August 2020.

7.4 With over 80 ELC capital projects to deliver, it was evident that these will not all be in place. Therefore it was imperative that the potential to deliver the hours in each setting (local authority, partner centre and childminder) was explored more fully. We will require more local authority settings to be open for the full year and more with extended opening times. We will need to develop the operating models to ensure the offer of flexibility is realistic whilst not being over burdensome to manage and deliver. We will also need to purchase more hours from our partners and will continue to engage and consult with them.

7.5 A further scrutiny day with the Improvement Service has enabled a clearer service model moving forward. The number of critical areas for expansion requirements for 2020 has been reduced to 20 due to developing more models of full year and extended opening times provision and greater use of partner provision.

7.6 We will continue to consult and engage with the various government departments who

have been tasked to ensure local authority plans are developing. We need to develop our business plans and use business intelligence to move forward, and are in the process of recruiting to posts that will enable this to happen.

- 7.7 Simon Mair, Head of Delivery Assurance with the Scottish Government met with local officers this month to discuss expansion progress, recent data returns and supply and demand findings. We also had wider discussion around scenario planning based on data, agreed capital works and contingency plans.
- 7.8 The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) and National Improvement Service were also present at the meeting and all bodies acknowledged the challenges that are being faced by authorities including for us the scale of the capital programme. It was agreed that further work would be required to develop the delivery model and ensure risks around any recruitment and capital programme delivery are mitigated.
- 7.9 The recent supply and demand analysis carried out by the Improvement Service alongside the setting by setting evaluation undertaken by the SFT team, will assist us as we move forward. We welcome the advice and support provided.
- 7.10 A delay and therefore risk to the programme has been in the recruitment of the workforce for August 2019 expansion plans. The recruitment restrictions and potential deployment of PSAs have meant that where normally we would have recruited all staff for the start of the August term, we have been unable to do so.
- 7.11 The summer is never normally a time to recruit to school posts as most staff are on leave and we are hoping that the impact on recruiting to posts will be minimal. This is yet to be realised and if we struggle to recruit particularly where we already have hard to fill posts we may be unable to offer the extended planned hours.
- 7.12 However, local teams are working hard to ensure the infrastructure is in place to deliver the plans for August 2019 and beyond and the updated list of settings due to deliver 1140 hours is attached as Appendix 3.

## **8. Working in Partnership**

- 8.1 Through the funding provided by the Scottish Government for the ELC expansion, the expectations were clear that we should provide assistance to partner providers to enable them to benefit from being in partnership with the authority and gain some additional support.
- 8.2 Alongside the funded rate we pay partners, we also include a range of benefits through a package of provision. In Highland this includes funding to undertake relevant qualifications for staff, training offered through the authority early years continuous professional development programme, input from peripatetic teachers and grant funding for specific resources. We have also arranged for Business Gateway to provide business advisory sessions and support to providers with business planning and sustainability.
- 8.3 The funded rates for partner providers will increase in August 2019 from £4.20 per child per hour to £4.63. The rate for eligible 2 year olds will increase from £5.00 to £5.20 per child per hour. In small remote and rural settings to maintain sustainability of these fragile services, block payments will continue to be paid.
- 8.4 The funded rates partner providers receive will also include an additional payment for a

funded meal commitment as part of the 1140 hours offer. This currently is £2.30. All ELC children entitled to free school meals due to parental benefit rights will continue to receive this regardless of the expanded hours provision.

- 8.5 The expectations from the government are that local authorities further support partners through additional funding recently made available and we have invited partners to apply to the authority for a one off grant to support capacity building for the expansion.
- 8.6 22 partners applied for funding and the panel met recently to consider all applications. Most of the applicants have been successful, some requiring further detail around their plans and costs. Partners were able to demonstrate innovative and exciting ideas for developing their businesses.
- 8.7 The partnership agreements we currently have will need to be reviewed for August 2020 in line with the launch of the Scot Excel documents reported to this committee in May. To ensure a consistent approach to this we have met with procurement officers in the Northern Shared Procurement Service to consider the approach required for each authority. There will be a shared agenda required but with local variations.
- 8.8 The Northern Alliance authorities early years leads are meeting with Scot Excel and the shared procurement service at the end of July in Inverness to spend some time developing a template for use across the north. This revised approach will provide a breakdown of specific entitlements within the new rate for August 2020.
- 8.9 Two key partners that we work closely with, CALA and Inspiring Scotland have been running taster sessions in outdoor nursery provision at Highland Wildlife Park. Children aged 2-5 years, accompanied by their parents throughout, have been taking part in a range of activities including pond dipping, den building and mini beast hunting. This venture is to gain an understanding of the potential interest for nursery sessions in the wildlife garden.

Designation: Chief Executive

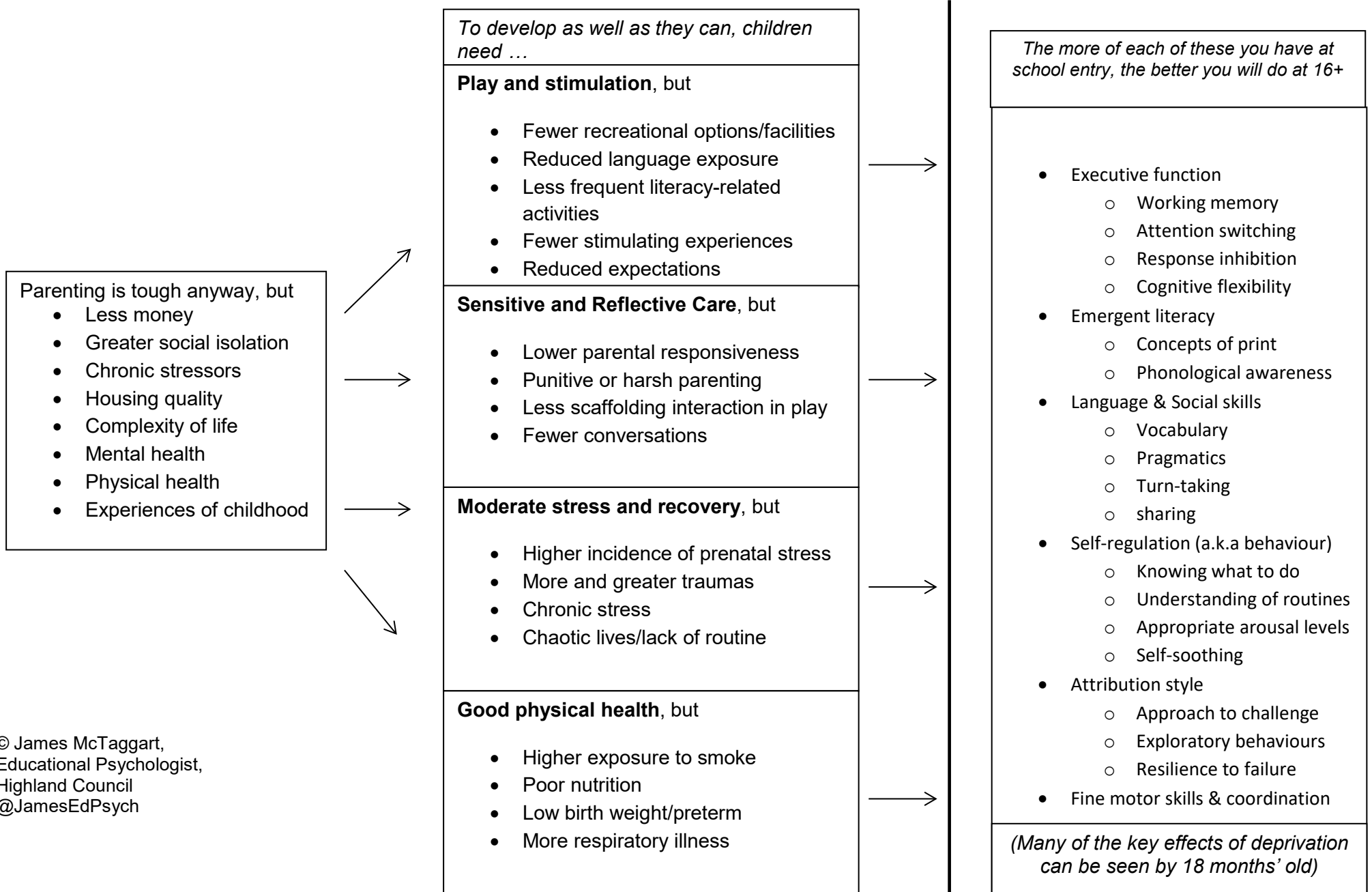
Date: 5 August 2019

Author: Sandra Harrington, Senior Manager Early Years

Background Papers:

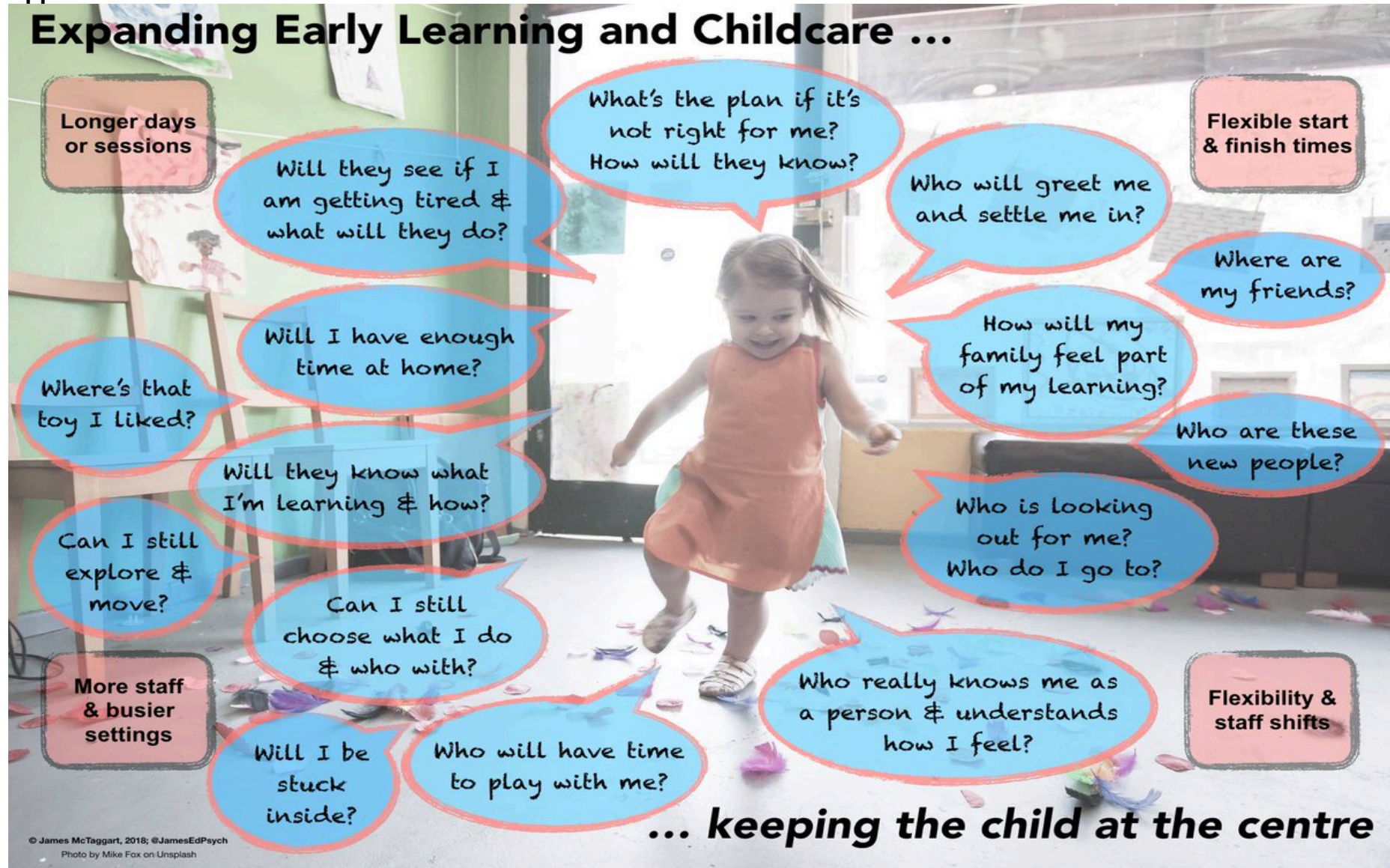
# Appendix 1

A literature review of the links between early adversity & deprivation ..... and later outcomes





# Expanding Early Learning and Childcare ...



**... keeping the child at the centre**

<b>APPENDIX 3</b>				
<b>Setting</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Opening Times</b>	<b>Weeks Open</b>
Abernethy	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Cannich	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Cauldeen	South	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	38 (term time)
Cawdor	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Central	South	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	38 (term time)
Dalneigh	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Dochgarroch	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Farr	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Stratherrick	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Teanassie	South	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Glenurquhart Childcare Centre	South	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	42 full weeks and 4 part weeks
Karen Mackenzie (Childminder - CM)	South	Phase 2	07:30am - 5.30pm	47
Limetree (Dalneigh) (Partner Centre - PC)	South	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	48
Stramash Tornagrain (PC)	South	Phase 2	8.30am - 5.30pm	50
Country Bumpkins	South	Phase 2	7.30am - 6pm	50
Meike White (CM)	South	Phase 2	8am – 6pm	46
Summerlings, The Sheiling (PC)	South	Phase 2	8.30am - 3.30pm	38 (term time)
Bonar	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Canisbay	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Castletown	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Dornoch	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)

Dunbeath	North	Phase 2	9.30am - 3.30pm	38 (term time)
Farr	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Helmsdale	North	Phase 2	8.30am - 3.30pm Mon Tues Thur Fri 9am - 1pm Wed	38 (term time)
Keiss	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Lairg	North	Phase 2	8.45am - 2.45	38 (term time)
Lybster	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Melvich	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Rogart	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Scourie	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Durness	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Thrumster	North	Phase 2	9.15am - 3.15pm	38 (term time)
Alison Munro (CM)	North	Phase 2	8:00am - 5:30pm	47
Halkirk (PC)	North	Phase 2	Sessional	39
Julie Minchin (CM)	North	Phase 2	Mon-Thur - 8am - 4.30pm	49
Kinlochbervie (PC)	North	Phase 2	Mon-Thur - 8.30am - 3.30pm Friday 8.30am - 2pm	38 (term time)
Seonaid Mhor (CM)	North	Phase 2	Flexible	52
Watten (PC)	North	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Culbokie	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Dingwall	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Gledfield	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Hill of Fearn	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)

Hilton of Cadboll	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Marybank	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Milton	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Park	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Resolis	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
South Lodge	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Tarbat Old	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Ardross (PC)	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 3pm	38 (term time)
Croileagan (PC)	Mid	Phase 2	8.30am – 4.30pm	38 (term time)
Cromarty (PC)	Mid	Phase 2	9am - 6pm	38 (term time)
Dingwall Children's Nursery (PC)	Mid	Phase 2	Mon - Fri 8am – 6pm	50
Dingwall Ducklings (PC)	Mid	Phase 2	8.30am – 3.30pm Daily	38 (term time)
Little Angels (PC)	Mid	Phase 2	Mon - Fri - 7.30am – 6pm	50
Acharacle	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Applecross	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Auchtertyre	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Banavie	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh	West	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	38 (term time)
Caol	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Glenelg	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Inverlochy	West	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	50
Kyleakin	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)

Lundavra	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Plockton GM	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Spean Bridge	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
St Columba's	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Kilchuimen	West	Phase 2	9am – 3pm	38 (term time)
Little Learners (PC)	West	Phase 2	8am - 6pm	50
Stramash FW (PC)	West	Phase 3	8am -6pm	50