



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) PROJECT

EXAMPLE OF IECE PROVISION: UK (SCOTLAND)

1. Abstract

Kilwinning Early Years Centre is based within the Pennyburn Primary School campus. It predominantly serves the Kilwinning and Pennyburn areas of North Ayrshire in Scotland. These include areas of high unemployment and multiple deprivation (as ranked by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). The centre also serves areas which have the lowest levels of deprivation. Families living anywhere in the North Ayrshire local authority area can, however, apply for a place.

The centre has two playrooms, a well-used parent's room, a shared community room, outdoor area, and access to the primary school gym hall and library. The centre also makes good use of local community venues for outreach services.

Kilwinning Early Years Centre can accommodate up to 45 children at any one time: 30 aged 3–5 and 15 children aged 0–3. The current roll of the centre is 86. Adult to child ratios are 1:3 for children under 3, 1:5 for 2–3 year olds and 1:8 for 3–4 year olds. Fourteen children are currently supported through a staged intervention planning in order to meet their additional needs. The centre also supports a number of children who are looked after by the local authority, but who do not require a support plan at this time.

Staffing within the centre consists of a head of centre, a deputy head of centre, nine early years practitioners, a modern apprentice, a clerical assistant, a social worker and a family link worker. Two early years teachers who serve the local community also use the centre as their base. The head, deputy and teachers are qualified to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 9 (European Qualifications Framework – EQF level 6); practitioners are generally qualified to SCQF level 7 (EQF level 5), although in this setting up to 80% of staff have undertaken additional qualifications up to SCQF level 8 (also EQF level 5).

The centre follows national advice on the curriculum and pedagogy, using *Pre-birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families* (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010), *Building the Ambition* (Scottish Government, 2014) and *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004). The centre's policy and practice taken account of overarching multi-agency Scottish Government policy 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC), the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004), the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014).

The centre aims to provide a welcoming, safe, secure environment and offers a high-



quality service to meet the needs of individual children and families. Parental involvement and engagement is a priority and the centre works closely with families through a range of interesting and innovative services including infant massage, Bookbug Rhymetime sessions, stay and play sessions, and a fortnightly health visitor clinic. Many programmes are offered in partnership with other organisations, such as Parent Network Scotland, which promotes the up-skilling of local parents to run groups themselves through programmes like Parenting Matters (a course for parents which aims to build up self-confidence, by giving parents a chance to learn from each other, and to think about themselves as people as well as parents).

2. Inclusive features

Admissions to the centre are governed by a local admissions policy which takes account of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004), the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014). Parents may self-refer to the centre, or may be referred by a supporting agency such as health or social work. A small number of children attend on a full-time basis, others attend part-time (including a number of full days), with a lunch if required. Places are used flexibly to accommodate on-going or ad hoc family need. All places for children under three are considered by a multi-agency partnership forum. All children in Scotland aged 3–5 are entitled to up to 600 hours of early learning and childcare each year. Children aged two and over who are looked after by the local authority or are living within workless households are also entitled to 600 hours. Places for children without a national entitlement are also allocated according to the local admissions policy. There is no ‘special’ provision within the local authority area for children under five, with all children attending a local setting. Transport is provided where required due to additional support needs.

The centre is well-known within the local community and encourages engagement with families from first contact. Those making applications are encouraged to join outreach and community/parental involvement programmes prior to taking up placement. This supports a smooth home to early learning and childcare transition, and ensures families have support during this interim period. Centre staff have also supported the local community in establishing parent and toddler groups in local neighbourhoods.

The centre is proactive in its approach to inclusion. Following an audit of families, specific programmes were established to encourage fathers to become involved. Previously, a family was supported to maintain family relationships and parental involvement in learning while affected by imprisonment of one of the parents. The setting takes account of cultural diversity, and recently staff and parents have been supported to learn British Sign Language to ensure that families with hearing



impairment can be fully included not only in the centre but also in the wider community. School staff have recently joined the programme to ensure continuity when the families move on to primary school. Families are encouraged to share their culture and language within the centre, celebrating diversity and enriching the curriculum. Children and staff learn key phrases in a number of languages to ensure all feel welcomed. The centre ensures that learning resources reflect diversity and challenge stereotyping across the nine protected equalities characteristics in the UK. There are no charges for any of the centre's programmes.

The centre operates a key worker system to ensure that each family has a designated member of staff who gets to know them and their children well, and who takes ownership of the children's development and learning needs. The centre's family link worker is used flexibly to liaise and support families or to release key worker staff with particular skill sets. Home visits are regularly undertaken and can be initiated by the centre or by families.

Parents and children complete an 'All about me' document prior to taking up a placement, which ensures that staff build on learning from the home. Information for parents is provided in writing and in person to ensure that literacy or language difficulties are not a barrier to understanding.

Scottish Government legislation and policy has a strong emphasis on 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). The GIRFEC wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) are used and understood by all public services to support joined up and co-ordinated services for families. They underpin the approach to additional support, which includes a single 'child's plan' across all agencies. Staff at Kilwinning Early Years Centre work very closely with a range of specialist and universal services, including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Within this framework, the staff operate a staged intervention process for all children requiring additional support (including additional challenge). It is recognised that all children are likely to require additional support, some on-going and sustained throughout their lives, while others for a period of time to overcome particular barriers to learning. Through the staged intervention planning process, staff address individual learners' needs both in their interactions and in the provision of resources (e.g. visual prompts and timetables). The centre takes very good account of children's emotional wellbeing and uses the PATHS (promoting alternative thinking strategies) approach to help children develop self-regulation. When required, the staff use individualised programmes of support such as Tacpac, a programme that combines touch and music to promote communication and social interaction, sensory, neurological and emotional development for children with autistic spectrum disorders.



The centre has a positive approach to challenging behaviour, with staff recognising behaviour as an expression of feelings. Approaches focus on meeting the needs of the child, rather than focusing on the behaviour, and through teamwork, improving wellbeing and reducing anxieties.

The centre operates an inclusive, values-driven curriculum. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect. All children are supported to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. The curriculum is also underpinned by the wellbeing indicators. All children are entitled to and receive a curriculum which offers challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance.

Children are involved in planning their own learning, through 'plan-do-review' and all have been involved in setting personal learning targets which are reviewed regularly with children and parents, and have special books documenting their learning. Children undertake peer and self-assessment and identify personal achievements on a weekly basis.

The indoor and outdoor areas of the setting are on a single level and easily accessible by all. The learning environment encourages independence at all levels, with carefully selected easily accessible resources and well-labelled displays. Resources are not restricted and children are free to choose.

Staff are skilled in observation and assessing children's progress and achievement and moderate their professional judgements within the centre and across other local settings.

The setting has strong links with local primary schools. It commences the transition programme in October of each year, prior to children starting school in August. For children who require it, an enhanced personal transition programme is implemented from February each year. There is a strong focus on supporting continuity in learning, as well as supporting children and families' wellbeing at this time. The start of the year at the centre is delayed by two days to allow centre staff to work with school staff in settling transitioning children into primary. Children in the local primaries continue to work with the centre children throughout the year. Transitions at all stages (home to centre, centre room to room, centre to school) focus on children's individual stages of development and needs, rather than age.

3. Inclusive highlight

The centre offers bespoke services to children and families, creating and tailoring support as required. They know that 'no one size fits all' and that only through an ethos of mutual respect, and a wide range of tailor-made approaches can they offer the excellent level of support that they do. Through the skills of staff, which they



continuously develop, and the deployment of the right person for the right task, they are able to offer a highly effective and inclusive service.

Bespoke support has included support for a family impacted by imprisonment (including prison visits), support for British Sign Language to include families affected by hearing impairment, and individual programmes for children, such as Tacpac for children with autistic spectrum disorders.

4. Other evidence of quality IECE

Both the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland have acknowledged the setting's very high level of service. In the most recent inspections by each body, the Care Inspectorate awarded the service 3 out of 4 grades as excellent, while Education Scotland commended the service with an excellent evaluation for meeting children's needs, commenting that this applied to both children and families. These awards recognise outstanding or sector-leading practice.

The setting's family support worker received a local authority award for her outstanding service which goes well beyond what is required contractually.

In recognition of the centre's outstanding practice, it has been featured on the Education Scotland website and in the *Early Years Matters* publication to share its highly effective practice. The head of centre has also been asked to contribute to a national working group to support the professional development of staff on GIRFEC. Her skills were also recognised by the local authority, which asked her to lead the recent expansion of high-quality early years services.

Inspection evidence and self-evaluation show that children in the centre are making very good progress in their learning and development. An evaluation of 'very good' indicates that 'almost all' or over 90% are making good progress. The approaches used are based on the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child, and recognise that all children will at some point require support to overcome barriers to their learning.

Universal support for the home learning environment and parental involvement from day one, together with very good systems for early identification of needs (including additional challenge), ensure that all children's needs are addressed.

The workforce are passionate about their work, they inspire one another and are focused on on-going improvement. They are committed to, and supported in, continual professional development and achieving higher levels of qualification. They have a strong skill base and work effectively as a team to provide support to children and families. They evaluate their practice, look outwards to what others are doing and plan for future needs. Staff are proud to work in the centre. The centre's



management and leadership are excellent.

Stakeholder engagement and partnership working are key to the centre's success. The head of centre continually seeks out new partnerships to support children and families. Parents are key partners in the process and are involved in identifying their own families' needs and planning services with the centre. There is a high level of communication with all stakeholders. Stakeholders are routinely asked to evaluate their involvement with the centre to support future improvement work. Evaluations focus on the impact of involvement.

The centre is engaged with Scotland's Early Years Collaborative (EYC). This is the world's first multi-agency national improvement programme. The head of centre is part of the local authority 'away team', engaging with others from across Scotland to improve practice with the centre and across agencies. Centre staff use EYC improvement methodology to improve their own practice within the setting.