

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2005
CHILDCARE CHARGES

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek agreement of the members of the Education Committee to increase the level of the current charge for childcare in the Council's nurseries which provide childcare in addition to pre school education.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has an Early Education and Childcare Admission's Policy which sets out the priorities for accessing childcare in addition to the free 2 ½ hour pre school education session per day.
- 2.2 The Council has four community nurseries, five nursery schools and one nursery class which provide childcare over and above the pre school education session. Childcare charges are levied where parents are in employment or who are receiving a childcare allowance through their further education course.
- 2.3 The current charge is £2.00 per hour of childcare, which includes a lunch if the hour of childcare purchased is over the lunch period. Parents who are in employment can access the Working Families Tax Credit which can pay up to 70% of childcare costs.
- 2.4 In December 2004, there were 307 children accessing a childcare place where there was no charge levied for childcare due to children placed in a high priority banding within the Admissions Policy and 94 where it was appropriate to levy a childcare charge.

3. PROPOSED CHILDCARE CHARGE

- 3.1 It is proposed that the current charge of £2.00 per hour of childcare is increased on 1 April 2005 to £2.50 per hour of childcare. It is further proposed that this childcare charge is reviewed on an annual basis.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nil

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As the majority of children who access a childcare place are referred from Social Work or Health and therefore are placed in a high priority banding, the number of children who will access a charged childcare place will change every year. Therefore it is difficult to determine the level of income that the childcare charge will generate.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed increase to the childcare charge will be reflected in the revised Early Education and Childcare Admissions Policy parents leaflet.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:
- (i) agree the recommendation to increase the childcare charge from £2.00 per hour to £2.50 per hour from 1 April 2005 and;
 - (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report

John Mulgrew
Executive Director (Educational and Social Services)

JA/KG/JW
10 March 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Early Years Education and Childcare Admissions Policy: Education Committee 13 November 2001

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer Early Years, Tel: (01563) 578125.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR