

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 28 MAY 2002

EARLY YEARS FUNDING

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the additional funding which has been allocated by the Scottish Executive for Early Years developments in financial years 2002-2004 and to seek approval for the proposed rate of payment for a pre-school education place for 2002/03 with a Partner Provider.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Due to the expansion and development of Early Years Services as part of the Scottish Executive's Childcare Strategy and universal provision for the delivery of pre-school education for children aged 3 to 5 years, additional financial resources have been allocated for financial years 2002- 2004.

- 2.2 The resources are as follows:

- Pre School Development Grant 2001/02 - 2002/03 £218,667
- Workforce Expansion and Development 2001/02 - 2003/04 £230,858

- 2.3 In both cases, the allocations for financial years 2001/02, announced in March 2002 by the Scottish Executive, can be carried forward to financial year 2002/03.

3. PAYMENTS TO PARTNER PROVIDERS

- 3.1 The Council currently has Service Level Agreements with 15 Partner Providers of pre-school education in the independent sector. This number will increase to 17 Partners in August 2002.
- 3.2 In academic year 2001/02, the payment was £940 per fully loaded place i.e. 5 sessions per week. Payment is paid pro rata depending on the sessions offered, and is in line with the minimum advisory level set by the Scottish Executive.
- 3.3 Children in their pre-school year can access 5 x 2.5-hour sessions per week. Three-year-old children become eligible for a part time funded place in the term after their third birthday, which can be 2, 3 or 5 sessions.
- 3.4 The recommended rate for 2002/03 for 5 x 2.5-hour sessions is **£963**, which reflects the guidance issued by the Scottish Executive. It is proposed that the Council pays this rate per fully loaded place this financial year and reviews this for 2003/04 when consideration will be given to the introduction of a graded payment per place based on quality indicators.

4. PRE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

- 4.1** A total of **£218,667** has been allocated to assist in the development of new pre-school education places for 3 year olds for the 2002/03 school year. This is in line with the duty, which came into force on 1 April 2002 under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.
- 4.2** If the level of demand for pre-school education for 3 year olds has been met, local authorities may increase the number of pre school education places that are fully integrated with childcare and increase the flexibility of early years provision to better meet the needs of families.
- 4.3** The Pre School Development Grant can be allocated across all providers within the pre-school sector.
- 4.4** It is therefore proposed that **£158,667** is allocated under Section 23 (local authority) for the development of pre-school education for 3 year olds and the integration of pre school places that are fully integrated with childcare and **£60,000** is allocated under Section 25 (partner providers) for the further growth of 3 year old pre-school education places.
- 4.5** These developments would include the need for adaptations to buildings, additional curriculum materials, training and development and staff costs.

5. WORKFORCE EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1** A total of **£230,858** has been allocated from 2001- 2004 to continue the expansion and development of the childcare workforce across the local authority and independent sector.
- 5.2** The document, "Childcare: the Training Challenge" published by the Scottish Executive in 2000, set out a programme of work which recognised the need to expand and train the childcare workforce.
- 5.3** The establishment of the Scottish Social Services Council has heightened the need for continued investment in the childcare workforce. It is expected that the childcare workforce will require to register with the Social Services Council from 2004 onwards. Individuals will be expected to hold, or be working towards a recognised qualification.
- 5.4** Ministers expect that the resources will deliver accredited qualifications, which will have a positive impact on the professional standing of those working across the childcare sector.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Costs associated with the expansion of pre-school education for 3 year old places and the development of the childcare workforce will be met from the financial resources set out in paragraph 4.4 and 5.1 of this report.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The provision of pre-school education in local authority and partner providers is in line with both government and Council Policy.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As of 1 April 2002, the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, places a duty on local authorities to provide pre-school education in either local authority nurseries or with partner providers of pre-school education.
- 8.2 Service Level Agreements are in place with the Council's partner providers of pre-school education.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:
- (i) agree that commissioned places with the Council's partner providers of pre-school education be paid at the recommended rate of £963 per fully loaded place;
 - (ii) note the allocation of £218,667 Pre School Development for the further expansion of Pre-school education;
 - (iii) note the allocation of £230,858 for the expansion and development of the childcare workforce; and
 - (iv) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

KG/JA/SB

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Childcare Strategy for Scotland, May 1998
2. East Ayrshire Council Children's Service Plan 2001-2003
3. Childcare: The Training Challenge

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer Early Years, Tel: (01563) 576185.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER – KAY GILMOUR

AGENDA