

# Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell



## **This Nutshell:**

- Gives the basics of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
- Explains how parents contribute to it
- Suggests where you can find more information about CfE and about supporting your child



These different settings are all linked, and staff in each all work for the same result: confident and happy children.

Whatever their age and stage, all children in Scotland follow the same general programme of learning. This is called the Curriculum for Excellence.

This aims to help children develop, at their own pace, so they can learn what they need to know and be able to do, as adults. Although the word 'curriculum' suggests something very rigid, CfE is actually pretty wide and very flexible, with the idea that it will fit around each child.

So, it's not so much about what age and stage and level your child is at, but how these all fit together and how, in their own way, your child can become a:

**Successful learner**

**Confident individual**

**Effective contributor**

**Responsible citizen**

## About Curriculum for Excellence

Children are in education for around 15 years: from age three to 18. They move from early learning and childcare at nursery, then on to primary school, and then through to the end of secondary school.

**These are known as the four capacities.**

All through CfE children and young people develop these four capacities, exploring their talents and gaining the skills that will be useful for the world of work and everyday life. Learning can happen in classrooms and outdoors. Towards the end of secondary school, young people can learn in other places such as college/university, often while still at school.

## What CfE looks like in more detail

	All children from Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) up until the end of S3 learn in the <b>BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION</b>										From S4 to S6 young people learn in the <b>SENIOR PHASE</b>				
Level	Early level		First level			Second level		Third and fourth level			The senior phase is when young people can take qualifications and courses that suit their abilities and interests, do further study, improve their skills and get work experience. Young people can choose whether to stay on at school, go to college or university, do work-based learning, community-based learning, volunteering or a combination of these.				
<p><b>There are five levels between ELC and S3</b></p> <p>When your child is ready, they move to the next level. Schools understand that children progress at different rates, and that they may be at different levels for different subjects. For example, a child could be at level 1 for literacy and level 3 for numeracy. CfE allows for that kind of flexibility.</p>															
School year*	ELC	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	
Age (years)	3-5	4½-5½	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	
Transition times	<p>When children are in ELC and P1, they learn through play, inside and outside. That's the best way for developing children's language, creativity and coordination skills. There's also a big focus on developing their social skills: getting on with others and managing their feelings.</p>		<p>From then on, right up to S3, children are building on their skills, year on year, before they pick subjects to specialise in and move into the senior phase. They keep on learning through play and in the outdoors as well as in classrooms and other settings.</p> <p>As well as the usual changes as children move from one school year to the next, there are some important transition (change) times. At each of these points, teaching staff pass information about your child on to the next set of teaching staff, and to universities, colleges and employers.</p> <p><b>You can do a lot to support your child at each of these points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage them to ask questions</li> <li>• Help them to become familiar with the new setting and what's expected of them</li> <li>• Help them think about the opportunities ahead, and what they can look forward to</li> <li>• Encourage them to talk to you about anything they are worried about</li> <li>• Speak to your school if you'd like information or help with any of the above</li> </ul>										<p>Staying in learning after 16 gives young people the best chance of getting secure work for the long-term.</p> <p>CfE means all young people have choices about how they continue their learning when they reach 16.</p> <p>Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationals 1-5</li> <li>• Highers</li> <li>• Advanced Highers</li> <li>• Foundation apprenticeships</li> <li>• Skills for work</li> <li>• Progression awards</li> <li>• Wider achievement awards</li> </ul>		
Transition times	ELC to Primary							Primary to Secondary			Broad General Education to Senior Phase			Senior Phase to leaving school ▶	

## Learning all the time

Children learn wherever they are, and all the time. All through CfE, they'll get the chance to learn in the classroom, outdoors, online, in workplaces and in the community.

Although children spend a lot of time in school, they spend much more time at home. So, CfE also stresses that parents are an important part of the picture. Nurseries and schools work closely with parents, carers, families and the community and welcome your involvement.

Your child should also have the chance to influence decisions about their learning and what happens in their school.

That's why it's good for you to know what CfE is all about, and why schools go about things the way they do.

When parents and teachers and children cooperate and work together, it brings out the best in children.



## How CfE fits together

### SKILLS

At all stages of CfE, across all subjects, children and young people learn skills such as literacy, numeracy and expressive arts, as well as how to think creatively, assess risks, make decisions, respect others and work in teams.

### Hobbies and achievements

Children develop their own interests too. These interests and their hobbies and achievements out of school are all part of who your child is and what they can do.

## Curriculum for Excellence and your child

# 8

### Learning areas

All children learn across eight areas:

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages including English, Gaidhlig, Gaelic learners and modern languages
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies

### Community

All children are an important part of their school community and so they learn how to be a member of the community, and why this matters for life beyond school.

## Being involved

Schools are keen to see parents: you are an important part of the school community. It's also important for you to have the chance to link in with your child's learning.

Schools have changed a lot in recent years. If you'd like to know more about what happens in your child's school, or if there's anything you are not sure about, it's OK to ask. Lots of parents feel a bit out of touch – and your child may not give you the full picture.

You can speak to your child's teachers/headteacher any time about anything to do with your child or CfE. Parents often want to know more about what their child is learning and why, or about the level their child is at, or what they can do at home to support their child's learning. Feel free to ask your school for advice.

You can get involved directly in what the school does. By law, all schools have to support parents to take part.

## The right to education

CfE is a whole approach to help children do their best at school, at home and, in time, in the adult world. It develops children's skills for learning, life and work and gives them the chance to develop in their own way. Results and qualifications (attainment) and life and work skills that come from all kinds of activities (achievement) are equally important.

### CfE gives every child and young person the right to:

- ✓ A consistent education from age three to 18
- ✓ A broad general education from age three (early years) to S3
- ✓ A senior phase after S3
- ✓ Opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work
- ✓ Personal support so they can fulfil their potential
- ✓ Support to move into further learning, training and work after they leave school. CfE links directly into work-based, college and university courses and qualifications

## How you can support your child's learning

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD ALL THE WAY ALONG

You are an important part of your child's education

There are all sorts of things you can do with your child to support what they are doing at school, at whatever stage they are at, and which don't cost anything: for example, reading with your child, playing games, taking them out and about

By listening, talking and encouraging you can do a lot to support your child as they go through ELC, primary and secondary school

### Literacy

At all stages, from age three to 18, children and young people learn grammar, spelling and speaking. This helps them to think critically and creatively, listen and talk, read and write. In doing so, they learn the skills which are so important in life and for future work.

Every teacher in each area of the curriculum encourages all children and young people to:

- Explain their thinking
- Debate their ideas
- Read and write at a level which will help them to develop their language skills further

### Numeracy

From early on, numbers, patterns and shapes intrigue children and often form part of their play. As they develop, they learn to count, measure and calculate, and to apply these skills for working out and solving problems in different contexts. Numeracy-related skills (such as problem solving) contribute to learning in other areas of the curriculum.

All teachers are responsible for promoting numeracy and encouraging children and young people to:

- Understand numbers and mathematical processes and concepts
- Apply these processes and concepts
- Problem solve and use analytical skills

### Health and wellbeing

This helps children and young people gain confidence, learn to think for themselves and develop positive attitudes. It includes aspects such as PE and food and diet. It helps young people develop 'life' skills, such as taking responsibility for their own health and fitness, decision making, working with other people, and communicating with others.

All teachers are responsible for promoting learning in this area including:

- Developing young people's skills, knowledge and understanding about health and wellbeing
- Encouraging young people to promote their own health and wellbeing throughout their lives

PARENTS CAN ALSO ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILDREN TO DO THESE THINGS

children • parents • teachers • families  
 • individuality • community • school •  
 nursery • learn • play • choice • confidence  
 • happy • fun • home • inside • outdoors

This leaflet is part of the Curriculum for Excellence series which also includes:

**Wider achievement in a Nutshell**

[npfs.org.uk/2019/06/wider-achievement-in-a-nutshell](http://npfs.org.uk/2019/06/wider-achievement-in-a-nutshell)

**Senior phase in a Nutshell**

[npfs.org.uk/2019/06/senior-phase-in-a-nutshell](http://npfs.org.uk/2019/06/senior-phase-in-a-nutshell)

**Find out more about CfE and how you can support your child at:**

**National Parent Forum of Scotland**

[npfs.org.uk](http://npfs.org.uk)

**Curriculum for Excellence fact file**

[www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/920/0121215.pdf](http://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/920/0121215.pdf)

**Parents as partners in their children's learning**

[education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/parents-as-partners-toolkit.pdf](http://education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/parents-as-partners-toolkit.pdf)



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