

## **East Dunbartonshire Council**

### **Early Years Admission Policy for children entitled to 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare ( including two year olds) : Updated February 2016**

The Revised Admission Policy is based on the principles within the Strategic Review of Early Years and Childcare, which was approved by the Council on 17 December 2013. It takes account of the increased entitlement to early learning and childcare for eligible children as detailed in the Children and Young People's Act as well as the secondary legislation with regard to eligible two year olds.

This policy will be implemented with effect from August 2016.

#### **1.0 Service Provision and Eligibility**

1.1 The Children and Young People Act increased the entitlement of all eligible 3 and 4 year old children to 600 hours of early learning and childcare. Children become eligible in the term following their third birthday. Some children who are 2 years old are eligible for increased provision. If a two year old is from a household in receipt of certain benefits and the parent is seeking work; for parent/carers who meet the current criteria for free school meals and also for children being looked after away from home including kinship and foster care. Refer to Section 1.2 for criteria. Two year olds become eligible in the term following their second birthday.

1.2 Two year old children are eligible if they are looked after or in kinship care or where they are in a household which qualify for any of these benefits:

- Income support
- Job seekers allowance
- Employment support
- Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance

Parent/ carer are required to provide evidence they were engaging in work related activity such as job seeking, employability pipeline programmes, training, studying and family support programmes such as parenting programmes

With effect from August 2015, children aged two years are eligible if they live in a household, which is in receipt of tax credits in line with entitlement for Free School meals:

- Child Tax Credit (CTC) but not Working Tax Credit & the income is less than £16,105;
- Both maximum CTC & Working Tax Credit and the income is under £6,420;
- Support under VI of the immigration & Asylum Act 1999;
- Universal Credit; and

- State Pension.

Evidence of benefits is required with a stamped verification form completed by The Hub.

1.3 The Act requires local authorities to ensure that the early learning and childcare provision available is flexible enough to allow parents an appropriate degree of choice when deciding to access services. East Dunbartonshire Council will build up models and choice incrementally in line with the Strategic Plan for Early Years. This was informed by a survey of parents carried out in November 2015.

1.4 As part of the implementation of 600 hours, provision has been reviewed on a locality basis to provide a range of provision within each area. The locality areas have been defined as follows:

- Bearsden / Milngavie / Torrance;
- Bishopbriggs; and
- Kirkintilloch/ Lenzie/ Milton of Campsie/ Lennoxton/ Twechar.

1.5 Parents will be able to access the entitlement to 600 hours early learning and childcare for their ante or pre-school child in the following ways:

- Five sessional places at a local authority nursery: Each session being three hours ten minutes; five days per week – morning or afternoon. Term time ( 38 weeks per year excluding five in-service days). All local authority nurseries offer sessional places;
- At an extended day term time nursery in the local authority – parents can purchase additional sessions. There are extended day nurseries in each locality within East Dunbartonshire.
- At an extended day / year centre in the local authority – parents can purchase additional sessions. There are extended day / year centres in each locality within East Dunbartonshire.
- At a partner provider – sessional or extended day / year.

1.6 Provision for two year olds is provided in some centres within each locality:

- Bishopbriggs: Cleddens Learning and Childcare Centre ( Extended day and year provision) ; Auchinairn Nursery ( Extended day provision)
- Kirkintilloch/ Lenzie and the Villages: Hillhead Nursery (Extended day and year provision); Lennoxton Nursery (Extended day and year provision); Twechar Nursery (Afternoon sessions); Gartconner Nursery ( Extended day provision); Lenzie Meadow Nursery ( Extended day and year provision).
- Bearsden and Milngavie: Castlehill Nursery (Extended day and year provision); Clober Nursery (Extended day and year provision), Colquhoun Park Nursery ( Afternoon places).

The Education Service will also procure places at childminders or private providers. The authority will build up provision for two year olds to provide more flexibility and

choice for parents in line with the Strategic Plan for Early Years and within the financial constraints.

- 1.7 East Dunbartonshire Council procures places with partner providers for ante and pre-school children. There is a tendering process in place, which allocates places in centres where the partnership criteria have been met. This details certain conditions including quality, price and financial viability.
- 1.8 Scottish Government Guidance recommends that children attend nursery for not less than two and a half hours per day and for not less than two days per week. Two 8 hour sessions would be the maximum funded compressed hours available i.e 16 hours per week; where parents request more hours, these could be purchased. In this way, the funding for 600 hours would be spread across the school or calendar year for parents.
- 1.9 Quality is a priority for all East Dunbartonshire Council early years' providers. Partner Providers must meet certain conditions of contract e.g. working towards high quality early years education and childcare, implementing child protection and health and safety policies. Staff in partnership centres benefit from training provided by East Dunbartonshire Council. Partnership centres, in addition to being inspected by the Care Inspectorate, are inspected by Education Scotland to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is being offered. The Education Service provides support and advice to partner providers as detailed in the Contract.
- 1.10 For the purpose of allocating sessional nursery places, East Dunbartonshire has been split into specific geographical areas, defined by the catchment areas of the Council's non-denominational primary schools.

## **2.0 Entitlement to provision**

- 2.1 All pre-school children aged four years of age are eligible for a funded place. Children in their ante pre-school year become eligible in the term following their third birthday. Eligible two year old children become eligible in the term following their second birthday.

Where a child's birthday falls on or between the following dates:	The child will become eligible from the following school term:
1 March – 31 August	August ( autumn term)
1 September – 31 December	January ( spring term)
1 January – last day of February	March / April ( summer term)

- 2.2 Parents may request to defer entry to primary school if their child has additional support needs or other difficulties affecting their development. Children born in January or February have the right to an additional year of funding at nursery. Children born in September – December will be subject to approval by the Early

Years Community Assessment Team – EYCAT. This will consider assessment by nursery staff, psychological services and/or other agencies as well as the views of parents. If approved, a further year’s funding at nursery will be allocated.

- 2.3 Ante and Pre-school children resident in other Council areas will be allocated places within an East Dunbartonshire Council nursery or a Partner provider, in accordance with the Admissions Process detailed in Section 3. This is part of a cross boundary arrangement with other local authorities. This does not apply to eligible two year old children.

### **3.0 Admission Process and Banding Procedures for three and four year olds ( Ante and Pre-School Places)**

- 3.1 Registration for ante and pre-school nursery places will take place in January / February each year. The last day of February will be the closing date for applications. All applications received after the closing date will be subject to available places and funding.
- 3.2 Parents should apply using the EDC Registration Form. The Registration Leaflet provides information for parents. These are available from Council offices, schools and the Council Website. If parents are applying for a deferred entry or their child already attends a local authority nursery and they are applying for a pre-school place, there are separate forms to be completed.
- 3.3 Where a request for assistance has been made by another agency this should be done on the Revised Early Years Request for Assistance Form.
- 3.4 Where there is insufficient provision to meet the demand, decisions must be taken to determine which children should be given the available places. Where possible, siblings will be allocated a place in the same nursery or sessions. East Dunbartonshire Council has agreed that there are circumstances which will give some children priority for admission. The same priorities will be used for all council nurseries. If demand exceeds the available places, a ballot will be conducted to ensure a fair allocation.

#### **3.5 Banding Procedures**

- 3.5.1 **Sessional places in local authority nurseries** ( 3 hour 10 minute sessions only), the following banding will be used to allocate places:

*Band 1 being highest priority and Band 4 being lowest priority.*

##### Band 1

- (a) Any child who is considered to be in need of protection.

- (b) Any child with additional support needs considered by the Psychological Services to be in need of nursery provision. (All requests for assistance will be considered by EYCAT – Early Years Community Assessment Team)
- (c) Any child who has been identified as requiring support with their development or whose family circumstances are considered to be difficult by a GP, Health Visitor or other professional who has requested assistance. (All requests for assistance will be considered by LAP – Locality Admissions Panel)

#### Band 2

- (a) Any child whose birthday is in January or February whose parents have exercised their entitlement and elected to defer their child's entry to primary school.
- (b) Any child born between September and December whose parents have exercised their entitlement and elected to defer their child's entry to primary school. (These children are not automatically funded by East Dunbartonshire Council).
- (c) Any child in their pre-school year. Places will be allocated on the basis of:
  - (i) within catchment area
  - (ii) outside catchment area

#### Band 3

Any child in their ante-pre-school year. Places will be allocated on the basis of:

- (i) within catchment area
- (ii) outside catchment area

#### Band 4

Any child living outside East Dunbartonshire.

For the purpose of allocating nursery places, East Dunbartonshire has been split into specific geographical areas, defined by the catchment areas of the Council's non-denominational primary schools.

**3.5.2 Extended day centres – Term time:** There are a limited number of extended day places available. These are allocated in accordance with the following banding. A Locality Admissions Panel (LAP) will allocate places. See Section 4.

*Band 1 being highest priority and Band 4 being lowest priority.*

#### Band 1

- (a) Any child who is considered to be in need of protection.
- (b) Any child with additional support needs considered by the Psychological Services to be in need of nursery provision. (All requests for assistance will be considered by EYCAT – Early Years Community Assessment Team.)
- (c) Any child who has been identified as requiring support with their development or whose family circumstances are considered to be difficult by a GP, Health Visitor or other professional who has requested assistance. (All requests for assistance will be considered by LAP – Locality Admissions Panel)

### Band 2

- (a) Any child born in January or February whose parents have exercised their entitlement and elected to defer their child's entry to primary school.
- (b) Any child born between September and December whose parents have exercised their entitlement and elected to defer their child's entry to primary school. (These children are not automatically funded by East Dunbartonshire Council).
- (c) Any child in their pre-school year. Places will be allocated on the basis of:
  - (i) living within locality
  - (ii) living within East Dunbartonshire

### Band 3

Any child in their ante-pre-school year. Places will be allocated on the basis of:

- (i) living within locality
- (ii) living within East Dunbartonshire

### Band 4

Any child living outside East Dunbartonshire.

The localities are defined in Section 1.5.

3.5.3 **Extended day centres – 50 weeks:** There are a limited number of extended day / year places available. Extended day term time only places are not available within 50 week centres. Places are allocated in accordance with the Banding in 3.5.2. above. A Locality Admissions Panel (LAP) will allocate places. See Section 5.

3.5.4 Early Years Holiday Provision is available within each locality in the 50 week centres. Information on the availability of Early Years Holiday Provision will be made available to all parents. Parents will apply for a place in October or Easter or Summer. Places are allocated as follow:

1. Children who attend the 50 week centres on extended day places.
2. Children who attend a local authority nursery and are categorised as Band 1, see 3.5.1.
3. Children within the locality.
4. Children who live within East Dunbartonshire.
5. Children out with East Dunbartonshire.

3.6 Partner providers have their own admissions policy. If a parent applies for a place at a partner provider, a place is procured in accordance with the Contract for Partner Providers. Children resident in other Council areas may be allocated places in an East Dunbartonshire Council Partner provider only after all applicants from the East Dunbartonshire area have been allocated places. Priority will then be given to children in their pre-school year. Funding for places will be subject to available budget.

3.7 Priority will be given to applications received before the closing date each year. All applications received after the closing date will be subject to places being available in the chosen local authority nursery or funding being available to procure a place at a

partnership centre. Parents will be offered an alternative place, but this may not be in their locality.

- 3.8 Applications for Partnership Centres received after the closing date from residents outside East Dunbartonshire will not be considered. Applications to change nurseries from a local authority nursery to a partner provider or requests for increased sessions at a partner provider received during the year, will be treated as a late application and will be subject to available funding.

#### **4 Admission Process and Banding Procedures for children under three years of age**

- 4.1 Parents of children aged two years old who are eligible for 600 hours as defined in Section 1.2 can apply for a place at any time of the year. East Dunbartonshire Council makes information available to parents on the EDC website and also through leaflets in relevant agencies e.g Social Work, Health Centres and Job Centres.
- 4.2 The Education Service requires evidence of the benefits the parent/carer is in receipt of and a stamped verification form should be completed by the Job Centre and attached to the Registration form, and sent to then chosen local authority Early Learning and Childcare centre that takes children aged 2. The parent/ carer also requires to provide evidence they were engaging in work related activity such as job seeking, employability pipeline programmes, training, studying and family support programmes such as parenting programmes.

If household is in receipt of tax credits in line with entitlement for Free School meals:

- Child Tax credit (CTC) but not Working Tax Credit & income is less than £16,105
- Both maximum CTC & Working Tax credit and income is under £6,420
- Support under VI of the immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit
- State Pension

Evidence of benefits is required with a stamped verification form completed by The Hub. This should be attached to the registration form and sent to the chosen local authority Early Learning and childcare centre. A list of those centres which provide places for two year olds is available.

#### **4.3 Banding procedures**

Places will be allocated by the Locality Admissions Panel according to the Banding criteria. Applications from outwith East Dunbartonshire Council will not be considered.

*Band 1 being highest priority and Band 2 being lowest priority.*

Band 1

- (a) Any child who is considered to be in need of protection.
- (b) Any child with additional support needs considered by the Psychological Services to be in need of nursery provision. (All requests for assistance will be considered by EYCAT – Early Years Community Assessment Team.)
- (c) Any child who has been identified as requiring support with their development or whose family circumstances are considered to be difficult by a GP, Health Visitor or other professional who has requested assistance.
- (d) Any child aged two years old who is looked after or in kinship care living within East Dunbartonshire Council;
- (e) Two year old children would be eligible where they are in a household which qualify for any of these benefits:
  - o Income support
  - o Income based job seekers allowance
  - o Income related employment and support allowance
  - o Incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance
  - o State pension credit
- (f) From August 2015, the two year olds who are in a household which qualify for free school meals:
  - o Income support;
  - o Income based job seekers allowance
  - o Income related employment and support allowance
  - o Prescribed Tax Credits:
  - o Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit), based on an annual income not exceeding the first income threshold for Child Tax Credit (currently £16,105); or,
  - o Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit based on an annual income not exceeding the first income threshold for Working Tax Credit (currently £6,420); or, where the child's parent has ceased to work the required minimum number of hours but remains entitled to Working Tax Credit (Working Tax Credit can continue to be awarded for a maximum period of 4 weeks immediately following the end of employment or reduction in hours); or,
  - o Universal credit (under Part 1 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012( c )
  - o Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Band 2

Two year olds who are not eligible for funding and live within East Dunbartonshire Council.

4.4 Cleddens Learning and Childcare Centre has a small number of places for children under two years of age. Applications should be made direct to the centre. Parents should be aware that this does not guarantee them a place when their child is eligible for funding as a three or four year old.

## **5.0 Locality Admissions Panels ( LAP)**

5.1 Each locality as defined in Section 1.5 should establish a Locality Admissions Panel to discuss and agree placement decisions.

5.2 The membership of the LAP will comprise:

- A member of the Senior Management from each extended day centre in the locality; and
- A representative from the authority's Early Years Team – Service Manager ( Early Years ) or nominated replacement; and
- Representatives from Health, Social Work or any other relevant agency regarding Band 1 applications.

5.3 The Banding as detailed in Section 3 of this policy should be used unless in exceptional circumstances. Approval should be sought from the Education Officer (Early Years and Primary) or the Chief Education Officer.

5.4 A Chairperson should be nominated by each LAP. This individual will be responsible for ensuring meetings are co-ordinated and decisions recorded. This role can be on a rotational basis. A record of the decisions should be sent to the Service Manager (Early Years)

## **6.0 Allocation of places for children with additional support needs / Emergency admissions**

6.1 Places at Campsie View Nursery and Twechar Language and Communication Resource are made by the Early Years Assessment Group ( EYCAT). These places are usually additional to the entitlement to funded provision. If a child attends on a split placement with a mainstream nursery, the funded part of their entitlement will be in the mainstream placement. If a child only attends Campsie View they will be entitled to attend for a longer session – three hours ten minutes per day/ term time.

6.2 There may be occasions when a referral is made for an emergency place at a local authority nursery. This is at the discretion of the Education Officer. (Early Years and Primary)