

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 3 March 2020

Early Years Admissions Policy

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 To approve the revised Early learning and childcare Admissions Policy. The proposed policy is attached in Appendix.

Alistair Gaw

Director for Communities and Families

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Report

Early Years Admissions Policy

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The October 2019 the Education, Children and Families Committee approved the need to review the Early Years Admissions Policy as we move toward universal entitlement to 1,140 hours from August 2020, taking account of cross boundary protocols to prioritise Edinburgh's children and the criteria within the Funding Follows the Child – National Standard for funded providers.

This report includes the changes that have been made to the Early Years Admissions Policy and the Application Process for funded places, to support parents and carers to access high quality early learning and childcare that is flexible, accessible and affordable.

3. Background

- 3.1 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early learning and childcare in Scotland – Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Planning Guidance for Local Authorities' issued in March 2017 by the Scottish Government set out local authorities' responsibility for the implementation and delivery of an expanded entitlement of 1140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare in their area. The vision for expansion is underpinned by the principles of Quality, Flexibility, Accessibility and Affordability.

- 3.2 The City of Edinburgh Council's Commitments 32 and 33 for this administration reflect the vision in the Blueprint:

32. Double free early learning and child care provision, providing 1140 hours a year for all 3- and 4-year olds and vulnerable 2-year olds by 2020

33. Make early years' provision more flexible to fit families' needs and provide additional resources to families in difficulty so that no children are educationally disadvantaged when they start formal schooling

- 3.3 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 1) Order 2019 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2019 increases the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide 1,140 hours of Early learning and childcare for all four

year olds, 3 year olds in the term following their 3rd birthday and 2 year olds who meet particular criteria.

- 3.4 The Policy reflects the increase in hours of Early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1,140 hours from August 2020 and identifies the priority for allocating places in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Act, including the need to provide continuity of service should a family or child's circumstances change.
- 3.5 The Policy is underpinned by the core components, values and principles within "*Getting it right for every child*", which are also fundamental to the detailed guidance and procedures developed in order to implement the policy.
- 3.6 The Policy is applicable to all local authority Early Learning and Childcare settings and it prioritises children who are resident within the boundaries of the City of Edinburgh Council.

4. Main report

The Early learning and childcare Admissions Policy – August 2020

Changes to eligibility criteria

- 4.1 The Policy identifies the order of priority given to children who are eligible for 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare, either because of their age or other criteria as identified in the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act](#). The Policy sets out the criteria for allocating places based on order of priority. This now includes criteria for children with siblings already attending the setting to remove the need for parents to travel between locations.
- 4.2 Children who meet the Eligible 2 year old criteria will now be able to access their funded entitlement from the week following their 2nd birthday, rather than the term after their birthday. This is to enable those identified as benefiting the most from access to funded Early Learning and Childcare to be able to do so earlier.

Changes to the Application Process

- 4.3 When applying for an Early Learning and Childcare place, parents/carers are asked to state their first, second and third choice of setting. The application process will now provide parents with the opportunity to state their first, second and third choice of delivery model to receive their funded entitlement e.g. during term time, full year provision or a blended model with another provider.
- 4.4 Children aged 3 years old are eligible for a funded place from the beginning of the term after their third birthday e.g. August, January or April. Parents/carers require as much notice as possible to enable them to make any necessary arrangements

around their funded place e.g. to attend work or study. Parents/carers will now receive notification of their funded places earlier as follows:

Funded entitlement begins	Parents notified of place
August	1 st week in April
January	1 st week in October
April	1 st week in February

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Policy seeks to provide clarity to parents/carers, staff and elected members about the duties of the local authority to meet its statutory duties in the delivery of Early Learning and Childcare. Guidance for staff regarding the procedures, which reflect the duties and priorities outlined in the Policy will be amended accordingly.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no further financial implications with regard to the duties outlined within the policy. The Local Authority will be informed of additional funding in the event of any increase to the statutory entitlement from August 2020..

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Policy on Early Learning and Childcare Admissions meets the council's requirement to have governing decision making in the allocation of resources and in relation to service standards.
- 7.2 The Policy will need to be updated in accordance with decisions communicated by the Scottish Government with regard to any modification in entitlement
- 7.3 The local authority has a duty to consult regularly with parents about the delivery of provision. Consultation with parents in September 2017 and September 2019 along with regular communication with parents contacting the early years service for information has informed the Policy

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Expansion of EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE from 600-1140 hours by 2020](#), Education, Children and Families Committee, 14 August 2018
- 8.2 ["A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE in Scotland"](#)
- 8.3 Drivers and Barriers to uptake of Early Learning and Childcare amongst 2 year olds

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 Early Years Admission Policy

Education, Children and Families Committee

Early Years: Early Learning and Childcare Admissions

Early Years: Early Learning and Childcare Admissions

Implementation date: 1 August 2020

Control schedule

Approved by

Approval date

Senior Responsible Officer Lynn Paterson – Senior Education Manager

Author Donna Murray – Senior Education Officer

Scheduled for review June 2022

Early Years: Early Learning and Childcare Admissions

Policy statement

This policy is required to ensure clarity and consistency in pursuance of the Local Authority duty to provide 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare to eligible children as required under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 1) Order 2019 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2019.

1.1 The Act defines those children who have an entitlement to 1,140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare as:

- All 4 year olds.
- 3 years olds in the term following their third birthday (Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- Any child aged 2 or over, who is or has been since aged 2, looked after by any local authority or has been the subject of a kinship care order.
- Children aged 2, living in households where the parent/carer is in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:
 - Income Support
 - income based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - income based Employment and Support Allowance
 - Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance
 - State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit with annual household income below £16,105
 - both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit with annual household income below £6,420 ²
 - support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Universal Credit with a monthly household earned income of £610 per month or below (Based on equivalent of £7320 per year) Note: disability allowance is not included as income.

Part 12 (3) of the Act identifies a child who is considered to be at risk of becoming looked after as eligible.

From August 2020, children of Care Experienced parents will also be entitled to an Eligible 2's funded place.

Once a child is identified as eligible their entitlement to early learning and childcare will remain, regardless of changes to parental/family circumstances.

This policy will safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need and so far as is consistent with that duty, promote the upbringing of children by their families, by providing a range and level of service appropriate to their need (Children (Scotland) Act 1995).

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) in Edinburgh seeks to build on existing structure and best practice that supports early intervention whenever possible. This policy is underpinned by GIRFEC and considers the core components, values and principles which bring meaning and relevance at a practice level to this single-agency, multi-agency and inter-agency approach, to meet the needs of all children.

All children within the eligible groups will be entitled to 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare.

Scope

2.1 This Policy relates to the following specific services within Local Authority provision:

- 1,140 hours early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.
- 1,140 hours early learning and childcare for 2 year olds who are of have been since aged 2, looked after by a local authority or under a kinship care order.
- 1,140 hours early learning and childcare for 2 year olds whose parents/carers are or have been since the child was aged 2, in receipt of specified benefits.
- Early learning and childcare services for children aged under 2 years.

Attendance at a particular Local Authority setting does not guarantee a child's entry into a specific Primary School. The provision of early learning and childcare in early years establishments is not governed by catchment areas.

The legislative duty of the Local Authority will be met in ensuring that 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare is available for those entitled within the Local Authority though not necessarily within a specific establishment.

Definitions

3.1 "Term" following their third birthday: as per school session dates. Term 1 – Autumn term, Term 2 – Spring term, Term 3 – Summer term.

There is provision to secure a place for a child earlier, immediately following their second or third birthday where wellbeing needs have been identified through the child's planning process. Children who meet the eligible 2 year old criteria are entitled to a funded place from the week following their 2nd birthday.

Policy content

Underpinning Principles

4.1 The principles underlying the policy apply regardless of the type of service accessed and are as specified in legislation:

- New universality and entitlement of early learning and childcare to specific groups.
- Centrality of the rights, needs and views of children and their families.
- Accessibility and flexibility of high quality services.
- Socially inclusive provision for families, incorporating additional support as appropriate through the integrated assessment and child planning process as outlined in GIRFEC.

- A commitment to cooperative values and the principles of equity of opportunity, social justice and to tackling social exclusion.

Implementation

The following information relates to the allocation of 1,140 hour placements.

Allocation of spaces

- 4.2 The criteria for allocation of places and for providing additional services apply across all early years settings. Parents/Carers are expected to show evidence of a child's identification in the form of the birth certificate prior to placement. Some identified settings will also provide a range of services which prioritise those children and families identified as having a need for additional support.

Additionality criteria

- 4.3 Any service delivery which does not reflect the baseline 1,140 hour entitlement will be made through the integrated assessment and child's planning process. This would include the allocation of additional resources (which may include additional time), a reduction in hours needed and those children who do not meet the funded eligibility criteria (e.g. those aged under 2).

Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare Settings

- 4.4 These settings provide 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare hours to 3 and 4 year old children who meet the eligibility criteria, under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Places for eligible 2 year olds are available in some but not all local authority settings, depending on registered capacity.
- 4.5 The allocation of 1,140 hour places will be made in the order of priority listed below. Once a child is identified as eligible from the age of 2, priority will be given for them to receive a place when aged 3. This reflects the requirement in the Act for the entitlement to remain and the importance of smooth transitions for our youngest citizens.
1. Children resident in Edinburgh who require additional support to enable them to reach their full potential (*Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009*), or who meet the eligibility criteria as identified in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
 2. Children resident in Edinburgh accessing a retained year (i.e. children of statutory school age who are assessed as requiring another year of pre-school education).
 3. Children resident in Edinburgh who have been granted deferred entry to Primary School.
 4. Children resident in Edinburgh who are eligible for funded early learning and childcare and have a sibling already attending the setting.
 5. Children resident in Edinburgh in their pre-school year in order of their birth date, oldest first.
 6. Children resident in Edinburgh who have reached their third birthday and are born within the dates of eligibility, in order of their birth date, oldest first.

7. Children resident in Edinburgh who have reached their third birthday and are not yet eligible based on the eligibility date but who have been assessed through the Child's Planning Process as meeting the criteria in section 4.2.
 8. **Children who are not Edinburgh residents.** Attention will be paid to the numbers of children on the waiting list from Edinburgh throughout the year who meet the above criteria and require places before the allocation of places for children out with Edinburgh will be considered.
- 4.6 The audit process will consider children with additional support for learning needs and how best they can be supported within the nursery setting.

Split placements

- 4.7 An aim of integrating early learning and childcare is to provide greater consistency for children and reduce the need for split placements if this is not in the best interests of the child and family.
- 4.8 If a split placement is considered as the most appropriate arrangement in meeting the needs of a child and family this can be accommodated at the discretion of the Head of establishment and will be for no less than two days.
- 4.9 Where there is a high demand for placements (i.e. 10 children or more on the waiting list), the Head of establishment will allocate split placements on a discretionary basis and in communication with the Early Years Service.

Allocation of additional services/supports

- 4.10 Any decision for a child and family to receive additional services will be allocated as a result of an integrated assessment and child's planning meeting as per Getting it Right for Every Child.
- 4.11 These decisions will be informed by the use of the GIRFEC practice tools: the wellbeing indicators and the resilience matrix where required. Decisions will be recorded as part of the Child's Plan and will refer to the child's identified and specific additional support needs.
- 4.12 Decisions to allocate additional hours or modify the allocated hours as an emergency intervention may be taken by the Head of Establishment and will relate to a child's safety, an emergency situation which has adverse effect on the family or the prevention of child from being looked after by the local authority. A child's planning meeting may then consider any additional supports/actions required as a result of such an emergency.

Selling of Additional Hours

- 4.13 Some settings may have early learning and childcare hours available for purchase which may include wraparound care between the hours of 8am and 6.00pm and which may include available hours over school holiday periods. The majority of settings will require to review the selling of additional hours each term in order to consider the waiting list for entitled children. This should be done in consultation with the Senior Education Manager for Early Years.

4.14 Priority for these places will be given to those parents in employment or education.

4.15 The Local Authority will continue to review the current favoured configuration of 1,140 hours in consultation with stakeholders.

Admissions Process

4.16 From August 2020, children who meet the eligible 2 year old criteria will be eligible for a funded place from the week following their 2nd birthday.

4.17 All other children are eligible for a funded place from the term after their 3rd birthday as follows.

Date of birth falls between	Eligible from
1 March – 31 August	August start of term
1 September – 31 December	January start of term
1 January – 28 February	April start of term

4.18 Parents/carers can register their child for a funded early learning and childcare place at any time. Parents/carers require as much notice as possible to enable them to make any necessary arrangements around their funded place e.g. to attend work or study. Parents/carers will receive notification of their funded places as follows.

Funded entitlement begins	Parents notified of place
August	1 st week in April
January	1 st week in October
April	1 st week in February

4.19 When applying for a funded early learning and childcare place parents are required to state 3 preferences of location and 3 preferences of model of delivery. Parents who chose not to state more than one preference should be advised that there is no guarantee that we will be able to accommodate their preferred choice of setting or model of delivery.

Responsibilities

Quality Improvement Education Officers and Early Years Managers

Related documents

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Drivers and Barriers to uptake of Early Learning and Childcare amongst 2 year olds
- A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland - Action Plan
- A Blueprint for 2020: Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Planning Guidance for Local Authorities

Equalities and impact assessment

For details of the completed Record of Equality and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) form, contact the named author of the policy.

Strategic environmental assessment

Not applicable

Review

June 2022
