

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

### Admission

## Early Learning and Childcare

#### Introduction

All establishments in West Dunbartonshire which provide early learning and childcare for children aged 0 – 5 years are designated as Early Learning & Childcare Centres and are run by the Department of Educational Services.

This leaflet explains the admissions policy for all centres and provides information to all parents/carers applying for places.

#### Demand for Places

Children greatly enjoy and benefit from playing and sharing their learning with other children. Early Learning & Childcare Centres have trained and experienced staff that organise a stimulating programme of learning experiences and offer security and care to the children.

#### Entitlement / Eligibility for Places

##### Three and Four year Olds

The Government requires local authorities to provide free nursery places for all three and four year old children; and for some 2 year old children. Parents/carers who are in receipt certain benefits which are detailed below, may be entitled to a place for a child who is two years old. The entitlement for a nursery place is 600 hours of early learning and childcare; this is normally 3 hours 10 minutes per day, 5 days per week over each school term/session. If available, there can be flexibility within individual centres. Discussions should be held with the Head of Centre regarding this.

Entitled two year old children become eligible for a place in the term after their second birthday. If your child's date of birth is between:

1 <sup>st</sup> March – 31 <sup>st</sup> August	-	they are eligible in August (autumn term)
1 <sup>st</sup> September – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	-	they are eligible in January (spring term)
1 <sup>st</sup> January – 28 <sup>th</sup> February	-	they are eligible in April (summer term)

In most cases the place will be in an Early Learning & Childcare Centre managed by the Council, but in certain circumstances, a place can be commissioned in a private partnership nursery.

If you wish to be considered for a commissioned place in a private nursery, please contact [earlyyears@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@west-dunbarton.gov.uk).

##### 2 – 3 Year Olds

Parents/carers may be entitled to a place for children aged between 2-3 years, if they are in receipt of **any** of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance (income based)
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Incapacity benefit or severe Disablement Allowance
- State Pension Credits
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) but not Working Tax Credit (WTC) and your income is less than £16,105
- Both maximum CTC and maximum WTC and your income is under £6,420
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit

Parents/carers should contact the centre of their choice if they meet any of the above criteria.

### **“Children in Need”**

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places a duty on local authorities to provide daycare, out of school care and holiday care for children who are in need of care and attention. In West Dunbartonshire this care may be provided in an Early Learning & Childcare Centre or by commissioning places with specially selected registered childminders called daycarers.

### **Childcare Provision**

The Government requires local authorities to work in partnership with other providers in the private sector to provide affordable, accessible high quality childcare. West Dunbartonshire Council provides entitlement to Early Learning & Childcare for three year olds, four year olds, and 2 year olds if the parent/carer is receiving the relevant benefit. In addition we provide day care for children in need, and additional childcare to meet children’s and parents’ needs. Parents/carers may purchase childcare in addition to the entitlement at one of our partner provider nurseries. Within some local authority nurseries, additional childcare hours may also be available to purchase on a temporary basis. As the local authority is required to offer entitlement to families meeting our admissions criteria, purchased childcare can be removed at any time.

More detailed information is available in a leaflet “Arrangements for Purchasing Childcare Terms and Conditions for Parents”.

## **Deciding Priorities for Admission**

In addition to those families entitled to places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and day care places, West Dunbartonshire Council has agreed that there are some family circumstances which give children priority for admission. The same admission policy is used for all Early Learning & Childcare Centres in West Dunbartonshire. It is expected that children’s names will be put on the register of applications at the nursery in the parents’ catchment area. This will then be considered at the Admissions Panel. There may be flexibility, dependent on individual circumstances.

Date of birth or length of time on the register of applications does not affect the priority given to children. All centres are non-denominational.

## **1 Places in Centres or with daycarers for children aged 0 – 5 years will be prioritised as follows:**

### **BAND 1 – CHILD PROTECTION**

Referral of a child by the Social Work Department deemed to be in need of protection – automatic admission.

### **BAND 2 – DAYCARE FOR “CHILDREN IN NEED”**

Children referred by:

- 1) Social Work Department
- 2) Psychological Services
- 3) Health Professionals

as being “in need” in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

This means that a child is in need of care and attention because:

- He / she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development unless services are provided for him/her;
- His /her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired unless those services are provided;
- He / she is disabled, or
- He / she is adversely affected by the disability of any other person in his family.

**N.B.** In cases of educational disadvantage where the first language is not English, language support staff may need to be consulted.

## **BAND 3 – RESPITE CARE**

Families who are identified **as being under stress** because for example:

- They are caring for elderly dependants
- They have 3 or more children under 5
- They are a lone adult household
- Other factors.

**N.B.** Supporting information will be required to confirm priority in the above band.

### **Entitlement for Admissions**

All other children not already admitted in Bands 1-3: 2 year old entitlement and or children who are three or four years old within the defined area.

## **BAND 4 – PARENTS IN EDUCATION/TRAINING**

Children of lone adults who are returning to Education/Training.

**N.B.** Supporting information (acceptance letter from the training service, for example), will be required to confirm priority in the above band. Childcare charges will be made in certain circumstances.

## **BAND 5 – PARENTS IN EMPLOYMENT**

Priority will be given to lone adult households in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit Childcare Allowance.

**N.B.** Supporting information will be required to confirm priority in the above band. Charges will be made for attendance in this category.

## **BAND 6 – GENERAL**

All other children in the age range resident in the defined area of the centre.

**N.B.** Charges will be made for attendance in this category.

### **Entitlement for Admissions**

#### **Pre-School Children**

All other children not already admitted in Bands 1 – 3 in their pre-school year within the defined area.

**N.B.** Charges will be made for attendance other than for the core pre-school entitlement.

#### **Ante Pre-School Children**

All other children not admitted in Bands 1 – 3 in their ante pre-school year in the defined area.

**N.B.** Charges will be made for attendance other than for the core ante pre-school entitlement.

## Deciding Priorities for Admission

**Q: How do I apply for a place for my child?**

**A:** All centres have a defined area for priority for admissions.

You can place your child's name on the register of applicants at the centre in your catchment area, from his / her second birthday for a pre-school year or ante pre-school place, or prior to their second birthday if you are receiving the relevant benefits.

Please note that defined areas for Early Learning & Childcare Centres are not consistent with the delineated areas for primary schools.

**Q: How are places allocated?**

**A:** Places are allocated according to the priority decided by the area admissions panel, which is made up of the heads of all local centres, representatives from social work or the health board. Decisions to allocate more than the core entitlement time or an amount of time where there is no entitlement will also be made at the area admissions panel.

**Q: What happens when there are not enough places in my preferred Centre?**

**A:** If more applications are received than there are places available, a ballot may be required. Parents will be advised that a ballot will take place and will be invited to attend. If a child is unsuccessful in the ballot, parents will be offered places in other local centres where there are vacancies.

**Q: What happens if my circumstances change?**

**A:** If there are any changes in your circumstances whilst your child's name is on the register of applicants you should inform the centre. In an emergency or a crisis a short-term placement can be arranged. In that case you will have a written agreement stating the length of time for which the place has been offered and a date to review your circumstances will be given.

All places will be reviewed by the area admissions panel and, if circumstances have changed, for example if a stressful situation improves, then a child may be offered a part time rather than a full time place.

## Enrolment

Enrolment will take place for the majority of children prior to starting in August. Notice of children's start dates will be sent out to parents/carers. Places which become available throughout the year in each centre, will be filled from the register of applicants, according to priority.

**N.B. The final decision on priority banding rests with the area admissions panel.**

If you are concerned that your application has not been properly considered you may contact the Lead Officer Early Learning and Childcare on **01389 737487**

Email: [earlyyearscas@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyearscas@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

Or visit the websites at: [www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk/](http://www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk/)

<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/early-years/>



This document can be made available electronically, in large print, Braille, tape and in a variety of community languages. Please contact Early Childhood Services, Educational Services

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