



Deferred Entry

Accessing an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Information for Parents and Carers

From August 2022, Aberdeen City Council will be one of the local authorities offering an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), as part of a Scottish Government pilot initiative, prior to it becoming a universal right from August 2023.

Previously, only children with a fifth birthday between January and February were automatically entitled to an additional year of funded ELC if entry to Primary One was deferred.

However, from August 2022, **children who are resident in Aberdeen City**, and whose fifth birthday falls between 22nd August 2022 and the end of February 2023, will be automatically entitled to an additional year of funded ELC.

The following information is intended to help you if you are considering whether your child should start Primary One or defer entry to school. You should also discuss this with staff in your ELC setting, at the earliest opportunity, who can advise you further.

Can my child have an additional funded year of ELC?

Children who were born on or between 22 August 2017 and 28 February 2018

In Scotland, children usually start Primary School in the year preceding or during which they have their 5th birthday. This means that in Primary One classes, children are usually aged between 4½ and 5½ years. Where a child does not start school at the expected August start date for their year group, it is called deferred entry to Primary School.

If your child's 5th birthday falls between 22nd August 2022 and February 28th 2023 you have a legal right to defer their entry into Primary One until the following August when they are nearer 6 years old.

Should you wish to defer your child's entry to school, **and are resident in Aberdeen City**, your child will be funded for an additional year of Early Learning and Childcare. Every effort will be made for this to be accessed at the setting of your choice, although this cannot be automatically guaranteed if you are requesting a change of setting for this additional year or are requesting a setting outwith Aberdeen.

It is important that you are well informed when you make this decision as children who defer entry to Primary One remain entitled to leave school when they are 16. Due to the later start date, this may be prior to the completion of SQA National Qualifications.

If I am considering an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare for my child, what should I do?

If an additional year of funded ELC is being considered you should discuss this with staff in your child's ELC setting in the first instance. You will be required to reapply for an ELC place when applications open in 2022.

Could an additional year of funded ELC disadvantage my child?

It is important to consider your child's school career from ELC to secondary school and beyond. All young people can legally leave school in Scotland at age 16. If your child turns 16 between 1 March and 30 September they can leave school after 31 May of that year. If they turn 16 between 1 October and the end of February then they can leave at the start of the Christmas holidays in that school year.

For those that defer the start of Primary One, this may mean that your child could make the decision to leave secondary school prior to completing SQA National Qualifications.

My child turns 5 between 22nd August and 28th February. I am unsure whether he/she should start school in August 2022.

Most children in this age group are ready to, and do, start school, although they do not legally have to. You may think it is in the best interests of your own child to defer their entry to school. In these cases you don't need to complete an application for deferral but you do have to make your request known. Before you make your decision, you should discuss with staff at your child's Early Learning and Childcare setting.

If you are unsure at this stage whether to defer your child's entry to Primary One you should apply for both an ELC and a Primary One place for your child.

Where should my child be placed for this additional year of funded ELC?

An additional year of funded ELC can be taken at a Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare setting or at a Funded Provider setting.

It is important, as part of the application process, that careful consideration is given to the setting where the additional year of ELC should be completed.

For example, please remember that the decision to grant an additional funded year of ELC, and of where this takes place, is not taken into account during the decision making process for Primary One placing requests. This means that, if you choose that your child should complete their additional year of ELC at a Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare setting in a school that is not your primary catchment school, this will not influence any further decisions about Primary One applications. That is, at a later date, if you wish to apply for a primary school place at a school that is not your child's primary catchment school, there is no guarantee that they will be able to attend this school. Whether or not they have completed an additional year of ELC, where this has taken place and the reason for the granting of that place, will have no influence or bearing on the normal decision making processes for primary school placing request applications.

My child is an Aberdeen City resident but attends an ELC setting in a Local Authority that is not Aberdeen City. If I am considering applying for an additional year of funded ELC, what should I do?

You should discuss with staff in your child's Early Learning and Childcare setting at the earliest opportunity.

As your child is resident in Aberdeen City, your child will be funded for an additional year of ELC and every effort will be made, through discussion with the other Local Authority, for this additional year of funded ELC to be accessed at the setting of your choice. However, this cannot be automatically guaranteed.

My child attends an Aberdeen City Council ELC setting and I am not an Aberdeen City resident. If I am considering applying for an additional year of funded ELC, what should I do?

You should discuss with staff in your child's Early Learning and Childcare setting at the earliest opportunity and refer to your Local Authority's Deferred Entry Policy. You must apply to the Local Authority in which you are a resident for them to make the decision regarding the funding of an additional year of ELC. For Aberdeenshire residents the link in relation to deferrals is: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/admissions/delayed-entry/>

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