

Islington Early Years Admissions Policy

August 2021

Introduction

This policy sits alongside the [charging policy](#) in outlining the terms and conditions of childcare places in Islington; please refer to both for full details.

This admissions policy applies when parents/carers express a preference to receive provision for their children in Islington community primary schools, nursery schools and Islington early years centres and children's centres.

Islington Council subsidises daycare for children aged 6 months and above, in all its children's and early years centres and in a number of voluntary sector community nurseries. This supports the council to ensure that local, affordable high-quality childcare is made available to parents and carers who are both in employment or studying towards a qualification.

Under Threes

The Council provides part-time and full-time places for Islington-resident children under three in children's and early year's centres, nursery schools and some primary schools. Some two year olds can receive 570 hours of Free Early Education per year (FEEE). All other places and any additional hours for 2 year olds with FEEE are subject to the council's charging scheme. Please note: not all settings offer the FEEE for two year olds.

A two year old is eligible for a FEEE part-time place from the term after their second birthday if they meet one of the following national criteria:

- income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- child tax credits, and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2-year-olds can also get free childcare if they:

- are looked after by a local authority
- have a statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- get Disability Living Allowance
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

To find out if you are eligible go to www.islington.gov.uk/free2

Three and Four Year Olds

All three and four year olds are entitled to receive 570 hours of free early education per year from the term after their third birthday. This is usually taken as 15 hours per week for 38 weeks but some providers will allow fewer hours per week to be taken over more weeks per year. This universal entitlement can be taken in primary and nursery schools, children's centres, other early years settings and with childminders. Some three and four year olds are entitled to an additional 15 free hours, making a total of up to 30 hours per week.

The eligibility criteria for the 30 hours Funded Early Education Entitlement are as follows:

- Both parents are working (employed or self-employed including zero hours' contracts) or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family; and
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at the national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW); and each parent individually earns less than £100,000 per year.
- Both parents are employed but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave;
- Both parents are employed but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave;
- Both parents are employed but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay;
- One parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring; or
- One parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.

Any hours provided above the FEEE for three and four year olds are subject to the council's charging policy and charging schedules.

How does the council decide who should be offered places in its children's centres, early years centres, nursery schools and nursery classes in community primary schools?

Admissions Criteria

Children under three

Places are first allocated to Islington children as follows:

1. to children 'looked after', adopted, subject to special guardianship or a residence order;
2. to children 'at risk' (or the sibling of a child 'at risk') who are the subject of a child protection plan;
3. to children deemed by the Council to be 'in need' and who meet criteria set out in the 'Early Years Priority Statement' (attached);

Any remaining places can be given where at least one of the below applies:

- a) Both parents are working/studying (employed or self-employed including zero hours contracts) or the sole parent is working/studying in a lone parent family.
- b) Eligible for FEEE for 2 year olds (if offered by the provider).

These places are allocated as set out in the criteria below.

- a) to Islington children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range
- b) to children with a sibling attending in the same school or centre
- c) to Islington children living nearest the school or centre decided by a straight line measurement
- d) to non-Islington residents

Three and four year olds

If there are not enough places available for the number of applications, the places will be allocated to Islington residents as follows:

1. a full or part-time place to children 'looked after', adopted, subject to special guardianship or a residence order;
2. a full or part-time place to children 'at risk' (or the sibling of a child 'at risk') who are the subject of a child protection plan;
3. a full or part-time place to children deemed by the Council to be 'in need' and who meet the criteria as set out in the Early Years Priority Learning Statement (Attached).
4. to other children in the following order:
 - a) to three and four year olds, a part-time (15 hours) FEEE place according to availability in individual schools and children's centres;
 - b) to eligible three and four year olds, a full time (30 hours) place according to availability in individual schools and children's centres;
 - c) If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated in the following order:
 - i) to children already attending the school or centre*;
 - ii) for school nursery classes: to children with a sibling attending the primary school;
 - iii) to Islington children living nearest the school or centre decided by a straight line measurement

- d) If there are still vacancies, places can be allocated to non-Islington residents living nearest the school or centre. These will be decided by a straight-line measurement for children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range.

*This does not apply when parents want to move from one type of place to another (e.g. from marketed to community).

Places subject to the Council charging scheme

Places, which are subject to the council's charging policy, where both parents are working or studying are allocated in the following order:

- a) to children already attending the school or centre*
- b) to children with a sibling attending the same school or centre;
- c) to Islington children living nearest the school or centre decided by a straight line measurement;
- d) to Islington children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range

Marketed places

About 150 places in nursery schools, children's and early years centres, including a very few primary schools, are allocated outside the above criteria, through a marketed places scheme. The scheme enables parents where both parents are working or studying and are able to pay the full marketed charge to apply for a place. Places within this scheme are allocated first to those who live in Islington, second to those who work in Islington, and third to those who live and work out of borough.

Keyworkers

Keyworkers, who are not resident in Islington but are employed in Islington, may be considered for places in children's centres and early years centres, which no Islington resident wishes to take up. For this purpose, keyworkers are defined as teachers, NHS clinical staff, police and community support officers, staff employed in schools and children's centres, and social care workers. Keyworkers must have a permanent contract of employment for at least 17.5 hours per week and a family income of less than the maximum income in line with Islington charging schedules.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

All schools and centres must provide for children with SEND. In addition, there are 36 specialist places in total in children's centres. See the Islington SEND local offer for more information:

www.islington.gov.uk/localoffer

Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers have a duty to inform the local authority if the child is fostered through a private arrangement with the child's birth family. Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

Priority Early Learning –

Eligibility Criteria

Islington Council and partners consider the following children to be most in need of the services (which may include day care and early education) they provide or commission.

An early years multi-agency panel allocates places in priority order as per the list below, with 'A' being the highest.

These children are assessed by the relevant professionals as requiring additional services in order to reach or keep up a reasonable standard of health and/or development and who are:

- A - Children who are "Looked After", adopted, subject to a special guardianship order or residence order
- A - Children subject to Court Orders or Police Powers of Protection
- A - Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan
- B - Children who are likely to become 'Looked After'
- B - Children whose parents [or primary carers] are experiencing difficulty as a result of drug or alcohol related problems (this could include the child if appropriate)
- B - Children living with domestic violence
- B - Children whose parents [or primary carers] have a significant mental health illness
- C - Children of parents who are teenagers
- C - Children who have suffered abuse in the past
- C - Children who are privately fostered
- C - Children who are unaccompanied refugees or asylum seekers
- C - Children of parents who are or were previously looked after
- D - Children who are homeless and/or are temporarily housed in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation
- D - Children living in overcrowded housing
- D - Children whose parents [or primary carers] have a significant physical illness or physical or learning disability that impacts on the wellbeing of the child
- D - Children whose parent/carer has caring responsibilities for someone else (e.g. disabled parent/partner)
- E - Cognitive and learning (SEND)
- E - Social, emotional and behavioural (SEND)
- E - Communication and interaction (SEND)
- E - Sensory (SEND)
- E - Physical (SEND)
- E - Medical condition or syndrome (SEND)
- F - Children who are siblings of disabled children