

Islington Early Years Admissions Policy

August 2020

Introduction

The Council has a wide range of early education and childcare provision available for young children from the age of 6 months until children have to go to school. The way that early years services are funded means that it is important to explain clearly the council's policy for making provision for children of different ages and how it decides which children are offered places in council funded nurseries and nursery classes in schools.

All three and four year olds are entitled to receive 570 hours' free early education per year. 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 two years olds can also receive 570 hours of free early education per year and from September 2017, some three and four year olds are entitled to an additional 15 free hours, making a total of up to 30 hours per week. These entitlements can be taken in many of the same settings, which offer the universal entitlement. However, some settings do not take 2 year olds and some do not offer the additional 15 free hours for 3 and 4 year olds. The universal and targeted entitlements are funded by central government and are referred to in this document as free early education entitlement (FEEE).

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

Three and Four Year Olds

All three and four year olds are entitled to a free part-time early education place from the term after their third birthday.

From September 2017 some three and four year olds may be entitled to a further 15 hours, making a total of 30 hours per week. The following criteria apply:

- 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 funded entitlement for three and four year olds in primary and nursery schools, and children's centres are subject to the council's charging scheme.

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. The part-time early education two year old places, for children who meet the eligibility criteria, are free. All other places and any additional hours for 2 year olds with FEEE are subject to the council's charging scheme.

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:

- the child is looked after by the local authority, is adopted or subject to special guardianship or a residence order
- they are no longer looked after by the local authority as a result of an adoption order, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order which specifies with whom the child lives
- the family meets either of the following financial criteria:
 - they meet the criteria used to determine eligibility for Free School Meals;
 - their family receives Working Tax Credits and has an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 per year
- they have a current Education, Health and Care plan;
- they are entitled to Disability Living Allowance;

The Council also funds some places for 2 year olds with special educational needs and disabilities who meet local rather than national criteria above

To find out if you are eligible under national and/or local criteria, go to www.islington.gov.uk/free2

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

Three and four year olds

Parents may state their preference as to which nursery class, school or centre they would like their child to attend in the years leading up to the child's admission to reception class. However, if there are not enough places available, 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 as per quota agreed with individual schools and children's centres;
 - b) to eligible three and four year olds, a full time (30 hours) place as per quota agreed with individual schools and children's centres;
 - c) to other three and four year olds places can be offered according to the council's charging scheme;
 - d) If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated in the following order:
 - i) to children already on the roll of the school or centre*;
 - ii) for school nursery classes: to children with a sibling registered in the primary school;
 - iii) to children living nearest the school or children's centre;

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.

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

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);

Providers who offer FEEE places for 2 year olds and/or places subject to the Council charging scheme allocate remaining places as set out in the criteria below.

Free early education places for 2 year olds:

- 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 registered 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

Places subject to the Council charging scheme

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

- a) to children already on the roll of the school or centre*
- b) to children with a sibling registered in 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 scheme

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 who 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 other applicants.

Key workers scheme

Key workers, 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, key workers are defined as teachers, NHS clinical staff, police and community support officers, staff employed in schools and children's centres, and social care workers. Key workers 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

All schools and centres must provide for children with special educational needs. However, there are 36 specialist places in total in ten children's centres. See the Islington SEND local offer for more information: www.islington.gov.uk/localoffer

Parental Responsibility

You 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).

January 2020

Priority Early Learning Statement 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:

children who are "Looked After", adopted, subject to a special guardianship order or residence order	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1)	A
children subject to Court Orders or Police Powers of Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	(2)	A
children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3)	A
children who are likely to become "Looked After"	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4)	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)	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5)	B
children living with domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6)	B
children whose parents (or primary carers) have a significant mental health illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	(7)	B
children of parents who are teenagers	<input type="checkbox"/>	(8)	C
children who have suffered abuse in the past	<input type="checkbox"/>	(9)	C
children who are privately fostered	<input type="checkbox"/>	(10)	C
children who are unaccompanied refugees or asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	(11)	C
children of parents who are or were previously looked after	<input type="checkbox"/>	(12)	C
children who are homeless and/or are temporarily housed in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	(13)	D
children living in overcrowded housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	(14)	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	<input type="checkbox"/>	(15)	D
children whose parent/carer has caring responsibilities for someone else (e.g. disabled parent/partner)	<input type="checkbox"/>	(16)	D
children with a condition or difficulty within the following categories of special educational need. Please see Islington SEND local offer for more details			
cognitive and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	(17)	E
social, emotional and behavioural	<input type="checkbox"/>	(18)	E
communication and interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	(19)	E
sensory	<input type="checkbox"/>	(20)	E
physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	(21)	E
medical condition or syndrome	<input type="checkbox"/>	(22)	E
children who are siblings of disabled children	<input type="checkbox"/>	(23)	F