



Argyll and Bute Council
Education Service: Early Years

Primary school entrants

Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Parent Information

*If required this information leaflet can be supplied in other languages and formats.
Please contact Early Years (see back page).*

What does an additional year of ELC mean?

This means that your child's entry to primary school will take place one year later than the typical start date, and you are requesting an additional year of ELC.

Entitlement

If your child turns five years old between the second day of the school year and the end of February, you have the legal right for their entry to primary school to take place the following August instead.

All children with birth dates between the second day of the school year and the end of February, are automatically entitled to receive an additional year of funded ELC.

Children due to start school, who have their fifth birthday between March and the first day of term in August, can still apply for an additional year of funded ELC. This is at the discretion of Early Years however and only granted in circumstances warranting this.

How to Apply

You must indicate that you wish to apply for an additional year of ELC on the P1 online application. P1 registration week for session 2026-2027 takes place online from 17th to 21st November 2025. More information can be found [here](#).

Please note:

- The local authority offers Early Learning and Childcare in local authority, voluntary, private and independent sectors and will try to allocate an additional year of Early Learning and Childcare according to parental choice. However, in the best interest of the child, we believe that, wherever possible, it is important to access Early Learning and Childcare in the same place throughout your child's Early Learning and Childcare experience to provide continuity and a secure learning environment.
- Parents may request an additional year of ELC under Cross Boundary funding. This is where they wish to place their child/children in an ELC setting outside of their resident local authority area. This will be subject to longer timescales for approval, due to cross boundary funding protocols.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do I decide what's best for my child?

Choosing when your child should start primary school is a big decision. Before you decide, it's best to speak to your child's ELC setting, as they will know your child extremely well and be able to give you informed advice and support to make the right decision for *your* child.

You may also wish to visit the primary school your child will be attending. Much of the learning in the early stages of primary school is now based in play which helps support transition for children moving from ELC into Primary 1.

If you are still finding the decision difficult, ask your child's ELC setting to make contact with their Early Years Education Support Officer. This is a member of Argyll & Bute's Central Education Team, with a specialism in Early Level education, who can meet with you to discuss your child and help you make your decision.

If you are thinking about requesting an additional year of ELC, here are some things you might want to consider:

- If you are worried about 'school readiness', then please remember, it's not the job of the child to be 'school ready', it's the job of the school to be 'child ready'.
- What feedback has the ELC setting given you? You can ask for a discussion to get advice from the nursery or childminder.
- What support and challenge will your child receive from the ELC setting if they stay?
- What will it mean when your child is older, for example when they are 12, or 16, if they might be one of the youngest or one of the oldest in their class?
- What will it mean for gaining qualifications? If a child enters P1 a year later it might mean they would be able to leave school at 16 without achieving any qualifications.
- What will it mean for young people who choose to go on to further education? Young people who entered P1 straight away will be the youngest in their year group and may not be able to participate in some of the social aspects of college or university life.

Q. It's P1 registration week and I am still unsure whether to register for school or request an additional year of ELC, what should I do?

Due to the way that ELC spaces are allocated in February & March, we would advise you to request an additional year of ELC in your online P1 application. You can change your mind at any point up until the start of the next school year. We encourage you to have conversations with your child's ELC setting as they will be able to provide advice and guidance to help you make an informed decision.

Q. What should I do if I applied for an additional year of ELC, but have now changed my mind?

If you change your mind about an additional year of ELC, please advise us by replying to the confirmation email you received when you submitted your online P1 application.

Q. My child has additional support needs. Should I request an additional year of ELC?

In Argyll & Bute, we are committed to the principles enshrined within GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child). This means that any decision should be based upon the individual needs of your child. There is no 'one-size fits all' approach or automatic assumptions. If starting school at this point isn't in your child's best interests because of their individual needs, and an additional year of ELC would benefit their development, then this should be considered. Please speak to your ELC

setting, Education Support Officer for Early Years or school about any concerns you have for your child.

Q. I have made an application for an additional year of ELC, my child's date of birth falls into the automatically entitled category. What happens next?

Early Years will advise your ELC setting of your request. It is likely that they will already be aware of this following conversations you will have had with them when making your decision. We will also notify your catchment area school of your decision. This does not stop you changing your mind if you later decide to send your child to school instead. We aim to confirm your request by the middle of February.

Q. I have made an application for an additional year of ELC, but my child's date of birth falls into the discretionary category. What else is involved in addition to the above?

Your ELC setting will ask you to complete an additional form giving more background on the reason for your request. Your ELC setting will also provide relevant information & documents to the Early Years Education Support officer, who will use this to come to a decision that is in your child's best interests. We aim to inform you of the outcome by early April.

Queries:

A helpline has been provided by Education Service: Early Years to assist parents with information and advice on all aspects of Early Learning and Childcare for their child.

You can contact the helpline by e-mailing or telephoning as indicated below (between 9.00am – 5.00pm, Monday-Friday):

Telephone: 01369 708503

Email: earlyyears@argyll-bute.gov.uk



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