



ADDITIONAL YEAR OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (ELC): PARENT INFORMATION

WHAT IS AN ADDITIONAL YEAR OF ELC?

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 funded ELC hours.

ENTITLEMENT

When your child turns five, you have the legal right for their entry to primary school to take place the following August instead. This is deferring P1 entry. Whether your child would be entitled to an additional year of funded ELC during this time, depends on their date of birth.

- **Automatic entitlement:** Children who turn 5 between the second day of the school year and the end of February, are automatically entitled to receive an additional year of funded ELC.
- **Discretionary entitlement:** Children who turn 5 between 1st March and the first day of the school year, can only receive an additional year of funded ELC at the discretion of Early Years (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 2027-2028 takes place in the middle of November. [View P1 Registration Information.](#)

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. However, parents may request an additional year of ELC at a different ELC setting.

SOURCES OF ADVICE

- You may 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.
- Ask your child's ELC setting to contact their Early Years Education Support Officer. This is a member of Argyll & Bute's Central Education Team who specialises in Early Level education.

DECIDING WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR CHILD

Choosing when your child should start primary school is a big decision. 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'. 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. Here are some important considerations:

Learning & Development

- Does your child show curiosity and enthusiasm for learning?
- Do they recognise letters, sounds, numbers, shapes, and colours?
- Does your child learn best through play and exploration rather than more structured activities?
- Can they participate safely and confidently in the indoor and outdoor environment?
- How does your child cope with tasks requiring sustained attention and concentration?

Language & Communication Skills

- Can your child understand and follow instructions appropriate for their age?
- Are they able to express their needs, thoughts, and feelings effectively?
- Is your child's speech easily understood by familiar and unfamiliar adults?
- Can they participate in conversations and group discussions?
- Are there any speech, language, or communication needs that could affect their experience of school?

Social & Emotional Development

- How does your child interact with their peers?
- Do they initiate and sustain play with other children?
- Can they share, take turns, and cooperate in group activities?
- Are they able to form friendships and maintain them?
- How do they cope in larger groups?
- How does your child manage frustration, disappointment, and change?
- Do they require significant adult support to regulate their emotions?
- How confident are they in new situations?
- Do they demonstrate anxiety about transitions or separation from parents/carers?
- Would another year of funded ELC support their confidence and emotional wellbeing?

Independence & Self-Care

- Can your child manage personal care tasks independently?
- Are they able to organise belongings and follow routines?
- Do they seek help appropriately when needed?
- How much adult support do they require throughout the day?

Additional Support Needs

- Are there identified or emerging additional support needs?
- Are there areas of development that are significantly delayed or emerging?
- Have any professionals recommended further time in an early years setting?
- What interventions and strategies are currently in place, and what progress has been made?

Future Considerations

- What will it mean when your child is older, if they are one of the youngest or oldest in their class?
- If a child enters P1 a year later, they may be able to leave school at age 16 without qualifications.
- Young people who enter P1 straight away will be the youngest in their year group and may not be able to participate in some social aspects of college/university life.

Contact Early Years on Tel: 01369 708503 or earlyyears@argyll-bute.gov.uk

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

How do you come to a decision on a discretionary additional year of ELC application?

In line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), we recognise that every child develops at their own pace and has individual strengths, needs and circumstances. Decisions about an additional year of ELC are made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the unique needs and context of each child.

There is no single factor that determines whether a request will be supported. Instead, we consider a range of information, including the child's wellbeing, development, learning needs, views of parents and carers, and professional advice from those who know the child best. Our aim is to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the child, supporting them to achieve the right balance of nurture, learning and challenge at the right time. By taking an individualised approach, we seek to promote positive outcomes and ensure each child receives the support they need to thrive.

When will I find out about the outcome of my discretionary additional year of ELC application?

We aim to inform you of the outcome by the easter holidays.