



**Clackmannanshire
Council**

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Education Services

Information on Early Entry to School

The information provided in this booklet gives advice to parents who are considering applying for their child to start school early. It gives parents information about:

- the term 'Early Entry' and what it means
- Aspects that Education staff will consider when making decisions about early entry applications
- Issues which parents are asked to consider before applying
- How parents may apply for Early Entry

1. What does the term 'Early Entry' mean?

Councils are required to set the latest date by which children must have their fifth birthday in order to fall within the category of those who are considered to be old enough to attend school. Children born **before or on** this date **are regarded as being 'of school age'**. Children born **after** this date are **not regarded** as being old enough to attend school.

2. If I apply for my child to enter school early, how will Education staff decide on my application?

Education staff will consider whether:

- Your child's learning and development would be best met within an early years setting where the early childhood curriculum on offer is designed to meet the needs of young children
- The particular primary school class to which the child would be admitted would be able to provide education suited to the abilities and aptitudes of your child

In considering the best decision for an individual child, Education staff will consider key aspects of your child's learning and development. They will review your child's Profiling documentation, observe your child in nursery, consider the Head of Establishment's report (Section B of the application form) and discuss your child's learning and development with nursery staff and a member of the School Management Team.

Key aspects of learning for consideration will include your child's:

- Approach and attitude to learning
- Ability to communicate own feelings and express ideas confidently
- Levels of independence and self-help
- Emotional and personal development including self-confidence and esteem
- Preferred learning style and stage of development
- Ability to take part in conversations and discussions within a range of groupings and situations
- Progress within the early years curriculum

Decisions will also be made within the context that:

- Early childhood settings and independent settings in partnership with Clackmannanshire Council area provide the challenge, enjoyment, depth and relevance, personalisation and choice important to young children's development.
- The early childhood curriculum on offer is ideally suited to meeting the needs of young children, promoting emotional and social development, self-esteem and confidence.
- The starting point for learning is the child, and children need opportunities to develop their thinking through investigation, first hand experience, talk and play, with other children and with adults. Early years settings plan for and provide these opportunities.
- Activities and experiences within early childhood settings are carefully differentiated to meet the needs of **all** learners. The skill of the nursery team in early years settings ensures that relevant learning opportunities exist for all children, regardless of age or stage of development.

3. What Issues should I consider before deciding to apply for Early Entry?

Before making a decision, parents are asked to consider:

- Their child's **learning and development**
- Their child's **emotional and social development**
- Possible **long-term implications** for their child

It is helpful to discuss these issues with staff at your child's early years establishment.

A child's maturity and ability to cope with change should be given careful consideration at any point of transition. Research shows that early entry to school may put undue pressure on a child and suggests that early introduction to schooling could "increase anxiety and have a negative impact on children's self-esteem and motivation to learn". On the other hand, effective early years education can enhance school readiness.

Transition to school is a major event in the lives of young children which needs to be carefully planned for and supported. Early entry to primary school can be counter-productive to this.

Parents are asked to consider the possible long-term implications, when at the end of secondary school their child may still be too young to leave school along with their peers, and when potential difficulties exist around entrance to their preferred form of higher education.

4. If I decide to apply, what should I do?

A parent wishing to proceed in applying for early entry must complete an Early Entry Request application form. The parent or legal guardian of the child should complete Section A of the form. The Head of the Nursery or other early years establishment completes Section B and discusses the application with a member of school Senior Management Team.

All sections of the Early Entry Request application form and a copy of your child's Profile should be submitted **by 1st February** of the year for which early entry is sought. The application form should be submitted to Kirsteen Carmichael, 4th Floor Kilncraigs, Greenside Street, Alloa, FK10 1EB.

5. What happens next?

Arrangements will be made for staff from Education to meet with you and your child at your child's nursery. You will be informed of the date and time of the meeting. A member of the Management Team from the primary school will attend. The discussion will last for not more than an hour and will be conducted by a designated representative of Education.

The purpose of the discussion will be:

- to discuss the application with you
- to make a recommendation to the Education Senior Management Team

If your request is granted you will receive a letter inviting you to enrol your child at school.

In considering requests for early entry we must take into account the normal constraints affecting education generally. In determining any request therefore in addition to the meeting with you, we require to consider whether additional resources, in terms of staff, adaptation of school buildings or facilities will require to be committed as a result of the early entry request. This would have an influence on our decision.

If the Education Service refuses the request, you will be advised accordingly and given reasons for the refusal.

If your request for early entry is refused it is not possible to make an appeal against this decision

Where there are more requests than there are places available for the primary stage at a particular school all requests will be considered in line with the Council's admissions policy.

In general, an early entry request will only be considered for the start of a new school year, that is August. Requests for children whose family move into the area during the school year will be considered on an individual basis.

We are not able to fund home to school transport, except where seats are available in existing provision. Such provision can however, be withdrawn if there is increased need for distance entitled children within the catchment area.