

Admission for free Early Years Places

The Authority's admission criteria, which was agreed with the Early Years and Extended Schools Partnership, applies to free early years places for three and four year olds.

Free Early Years Place Admissions Guidelines

There are free early years places for all three and four year olds whose parents want one. Children may take up a free place:

- at a nursery class attached to a local school or at St Paul's Nursery School
- at their local pre-school playgroup
- at a private day nursery or independent nursery school
- with a childminder who is part of a registered network
- with the Portage Service (offering home visits for children with special educational needs aged 0 – 5 years)

All the above are called 'providers'.

The Early Years and Extended Schools Partnership and CYC agreed the following guidelines on admissions criteria for three and four year olds taking up a free early years place in the City.

- Normally children will be admitted in age order, so that the oldest children are admitted first:
- BUT children with identified special needs, or in social need, may be offered a free early years place before an older child who doesn't have these needs.
- Three year olds should be admitted in line with eligibility dates established by the Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Children who have their third birthday between 1 September and 31 December should be admitted from the beginning of the Spring Term.
- Children who have their third birthday between 1 January and 31 March should be admitted from the beginning of the Summer Term.
- Children who have their third birthday between 1 April and 31 August should be admitted from the beginning of the Autumn Term.
- Children should be admitted from anywhere within the City of York Council area. This allows parents to use early years provision that is most convenient for the family, near their work or close to their childcare provider.
- As part of the Pathfinder project for the 'new flexible increase in entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds', parents can access up to 15 hours of free early years provision

over a minimum of 3 days over 38 weeks of the year. Providers are being supported to offer the increase in entitlement in a flexible manner, which accommodates parental need. If a provider is unable to meet a parent's needs themselves, we would expect them to liaise with their local Shared Foundation Partners to try and meet these needs. Some children with special educational needs may require a different pattern of attendance.

- Children living within the City of York boundary, or within the normal area for City of York schools, have a higher priority for a place than children living outside the City boundary.
- Children living outside the City of York boundary who have attended a York pre-school provider for three terms before their third birthday will also be given prior consideration for a free early years place.
- Children with additional needs or vulnerable children qualify for additional hours (maximum of 15) if they are not already accessing the full entitlement.

The guidelines are based on equal opportunity principles, so that children will be admitted according to fair, open and clear criteria. People who provide free early years places do not have to follow these guidelines, but they should have a way of admitting children that is fair for all children who apply for places. Parents can ask to see admissions policies which set down how providers make their decisions.

City of York Council only funds free early years places within the City. This policy is aimed at supporting York providers so that a range and choice of provision in the City is sustained.

A fact sheet on free early years places for three and four year olds is available from the York Families Information Service on (01904) 554628, mobile: text 'funding' to 07624 802244 or email: cis@york.gov.uk.

The admissions policy

The admissions policy to full time school was introduced in September 2003.

The admissions policy is part of 'A Shared Foundation for Children' and combines education and care for children aged three to five years old in York.

'A Shared Foundation for Children' presented an ideal opportunity for York to rethink how to provide the best early years education and childcare for three to five year olds before they start formal education.

The policy means that children start full time education in the school year they turn five. There are two formal points of full time entry to school. These are dependent on the child's birth date. This means that:

- Children born between 1 September and 31 December can be admitted full time to school in September in the school year that they turn five.
- Children born between 1 January and 31 August can be admitted full time to school in January in the school year they turn five.

The policy includes an option of 'Deferred Entry'. All schools follow the council's formal policy of Deferred Entry. This means that parents may secure a place at a school under the normal admission arrangements but choose to postpone their child's admission to the school until the term after a child turns five. It is a legal requirement that all children must enter formal full time education the term after their fifth birthday. Adoption of this policy is recommended to the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools.

Schools and other local providers work in their Shared Foundation Community Partnership to offer early education and wraparound care and *subject to* consultation extended services to suit each child. Each local partnership may include pre-school playgroups, day nurseries, childminders, toddler groups and other out-of-school care.

Every three to five year old in a part time place is entitled to up to 15 hours of free early years provision per week, which is based currently on the Foundation Stage Curriculum. There may also be the opportunity to access additional wraparound care between the hours of 8am to 6pm.

Children who are accessing full time education will be receiving the equivalent to 15 hours per week based on the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Wraparound care is the term used to describe seamless care, education and play for young children. Additional hours are added to the free early years place to provide a whole day of education and care.

Wraparound Care includes the following:

- Breakfast clubs
- Lunch clubs
- Before/after early education sessions
- After school clubs/homework clubs
- Holiday play schemes
- Childminders

The education aspect would be offered by the school, or by a pre-school playgroup, private nursery or childminder registered for free early years provision, on or off a school site.

The wraparound care aspect would be provided by a pre-school playgroup, private nursery, childminder or informal carer. Again this could be provided on the school site or it may be that the childcare aspect is offered by a number of providers in the locality.

If you would like more information please contact the York Families Information Service on (01904) 554628, mobile: text 'funding' to 07624 802244 or email: cis@york.gov.uk.