

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2001

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE ADMISSIONS POLICY

Report by Director of Educational & Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members of the Education Committee of the proposed changes to the current East Ayrshire Pre-Five Admissions Policy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 3 September 1998, the Education Committee agreed revisions to the Pre-5 Admissions Policy. The Full Council endorsed the revised policy on 24 September 1998.
- 2.2 In recognition of the Council's duties under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and also the requirement for Pre-School education the following bandings were agreed:

- Band 1 Children in "need" Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
Referred by Social Work Department, Psychological Services, Pre-School Assessment Teams, Doctors and Health Visitors.
- Band 2 All children in their pre-school year living within the boundary of East Ayrshire.
- Band 3 Children in their pre-school year who live outwith the boundary of East Ayrshire but within the catchment area of an East Ayrshire Primary School.
- Band 4 All other children living in East Ayrshire with priority given to:
- Children from one adult households
 - Parent in employment, further education and training.
- Band 5 All other children in their pre-school year living outwith the boundary of East Ayrshire
- Band 6 Children not in their pre-school year from outwith East Ayrshire

3. EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

- 3.1** Since 1 April 1996, East Ayrshire Council has undertaken an expansion of pre-school education provision. A part time, five session pre-school education place has been made available for every child in their pre-school year whose parents wish it and 70 per cent of three year olds have accessed a place in either a local authority nursery or partner provider.
- 3.2** In the academic year 2000/2001 **1245** pre-school children and **797** three year olds accessed a place in local authority nurseries while **49** pre-school children and **324** three year olds accessed a place in partner providers of Pre-School Education.
- 3.3** Increasingly Government policy has encouraged the development of combined early education and childcare in a way that responds to the changing needs of children and families.
- 3.4** The Pre-School Education grant allows parents to access free, pre-school education for children in their pre-school year and three year olds from the start of the term following the child's third birthday.
- 3.5** The Government has declared its intention that childcare should be available and affordable. The provision of full day places and wraparound care is a key area for development in nursery schools and classes.
- 3.6** At present, parents seeking early education and childcare can be obliged to use two separate providers in one day. This poses problems for working parents and in particular for lone adult households for whom provision in one establishment would be preferable.

4. PROPOSED REVISED ADMISSIONS POLICY

- 4.1** To enable access to integrated childcare and early education, a revised Early Education and Childcare Admissions Policy is proposed to take account of the range of services delivered by or commissioned through the Council's Early Years Services:
- Community nurseries (0-8 years)
 - Nursery schools
 - Nursery classes
 - Partner Providers
 - Day Carers
- 4.2** Also, in recognition of the Council's duties under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the new duty under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 which commits local authorities to a permanent role in securing pre-school education, the following bandings are proposed:

5. PROPOSED EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE ADMISSIONS POLICY

(i) Places in Community Nurseries and Day Carers providing places for children aged 0- 3 years

BAND 1 CHILD PROTECTION

Referral of a child by Social Services to be in need of protection.

BAND 2 CHILDREN IN NEED

Children referred by: Social Services, Psychological Services, Health Professionals as being "in need" in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This means he/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health and development unless services are provided for him/her.

- His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired unless those services are provided
- He/she is disabled or
- He/she is adversely affected by the disability of any other person in his/her family.

BAND 3 RESPITE CARE

Families who are identified as being under stress

BAND 4 PARENTS IN EDUCATION/TRAINING

Priority will be given to lone adult households.

BAND 5 PARENTS IN EMPLOYMENT

Priority will be given to lone adult households in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit Childcare Allowance and lone adults working less than 16 hours per week and in receipt of income support.

BAND 6 GENERAL

All other children in the age range resident in the defined area of the Centre.

(ii) Places in Community Nurseries, Nursery Schools and Primary Schools with Nursery Classes for children in their Pre-School and Ante-Pre-School Year will be prioritised as follows:

BAND 1 CHILD PROTECTION

Referral of a child by Social Services in need of protection

BAND 2 CHILDREN IN NEED

Children referred by: Social Services, Psychological Services, Health Professionals as being “in need” in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

This means he/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health and development unless services are provided for him/her.

- His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired unless those services are provided
- He/she is disabled or
- He/she is adversely affected by the disability of any other person in his/her family.

BAND 3 PRE-SCHOOL YEAR

All children in their Pre-School Year living within the boundary of East Ayrshire and those children with January/February birthdays whose parents choose to defer their child’s entry to primary school.

Children in their Pre-School Year who live outwith the boundary of East Ayrshire but within the catchment area of an East Ayrshire Primary School.

BAND 4 ANTE PRE-SCHOOL YEAR

All children in their Ante Pre-School Year living within the boundary of East Ayrshire

Children in their Ante Pre-School Year who live outwith the boundary of East Ayrshire but within the catchment area of an East Ayrshire Primary School.

BAND 5 GENERAL

All other children in their Pre-School year living outwith the boundary of East Ayrshire.

All other children in their Ante Pre-School Year living outwith the boundary of East Ayrshire.

6. CHARGING

- 6.1** With the re-integration of the pre-school education grant and the further integration of education and care, the Council requires to establish a charging policy of the childcare element which is provided over and above the free pre-school education. The proposed rate will be £2.00 per hour subject to the following reductions in certain circumstances:

- (i) parents accessing 20 hours or more of childcare for any one child should be entitled to a 5% reduction
- (ii) parents accessing 40 hours or more of childcare for any one child should be entitled to a 20% reduction
- (iii) If more than one child from the same family is accessing childcare, the second child will be charged at 50% of the agreed rate. If there are three or more children, the third child and any subsequent children should be charged at 25% of the agreed rate
- (iv) Children in BAND 1 and 2 – there is no charge for children 0-5 years
- (v) Children in BAND 3 are free for 0-3 year olds

6.2 Income generated from the above proposals will be used to further develop the service.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The proposed revised Early Education and Childcare Admissions Policy would apply to all new places being allocated from March 2002.

7.2 All applications will still require to be recorded on a register of applicants to be held in each establishment.

7.3 The allocation of places in Community Nurseries and with Day Carers for children aged 0-3 years will continue to be administered by Heads of Establishment in the context of the multi disciplinary admissions panels, which currently exist.

7.4 The allocation of Pre-School education places in local authority and partner providers for children in their Pre-School and Ante Pre-School Year will be undertaken by one central multi disciplinary admissions panel.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The income generated from the proposals set out in paragraph 6.0 will be monitored on an annual basis.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Nil

10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This proposals set out in this report are in line with the Childcare Strategy and policy of Social Inclusion.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee agree:

- (i) to refer the proposal to Council for approval of the proposed revised Early Education and Childcare Admissions Policy as stated in this report;
- (ii) that the Director of Educational and Social Services should now advise Heads of Early Years Establishments and partner providers of the revised policy and arrange for the implementation of the policy from 1 April 2002;
- (iii) that the Director of Educational and Social Services is requested to monitor the implementation of the revised policy; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

18 October 2001
JA/KG/SB

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Re-integration of Pre-school Education Funding
2. Implications for Policy and Practice – September 2001
3. East Ayrshire Council – Pre-5 Admissions Policy

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel. No. (01563) 576004 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer Pre-5 services Tel. No. (01563) 576185

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER – KAY GILMOUR

AGENDA