# ADMISSIONS POLICY

**Policy**

Stepping Stones nursery is currently registered to provided private and funded places for 36 children (with a maximum of 12 two-year olds), consisting of a variety of:

* 3-5-year-old Early Learning and Childcare funded places
* Eligible 2-year-old funded places
* Private 2-year-old fee-paying places

This policy will explain the enquiries and admissions process for each of these categories.

**Procedures**

**3-5-year-old funded ELC**

When is my child eligible for a place?

* 3-year-old children are eligible to start on their 3rd birthday, unless their birthday falls between March and June, when they will start the following August – the same as school.
* Children must be 3 years of age by the first in-service day of the new school term in August to start on the first day of term; otherwise it will be the Monday after their 3rd birthday.
* Stepping Stones reserve the right to postpone a child’s start date after discussion with you if it falls close to a holiday period. This is to ensure the needs of the child are met and that settling in periods are sufficient.
* 4-year-old children not currently attending a funded ELC Provider will be eligible for their ELC starting immediately subject to availability of spaces and agreement by the Nursery Manager

How do I apply for my 3-year-old?

* Visits are encouraged for you and your child(ren) all year round to get a feel of the setting and ask any questions you may have.
* Registration week for ELC usually takes place in late January/Early February. Details of the dates can be obtained from:
1. Our social media pages/website
2. Adverts in the local press
3. Posters displayed in the local area
4. Argyll and Bute Early Years helpline - 01369 708503

**Primary 1 deferral:**

* For all children born August-February, if you decide to defer your child’s entry into P1 until the following year you will **automatically**receive an extra year of funded ELC. More details available on request

**Eligible 2-year-old funded ELC**

* If you are in receipt of one of certain benefits or if the child is either looked after by a local authority, the subject of a kinship order or a child with a parent-appointed guardian, then you are entitled to a funded ELC place starting from the term after the child turns 2.
* Please check the up-to-date information for guidance

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/funded-early-learning-and-childcare-2-year-olds>

How do I apply for ELC for my 2-year-old child?

* If you are interested in a space at Stepping Stones and we have availability then you should contact the Early Years Helpline on 01369 708503 and request an application pack
* Completed packs should be given returned to us along with your child’s birth certificate and evidence of receipt of one of the benefits listed above.
* Your application will be checked by someone from Early Years who will confirm your place in writing.
* If you require support to fill out the forms please contact Early Years, speak to your Health Visitor or Jobcentre Plus.

**How are funded ELC places offered?**

* You will be informed by letter from Argyll & Bute Early years if you are successful in gaining a place at Stepping Stones. This usually happens by the end of May.
* If the demand for places within Stepping Stones is greater than those available a ballot will be held. If you are unsuccessful in the ballot for your preferred provider, you will be offered another ELC place, and you will be informed of this following the ballot. Information on our ballot process and our priority banding can be found in appendix 1
* A ballot will also be held for anyone unsuccessful in gaining a place to create a waiting list should any spaces become available throughout the year. Your space on the waiting list will remain open for the whole of your child’s ELC allocation and these will be filled before any new ELC registrations are taken.

**Private 2-year-old fee paying**

* Please phone/email us to arrange a visit where we can answer any questions you have and you can see the setting in action.
* Children can join all year round, dependant on availability.
* Spaces are dependent on the prompt payment of fees (see fee management policy for more information)
* Fee paying spaces are allocated on a first-come first-served basis

**Allocation of ELC spaces**

At Stepping Stones we have 2 rooms available. Our Explorers room is for 2-year-olds and younger 3’s whilst our Adventurers room is for older 3’s, 4, and 5-year-olds. To ensure the rooms remain age and stage appropriate then each room has its own specific age range. ELC spaces will be allocated to these rooms in accordance with the following age ranges (Dates are according to the Argyll & Bute school holiday calendar)

* Explorers room – Children who turn 3 after the October break
* Adventurers room – Children who turn 3 before the October break

Stepping Stones reserves the right to adjust these age bands should it be beneficial to the child(s) development and in full agreement with the parents/carers

**This policy was written taking the following into consideration:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| UNCRC | 3, 18 |
| Health and Social Care Standards | 4.5 |

As a staff team we are committed to reviewing and updating our policies annually

This policy was last reviewed on 10/01/2023

Signed: Mo King (Manager)

**Appendix 1**

ELC ballot procedures will be held according to Argyll and Bute guidelines

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/elc_info_for_parents_booklet_rev_february_2019_3.pdf>

**Priority Criteria**

1. Children already attending Stepping Stones
* A priority placement will only be given to those who have attended Stepping Stones for at least 12 weeks prior to their potential commencement date.
1. For children deferring entry from P1 and staying at nursery an additional year
2. Children with elder siblings already attending Stepping Stones
3. (i)Children on the child protection register or identified through child protection procedures.

(ii) Referral from social work department where the child is deemed to be in need where:

* The placement would help the child remain within the family environment rather than be looked after by the local authority.
* The child is subject of a statutory order.
* The placement would support the child’s return to the family
1. Referrals from the undernoted professionals where there are concerns about the development of the child, parent or family.
* Education establishments
* Health agencies
* Education psychology services
* Social work services
* Voluntary sector agencies.

This priority refers to children who require support as a result of circumstances which are placing the child, parent or family at an education, social or health disadvantage. This includes children who are adversely affected by the disability of any other person in the family or it may include children with English as an additional language where a high level of support is needed.

1. New ELC registrants who will be in their pre-school year
2. Children within local area (Helensburgh and Lomond)
3. Children out with local area (according to Argyll and Bute guidelines)