



Education Authority Northern Ireland

Parent Guide to Pre-School Admissions 2020/2021

(Parent is defined as the person who has legal custody of the child)

Applications are not considered on a 'First Come First Served Basis'

During the admissions procedure when applying the admissions criteria **punctual** applications will be considered before **late** applications are considered.

A **target pre-school age application** will always be given priority over an **underage application**

Key points to **READ**:-

Read this **guide to pre-school admissions 2020-2021**. Doing so will explain to you the process including informing you about the pre-school age groups for September 2020. **Admission procedure key calendar dates are also available.**

Examine the **admissions criteria of all the pre-school(s)** that you are going to list in your order of preference. Parents are encouraged to list a number of preferences in their pre-school application form **that they would be prepared to send their child to**. Admissions criteria are available on this website www.eani.org.uk/admissions. It is **important** to read the admissions criteria as the onus will be on you as a parent to provide your reasons for each preference you list and to provide supporting documentation that any of your pre-school preferences require.

Apply online at www.eani.org.uk/admissions. We do encourage as many parents as possible to apply online, last year 45,000 applications were received online for pre-school and primary 1 admissions. Digital guidance/assistance is available if you need help in navigating the online application, read more in this website. If you decide not to apply online, a paper application will be available in your local pre-school provider or from the Education Authority from 7 January 2020.

Documents – remember when you have submitted your application you **must** provide your child's **Birth Certificate** to your 1st preference pre-school **along** with any supporting documents required by any of the pre-school preferences you have listed.

Age to apply for a funded Pre-School place in the September 2020–June 2021 school year?

Target Pre-School Age:- If your child is born on or between **2 July 2016 and 1 July 2017** they will be in their **final pre-school year (Target Age)** and you will be eligible to apply for a funded place for your child in either:-

- a Nursery School; or
- a Nursery Unit in a Primary School; or
- a Voluntary/Private playgroup provider

Penultimate (Underage):- If funded places are still available after target age children are admitted then underage (penultimate) children **born on or between 2 July 2017 and 1 July 2018** may also be admitted. If your child falls within this age group you will be eligible to apply to:-

- only a Nursery School or a Nursery Unit

Pre-School admissions procedure is in two Stages

After the application closing date of 12 noon on 30 January 2020 pre-schools will commence consideration of applications within a 2 stage process (refer to Key calendar dates in this guide for the 2 stage process):-

Stage 1 – Consideration of target age applications (children in their final pre-school year)

Stage 2 - Consideration of target age children unplaced at close of Stage 1, underage applications, applications from children living in Republic of Ireland, target age applications received after 12 noon on 7 February 2020 and new target applications received in Stage 2.

Key calendar dates in the Pre-School Admissions Procedure for 2020/2021 school year

<p>Apply Between 12 noon Tuesday 7 January 2020 (GMT) and 12 noon Thursday 30 January 2020 (GMT) (treated as <u>punctual</u>)</p>	
After 12noon Thursday 30 January 2020	<p>After this date/time:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the online portal will not be accessible to apply; • all applications are paper-based and a paper application is available in your local pre-school or from the Education Authority. • Applications received for a Target Age child will now be <u>late</u> (Stage 1) and for an Underage child treated as <u>late</u> throughout the procedure.
12 noon Friday 7 February 2020 (GMT)	<p>Final date/time you can provide to your first preference pre-school a new application (treated as late) and additional information in support of an application for any preference(s) listed. Applications/information received after 12 noon on 7 February will be processed in Stage 2.</p> <p>Final date/time a parent can submit a Change of Preference in Exceptional Circumstances (CoPEC) request to the Education Authority. Read the pre-school guidance for further information. CoPEC requests will not be accepted after this date/time.</p>
Tuesday 28 April 2020 (Close of Stage 1)	Letters will be posted on this date for receipt on Wednesday 29 April 2020 to advise on the outcome of your application (Target Age Only).
Wednesday 29 April 2020 (Stage 2 commences)	New Stage 2 first time applications are paper-based
Tuesday 5 May 2020 (no later than 4pm)	<p>Receipt of:-</p> <p>(a) Further Preferences for unplaced Stage 1 target age child (treated as <u>punctual</u>);</p> <p>(b) New first time Stage 2 target age application/documents (treated as <u>punctual</u>); Received after 4pm on 5 May treated as <u>late</u>.</p> <p>(c) New preference (treated as <u>late</u>) for target age child who was offered a funded place at Stage 1–Parent wanting to refuse offer;</p> <p>(d) New first time Stage 2 underage application/documents (treated as <u>late</u>).</p> <p>New additional documents for an underage punctual application (treated as <u>punctual</u>).</p> <p>5 May 2020 is the final date (a) to (d) inclusive will be accepted and processed in accordance with this timetable. If received after this date it will not be considered by the pre-school provider until after the close of Stage 2.</p> <p>NOTE: In all cases additional funded places will not be granted to a provider for a child who has already been offered a funded place in another setting.</p>
Wednesday 13 May 2020 (no later than 4pm)	EA will accept appeal form for Stage 1 against Nursery School/Units
Monday 8 June 2020 (Close of Stage 2)	Letters will be posted for receipt on Tuesday 9 June 2020 to advise on the outcome of your application.
Monday 22 June 2020 (no later than 4pm)	EA will accept appeal form for Stage 2 against Nursery School/Units

Pre-School Admissions in Northern Ireland

The Education (NI) Order 1997 gives you, as a parent, the right to express a preference as to the pre-school which you wish your child to attend. All parents seeking a funded pre-school place for their child are required to submit an application form in accordance with the arrangements set out below. This guidance describes the arrangements which the Education Authority (EA) has made to enable you to state your order of preferences and to seek a place for your child in your preferred pre-schools.

Priority will be given to children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission.

What is a funded Pre-School?

A funded pre-school place is provided under the Pre-School Education Programme.

- It normally consists of five sessions per week, each lasting 2½ hours per day during the school year.
- **In nursery schools and primary schools with nursery units**, attendance takes the form of full day (4½ hours per day) or part-time (2½ hours per day, either morning or afternoon sessions).
- **Nursery schools and Primary schools with nursery units** can offer either full time or part time sessions which can be either morning or afternoon.
- **A few Nursery schools and Primary schools with nursery units** have both full-time and part-time sessions.
- **Voluntary/Private Playgroup providers** only offer part time sessions (2½ hours per day).

Do I need to apply for a funded pre-school place?

Pre-School Education is **not compulsory** although good quality pre-school education has important benefits. Parents make application for a funded place on the understanding that their child will attend 5 days per week if offered a place. This will enable their child to benefit fully from a quality pre-school experience.

Exceptions

Special Educational Needs

If your child is undergoing statutory assessment you still need to apply for a funded pre-school place. However, **you should not complete an application if your child has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN Stage 5)**. Your child's placement will be arranged through the EA's Special Educational Needs Department.

Where can I find out about pre-schools and their admissions criteria?

Use our 'Find a school' section at www.eani.org.uk/admissions to search for pre-schools in your area and read their admissions criteria.

Other sources for this information may include:

- Your attendance at an open day or evening if arranged and promoted by a Pre-School provider.
- The Department of Education - ETI Inspection reports may hold reports for the Pre-School you are researching - ETI website <https://www.etini.gov.uk/>
- Early Years Organisation (Early Years website <https://www.early-years.org>)
- Family Support NI <https://www.familysupportni.gov.uk>

How do I apply for a funded Pre-School place for the 2020/2021 school year?

The easiest way to apply is online using the Citizen Portal. User guides are available on the EA website at www.eani.org.uk. You can apply online between: **12.00 noon (GMT) on Tuesday 7 January 2020 and 12.00 noon (GMT) on Thursday 30 January 2020.**

If you are unable to apply online, a paper application will be available on request from a pre-school provider or the Education Authority if you need one. *(The Citizen Portal closes at 12 noon on 30 January 2020 – an application is paper based after this date/time).*

Before starting to complete your child's application you should carefully read this guidance about the admissions procedure as well as the admissions criteria for each pre-school that you wish to nominate as a preference.

You must use your child's current home address and not that of a childminder or grandparent.

It is important that you carefully choose the correct name of the pre-school(s) you are going to list as some pre-schools have similar names e.g. St Mary's PS NU, Omagh, St Mary's PS NU, Banbridge, etc.

Any abbreviations within a pre-school provider's name or referred to in this website are as follows:-

PG = Playgroup

FT = Full-time

PS NU = Primary School Nursery Unit

NS = Nursery School

PT = Part-time

Refer in this guidance to *'How many preferences should I list'* and to *'I have previewed and submitted your form – what happens next?'*

How many preferences should I list?

The process for admission to pre-school is preference based and it is not always possible to accommodate everyone's first preference. For this reason, a parent is encouraged to list a number of preferences **that they would be prepared to send their child to**. You should list at least four preferences and on the Citizen Portal you can list up to six preferences and if you wish to list more than six preferences you should email the additional preference and reasons for preference to the Education Authority at preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk clearly stating your child's details.

Please note you cannot list the same preferences more than once. The **only exception** to this is if you **wish to apply for a nursery school or nursery unit which offers both Full-Time (FT) and Part-Time (PT) provision, in which case, you will need to list the pre-school provider twice, in your order of preference, if you want the provider to consider your application for both Full-time and Part-time e.g. (this is an example, but use the provider's correct name when listing preferences):-**

1st Provider A FT

2nd Provider B

3rd Provider A PT

You should be aware that after Tuesday 28 April 2020 (Close of Stage 1) a number of pre-schools will have allocated all their funded places. Therefore, it is important that you give very careful consideration to the stated order of your preferences and ensure all relevant information is provided to the first preference pre-school by 12 noon on Friday 7 February 2020.

You should detail how you feel your child meets the admissions criteria of the pre-schools you have listed as preferences, as this is what pre-schools will use when applying criteria and making decisions on which children will be offered funded places. Refer in this guidance to information for example on what socially disadvantaged circumstances means as pre-school providers are required by law to give priority to children in their final pre-school year (target age) who are from socially disadvantaged circumstances.

(When applying in Stage 2 of the pre-school admissions procedure refer to key calendar dates in this guidance).

What does socially disadvantaged circumstances mean when applying for a funded pre-school place?

Legislation requires pre-school providers to give priority to children in their final pre-school year who are from socially disadvantaged circumstances.

The Department of Education has defined socially disadvantaged circumstances as applying to a child whose parent is in **receipt of any of** the following benefits:-

- (i) Income Support;
- (ii) Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- (iii) An award of Income Support which has been converted into an Employment and Support Allowance and the level of benefit remains the same; or
- (iv) Universal Credit.

If you are in receipt of any of these benefits you must provide verification to your first preference provider by completing a Benefit Verification form and you will need to get it stamped by the Social Security / Jobs and Benefits Office. **From 7 January 2020 a form** will be available from

- Social Security/Jobs and Benefits Offices across NI; or
- a pre-school provider; or
- Education Authority; or
- download from <https://www.eani.org.uk/BenefitVerification>

Previewing and Submitting my application

You should check all the information carefully before submitting the form. You should ensure that *all* relevant information/reasons for preference(s) are provided to enable *all* the pre-schools you have listed as preferences to consider your child's application. *You and you alone are responsible for ensuring that all relevant information/reasons for preference are provided.*

If you do not provide relevant information/reasons for preference you may reduce the chance of your child being admitted to a pre-school of your preference. *Likewise, if you do not list a number of preferences that you would be prepared to send your child to, you may reduce the chance of your child being offered a funded place.*

It is also your responsibility to ensure that the information you provide is correct. Pre-schools may verify information provided as part of your child's application and information found to be false or misleading can lead to non-admission.

The information that you provide on the form or in support of your application is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

I have previewed and submitted my application. What happens next?

If you have successfully submitted your application using the online citizen portal you will receive an email confirmation from the Education Authority. Whether you have completed your application online or by paper the following information will be applicable:-

- **Birth Certificate**

You now need to bring or send your child's birth certificate to the pre-school you have listed as first preference. You should do this as soon as possible as it is required by the pre-school to check that your child is the correct age for admission to pre-school.

- **Other Documentation in support of an application**

If you are claiming priority because of socially disadvantaged circumstances you will need to provide a benefit verification form as referred to in this guidance. Some pre-schools also ask for additional documentation to support or verify your child's application. This documentation may be required either at the beginning of the application process or at the time placement letters are issued. You should carefully read the admissions criteria of the pre-schools you have listed on your application to check if you need to bring or send your documents now. If the pre-school has asked for verifying documents which you do not have, contact the pre-school directly to ascertain what they will accept as an alternative.

You should provide to the first preference pre-school provider supporting information for any preference(s) listed preferably by 30 January 2020, or by 12.00 noon on Friday 7 February 2020 at the latest.

(Stage 2 of the pre-school admissions procedure - refer to key calendar dates in this guidance).

Applying to an Integrated Nursery Unit?

If you list an integrated primary school nursery unit as a preference on your online application you will be presented with an additional question (specific to this preference only) which asks you to select your child's community background from a drop down menu of Protestant, Catholic or Other/None. You may provide any additional information relating to a pre-school's criteria in the 'Preference Reasons Continued' section for each pre-school listed e.g. if you are in a mixed religion marriage.

The details that you provide will only be disclosed to the relevant integrated primary school nursery unit at the point when your child's application is required to be considered by that setting (and will not be shared with any other pre-school listed).

It is important that you provide the detail requested so that the integrated primary school nursery unit can apply their criteria to the different categories.

If you complete a paper application you will need to carefully read the admissions criteria of the setting you are listing and follow their instruction on how this information is to be submitted to their setting.

If you choose to indicate your child's religion on the Education Authority's paper application form (which is not recommended) then you should be aware that this is done at your own discretion and in the knowledge that this 'special category data', in terms of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), may be seen by other individuals or pre-schools that you have listed as preferences, and the Education Authority takes no responsibility for any use made of it by any person.

What happens if my application is late?

During the admissions procedure when pre-schools are applying their criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered.

An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 30 January 2020 will be treated as a late application - (Target Age – Late in Stage 1 and an Underage – Late throughout the procedure).

Having a late application could reduce your child's likelihood of gaining a place in your preferred pre-school i.e. should the pre-school you are applying to receive more applications than it has funded places available it will firstly consider all punctual applications (including second and subsequent preference applications) before your application is considered.

(Stage 2 of the pre-school admissions procedure - refer to key calendar dates in this guidance).

How are admissions decisions made and by whom?

If a pre-school has sufficient funded places all eligible children will be accepted. In the event of the number of applications being greater than a pre-school's admissions number the Board of Governors of a Nursery School/Nursery Unit or the Management Committee of a Voluntary/Private Playgroup will apply their published admissions criteria to all applicants to determine which children will be offered places up to their admission number.

Pre-schools are required, by law, to give priority to:-

- (i) Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances in their final pre-school year i.e. born on or between 2 July 2016 and 1 July 2017
- (ii) Children not falling within sub-paragraph (i) in their final pre-school year; and who at the time of their proposed admission will not have a pre-school education place, whether full-time or part-time, at another pre-school or any other premises.

Pre-school providers will implement this legal requirement through application of the statutory admissions criteria. If there are more applications meeting a particular statutory criterion than there are places available then the provider will select between these applicants by applying its own sub-criteria; these sub-criteria normally differ from provider to provider. Responsibility for drawing up and applying a pre-school's admissions criteria rests with the Board of Governors or Management Committee.

If your child is not accepted by your first preference pre-school your child's application will be considered by your second preference pre-school. The process will be repeated until your child has secured a place or all preferences that you have listed have been exhausted. Places will be allocated to those who best meet the admission criteria.

I'm planning to move house, what address should I use?

The address you use on your child's application must be the home address at which they are currently resident. It cannot be that of a childminder or grandparent.

If you are planning to move house during the admissions procedure you should notify the Education Authority when the move is completed by emailing preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk and providing your child's name and date of birth and indicating the new address and when you moved. The Education Authority will ensure the pre-school(s) to which you have applied are notified. You may be asked for documentation to verify that you are resident in your new home. It will be up to the pre-school(s) which you have applied to, to determine whether it can take account of your new address when applying the admissions criteria.

Accepted documents to verify your new address include:

House move:

- Tenancy agreement
- Rates bill
- Sale of house agreement

Living outside Northern Ireland at time of application

You can still make an application for a pre-school place. However, priority is given to children residing in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission.

If you are moving to Northern Ireland, when completing the application, you must use the address you are residing at the time of the completion of your application. Boards of Governors / Management Committees can only use a new address once your child is residing at the new address. You should notify the EA in writing when you have moved and you will need to provide verification of your move.

Adding new/additional information

During the admissions procedure if your circumstances change in a way that may be important for the admissions process you should contact the Education Authority in writing or by emailing preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk to provide this new information. Noon on Friday 7 February 2020 is the final date/time by which the Education Authority will accept the information. After this date new/additional information will not be processed until Stage 2 of the procedure, after 28 April 2020.

If you change address during the process you must inform the Education Authority in writing preferably by email to preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk

(When applying in Stage 2 of the pre-school admissions procedure refer to key calendar dates in this guidance).

Changes of preference(s)

Depending on when you decide to change your preferences different rules apply:-

Before 12 noon on Thursday 30 January 2020

If you wish to change your preferences before 12 noon on Thursday 30 January 2020 and had applied using the online Citizen Portal you can make changes to your application by logging in to your account and clicking on 'Change your application'. On-screen warnings will indicate that your application is unsubmitted and that it cannot be processed unless you resubmit it. You can add/delete preferences and/or change the order of preferences listed using the arrow keys on the 'Your Preferred Pre-Schools/Schools' page. Ensure that you also update your reasons for preference as appropriate. You should preview your form and satisfy yourself that all the information is correct before you resubmit your application by the closing date/time of 12 noon on Thursday 30 January 2020. It is your responsibility to ensure you have resubmitted your application otherwise it cannot be processed. Remember if you had supplied your child's birth certificate and any other documentation to the original first preference pre-school provider you will need to retrieve it and bring it to your new first preference pre-school provider.

If you have applied using a paper application you will need to withdraw it from the pre-school provider and complete and submit a new application to your new first preference pre-school provider by the closing date/time of 12 noon on Thursday 30 January 2020.

Between 12.00 noon Thursday 30 January 2020 and 12.00 noon Friday 7 February 2020

Apart from those necessitated by exceptional circumstances, no changes of preference will be processed if received after 12 noon on Thursday 30 January 2020. If you wish to change your preference, for any reason other than in exceptional circumstances, you must withdraw your original application by emailing preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk and submit a new paper application.

If this occurs between 12.00 noon on Thursday 30 January 2020 and 12.00 noon on Friday 7 February 2020 your new application will be processed within the admissions procedure as a late application. *Refer to the section "What happens if my application is late?" for further details.*

If you wish to change your preference due to exceptional circumstances you must submit a request in writing or by emailing preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk to the Education Authority on or before 12.00 noon on Friday 7 February 2020. Verification of the exceptional circumstances must be provided with your request. If approved, the Education Authority will send you a pro-forma to complete with your new list of preferences (in order of preference and including your reasons for preference as they relate to the admissions criteria). If the original application was received by 12 noon on 30 January 2020 then your 'changed' application will be processed within the admissions procedure as a punctual application.

Documents which may be acceptable to verify your exceptional circumstances may include e.g. a tenancy agreement, rates bill or sale of house agreement (for a house move) or a letter from family support officer, medical professional, (for family related circumstances) or a letter from an employer (in the case where you have changed jobs since the submission of your application). All documents must be recent.

Requests for change of preference in exceptional circumstances will not be accepted after 12 noon on Friday 7 February 2020.

How and when will I be notified of the outcome of my pre-school application?

There are **two dates of notification**

Stage 1 (Final pre-school year (Target Age))

Pre-School providers will post letters to parents on **Tuesday 28 April 2020** for receipt on Wednesday 29 April 2020. The letter will be sent by the pre-school provider in which your child has been placed. If your child is not offered a place the EA will write to you and provide you with information on pre-schools which still have funded places available at the close of Stage 1 and a request for further preferences for processing in Stage 2.

Stage 2

Pre-School providers will post letters to parents on **Monday 8 June 2020** for receipt on Tuesday 9 June 2020. The letter will be sent by the pre-school provider in which your child has been placed. If your child is not offered a place the EA will write to you and provide you with information on pre-schools which may still have places available at the close of Stage 2 of the admissions procedure.

What happens if I do not get a place in Stage 1?

If you applied online or by paper and did not obtain a place in Stage 1 you will be asked by EA to nominate on a proforma the names of further pre-school providers who still have places available at the close of Stage 1. This list will be available on the EA website on 29 April 2020. 5 May 2020 at 4.00 pm is the last date for:

- Nomination of further preferences for children who were unplaced in Stage 1
- New Target age first time application (treated as punctual), if after 4pm on 5 May (treated as late)
- New preference (treated as late) for target age child who was offered a funded place at Stage 1 – Parent wanting to refuse offer
- New Underage first time application/documents (treated as late)
- Documentation for underage who applied before 30 January 2020 (treated as punctual)

My child has been offered a place at close of Stage 1 or close of Stage 2 in one of my preferred preferences which I now wish to refuse.

The key aim of the Pre-School Education Programme is to ensure a funded pre-school place is available for every child whose parents wish it. The process for admission to pre-school is preference based, and it is not always possible to accommodate everyone's first preference. For this reason, parents are encouraged to list a number of preferences in their pre-school application form **that they would be prepared to send their child to.**

If your child has been offered a place in either Stage 1 or Stage 2, in one of your nominated preferences, which you now wish to refuse, you can withdraw your application and now make a new application which will be treated as 'late' to any provider who still has funded places available - **IMPORTANT:** if you now decide to apply to an oversubscribed provider that provider will not be granted an additional place for your child in their setting as additional places are not granted for children who had previously been offered a funded place within the pre-school admissions procedure for 2020/2021.

Applying for a Reception place in the school year September 2020 - June 2021

What is a Reception Class?

A small number of primary schools have a Reception class/group **for children who are aged four at the date of their admission but who are not yet compulsory school age (i.e. children whose fourth birthday is after 1 July in a year).**

Children in Reception classes do not follow the primary one element of the Northern Ireland curriculum and **cannot** be admitted until they reach their fourth birthday.

Children who are not of compulsory school age will only be selected for admission after all children of compulsory school age have been allocated a place.

Can I apply for a funded pre-school place and a place in a reception class?

Yes you may apply for both a pre-school place and a place in a reception class. These are two separate application procedures and therefore you will need to complete two separate applications. For information on applying to a Reception Class can be viewed under the Primary Admissions Guide available at www.eani.org.uk/admissions.

School Admission Appeals Procedure

Details of the appeals procedure will be available on this website at the end of the admissions procedure. An appeal can only be lodged against the decision of the Board of Governors of a Nursery School/Nursery Unit.

Frequently Asked Questions

My child is under the age of 2, can I apply for pre-school?

No, if your child is under the age of 2 you can make contact with the Early Years Organisation or Family Support NI for further advice

[Early Years Organisation](#)

[Family Support NI](#)

Is Pre-School compulsory?

No, although good quality pre-school education has important benefits. Parents make application for a funded place on the understanding that their child will attend 5 days per week. This will enable their child to benefit fully from a quality pre-school experience.

Do I need to put my name down or register with a pre-school provider?

No and even if you have given your name to a provider, you will still need to apply for admission.

Can my child attend a funded place in the morning and one in the afternoon?

No. A child is only entitled to one funded place in a nursery school/unit or playgroup or private nursery e.g. a child may not have a funded place in a playgroup in the morning and attend a nursery school/unit in the afternoon.

Can my child be enrolled for a second year in pre-school?

If your child is already attending pre-school and is at the age to apply for a second year, you still must complete an application. There is no automatic entitlement to a second year placement.

Can my child do another year in funded pre-school instead of starting primary school?

No. A child over compulsory school age is not entitled to a funded pre-school education place. Our information leaflet entitled 'School Starting Age – A Guide for Parents' includes information on the legislation that determines compulsory school age, making your own arrangements to educate your child of compulsory age and advice on what to do if you have concerns about your child settling into primary school.

www.eani.org.uk/publications/starting-school-age-a-guide-for-parents

Can I complete more than one application?

No. If you have made more than one application you will have made a false declaration.

In the event that parents are discovered to have lodged more than one application form, then the first application lodged will normally be treated as the formal expression of parental preference and all other applications will not be considered.

What happens when parents cannot agree on which pre-schools to apply to or the order of preferences?

In cases where parents cannot agree on the preferences for their child, they should endeavour to do so as soon as possible to minimise the risk of their child being unplaced. If mutual agreement is not possible ultimately you may need to obtain a Specific Issues Order from the court. If you require further advice you should contact the Education Authority.

How do I inform a pre-school who offers a morning and afternoon session, my order of session?

Pre-School legislation enables parents to list full-time or part-time preferences, it does not recognise morning and afternoon sessions as preferences. Where a pre-school offers a morning and afternoon session you can mention in your reasons for that preference, your order of session. The admissions criteria will inform you if a pre-school offers a morning and afternoon session.

What curriculum is taught in pre-school?

All funded pre-school education centres must follow common pre-school curricular guidance to plan and organise the children's learning.

Who can I speak to about a pre-school provider's published admissions criteria?

The Board of Governors of a Nursery School or Primary School with a Nursery Unit and the Management Committee of a Voluntary or Private Playgroup are responsible for determining and applying their own admissions criteria. Any queries on the content of the published criteria should be directed to the pre-school provider.

Can I pay for my child's pre-school education?

If you wish, you may contact any private or voluntary provider of your choice directly with regard to a fee paying place for your child.

When will any document(s) that I have provided in support of my application be returned to me?

Original documents will be returned to you by the pre-school provider, as applicable, at the time of application or where your child is placed. The EA will return original documents to those who have been unsuccessful in securing a pre-school place at the close of Stage 2 of the pre-school admissions procedure.