



FAQs- Frequently Asked Questions

Each year we have queries from parents regarding the Open Enrolment Procedure. As we can't have you inside school to chat about these, we have compiled the attached list of frequently asked questions.

I haven't completed an Expression of Interest, can I still apply?

Yes. Not all schools compile a waiting list or expression of interest list. All parents apply on an equal basis in January regardless of if you have expressed an interest in a school or not. Some schools choose to keep a list in order to know how many people an intention have to apply. Having a name held on a school list does not give you priority and parents still must apply through the same process. All details in relation to applying can be found at www.eani.org.uk

I have not had a child at the nursery before, do I still have a chance of getting a place?

Yes. There are both statutory criteria set by the Dept for Education and individual criteria set by the school. All preschool settings devise a list of their own criteria, so please consider what is on the published list for the all the settings you wish to apply for.

Within Monkstown preference is given to the pupils who have siblings that have previously attended or may be attending currently. We also include priority for any child that may be currently attending, for example, any child that attends in a pre-preschool/underage place.

All preschool settings must aware their first spaces to those applicants who meet the social disadvantage criteria.

What are my chances of getting a full time place?

We only have 26 full time places and these are usually oversubscribed very quickly. We have 52 part-time places therefore more chance of securing a part-time place for first time applicants. The part time morning places are awarded before the afternoon.

If I applied for full time and was not successful, will I be offered a part-time place?

If you apply for full time and are not successful, **you can only be considered for part-time if you select this as a separate additional preference.** If you do not select part-time as an additional preference, your application with Monkstown Nursery School will end if you are refused a full-time place with no selection made. You can apply for both full-time and part-time. Please remember though, If you have selected part-time as a subsequent preference (2nd, 3rd, 4th etc), those applications received for part-time 1st preference will be selected and placed first. Additional preferences will only be allocated if places remain after 1st preference and in order.

During last year's application process all children who put Monkstown Nursery School, first and second choice were awarded a place at Monkstown Nursery. However if you are

unsuccessful in securing a full time place, it is most likely that you will be awarded a PM part time slot.

Can I request an AM place if applying for part time?

When you apply for part-time, you are applying for a part-time place. This is a 2½ hour session. You can mention that you would prefer a certain session but please remember that if you request a morning place only, you will only be considered for morning and will then not be considered for an afternoon place. Your application is for a place at Monkstown Nursery. Those who best meet the criteria eg have Monkstown part time as their first preference will be taken before those who have listed Monkstown Full time 1st and Part time 2nd, regardless of address.

I have had a child at the nursery before, does this mean I will get a full time place?

No, this is not guaranteed. We only have 26 full time places. These are filled using the DE criteria firstly, full preschool age and any children whose parents are verified as socially disadvantaged by the benefits agency. Following this, we apply our criteria published in relation to siblings (please check EA website for this). We then consider the distance from the child's home address to school, as the crow flies.

It does not guarantee you a full time place as we are regularly oversubscribed with siblings of families who have attended previously. **Please remember that you can only be considered for part-time if you have also selected part-time as a further preference.**

I am not sure if I am socially disadvantaged or not?

The school does not verify if a parent receives social disadvantage status. You will need to contact the benefits agency for verification. Check the EANI website for further details. If you are eligible, it will mean that your application may be further up the criteria and a benefit to your application. Without verification, the school cannot apply the socially disadvantaged criteria to your application. It could be the difference between securing a place and not securing a place in some circumstances.

My child has additional needs, will they get support?

Unfortunately, children cannot be provided with 1:1 support unless the Education Authority has assessed your child, along with medical professionals, prior to attendance. In order to secure 1:1 support, your child must be allocated a Statement of Special Educational Needs by the EA. Without this, your child can still be supported in school along with other children in their class, but 1:1 assistance cannot be provided.

For some children, transition to nursery can be difficult but for others support alongside their classmates is sufficient. If you are worried about your child's development or have any other worries about their needs, please speak to your Health Visitor or GP. This can help your child to be assessed in advance and be much more proactive in order to assess your child's individual needs in advance of starting nursery. It is really useful to provide details of your child's needs to the schools and preschools as this allows much more thorough planning in advance of meeting your child.

I'm interested in applying for a full time place but my child is a fussy eater? Is this a problem?

Full time places involve a child being developmentally able to cope with a much longer day. Eating is one part of this. If your child is fussy and will reluctantly only eat a few foods, this could be a problem. Attending for a longer day means your child will get hungry. Snack is provided each day with a range of fruits, breads, crackers and other healthy break options. If your child is fussy it can be difficult to encourage them to eat. At Monkstown Nursery School, school dinners consist of a cooked school dinner with a varied menu. For children who find eating difficult, it can be a very daunting time and can often unsettle them staying for the longer session.

In addition to eating, toileting and independence is another aspect of a longer full-time day. Children will need to be able to access and take care of their needs for toileting, hand washing and personal hygiene. Dinner involves all 26 children sitting together for a social lunch experience. The children use real cutlery, plates and open cups for drinking. They are sitting for two courses and must be able to cope with sitting at the table for this 40 minute period.

If my child attends the nursery, does this mean they get priority to any particular primary school?

NO, Monkstown Nursery is a standalone nursery, unlike a nursery unit which is attached to a primary school. We are listed as feeder nursery schools to some local primary school, and you should consider the criteria for primary settings to clarify this. The children attending nursery move on to a wide range of primary schools in the local and wider Newtownabbey area and further.

Do you save spaces for underage, pre-preschool children and can my child apply when they are 2yrs and 10mths?

We do not save or reserve any places for underage children. No preschool setting reserves places. The application process must give priority to children in their full preschool year before they attend Primary 1 the following year. Pre-preschool, underage children, penultimate preschool are children who are in the year before their preschool year. They still have a preschool year the following year. It is true that you are able to apply for places BUT your child can only secure a place if there are places remaining after all full preschool children have been processed. **Underage children must not be placed before full age children.**

Only where there are no more applications for full age children can underage children be considered. This is also on a strictly eldest first (chronological) basis (we would usually not get any further than July and August birth dates). If any underage places are awarded these will be afternoon part time slots.

Finally, I would strongly advise parents NOT to choose all full-time preferences as it is highly likely that this will result in no place being allocated. Even selecting a number of full-time settings first and then part-time places as the lower preferences can result in your child not

being placed. Settings fill places quickly with 1st, 2nd, 3rd preferences and may be full by the time a later preference application reaches your application.