

Policy for preschools and pedagogical care

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1. General

Placement in preschool and pedagogical care is regulated in Chapter 8. (preschool) and Chapter 25. (other educational operations) of the Education Act (2010:800). Uppsala Municipality strives for all placements in preschool and pedagogical care to take place in such a way as to provide the greatest possible continuity and security for children and families.

Admission in the municipality includes all placements in preschool and pedagogical care under municipal and private management where the operation receives municipal grants and have chosen to be part of the municipality's placement system.

2. Preschool and pedagogical care for children between 1-5 years old

Operations for children aged 1-5 years are carried out in the form of preschool and pedagogical care (family home day care/child caregivers, multi-family systems and family networks).

In the following text, the term 'preschool' also includes pedagogical care **except** under section 2.4. *Ahead of placement in preschool and pedagogical care.*

2.1 Right to a preschool and pedagogical care place

Children of guardians who are gainfully employed or studying shall be offered preschool to the extent necessary for the guardian's gainful employment or studies.

In order for guardians to be able to make a choice based on the need for care time, all preschools must strive to meet the parents' needs for care in accordance with Chapter 8, Section 5 of the Education Act. Preschool is offered on weekdays except Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and Midsummer Eve. Opening hours vary based on the parents' needs. Care during other times is described below in a specific section.

All children are entitled to at least 525 hours a year (public preschool) from the autumn semester of the year the child turns three.

Guardians must be able to verify their working and study time upon request.

Children shall also be offered preschool to the extent necessary to take into account the child's own needs due to the family situation in general.

For guardians working shifts or working irregular hours, the employment rate is crucial for the extent of time spent in preschool, regardless of when the work is carried out.

The establishment may be closed for four days per academic year to allow staff to plan, and further training. Fee reductions for these days are not allowed. The principal can arrange temporary solutions for children in need of care during these days.

Other working days of the year, activities shall be provided for placed children. This also applies if there is a need of care during school holidays. The activities may be conducted in another facility or in another fashion.

In Uppsala Municipality, the following guidelines apply:

- Children who for physical, mental, or other reasons need special support in their development shall be offered a place in preschool unless the child's need for such support is otherwise met (Chapter 8, Section 7 of the Education Act). A child's right to preschool on account of the child's own needs is determined after special examination.
- Children whose guardians are unemployed or on parental leave are entitled to a place in preschool for 20 hours per week. In order for a guardian to be considered unemployed and the child thus entitled to preschool, guardians must be at the disposal of the labour market and also otherwise meet the requirements of being an active jobseeker. If, in the event of unemployment or parental leave, a guardian works part-time for one week, the child is entitled to four hours of stay on the days on which the guardian is not at work.
- Guardians have the right to keep the child's existing care time of one month after the birth of the sibling or the onset of unemployment.
- In cases of pregnancy, siblings may keep their current care time even if, during the month preceding the expected birth, the mother takes parental leave, vacation days, or does not study or work for any other reason.
- Children of guardians who are gainfully employed or studying are entitled to care during a period when preschool is not offered to the extent necessary for the purpose of the legal guardian's gainful employment, studies, or the family situation in general.

2.2 Registration

Registration for a place in a preschool must be made at least three months (processing time) before the desired placement month. For example, if the demand date is in January, the application must be received no later than September at the latest. This is with the exception of placements starting in August where the processing time is four months; meaning the application must be received by March. The child can be offered a place after they have turned 1 year old. Places are available as soon as one is open. Registration can be submitted all year round.

Registration is made through the municipality's e-service. The child must be at least one month old before they can be registered. The registration shall indicate the date from which the preschool site is requested (requirement date).

Guardians can make up to nine choices in their registration. However, there is no guarantee that the child will be given a place at any of these choices. If a place cannot be offered according to any of the desired choices, the child is offered another option.

Guardians may change their options in their registration without the processing time being affected. Guardians can change the requirement date to a later date. If the requirement date changes to an earlier date, a place is offered as soon as one is available.

2.3 Special procedures

The Education Department handles the following reports of place requirement in accordance with these specific arrangements:

- Children with a protected address and/or identity.
- Children of guardians with need for care when preschool is not offered.
- Children who, for physical, mental, or other reasons, need special support in their development in the form of preschool.
- Children of guardians applying for a place in family home day care.
- Children of guardians applying for a place in a Finnish-speaking preschool.
- Children switching to/from public preschool.
- Children who are unable to use the offered place because the preschool is unable to provide care for the duration required by the guardian.

2.4. Ahead of placement in preschool and pedagogical care

The child shall be offered a place in a preschool unit as close to the child's own home as possible if the family so wishes. Reasonable consideration shall be given to the wishes of a guardian. (Chapter 8, Section 15).

When offering a place, consideration shall be given to the fact that the principal according to Chapter 8. Section 8 of the Education Act shall be able to ensure that children's groups have an appropriate composition and size.

2.4.1 Placement order preschool

If two or more children have applied for the same place, the following order of priority applies, which applies both to new placements and to changes of placements:

1. Siblings of children who already have a place at the preschool in question. Siblings in this instance are all children registered in the same household regardless of the identity of the guardians. ○ If two siblings compete for the same place, relative proximity determines who gets it.
2. Relative proximity, which means that the distance between the children's registered address and the preschool applied for is measured and set in relation to the distance to another nearby preschool (see below).
3. Applications received more than three months before the desired placement month (requirement date); meaning, when a place is desired earlier than three months from the date when the need for a place was registered. For placements in August, applications received later than four months before the desired placement month are valid.
4. Children registered in another municipality (subject to availability).

Relative proximity

If a preschool does not have room for everyone who wanted it, a selection is made based on relative proximity. Relative proximity is the difference in the viable route to the desired preschool compared to an alternative preschool nearby (of the preschools included in the municipality's queue).

How relative proximity is calculated:

- The distance between the child's registered address and the desired preschool is measured.
- The distance to the desired preschool is compared with the distance to the closest or second closest preschool to obtain the difference in distance =

relative proximity. If the chosen preschool is the closest preschool, the distance is compared with the second closest preschool. In other cases, the distance between the selected preschool and the nearest preschool is compared.

- The relative proximity is compared for all those who have applied for the same preschool.
- If two children requested the same preschool and only one of them can get a place, it is given to the child who has the longest relative distance to his/her alternative preschool who is entitled to the place.
- If two children have the same relative proximity:
 - the distance to the preschool applied for is measured. The child with the shortest route to the applied for preschool is offered the place.
 - where the distance to the applied for preschool is the same, the child who has chosen the preschool is assumed in the first place over the child who has chosen the school as a second or third choice, etc.
 - In cases where both have selected the same preschool, a draw is used to settle things.

2.4.2 Placement order pedagogical care

If two or more children have applied for the same place, the following order of priority applies, which applies both to new placements and to changes of placements:

1. Siblings of children who already have a place in pedagogical care in the current family home day care, multi-family system, or family network. Siblings in this instance are all children registered in the same household regardless of the identity of the guardians.
2. The composition of the group is taken into account based on age.
3. Applications received later than three months before the desired month of placement. For placements in August, applications received later than four months before the desired placement month are valid.
4. Children registered in another municipality.

2.5 Offer to a preschool and pedagogical care place

When there is a vacancy available, the guardians of the child next in line receive a placement offer to be answered by the child's two guardians. Offers are not sent if a change to a preschool in the municipality's queue can be granted. In this scenario, a so-called direct placement takes place instead (see below).

In special cases, it may be sufficient for only one guardian to respond to the placement offer. It is decided by the caseworker in the specific case.

In order to get a place, the guardians must accept the placement offer **within eight days** (does not apply to changes). With the reply, the guardians must submit the forms Contract for care time and income notification for fee.

If the guardians have not responded to the placement offer within eight days, it is considered that they are forfeiting the offered place and the registration is cancelled.

Guardians who are offered space for lower ranking options can accept or decline this and still remain in the queue for higher ranking options.

If the application concerns a change of preschool and the change can be granted, placement is made through so-called direct placement. This means that the child loses the place from which the change is sought from the date that the place at the new preschool is granted. This applies only to those who apply and can get a change to a preschool, not to pedagogical care.

Guardians who are not offered a place on any of their preferred options, but are offered a place at another preschool, can accept or decline the offer and still remain in the queue for all the desired options.

Guardians who decline an offered place cannot be guaranteed another location on the desired placement date.

2.6 Paused placement

Anyone who does not have use for his/her place for more than two months, may apply to remain for up to three months. The exception to this rule is summer leave. The application to keep the place is made in writing to the Education Department. The fee is paid even when the place is not used.

If a place is not used for two months, and the guardians have not applied for a pause in the placement, the place will be terminated with immediate effect.

3. Care outside regular opening hours in preschool

Care is provided between 18:30 and 06:30 weekdays and on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays. Children of guardians who are gainfully employed or studying are entitled to care during a period when preschool is not offered to the extent necessary for the purpose of the legal guardian's gainful employment, studies, or the family situation in general.

Care can be offered from the age of one until the spring semester of the year of the child's 13th birthday.

Care during the time when preschool is not offered is divided into:

- care that does **not** involve overnight accommodation, and
- care involving overnight accommodation or being carried out on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Care that does **not** involve overnight stays is granted to guardians who are able to leave or pick up children so that the night rest can take place at home. If the child is not to stay overnight in the establishment premises, they can be returned no earlier than 06:00 and picked up no later than 22:00.

Care that involves an overnight stay is granted to guardians who are not able to leave or pick up the child at times that allows for the child to get their night rest at home. The night rest then takes place in care. This type of care also includes care on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays, even if it does not involve overnight stays.

If two or more children have applied for the same place, the following order of priority applies:

1. Siblings of children who already have a place at the preschool in question. Siblings in this instance are all children registered in the same household regardless of the identity of the guardians.
2. Queue time – application date
3. Children registered in another municipality – if the municipality approves the placement

3.1. Right to care

In order to have access to the care with regard to the gainful employment of guardians, working times between 18:30 and 6:30 must be verified by a certificate from the employer. It also applies to travel time to/from work between 18:30 and 6:30. The schedule should be enclosed with the application.

Other family circumstances which may grant access to care may include, for example, a guardian being admitted to a treatment centre, correctional institution, or similar.

Children whose guardians need care during time when preschool is not offered have priority to a preschool offering such care.

In order to be granted care that involves overnight stays or care being carried out on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays, the guardian must not be able to leave or pick up the child at times that allows the child's night rest to take place at their home. This is an assessment made in individual cases on the basis of the following criteria: the age of the child, the guardian's work schedule the following day, and the child's and the guardian's need for daily rest.

3.2 Special reasons

In individual cases, where special reasons apply, solutions with employees collecting the child and performing care in the child's home may occur. Such solutions are regularly reviewed. Special reasons mean that care needs to be carried out at home in order to avoid an unsustainable situation for the individual family. Special reasons may differ in nature and are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Special reasons shall be supported with documentation.

3.3. Travel

The guardian is responsible for all travel in connection with care when preschool is not offered.

4. 4. Fee and termination of place

4.1 Fees

The guardian's fees are paid monthly, twelve months a year.

The full fee is paid twelve months per year, regardless of the duration of stay. For children entitled to public preschool, the fee is reduced by 25 per cent between September and May.

In cases where guardians have different addresses, the invoice is sent to the guardian where the child is registered. In cases where only the legal guardian registered at an address other than the child needs a place in preschool, the invoice is sent to this guardian.

4.2. Termination

Guardians have the right to terminate the place at any time during the year. Both guardians shall confirm the termination. The notice period is two months. Fees will be paid during the period of notice. Termination is also required when changing between a preschool in the municipality's queue and a preschool with its own queue.

4.2.3 Switching between a fee free public preschool and paid preschool

Since the child retains his or her place in the preschool at the time of the transition between a public preschool with no fee and a paid preschool, the place does not need to be terminated. Guardians of children who already have a preschool place can instead reapply for a place at a public or paid preschool in order to change the basis for the placement.

4.3 Suspension

In the case of three unpaid monthly fees, placement may be terminated with immediate effect.

Suspension remains in effect until the guardian settles the debt or makes an agreement on instalments. This is administered according to a special procedure that takes advantage of the guardian's ability to retain the child's place.

No suspension may take place if the child is in need of special support or for the part covered by the right to a general preschool.