Allocation policy for places at KU Leuven childcare centres

The demand for places at our childcare centres is much greater than the number of available places.

That means we are unable to offer a childcare place to every parent who applies for one.

We therefore have to make a selection from among all the applications we receive.

This document aims to give you a better insight into the method we use for allocating places.

**Condition for submitting an application.**

In order to apply for a place, you must be pregnant. Also see below.

We assume that all application forms are completed fully and truthfully. Incomplete forms or false information may result in a childcare place being refused or withdrawn.

**How do I apply for a childcare place?**

Register on the website: www.kinderopvangleuven.be and submit your application there.

You are entitled to five choices. Please note: each of our childcare centres counts as one choice. If you choose one of our crèches, that choice only applies to that particular crèche. We cannot simply offer you a place at one of our other branches, as that would not be fair to other parents who also have just five choices.

**When are places allocated?**

For unborn children, places are allocated around ten months before the effective start date of a new day care group or new intake of children within an existing group.

If your application is for a child who has already been born, you will be informed within 14 days whether the child has been allocated a place.

The table below shows when we meet to discuss the available places.

Places become available at our crèches because children start school or because they leave the crèche for another reason. Children who have reached school age are only allowed to start school after a school holiday.

This means that our entry dates generally coincide with the dates immediately following the school holidays.

This can mean that your preferred start date does not coincide with our entry dates. It is therefore important that you take some time to consider what is feasible for you. You may need to make some interim arrangements after your maternity leave comes to an end before your child can start at the crèche.

The period between Easter and September, for example, is a longer period to bridge, with four months between the two start dates. If this is not possible for you, you may want your child to start earlier, while you are still on maternity leave, which means you would need to choose an earlier allocation round.

Perhaps you would rather use full-time parental leave to cover this period (the gap between the end of your maternity leave and the crèche start date) so that you can spend a little longer at home after your child’s birth. If so, it might be better to choose a later allocation round.
The table below shows when we allocate the places (1), which applications from the waiting lists we discuss (2), and when those children can actually expect to start at one of our crèches (3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Allocation meeting</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>The following applications are then discussed (your requested start date is between...)</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Your child would then start at the crèche...</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Before your child can start, you might have to wait up to...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Monday in April</td>
<td>1st Monday in June</td>
<td>Last Monday in September</td>
<td>Last Monday in November</td>
<td>1st Monday in February</td>
<td>All applications from 1 January to 31 January inclusive</td>
<td>All applications from 1 February to 31 March inclusive</td>
<td>All applications from 1 April to 31 May inclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would like to know the dates of the school holidays for future years, you will find a useful overview via the following link: [http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/infolijn/faq/schoolvakanties/](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/infolijn/faq/schoolvakanties/)

We ask parents to think carefully about their childcare plan and the start date they enter in their application.

Our revenue is calculated on the basis of the number of children attending per crèche day. If children are frequently absent or if parents want them to start later than planned, our attendance figures fall and we encounter problems. We have a set group size and we wish to keep this relatively small so that we can guarantee high-quality childcare. It is therefore important that parents stick to their chosen childcare plan and requested start date.

We base our future groupings on these childcare plans. As places are very scarce, choosing a childcare plan means making a commitment to the crèche.

We would therefore like to make it clear that:

- **The chosen start date cannot simply be moved**: we are expecting your child on the agreed date. Failure to keep to this start date will result in your contract being suspended. We will then allocate this place to another parent on the waiting list. If you want to stay with your child a little longer during the first few months, you should choose a later start date when you apply. The requested start date as specified in your application when we hold our allocation meeting is the date we will use when allocating places. If you wish to change your start date, you can do this **until two weeks before the allocation meeting** (you will find the dates of the allocation meetings in the table).
- If you are planning to take part-time parental leave and want to work four days per week, you must request a four-day childcare plan when you register. After the period of 15 months’ parental leave has expired, you may be eligible for a full-time childcare plan provided we have a place available. However, there is every chance that you will need to stay with this four-day childcare plan and will not be able to increase it later. You should therefore work out in advance whether you can make your own alternative arrangement for this fifth day after your parental leave expires, in case your child is not able to obtain a full-time place at the crèche.

- If it transpires that you wish to change your chosen childcare plan when signing the contract (resulting in more or fewer days’ childcare), this may result in your place being allocated to other parents.

- Likewise, if we find that you are regularly deviating from the childcare plan (except when the child is ill – medical certificate required from the third day), or that you deviate from the plan for a consecutive period of one month outside the closed periods (except when the child is ill - medical certificate required from the third day), this will result in the contract being amended or suspended (depending on whether it is possible to combine an amended childcare plan with a second childcare plan for another parent), so that we can help other parents on the waiting list. The plan can only be amended if we are able to resolve this organisationally by matching your revised childcare plan with a part-time childcare plan for another parent on the waiting list. The chance of this happening is therefore quite small.

- We expect parents to take their main period of leave during our holiday closure in the summer. All employees are entitled to at least 20 days’ leave, in principle, and we would ask them to take this leave during our summer closure.

We aim to maximise attendance rates and ensure high-quality group sizes so that we can help as many parents as possible in their search for childcare.

What factors play a role in the allocation of a place?

Below you will find a brief explanation of the factors that can play a role in the allocation of a place. The factors listed are not ranked in order of importance, are not absolute, and are certainly not exhaustive:

Our crèches are able to provide childcare for all children between the ages of 0 and 3 years.

The K.U.Leuven Crèches are recognised and subsidised by the Kind en Gezin (‘Child and Family’) agency. They were founded on the initiative and under the auspices of K.U.Leuven and are supported by the University, the University Hospital and IMEC. Staff of these organisations are therefore given a degree of priority in the allocation of places. However, this priority is not absolute; the K.U.Leuven Crèches are also open to children whose parents have no link to K.U.Leuven, the University Hospital or IMEC.

Brothers or sisters of children who already attend one of our crèches are given absolute priority provided they are still at the crèche when the new child joins.

The parents’ work situation is taken into account in the allocation of places.
Difficult work situations (rosters, problems with work/life balance) are given extra consideration.

Difficult social situations may also play a role in the allocation of a place. At least 20 percent of the facility’s available places are priority places for children of:

- single parents who cannot look after their children during the day because of their work situation or because they are studying
- parents whose income from employment is less than EUR 14,330.61 (valid until end of September 2012) and who cannot look after their children during the day because of their work situation or because they are studying
- parents whose income is less than EUR 14,330.61 (valid until end of September 2012) and for whom childcare is an important factor because of their economic and social participation.

The requested days and times of childcare also influence the decision. Two requests for part-time childcare can be combined into one full-time childcare place provided the hours match.

The timing of registration is also important. Requests submitted at the start of pregnancy are given priority over those submitted later in pregnancy.

Registrations submitted before pregnancy is confirmed are categorically rejected.

If, after a place has been allocated, the estimated due date is deferred by six weeks or more, the allocation of a place is withdrawn.

If an allocated place is given up because of a miscarriage, priority will be given for one year for the next intake. You will need to provide us with a certificate confirming that the place was given up because of a medical problem (e.g. certificate of admission to hospital, medical certificate).

The age of the child may influence the decision. The child’s age must fit in with the group the child will be joining.

Each time a place becomes available, we have to check which candidates are on our waiting list. We therefore do not allocate places in purely chronological order. Parents who belong to a Kind en Gezin priority group and new siblings of children already at the crèche may be moved ahead of parents who have been waiting for a longer period of time.

Who makes the final decision?

The director makes the final decision, in consultation with the managers of all the K.U.Leuven Crèches.

The director is advised by the Management Committee of K.U.Leuven Crèches if problems occur in the implementation of the allocation policy.

The director reports to the Management Committee annually on the current situation and any problems encountered with the allocation policy.