

Role of the School

1. Accessing and completion of Early Learning and Childcare Application Forms

Parents/carers applying for an Early Learning and Childcare place for session 2017-18 should be given a paper copy of the relevant parts of the application pack, including the application form/s, depending on the child's birth date, or directed to the website:

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/early-learning-and-childcare-information/>

Eligible 3 and 4 year olds

Applicants - Birth Date between 1.03.2013 & 28.02.2015

All applicants with birth date between 1.3.2013 and 28.2.2015, including returners, should complete an Early Learning and Childcare Application form. These can be obtained directly from the website or from the guidance pack – electronically distributed to schools and partner providers.

Any child returning to the same Early Learning and Childcare setting in August 2017 must now complete an application form. A place should be retained for them at the existing setting.

In Addition:

Significant Additional Support Needs

- **Please see procedure for children with Significant Additional Support Needs (Document 7)?**

Delayed Entry Request

- **Please see procedure for Requesting Delayed Entry to Primary 1 (Document 11)**

Eligible 2 year olds

Applicants Birth Dates: (1.3.2015 – 29.2.2016)

Eligible 2 year olds require to meet one or more of the following criteria

1. Those that are looked after and accommodated or are under a kinship or guardianship order.

Application forms can be obtained from their social worker as their support is required to confirm eligibility.

2. Those whose families are in receipt of one or more of these qualifying benefits:

- Income support
- Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Any income related element of the Employment & Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit, and income is below £16,105
- Both maximum CTC and WTC with income less than £6,420
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit (interim measure)
or any other qualifying benefit as stated by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Application forms can be obtained from the Department for Work and Pensions, or by contacting the Early Years Team at 01224 664026 earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk and completed by the parent/carer.

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/early-learning-and-childcare-information/>

PLEASE NOTE

All two year olds are allocated places centrally therefore the completed forms should be sent to the Early Years Team, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen. AB16 5GB earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

2. Returning Early Learning and Childcare Application Forms

Parents/Carers must return the completed application form to their 1st choice of provision.

On receiving the application form, the setting must:

- Date-stamp the top front of the application form.

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- Check the birth date on the application form matches the birth date on the birth certificate. Circle *Yes* in the appropriate box to verify this.
- Check the home address* as evidenced by the parent/carer providing, for example, a recent (within 3 months) utility bill or bank statement. Circle *Yes* in the appropriate box to verify this.
- Provide a *receipt of application* for the parent/carer from the receipt form pad. Circle *Yes* in the appropriate box to confirm this has been done.
- Sign and date the received application form in the appropriate box to confirm all steps have been completed.

NOTE *Proof of address for a new build house must come from a solicitor.
DO NOT RETAIN ANY ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS (for example birth certificate).
If the evidence does not match the information recorded on the application form, do not accept the application form and inform the parent/carer.

NB – Any applications received by schools up to the date of the first panel meeting should be retained by the school, and input onto the EL&CC Admissions spreadsheet for 17/18 which will be sent to you by your Development Worker prior to the August 2017 admission panel allocation meetings, prioritised and taken to the local Early Learning and Childcare Admissions panel for allocation.

3. Guidance for Local Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Panels

Guidance for operation

These panels operate at cluster level and are tasked with locally allocating children to Early Learning and Childcare places provided directly by the local authority or by approved partner providers.

Parents are asked to highlight their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices of Early Learning and Childcare provider on the application form they submit.

It is recognised that in some areas there are fewer places available at school nursery provision than there is demand. Panels play a vital role in fairly determining those children who will be allocated a school nursery place and/or their 1st choice of provision.

The allocating of children to places is determined against a criteria and the assigning of a priority status between Priority 4-10. The allocation of Priority 1, 2 and 3 status is decided by centrally managed panels, therefore the focus for local Early Learning and Childcare panels is the assigning of priority status between 4 and 10. The criteria for the 10 priorities are as follows:

**Admissions Criteria for Local Authority Nurseries Only
Aged 2 to not yet attending school**

Priority One

Two year children eligible under Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Priority Two

Children deferring entry from Primary One and staying at an EL&CC setting where an additional year of funding has been agreed by Aberdeenshire Council.

Priority Three

3 and 4 year old children who are resident in Aberdeenshire who have a recognised additional support need and as agreed by the Central admissions panel.

Priority Four

Children who are returning to the same EL&CC setting, including those who were eligible from aged two.

BY DATE OF BIRTH:-

Priority Five

Four year olds from the local children's services network

Priority Six

Three year olds from the local Children's services network who have a sibling already within the EL&CC setting and/or school.

Priority Seven

Three year olds from the local children's services network

Priority Eight

Children whose childcare is within the local children' services network

Priority Nine

All other eligible children residing in Aberdeenshire

Priority Ten

Children residing outwith Aberdeenshire

It should be noted that Partner Providers are not bound by the above admissions criteria but must ensure their admissions policy complies with all current equal opportunities legislation.

Local Early Learning and Childcare Panels:

The main roles of these panels are to:

- Confirm children's individual levels of priority from priority bandings 4-10
- Allocate children to Early Learning and Childcare places at provisions within their cluster

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- Check for duplicate applications made by parents to a number of provisions in the cluster.

The membership of the panels should include:

- Representatives of all school nursery provision and partner providers in the cluster area
- The Early Years Development Worker for the cluster who will chair and organise the panel.

Allocation of sessions

It is recommended children be offered a mix of morning and afternoon sessions and that ages and genders are mixed within individual sessions.

Where demand exceeds supply schools shall reallocate those sessions vacant due to parents applying for less than 5 sessions. The offer letter makes clear to those parents applying for less than 5 sessions, that there can be no guarantee of increasing to the full 5 sessions at a later point in the session.

In those instances where places are limited, and the priority status allocated to children is the same, those children who are older shall receive the priority for places.

Allocating children to 2nd and 3rd choices

Where children are not able to be accommodated in their first choice of provision, they shall be allocated to their second or third choices.

In the unusual event of a 3rd choice provision not being able to offer a place, applications should be forwarded to the Development Worker for the cluster and, following discussion with the parent/carer, allocation shall be made to an alternative provider within the cluster or the application held in the event that a place becomes available in the setting of choice. **First choice settings will send the unsuccessful letter.**

January/April applications and applications received after the date of the first local panel meeting

All January and April applications, and any applications received after the first admissions panels meeting should be directed to the Development Worker for the cluster for allocation. **(see Section 8 – Applications made out with the main application period.)**

Allocation of Delayed Entry and Additional Support Needs Places

Until the Early Years Central Panel process is completed, places should be retained for any ASN or delayed entry requests. After this process is completed, spaces no longer required will be allocated via the Development worker for the cluster.

Actions required following the panels

Offer letters for August 2017 intake shall be sent by the school/setting by second class post **on 21st March 2017** and written acceptance of the offer from parents must be received by no later than **21st April 2017**.

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Offer letters for **January 2018** intake shall be sent by the school/setting by 2nd class post on **29th September 2017 and written acceptance of the offer from parents must be received by 13th October 2017.**

Offer letters for **April 2018** intake shall be sent by the school/setting by 2nd class post on **8th December 2017** and written acceptance of the offer from parents must be received **by 12th January 2018.**

Those parents who miss these deadlines shall receive one phone call from the school they have applied to on deadline day to remind them to accept the offer of a place. These parents shall then be given 3 working days to accept. If this further deadline passes, the place may be offered to the child who is next in line in terms of priority.

Delayed entry requests (August – December) and Priority 2 status

Delayed entry requests (August – December) and Priority 2 status are considered by centrally held Early Years Additional Support Needs panels. Places should be allocated and retained until the decision of the central panels, including the appeals panel, has been confirmed.

These panels include senior representatives from Health, Social Work and Education. Supporting information is submitted to the panels by those colleagues directly working with children, along with invitations for parents and carers to share their experiences.

4. Delayed Entry Requests

Please follow **Procedure for Delayed Entry to Primary One** (Document 11)

5. Significant Additional Support Needs

Please follow **Procedure for Children with Significant Additional Support Needs** (Document 7)

6. Early Learning and Childcare application information - role of School Administrator

EL&CC Admissions spreadsheet should be completed prior to August Admissions panel (6-13th March) meeting and forwarded to the Development worker.

All details should be entered directly into Click and Go following the decision of the local admissions panels by the School Administrator.

NOTE – by 17th February 2017, below should be submitted to the Quality Improvement Manager (Early Years) via the early years inbox:

earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

1. Priority 2 - Delayed Entries – Jan/Feb 2013 birthdays, Delayed Entry Request Form, copy of Section A only.

- 2. Priority 2 - Delayed Entries** – August/December 2012 – Delayed Entry Request form, copy of Sections A, B and C and *supporting evidence relating to Priority 2 status*
- 3. Priority 3** – Significant Additional Support Needs - Professional Support of Application Reports **or Record of Single/Multi Agency Plan**

7. Informing parents/carers of the outcome of their application for an Early Learning and Childcare place (Local Authority Only)

Allocation of places in Local Authority nurseries will be completed by schools and Development Workers and will be in three stages.

For August 2016 intake:

1. The local Early Learning and Childcare Admissions panel will meet during the period **6th – 13th March 2017** to allocate places.
2. The EL&CC Admissions spreadsheet, populated with details of returners and August starts, will be prepared by the school prior to the meeting and sent to the Development Worker prior to the admissions meeting.
3. All applications for children for session 17/18, including those returning to the same setting, should be taken to the local panel meeting.
4. An overview of all cluster places will be held by the Development Worker.
5. Letters offering **August 2017 entry** Early Learning and Childcare places will be sent to parents/carers by second class post on **21st March 2017**. This letter will contain the offer of the place and the specific start date and time for August.

Parents/Carers must return the form accepting the place to the appropriate school by **21st April 2017**.

Development workers must be notified of the outcome of all applications.

Parents who have requested fewer than five sessions may be granted an increase, with the agreement of the Head teacher and if it incurs no further resource costs.

By **12th May 2017** the School Administrator is to inform the Development Worker of the number of August 2017 entry Early Learning and Childcare places that have been accepted by updating the admissions spreadsheet and sending to the Development Worker.

NOTE Children commencing nursery in August 2017 should be **attending regularly by the end of the second week of term for nurseries with up to 20 children in one class** and **by the end of the third week of term for nurseries with over 20 children in one class**.

For January 2018 intake:

1. The local Early Learning and Childcare admissions panel will meet the week commencing **18th September 2017** to allocate January places.

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2. The EL&CC admissions spreadsheet with details of children to be offered places will be prepared by the Development Worker ahead of the panel meeting and distributed to schools/partner providers.
3. Letters offering **January 2018** entry Early Learning and Childcare places will be sent to parents/carers by schools/partner providers by second class post on **29th September 2017**. This letter will contain the offer of the place and the specific start date and time for January 2017. Parents/carers must return the form accepting the place by **13th October 2017**.
4. Development Workers must be notified of the outcome of all applications.
5. By **10th November 2017**, the School Administrator is to inform the Early Years Team of the number of January 2018 entry Early Learning and Childcare places that have been accepted by **updating EL&CC admissions spreadsheet** and sending to the Development worker.

For April 2018 intake:

1. The local Early Learning and Childcare admissions panel will meet week commencing **27th November 2017** to allocate **April 2018** places.
2. The list of children to be offered places will be prepared by the Development Worker ahead of the panel meeting and distributed to schools/partner providers
3. Letters offering **April 2018** entry Early Learning and Childcare places will be sent to parents/carers from the school by second class post on **8th December 2017**. This letter will contain the offer of the place and the specific start date and time for April 2018. Parents/carers must return the form accepting the place by **12th January 2018**.
4. **Development Workers must be notified of the outcome of all applications.**
5. By **26th January 2018**, the School Administrator is to inform the Early Years Team of the number of April 2018 entry Early Learning and Childcare places that have been accepted by updating **ELC admissions spreadsheet 2017/18** and sending to the Development worker.

8. Applications made out with the main application period (applications received up to the date of the first local panel meeting.)

All applications, for August intake, submitted by parents up to the date of the first panel meeting will be included in the local Early Learning and Childcare admissions panels' agendas and offers of places made, by the school or provider, as per the August 2017 timescale.

All applications, and any applications received after the date of the first panel meeting, should be directed to the Development Worker for the cluster, for placing, in accordance with the following procedure:

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Development Workers - Procedure for allocating applications following the first admissions panel meeting.

Any applications received after the first panel meeting, and where a child would be eligible to start in August, should be allocated by the Development Workers on receipt of their application form, following the normal admissions criteria priorities.

Applications received after the first panel meeting, and eligible to be included in the September or December panels, will be allocated at the appropriate panel meetings for children starting in January 2018 or April 2018 and offers of places made as per the January and April 2018 schedule.

Applications received between the September and December panels, and any received after the December panel meeting, where a child would be eligible to commence their Early Learning and Childcare sessions, should be allocated a place by the Development worker, following the normal admissions criteria priorities.

- children already living in the cluster should be given greater priority than those yet to move into the cluster area
- consideration between children already living in the cluster should be based on older children receiving priority over applications made for younger children.

The Development Worker is responsible for allocating places outwith the admissions panels however, it is still the school's responsibility to send out offer letters to the parent/carer and advise the Development Worker of the outcome of the offer in order that the Development Worker has an overview of all vacant places within the cluster.

The Development Worker may keep details of any application that has not been placed as per the parent/carers choice.

9. Transferring between Early Learning and Childcare settings.

Early Learning and Childcare places are allocated from the child's eligible start date until the end of the school year in July 2018.

Should a transfer between Early Learning and Childcare settings be requested prior to this date, then the parent/carer should discuss a change of provider of Early Learning and Childcare with the headteacher/manager of their current setting, as a notice period may be required if the child is transferred from a playgroup or private nursery.

A child may transfer from one setting to another under certain circumstances. These may include but are not limited to:

- Moving house
- A child's significant support needs warrant it
- Parents/carers need to access other types of childcare eg change of work commitments
- There is a significant change in home circumstances

After discussion of the need for transfer with the headteacher/manager of the child's current setting, a Request for Transfer form must be obtained from, completed and

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returned to EarlyYears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk in order that the Quality Improvement Manager (Early Years) can review the circumstances and consider the outcome of the request.

A child should **not** transfer settings until approval for funding has been authorised by the QIM (Early Years) and a start date with the new setting confirmed. Places may not always be available at the preferred new setting.

The QIM (Early Years) will notify both settings, the development worker for the cluster and the parents/carers of the outcome of the request. Following approval, the school should notify the parent/carer of the start date and pattern of sessions.

Should a parent/carer wish to move their child at the end of the school year then they must submit a new application form in line with Aberdeenshire Council's Admission Policy <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/early-learning-and-childcare-information/>

10. Split Placements Between Early Learning and Childcare Settings

A parent/carer residing in Aberdeenshire may request to split their child's placement between two Early Learning and Childcare settings under certain circumstances.

These may include but are not limited to:

- **Moving house**
- **A child's significant support needs warrant it**
- **Parents/carers need access to other types of childcare eg change of work commitments**
- **There is a significant change in home circumstances**

After discussing the need for a split placement with the headteacher/manager of the child's current setting, a Split Placement Request Form must be obtained from, completed and returned to EarlyYears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk in order that the QIM (Early Years) can review the circumstances and consider the outcome of the request.

A child should **not** start a split placement until approval for funding has been authorised by the QIM (Early Years) and a start date with both settings confirmed.

The QIM (Early Years) will notify both settings, the development worker for the cluster and the parents/carers of the outcome of the request. Following approval, the settings should notify the parent/carer of the start date and new pattern of sessions.

Role of the Playgroup/Private Day Nursery

NOTE Partner Providers may offer places to all eligible children at any point during the year. It is recommended Partner Providers encourage parents to apply for their Early Learning and Childcare place as early as possible, to help you to prepare to meet the individual needs of children.

Places should be retained for those children remaining in their current setting.

1. Accessing and completion of Early Learning and Childcare Application Forms

Parents/carers applying for an Early Learning and Childcare place for session 2016-17 should be given a paper copy of the relevant parts of the application pack, including the application form/s, depending on the child's birth date, or directed to the website:

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/early-learning-and-childcare-information/>

Applicants - Birth date between 1.03.2013 & 28.02.2015

All applicants with birth date between 1.3.2013 and 28.2.15 including any returners, should complete an Aberdeenshire Early Learning and Childcare Application Form. These can be obtained directly from the website or from the application pack – electronically distributed to schools and partner providers.

Any child returning to the same Early Learning and Childcare setting in August 2017 must now complete an application form. A place should be retained for them at the existing setting.

Applicants Birth Dates: 1.3.2015 – 28.2.2016 (eligible 2 year olds)

Eligible 2 year olds require to meet one or more of the following criteria

1. Those that are looked after and accommodated or are under a kinship or guardianship order.
Application forms can be obtained from their social worker as their support is required to confirm eligibility
2. Those whose families are in receipt of one or more of these qualifying benefits:
 - Income support
 - Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance
 - State Pension Credit
 - Income based Job Seekers Allowance
 - Any income related element of the Employment & Support Allowance
 - Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit, and income is below £16,105
 - Both maximum CTC and WTC with income less than £6,420

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- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit (interim measure)
or any other qualifying benefit as stated by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Application forms can be obtained from the Department for Work and Pensions, or by contacting the Early Years Team at 01224 664026, or from the Aberdeenshire website: <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/early-learning-and-childcare-information/>

Please Note:

All two year olds are allocated placed centrally and the completed forms should be sent to the Early Years Team, Westburn road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB

In Addition

Delayed Entry Request Form

- **Please see procedure for Requesting Delayed Entry to Primary 1 (document 11)**

Significant Additional Support Needs

- **Please see Procedure for Children with Additional Support Needs (document 7)**

1. Application period for Early Learning and Childcare

Partner providers may admit children at any point in the year.

2. Returning Early Learning and Childcare Application Forms

Parents/Carers must return the completed application form to their choice of setting.

On receiving the application form, the Play Leader/Manager of the Early Learning and Childcare setting must ensure that they undertake the following checks

- Date-stamp top front of application form.
- Check the birth date on the application form matches the birth date on the birth certificate. Circle **Yes** in the appropriate box on the application form to verify this.
- Check the home address* as evidenced by the parent/carer providing, for example, a recent (within 3 months) utility bill or bank statement. Circle **Yes** in the appropriate box on the application form to verify this.

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- Provide a *receipt of application* for the parent/carer from the *receipt form* pad. Circle Yes in the appropriate box on the application form to verify this.
- Sign and date the received application form in the appropriate box on the form to confirm all steps have been completed.

NOTE *Proof of address for a new build house must come from a solicitor.
DO NOT RETAIN ANY ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS (for example birth certificate).
If the evidence does not match the information recorded on the application form, do not accept the application form and inform the parent/carer.

3. Admissions Policies

Partner Providers must ensure their admissions policy complies with any equal opportunities legislation including (without limitation) the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Equality Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Young people (Scotland) Act 2014

4. Delayed Entry Requests

Please follow **Procedure for Delayed Entry to Primary One**

NOTE For children whose birth date is between 1 August and 31 December 2012, the parent/carer should be re-directed to the Primary School where they intend to enrol their child for Primary 1. *Delayed Entry Request Forms* for these children should not be accepted by Partner Providers.

NOTE *Delayed Entry Request Forms, Section A only*, (January & February birthdays) should also be returned to the Quality Improvement Manager (Early Years), earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

5. Significant Additional Support Needs

Please follow **Procedure for Children with Significant Additional Support Needs**

6. Informing parents/carers of the outcome of their application for an Early Learning and Childcare place

For ease, Partner Providers have been provided with a template offer letter to give parents, should places be available. This may happen at any point throughout the year. Partner Providers may admit all eligible children for their fully funded sessions, the term after their third birthday. If a place is not available in your provision, please direct them to the Development Worker for the area.

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7. Transferring between Early Learning and Childcare settings.

Early Learning and Childcare places are allocated from the child's eligible start date until the end of the school year in July 2018.

Should a transfer between Early Learning and Childcare settings be requested prior to this date, then the parent/carer should discuss a change of provider of Early Learning and Childcare with the headteacher/manager of their current setting, as a notice period may be required if the child is transferred from a playgroup or private nursery.

A child may transfer from one setting to another under certain circumstances. These may include but are not limited to:

- Moving house
- A child's significant support needs warrant it
- Parents/carers need to access other types of childcare eg change of work commitments
- There is a significant change in home circumstances

After discussion of the need for transfer with the headteacher/manager of the child's current setting, a Request for Transfer form must be obtained from, completed and returned to EarlyYears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk in order that the Quality Improvement Manager (Early Years) can review the circumstances and consider the outcome of the request.

A child should **not** transfer settings until approval for funding has been authorised by the QIM (Early Years) and a start date with the new setting confirmed. Places may not always be available at the preferred new setting.

The QIM (Early Years) will notify both settings, the development worker for the cluster and the parents/carers of the outcome of the request. Following approval, the school should notify the parent/carer of the start date and pattern of sessions.

Should a parent/carer wish to move their child at the end of the school year then they must submit a new application form in line with Aberdeenshire Council's Admission Policy <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/early-learning-and-childcare-information/>

8. Split Placements between Early Learning and Childcare Settings

A parent/carer residing in Aberdeenshire may request to split their child's placement between two Early Learning and Childcare settings under certain circumstances.

These may include but are not limited to:

- **Moving house**
- **A child's significant support needs warrant it**
- **Parents/carers need access to other types of childcare eg change of work commitments**

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- **There is a significant change in home circumstances**

After discussing the need for a split placement with the headteacher/manager of the child's current setting a Split Transfer Request Form must be obtained from, completed and returned to EarlyYears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk in order that the QIM (Early Years) can review the circumstances and consider the outcome of the request.

A child should **not** start a split placement until approval for funding has been authorised by the QIM (Early Years) and a start date with both settings confirmed.

The QIM (Early Years) will notify both settings, the development worker for the cluster and the parents/carers of the outcome of the request. Following approval, the settings should notify the parent/carer of the start date and new pattern of sessions

General Notes for school nurseries and partner providers.

- **Children, unless an eligible 2 year old, must have had their 3rd birthday before taking up an Early Learning and Childcare Place.**
- **Children who will be three from 1st March onwards will take up their Early Learning and Childcare place the following August.**
- **Children who will be three by 31st August are eligible for fully funded Early Learning and Childcare places from August**
- **Children who will be three by 31st December are eligible for fully funded Early Learning and Childcare places from January**
- **Children who will be three by the last day of February are eligible for fully funded Early Learning and Childcare places from April.**

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