

Give Them Time Campaign Parent Survey - July 2021

What difference has a deferral year made to your child?

- 1 This time last year X wasn't interested in letters or even trying to write his name. Yesterday he came to me asking to practice his writing and wants to know his letters as apparently he needs to urgently learn to read and write this week!!! I've never regretted deferring him but my goodness that made the decision even more clear! He's definitely now ready for school. Hopefully August won't be the struggle it would have been last year had we sent him then. He's still not wanting to go to school but at least he will pick up a pencil and doesn't cry over letters!! That's a huge step forward
- 2 The extra year at nursery has made a huge difference to my child. Her confidence has grown so much. I've noticed a huge difference in her social development and she's really embraced the nursery environment. Having time to play has meant her imagination has flourished!
- 3 I am now completely confident that my son is ready to start school and he is excited to do so. He can now fully do all bathroom business himself (wiping etc) and understands about choosing healthy balances in his meals. He can ride a bike which he would only try a couple of months ago because his body wasn't ready until then. He can write his name and a few short words and can count to 20 etc.
But most importantly he is socially ready. This was what I was most concerned about in deferring him as he has no developmental issues, but he had spent very little time with other children having only had part time nursery from 3.5 and this being closed for months anyway due to pandemic. With no other children in the family, he was very adult focused and didn't know how to play with other children. Now he has friends and is fully engaged in the social life of his peers with the ability to understand others. When I see him playing with younger children (some of whom are going to school this year too), I am struck by his relative maturity. They are frequently upset and needing a lot of help managing their relationships. In general my son can manage his and their feelings much better, such as suggesting they take turns rather than fighting, suggesting other activities. This makes me feel that he will be fine in the school environment and will be able to thrive as part of a class even when the teacher is not immediately available. He will be able to communicate his feelings, good or bad, and process things that happen.
As he is going to a Gaelic language school (but has no previous background in the language) this year has also enabled us to start working on learning words together before immersion starts.
And finally, I have seen the bond between him, me and his father all deepen especially during lockdown, as we have had the time to really appreciate this early time in his life, giving him so much security and love which I know will be a vital underpinning if he encounters any challenging situations in school, perhaps years ahead. I am really thankful that I heard it was possible to apply for the extra year nursery funding as without it school would have been the only option and I don't believe it would have been the best thing for him.

4 The deferral year made a HUGE difference. My child could not walk into a room, visit family, go to a shop or even attend a birthday party at 4yrs old without a huge meltdown that included tears, hitting himself, sometimes hitting out, refusing to move, lying on the ground, refusing to dress. It was horrendous for him. It appeared that he was anxious and scared but I could do nothing to reassure him. A stranger speaking to him would be a trigger.

My son would throw a pencil over his shoulder, did not want to sit down. My son was noise sensitive and still to this day doesn't like noisy environments.

My son was born premature. He was in neo natal for 5 weeks. Two of these weeks were intensive care. He attended outpatients every 2 weeks for 7 months. He was not like his peers. He was very small. He could not reach the peg for his coat at nursery. He could not climb big steps. He could not hold heavy objects (I.e. food tray).

The deferral year saw my son bloom like a beautiful flower. As each month went by those anxieties about social situations began to reduce. He was more able to cope with different and new situations. This is credit to nursery staff who had him outside every day, cuddling him, nurturing him for as long as he needed. Getting him to do challenges like climbing trees, running about, getting messy/ dirty. His emotional capacity for coping seemed to be growing. The transition arrangements were rubbish. Nowhere good enough for what he needed and I had no control over this.

He attends a school that is bursting with capacity. There is an inadequate play area. This means the children are not outside as much as they should. There is huge pressure with homework, reading, writing and maths. Children are kept in at playtime if they don't finish their work on time, or their behaviour isn't good. They don't get to go to the toilet when they want. They must wear a uniform. PE is only twice per week and there is no play based learning. The teachers are lovely. Would my son have coped with all that at 4yrs? NO!

Did he cope at 5yrs- yes but only just. I refused to engage in the level of homework sent out. I complained about the lack of play and ability to get outdoors. As his parent it is me that promotes his mental health and wellbeing. Its me that protects him when the school can't see he is struggling.

A year made the world of difference. Deferral was critical for his health and every say since this pandemic began I am so pleased I gave him more time because he is coping tremendously more than most of his peers

5 Huge. More emotionally ready and was confident, happy and focused to learn when he did go

6 In what was supposed to be my sons pre school year he was emotionally immature compared to the other children in his group, being one of the youngest in the pre school group he struggled to play with other children and even failed part of his pre school assessment with the health visitor because he couldn't copy the lines, circle and cross she had drawn for him. He wasn't interested in holding a pen or pencil and wanted to spend all his time at nursery running and climbing outdoors which was fine and supported by the nursery staff. Over the course of his deferred year at nursery he began supporting other younger children and encouraging them to use the outdoor equipment, he started risk assessing for himself and others and gradually made friends. He also found he loved to draw outdoors with chalk and make his marks. This led to a love of colouring in and great pencil control along with a massive confidence boost. My son started school the following year socially, emotionally and academically ready and has thrived in his first year of primary school. Unfortunately we weren't so lucky with his older sister and couldn't defer her being an October birthday. She's just finished primary 4 and is still struggling to keep up with her classmates or make friends. Most 4 year olds are not ready to be in a school environment for 6 hours a day with a teacher and 25+ other children and a structured routine, nursery ratio is 1:8 so much more focused and pupil led learning is possible. For many children school at 4 holds them back rather than allowing them to develop at their own pace and thrive. I'm glad I could give my son the time he needed x

- 7 I have twins due to start school this August after deferral. It was more for the benefit of my son who socially was not ready for school last year rather than academically. For perspective, when he started nursery I was in there with him for a good month or so as a step to help him to settle. On days when I tried to leave he was getting himself so upset he would make himself sick. He was really uncomfortable around other children and would stick to his sister like glue. For comparison, they had their school visit this week and I was worried about it even though he was voicing that he wasn't. He never looked for me once. Didn't ask where I was and when I tried to get his attention to tell him where I was going he was just so interested in playing with the other children that he didn't even acknowledge me. I watched as he approached children he didn't know to speak to them and play with the. The difference from now to when he started nursery is huge. I do believe that if we had to send him to school last year it would be a very similar story to starting nursery.
- 8 she is able to sit and concentrate longer. she will be able to go to school more independant and able to recognise the alphabet and numbers straight away without struggling. she can now write her name and a few other words just by being at home with me
- 9 My son is now going into p4. He's much more confident and mature and he copes well with the school work
- 10 A huge difference, a year ago he was not ready.
- 11 What a HUGE difference a year makes!! Delighted to have deferred our December born daughter with no additional support needs. Best decision we ever made!!

She has just finished primary 1, which has been great both academically and most importantly emotionally. We believe the extra time at nursery and especially an extra year being nurtured and having fun with family, has been extremely beneficial to our child. We hope that getting these important foundations in place, in our child's early years, will provide them with the skills and resilience to succeed in later life both physically and emotionally.

Since fighting for our child's deferral in our LA and seeing the benefits first hand, we have become big supporters of the Upstart Scotland campaign. We believe the impact on government spending on issues later in life, would be significantly reduced with the introduction of a kindergarten stage for all children in the UK. We also have the previous experience of growing up in Scotland after starting school at age 4 ourselves. Apart from the obvious disadvantages of starting school at age 4 in the 80s, we can see that growing up in 2021 comes with far more social and emotional challenges in our modern day society and we must make changes to help our children to adapt and flourish in today's world.

- 12 She has grown in confidence.
She was able to start school confidently despite missing so much of nursery due to Covid.
- 13 It gave her the chance mature emotionally enabling her to navigate the tricky world of friendships and relationships in the safety of an environment she was secure in. It gave her the time to develop a natural interest in the world around her and her curiosity then developed into a love of learning, and an interest in all things new. It allowed her to go at her own pace, sometimes needing to come home early because she was exhausted, sometimes wishing the day was longer because she wasn't finished exploring at pick up. It also allowed her to continue her extra curricular classes without them being in the evening when she was already tired from nursery. And more than anything it gave her time to be really ready to excel in primary 1! (January born baby)
- 14 She is so much more confident, reaching her academic potential and loves school. She definitely was not ready at age 4.
- 15 My child has enjoyed his first year at school having the time to grow in confidence, catch up with his peers and make friends. I have no regrets as he would have never have managed to cope last year.

- 16 My Feb born twins were more than capable academically last year but emotionally and socially they were no where near ready to start school. Thank goodness for their deferred year! It has made a huge difference to their emotional well-being. They are now happy, confident, sociable individuals who are thriving, inquisitive and keen to learn. Deferral was hands down the best decision ever.
- 17 My daughter is like a completely different child. So much more emotionally stable and able to handle big emotions. Secure in herself and so ready to learn. She has been at home for the year as didn't get a funded nursery place and despite this she has absolutely not been bored or needed school in any way. She's had a ball learning through play, having time to learn how to handle difficult situations and just being little. When her older sibling was homeschooling she was able to join in on her own level with some tasks but there was never any pressure. I would have been so worried about her starting at 4 but now we are all looking forward to her starting. Confirmation to me we made the right choice was just the other day when she realised she was having her last "granny" day, then her school tie arrived & finally we found out her class and teacher. She had one of her "moment's" which are now a rare occasion rather than daily & reminded me that she is still a little girl who can get overwhelmed with big change. However, we have all learnt how to deal with these times and she herself knew she just needed cuddles, stories and to go to bed early. Next day she was fine again.
- 18 He's always been socially ready but emotionally it's just another year to overcome the tantrums over the littlest of things which have subsided over this year with age. He's ready to sit and learn and wants to do numbers letters etc
- 19 This time last year he was struggling to sit for any length of time, he was not interested in picking up a pen or a pencil and was not interested in letters. His language was still underdeveloped and he struggled to express his needs.

This year he wants to learn, he is picking up books and asking what the letters are, he can almost write his name and is happy to sit for periods of time, he is ready to learn and ready for P1

- 20 he's flourishing! Less anxious. Confident. Looking forward to going to school. He's a nov birthday and the idea of him going to school last year was laughable. This year it's so natural and easy and something we're all excited about. He's grown immeasurably in every way. It was beyond any doubt the right decision to defer.
- 21 Our daughter has grown in confidence and is now looking forward to going to school. She has started to show an interest in reading and writing and is really curious about what she will experience in primary 1. None of this was on her mind a year ago. We had deferred our October born child, not knowing whether we would receive funding for another year. Going through the process was very stressful for us as parents, especially as our child had no identified concerns with regards to her academic skills - she was just very quiet and had little confidence around other children. The additional year in nursery has not resolved her difficulties, but certainly lessened them, whereas a year in school would have presented her with additional pressure to "grow up" a 4 year old doesn't need. We are very happy with our decision and wish it would be easier for families in similar situations. Our child was given time to develop at her own pace, time she would have been given automatically in many other European countries. If Scotland aims to be the best country for a child to grow up in, we have a long way to go to support families on this journey.
- 22 Emotionally able to self regulate better, less frustrated, more confident, improved toileting!

23 My child has had longer to build his communication skills as he has a speech disorder and needed that extra time to be in an informal setting where he can play without any pressure. He will start P1 in August 2021 emotionally ready to join his peers. He is an early September born child and will turn 6 years old 20 days after the commencement of the school term. This is a fantastic age to begin formal education and will really help him. No regrets as a parent in the decision I have made.

24 Deferring X's entrance to P1 has made a huge difference to him and his confidence. He's more confident trying new activities. He now sits at a table and will do arts and crafts, he'll attempt to write his name, he can recognise some letters and he enjoys maths games. He's also made more friends, I hear a lot more names now than I did last year which is nice.

It's also been really nice at home, I've had more time with him, he's had more time with his little brother too which has benefitted them both.

Today is his last day of nursery and he's a mix of sad and excited whereas last year he was petrified at the thought of leaving nursery, his teachers and the few friends he had.

I'd recommend deferring your child to anyone, it's a massive difference to you, your child and attitudes towards school.

25 It's not an easy decision to make. We deferred our 27th August born son back in 2017. He had an element of speech delay. Emotionally he wasn't ready either. He's just finished P3. I can use one word to describe him right now - thriving. Academically literature and maths is a breeze. He understands connections in stories and can use his imagination to make up both written and drawn stories. He enjoys school. A completely unknown at the time was the pandemic and he hasn't fallen behind in any area.

I always get a twinge of guilt when he starts his new year and he's the oldest in his class within two weeks, but what does that matter? He's also one of the children who doesn't struggle with his work.

To be realistic, it's not all perfect. He still struggles emotionally at times - like when he's out at a game of dodge ball in PE or he loses a board game, but if I sent him to P1 on the 'normal' trajectory he would be struggling so much emotionally that academically he would be way behind. At least now he can work out and understand these big feelings and manage them.

I'm so proud of the person he's growing into. We were very lucky and had huge support from our nursery and nursery school teacher, who subsequently went on to be his P1 teacher.

We need to educate and encourage teaching professionals that deferral is a completely normal thing and the right choice to make if your child needs it.

I read yesterday from an ex-primary head teacher who said, even if they are ready academically at age 4, emotionally very few are, so give them the extra time to grow and be little.

- 26 I wouldn't consider it as 'deffering' my son as we just put him when he was 5 like alot of other children. It made a huge difference to us as a family and him. We quickly relaised our non supportive school wasn't the best one for us from the response we got from them when we didn't agree to put him to school. We took a leap and bought our first home in a different area and went to a school that supports us and we are all much happier. My son had his final nursery year in a better place, unfortunately alot less hours due to not being able to afford anything like what the others got funded. Our son had a year of playing with his family and friends, going on adventures and learning life skills and gaining much lacked confidence. We worked very hard with our boy before he started school and gave him every ooportunity we could. Our boy then went at 5 with confidence he was ready, although very nervous he thrives and is at the level of learning with the other primary 1s with no learning support (that was offered had he gone at 4) he works independently like every other child in his class and is no different to them. I would recommend to anyone to do the same. No regrets although it was one of the hardest years of my life between feeling as a parent my voice wasn't heard, my son being left out, moving home and school. It worked out in the end and we are where we needed to be. Everything happens for a reason.
- 27 Increased confidence, emotional maturity, more time to play, all helped my daughter to start P1 with excitement and confidence and better able to manage the demands of a school day
- 28 His transition to school was effortless compared to many younger kids in his class, who have and in some cases continue to struggle. This year with COVID-19 has meant lots of upheaval and I'm sure my son being that but older has helped him cope.
- 29 Instead of tears going into nursery he trots in confidently. Huge improvements in confidence. His social skills are so much better. He plays with the other children now instead of alongside. Our quiet boy has become a leader and helps the younger ones in nursery. His fine motor skills have improved greatly. He can now write his name and recognises his letters.
Instead of worrying about him not being ready for P1 we now feel at 5.5 he is ready to engage fully in his play based P1 experience. He is ready to thrive.
The extra year has made a huge difference and we are very grateful for this, however...getting the funding was bureaucratic and stressful. We were lucky to get it as our LA is one of the worst to fund discretionary deferrals.
Thank you for the support from Give Them Time. We are very grateful.
- 30 The time to mature and gain more confidence and social skills
- 31 No pressure for him to start school this year, another year for his speech to improve which is vital for making friendships and gaining confidence
- 32 At 4.5 he was no where near emotionally ready for school. A year later he was more confident and mature and adapted to the school setting and learning to read and write quickly. I am glad every day I decided to defer.
- 33 Confidence has improved tenfold.
Recognition of numbers and letters massively improved. Interest in writing her name and learning how to do others names.
Will now go into nursery without any fuss or meltdowns.
- 34 We deferred our December 2012 boy not for any negative reasons. He had attended private nursery from 11 months, was well adjusted , had friends, and was interested in learning. However, as his mother I could see that as a four year old boy he still lacked the confidence and and the assertiveness that would develop in another year at pre-school. Best decision we have ever made. He has just finished p3 and doesn't just manage at school- he loves it! He is confident and has the resilience and resources to learn from mistakes that he would not have done if he was sent to school any earlier. I am so glad our second born was born in April!

35 Time to develop into a more mature young boy. Now ready to share joint attention. More able to self regulate his feelings. More confident as a 5 year old.
He is now ready to embrace learning in a p1 classroom.

36 My daughter has loved being in primary one this year, despite all the changes and unsettled times. She skips into school and out of school. She loves the learning and is happy, confident and secure. I 100% believe that her deferred year at nursery made all the difference. Throughout that year she was given time to grow in confidence, be less scared of the adults, be less tearful at drop off time and gradually find her own sense of self. XX we born 2015 so was 5.5 years old when she started p1

37 Deferred my December born daughter as she was emotionally not ready. Her experience at nursery was a battle because she was not even ready for that stage and so often did not go but deferring her made a huge difference and she actually enjoyed nursery even though she still loved home days. By the time she went to school at 5 and a half she was much more confident and able to manage and understand her emotions, academically she struggled with reading and confidence in general but had I put her a year earlier it would have been so damaging. Now at age 17 she has passed her highers with top marks and coped with mild dyslexia and she told me herself she is so thankful that I gave her that extra time before starting school.

I would also like to mention that in my 25 years as an Early Years Officer I have encouraged and fought for deferral every year in my job if I felt it was necessary even if the child was not a Jan/Feb birthday and in all these years each parent has said they were so glad they made the decision to defer, not once has anyone regretted it. The only ones who have regretted were those who were advised to defer and chose not to for various reasons. I absolutely urge our government to seriously give this cause very careful consideration and get it right for our children, you will not regret it. It will be an investment for a future of happy and emotionally healthier children with a love for learning and who will develop into confident young adults one day. Please do the right thing by our children, their future is in our hands. Thank you xx

38 X would not speak to any adult at pre school. She was a talkative little sole outside of nursery but so shy and struggled socially. A December birthday meant I could apply for deferral however I was unsure we could afford another year of blended care costs. As I started to look into it I discovered some councils did not offer this free or charge which was really surprising, there was already a financial implication as blended care was more expensive than before and after school care, had there also been a cost we could not have done it. I consulted with nursery and they agreed she would benefit from the additional year. I honestly cannot stress what an absolute difference this has made. X is a confident little girl who talks to everyone, she has blossomed this year and moves up to P1 with 7 good solid friendships. Had she gone last year she had not identified a single friend in the nursery group she was in. X has also been successful in building relationships with her teachers, considering she would not look at a them X now talks about how much she will miss them. She is now looking forward to school, and talks about what's she is excited about. Academically I think she may have been ok last year but socially she is like a different girl. I am hoping the confidence she has gained follows her through her school years.

39 My child is emotionally ready. Academically she would have been 'fine' last year but I didn't want her to be 'fine' I wanted her to be ready to embrace school and everything it offers. This year she is ready and so am I!

- 40 He is less emotional, he doesn't cry and make himself sick when being dropped at nursery. He's a happier and more confident boy. I'm not sick at the thought of him going to school this year, even without a proper transition, which I was last year. My son is more able to listen, he can concentrate more and understands more about what is being asked of him. He is looking forward to school whereas last year he struggled with staff changes etc. He is sad to be leaving nursery, and has been a little emotional this week; however this is nothing compared to his emotionalism a year ago (about everything and anything!). It's been an immense difference.
- 41 My son is a November birthday. He will now attend school when he is almost 6. Up until a few weeks ago we had wetting/soiling on a daily basis and protestations that he didn't even want to go to nursery, never mind school. As a teacher myself I know he is nowhere near ready. We would have deferred anyway as I am a firm believer no child should attend school until they are 5, and we are fortunate in that we are in a position to do that. However a funded deferral has meant that he can attend a school nursery in his pre school year and this for us is fundamentally important in helping him to be ready to make the best start possible for school. We could have funded a further year at his private nursery but I believe it is crucial for children, and especially those deferring, to experience a school nursery setting and have at least a year with the peer group they will start school with. We are so grateful that our deferral application was granted.
- 42 My son has a confidence that I am certain he wouldn't have had 1 year ago. He is resilient and has the ability to focus for short periods of time.
- 43 He has grown in confidence and is now starting to develop interest in letters and numbers. He is showing an eagerness to learn and his maturity around getting things wrong has developed positively. He is an observer, he has had time to observe and find his groove.
- 44 My daughter was not ready for school at age 4. She has come a long way in this year. She struggles putting phonemes and graphemes together. During lockdown, I made a point of dedicating about half an hour a day to literacy activities that were play based. It was quite an effort, but it helped, and we both learned a lot. We will continue over the summer and hopefully she will be starting to read by then. If she had gone to primary school last year, she would have struggled to pay attention and concentrate, being quite self led at that stage. She is now able to concentrate for longer and although she still gets distracted, she is more able to focus.
- 45 Improved speech
Increased attention span
Interest in numbers and letters
All these things weren't there last Yr but this Yr my little one is more than ready for school where last Yr he would have struggled as he just was not ready or interested.
- 46 Definitely right decision to defer my son who was a December birthday. Benefits socially and academically. Would not have achieved as well at school if not and still has growing to do before he leaves school
- 47 My end of Feb born daughter has always been intelligent and emotionally very literate so people assumed she would go to school 'at the right time'. I am so glad I deferred her, she has skipped into school each day in p1, full of confidence, feeling secure and happy and I have no doubt the extra time at home has contributed to developing that in her. Best decision I have made.
- 48 He has thrived this year as the oldest in his class finished feeling confident and happy
- 49 My son would hate to lift a pencil. We wouldn't draw, he certainly would not write his name. He also has little attention span and would roll on floor at nursery. Since February the return of second lock down, he can write his name.. which is an 8 letter name! He asks to do learning books especially maths ones. We have run out of space for all the drawings he brings him daily from nursery. It just naturally happened when he was ready and not forced. Those who were more sceptical on deferral have commented on what a difference and that it was for the best!

- 50 My boy was a February birthday. Giving him a deferral meant he started school at 5.5 instead of 4.5. This gave him the extra time to develop his social skills further through play and most importantly he didn't have the pressure of any formal learning at a young age. By 5.5 I was much more confident that he would be more socially, emotionally and academically ready to start formal learning in primary 1 and I was right. He has thrived and I'm so glad we gave him time!!
- 51 My son was just not emotionally ready for school at 4. Deferring him was the best decision I ever made for him. When he started he was mature and the oldest in his class, which he was always proud of. Eleven years later and he has achieved straight A grades in his exams. I believe this is down to giving him the best start and waiting that very short time of 1 year until he was maturer and more able for the demands of school.
- 52 Deferred my November born twins. One struggled with attention and the other with confidence. Both have come on so much this last year and are independently writing their names and recognise every letter in the alphabet. Attention has improved for first twin and report card came back from nursery last week saying other twin had "found his voice" in group situations and on his own and that he happily shares his knowledge and speaks out. They are both so ready to start P1 after summer and I have no doubt it was the correct decision.
- 53 Both my boys were deferred due to different reasons. I felt they both benefited massively. They were so much more ready emotionally and academically. I feel that every child should have the opportunity to be deferred as not all children are ready for school when the time comes. I feel that they are more socially ready as-well as they grown more. I really feel that all children if they aren't ready should be given the opportunity as I feel it helps gives them extra help before going to school and it makes the on the same level as there peers.
- 54 An amazing difference she is now ready for p1 which she definitely wasn't last June. She is more confident, academically more ready showing an interest in writing letters and numbers and can concentrate for longer.
- 55 It's been priceless. She is a different child. So excited about starting school, helping others around her. Her confidence has grown and she's keen to learn. She's in a much better place to start school and I have no regrets at all about giving my December born child that extra year. I'm so proud I went with my gut and fought the system.
- 56 More than I could have ever hoped. My daughter has grown in confidence, found her voice to speak to nursery staff without being too shy, formed friendships, played, played some more. I am now confident she is ready for school whereas last year she would have faded into the background and only just got by, now she will skip in and have the school experience she deserves. She will be the oldest in her year group (she turns 6 in October) but I feel this is definitely an advantage.
- 57 So much more confident, and ready to learn. Excited at the prospect of starting school, compared to tears and tantrums last year when she thought about going. So much more settled with transitions, and also now much happier to speak confidently with people who are new to her. I'm SO glad we chose to defer school for a year.
- 58 My daughter has just finished P1, she turned 6 in January, so started P1 at age 5 and a half. We swithered about sending her the year before at age 4 and a half and are so glad we didn't. She is a bright kid so would have coped academically, but socially and emotionally she wasn't ready. The nursery tried to persuade us otherwise but we stuck to our guns. The increase in her confidence and eagerness to learn after that extra year was massive. Seeing her skip in without a backwards glance on her first day compared to the year before when she regularly cried at nursery drop offs was wonderful. She is happy, sociable, in the top reading group and has taken a house move and change of school in her stride no bother. Absolutely no regrets and so glad we made this decision. Thanks to deferral support Scotland for the useful info and positive stories too.

- 59 It has definitely helped my son- made him much more confident and I feel he was ready to learn when he started school. Had I started him the year before, I feel he would have lost so much confidence because he's a bit dreamy and takes a long time to do things sometimes. He's now just finished P2 and making excellent progress. If he'd started P1 aged 4, he would have fallen behind quickly.
- 60 My January born daughter despite a having very limited time at nursery in her deferred year has blossomed more than we could have hoped for. We choose to give her an extra year due to her cautious personality making it hard for her to get involved in social situations even though she wanted to. She would sit in the side lines of events even when with people she knew very well. Often she would have emotional outbursts when she struggling to do something and never wanted to go to anything without a parent staying (except nursery). Everyone around us felt as she was academically bright we should still send her, thankfully for us we had the automatic right to defer her. A year later everyone of those who questioned our decision including the nursery & health visitor have seen how beneficial this year has been for her, the health visitor even stated " you must be so happy you deferred her, the difference is so noticeable" These people only experienced my daughter for small periods of time in a day and realise that as parents we knew our daughter better & our decision to defer was absolutely correct. Our daughter though still a cautious person (this is her natural personality) is now calmer when in new environments or challenged with something she cannot do, she can get involved in social situations with ease such as making friends at the park with children she has never met, attend a party and take part for the whole event. Instead of being the child in class who would have always being trying to keep up with her peers socially which would have ultimately ended up impacting her academically she is now more self confident and comfortable with her peers, this allows her to concentrate on her learning experiences and will therefore allow her to go through her primary education and beyond and flourish. We push our children far to quickly into education and the approach over the last decades has not improved our education stats, we must review our approach and allow our children time to be ready to learn in a formal environment. Not all children need that extra time, but parents should be given more respect and listened to when they express that their child does. I have yet to meet someone who has regretted deferring their child but many friends who have regretted not doing so (often because they found out too late it was even an option). Please give all parents the option to be heard when they wish to give their children that extra year.
- 61 The additional year in nursery has simply done wonders. Our daughter is so much more confident, outgoing and ready to learn. She was always very quiet, shy, very anxious and despite our best efforts she seemed to not really belief in herself. To have the chance to grow one more year in nursery without any pressure or performance expectations has been so important for her development. We look at her now and see a very different child. The whole family is looking forward now to her starting school because now we all know and feel she is ready, full of self-belief and ambition. We'll be forever grateful to the council that they recognised and supported what was in her best interest.
- 62 My son was a bag of energy when he was wee and needed to be moving at all times. Even though p1 is play-based here, he would not have coped with daily literacy and numeracy instruction/targets and homework if he'd started school at 4 -he didn't hold a pen willingly till a week before he started school at nearly 5 years 8 months. He loved it and has thrived although after 3 years of play-based pedagogy with no set seats, he has struggled this last year with being at a desk all day. Thank goodness he wasn't a year younger when he had to adjust to that - deferral gave him the gift of time to thrive not just cope.

- 63 Despite not having the nursery's support and me having to inform them that I had the legal right to defer my Sep born son, we knew that he needed extra time to develop before starting school due to his diagnosed speech and language delay, immature emotional self-regulation and rigid inflexibility about certain things -one day in Nov the year he could have started school, he point blank refused to wear shoes when I dropped him off at nursery - could you imagine the stress of that scenario in a playground? - me carrying him to his class line in his socks whilst he was having a tantrum about the idea of wearing shoes with everyone looking on and the teacher having 24 other kids to deal with as well as this? Absolutely ludicrous. The deferral year made a massive difference and he was happy to go and settled easily last Aug. Speech delay has made literacy acquisition difficult so he can only write his name after p1 but could you imagine the negative impact of being forced to try and learn these things a year earlier? - I dread to think of the impact that would have had on his wellbeing. He is happy and confident and his writing will improve with time. There was no doubt about our decision to defer when we did it and no doubt now at the end of p1.
- 64 In a nut shell my child has gone from surviving to thriving in his educational journey .
It's allowed him the time to equip himself to be able to regulate his emotions and articulate himself enough to achieve his full potential from the setting and not just survive each day .
It's taken him from not Mark making or engaging in messy play , to drawings and head to toe in mud .
It's taken him from avoiding eye contact and conversation to a lead role in his graduation ceremony .
It's allowed him the time to explore the world around him through play and the most nurturing environment without the pressures of school .
- 65 My child is now going into 4th year and not 5th year. So glad we deferred a year as it's when they hit secondary school you really see the benefits. They are much more mature hitting exam work and are the first to do things and hit milestones.
- 66 More confident, hungry to learn, more emotionally able to cope with all the personalities in his class. His report and parent interview talked about how he was always trying to help his classmates. A year has allowed so much emotional maturity, he was so ready for P1 and can't wait for P2
- 67 More confidence and she is ready now to start P1

68 I have deferred both my children one is now 8 and the other is 15.

For my 8 year old child - this has made a difference all the way through school where he is now going into P4 (would have been P5 if I had not deferred)

My child continues to be quite shy and can often lack confidence. Deferring his year at school gave him more time to develop friendships and develop his confidence in smaller groups of children with a higher adult to child ratio. He has found the structure of school difficult as he is quite a creative child and really thrives when outdoors, this would have been even more challenging if he went the year early that he should have. Being at nursery an additional year gave him more opportunity to develop his independence and creativity, it also helped his all round development particularly emotionally. My child has found difficulty learning to read and I can only imagine how much more challenging this would have been if he was completing work at the stage he could have went to school. I can only say for my child deferred entry has given him more time to develop emotionally, socially and academically at a pace that is appropriate for him.

For my 15 year old - I probably would want to focus on the benefits of going to school a year later particularly at the academy stage, my daughter was almost a whole year older than the other children in her class, the benefits of this when moving into the academy have been seen through her increased level of maturity, dealing with some of the challenges being a teenager can bring, being more mature in her ability to understand and engage in study for longer periods of time, and understand the importance of this. This additional year has also helped her to develop emotionally all the way through school and is so evident compared now as to her peer group particularly now are in their 3rd year at 13/14 where she is 15 and instead of being the youngest she is the oldest. This has reaped benefits around how she deals with situations that arise for teenagers around supporting friends, emotional resilience and with how she copes mentally with teenage issues. I have never regretted sending either of my children later to school and can only speak about the benefits I have seen so far for both of them. I would fully support the option for parents to choose a deferred entry year.

69 We decided to defer our son (born Dec 15) because he was really struggling with his social skills and with listening and understanding. We worried that, if he went to school aged 4, he would be disrespectful to his classmates and wander out of the classroom etc - he just wasn't ready. Given the teacher: pupil ratio, I'm sure he would have presented challenges.

In the deferral year, he has really come on leaps and bounds - he is talking better and expressing his thoughts and needs. He has developed social skills and treats other children with respect, developing the skills to make friendships and work collaboratively with his peers. He can apply himself better and listens/responds to instructions much better. He's in a much better place to start primary school.

70 The confidence my December born son gained in his deferral year was amazing. His willingness to sit and complete tasks was day and night.

His friendships have flourished and gone is my shy little boy who would cry at the slightest little thing.

His teacher has said what a settled and contented boy he is.

We still have "disagreements" over homework but that extra year has meant we are in such a better position to explain why it's done and control emotions that little bit easier.

I have no regrets in the slightest.

71 I have 5 year old twins and both have autism, the difference in them that extra year has made is amazing they are so ready for school this year

72 I deferred my daughter who's a January birthday (born in 2000) At the time I felt everyone and their dog had an opinion as to whether she was ready or not and I wasn't sure what to do. I was also a nursery teacher at the time but didn't have much experience at that time in my career to know what was best. I was advised by others who'd deferred to keep busy with activities, swimming, kindergym, etc. I wasn't convinced until she was in P1 and at least 50% of it was about school dinners, skint knees and making friends. She went into a composite P1/2 and was the social queen of the class cos she already knew the P2 from her preschool year in nursery. She also had the advantage of being more mature to deal with it all. Over the years since then, I've had deferred and not deferred children in the same class. Sometimes the difference in maturity isn't so much an issue in primary but more so in secondary. Fast forward to now and she's now 21 years old and it's definitely been the best thing, especially for exams, prom, driving, going out, going to uni, etc, etc. If you have the choice, definitely take it!

They grow up too fast, another year in nursery lets them learn through play before they start more formal learning in P1. Also, out of the folk I keep up with who were in my antenatal class, all of us who deferred have no regrets. Also, now she's at Uni, there are quite a few Jan/Feb birthdays who didn't turn 18 until later in first year. Hope that makes sense! X

73 The deferral year has made the world of difference to my son X. This time last year X would be anxious or nervous about new situations. He would need adult support when dealing with disagreements at nursery. This last year has helped him to grow in confidence. X started drama class just a few weeks ago and he ran in without a second look, he was actually excited to be trying something new. If this was a year ago he would have needed me there and felt anxious about going in on his own. Over the past few months X has had a huge interest in drawing, letters and numbers. He had very little interest in this a year ago. He is looking at books and trying to sound out words, he is trying to write words, he talks to adults and others with confidence. He is now in a place where the learning makes sense for him. If he had been at school this year, it would have only at this point in the final few weeks of Primary 1 that all of this would have clicked for him. I am over the moon that he has had this extra year before starting formal education because I feel confident that he is more than ready for the experience. My little boy is confident, curious and eager to learn. It could have been a very different story if he was at school this year. I have a little boy who can't wait to start school in August!

74 The boy that is leaving nursery this year is a completely different boy to last year. Last year he played independently from others his age, observing rather than participating. His key worker struggled to get him to join in and pushing him made it worse. He has gained in confidence, although still remains a little shy. He has good friends that he plays with regularly and has asked to keep in touch with over the holidays. He is excited about the thought of school rather than scared. He regularly talks about the wonderful things he will learn at school. In fact he was upset that there are summer holidays as he can't wait to learn to read.

Instead of spending a summer reassuring and persuading our little boy to go to school, we have a child that is ready and looking forward to it. When he walks into school in August, although apprehensive, he will go happily with his friends rather than having weeks of tears.

He has been given the opportunity to excel at life rather than do ok. He has all the foundations now and the confidence to use them. Deferring his P1 place has made the world of difference to a little boy that just needed a little more time.

75 My little boy has come on leaps and bounds in his deferred year. He is now a confident little boy who is more than ready for school.

76 He's gone from selectivity mute to part verbal but ONLY to adults (when he could have gone to school)...to having best friends and interacting with peers confidently. This gives him joy. It wasn't in my best interest as it was another year if morning's only rather than full days. But it was right for my boy. What a difference a year makes! It has done him the world of good.

- 77 The single best decision we have made for our daughter. She is starting school this August and she cannot wait, picking uniform every time we go shopping. This time last year if we mentioned the word 'school' she cried, not wanting to go. We had some job calming her down saying she wasn't going then.
A year on she is more confident, excited about what's coming and making new friends. She is the only one going to her school from her nursery class and she is not phased by it.
We know she is going to thrive this year and can't wait to see what comes next instead of worrying about her.
She is a December born and we had apply for funding. We were thankful our LA were supportive of our decision.
- 78 They are so much more confident as am I in letting them embark on this next stage once they go to school that's it count down to leaving home and being an adult its over in a blink of an eye childhood. Going to miss our parent and toddler classes so much x
- 79 Much more confident. More mature emotionally. More mature in his thinking, how he interacts with others and how he sees the world around him. He just wasn't ready a year ago.
- 80 Gone from being fairly non verbal and very shy with little to no interaction with his peers to being a confident, almost chatty, helpful wee boy. Just needed the extra time to find his voice and his feet.
- 81 My daughter although still shy in nature is more confident around other children. She is interested in letters and numbers and is more independent in dressing herself and putting her shoes on.
- 82 My son has had time to get allergy issues sorted which were impeding his play, sleep and general wellbeing.
As he is "ahead" academically and is a social child, the council argued that he should start school. No consideration was made for his life outwith the nursery setting. I had to appeal a rejection for funding and get several health professionals and an MSP involved.
We were eventually successful and my son is now finishing P1. His health is under control and he has thrived in school. He is able to sleep well and therefore can enjoy and engage in his learning. His school provide him with a great level of challenge and he thrives.
I have now also deferred my daughter and am over the moon she will receive a further year of nursery funding also and be fortunate enough to begin school closer to 6. I hope this will become the norm before too long!
- 83 My child is so much more confident than he was a year ago. He has enjoyed his year at nursery, he has developed strong friendships. He is more emotionally mature and is showing empathy. He is looking forward to starting primary 1 and I feel he is ready for the next step. The extra year at nursery has been invaluable and I believe will have a positive impact on his education moving forward
- 84 My son should've been starting school this August but having a February birthday we decided to apply for a deferral and thankfully we were approved.
At the time where I had to decided whether to send him or not this year I had no way of predicting if he would be "ready" or not.
I'm so glad we have a deferral in place as he is still very emotional, has no interest in writing and only just starting to identify letters from his name.
I truly believe if he had been made to go this year he would've struggled immensely
- 85 My child has confidence to learn and is happy going into school every day. She also has that extra year of maturity which helps her deal with things better.
- 86 The world of difference! She is ready to learn, happy & loving her time at school. She has grown in confidence! Best decision I could ever have made!

- 87 I will be deferring my child this year. Due to their care experienced background, trauma, suspected brain injuries and complex social and emotional needs. However I found it disappointing system, with no ability to appeal a refusal to defer here in Aberdeenshire council. They refused as our child is five in August and would not mention or take into account that she has varying levels of immaturity and faux maturity. The council are not going to fund an extra year for our child in their therapeutic outdoor setting. During this extra year of play and time to grow our child will also be having various assessments and diagnostics will be going on.
- 88 Last year our (December born) son could barely hold a pencil. He struggled with full days at nursery. He was tired and emotional and everything was a battle. He couldn't find the words to express how he felt and he was often angry. This extra year we've seen an amazing transformation. He had the benefit of being at forest kindergarten for most of the year. He is now enthusiastic about everything. He is beginning to write his name (and is interested in doing so). He loves numbers. He has the energy and stamina for a whole day. He still has outbursts, but now he has the vocabulary to tell us how he's feeling and why. And more importantly he's excited about starting school. I cannot imagine how tricky it would have been if he'd gone last year as he was 'supposed' to. Every parent and child should have this option if they believe their child would benefit.
- 89 She has grown in confidence! It was the best decision ever even though my family couldn't understand why. I myself am Feb born and went to school at 4 and I remember hating it, I struggled making friends, was bullied, would wet myself, had low confidence and worst of all I hated being 17 and at Uni, I didn't feel ready at all.
- 90 My son is now so excited about going to school - he's now interested in writing letters and it talking about learning to read. A year ago he was scared and nervous and had no interest in writing or reading. The extra year has allowed him to emotionally develop so that he is more than ready to move in to primary one - he is far better at expressing his feelings and needs
- 91 He's grown so much in confidence and emotional maturity.

His end of year nursery report from his key worker said the same. She commented on how proud she was to see his involvement in 'boisterous play', (not exactly how I would've worded it!) and I think what she meant was he's now 'getting into things', he's now involved rather than on the sidelines.

Although it was all about wellbeing for us, I saw how much progress he'd also made in his early literacy and number, during the second lockdown at home. I did think for a second, could he have gone this year? I don't think he'd have progressed so well in the p1 environment last year. He would've sat quietly, behaved and got on, but he wouldn't have had the time and space to explore learning at his own pace.

His deferral year has done him the world of good, he's ready to thrive in school now.

92 My boy is a January baby, he is the youngest of four and would have "survived" at school.

We gave him an extra year and boy has he flown.....he really enjoyed being the oldest at nursery and setting an example for others as well as getting to help the teachers more. He has settled really well into school and was more than ready to learn. It is now at the stage where we have to think hard about some of the maths questions we set him and his reading is top class as well.

The teachers have all commented that he is a joy to teach, ready to learn and just switched on and ready to go :-). He makes friends easily and is enjoying being with lots of others in the school.

Would I do it again, in a heartbeat, do I encourage others to do it, yes absolutely. He will continue to thrive and give his teachers a challenge (in the best way possible).

93 She is now ready to start p1, she is happier, more confident, excited to start school

94 my son is so enthusiastic about school and his learning.this is reflected in the feedback from his teacher and the numerous star pupil and top scorer awards he has achieved this year.

95 Time to develop skills in managing emotions.

96 He is absolutely thriving in p1, top group for maths and literature. He loved going every day, didn't once say he didn't want to go. Teacher said he was a joy to have in his class.

Confidence has grown way beyond what we ever imagined, although he still struggles a little socially. He made friends really easily even though he'd never met any of the kids before.

Deferring him was a very difficult decision but we are so glad we did.

97 I have deferred two of my children and the only wish I have is that I could've done the same for my July born eldest when I see the huge benefits it has had for my October and September born child. My October born daughter is due to start primary 6 in August. I truly feel this has made a difference to her whole life. In school she works well, learning isn't a struggle and she found lockdown work no problem as she tackled it in her calm and organised manner, she also loved being at home during this time. Her friendships seem easy, with little drama. She is still quiet and likes to assess all situations before engaging with them but she is confident and comfortable within herself and how she wants to be. She is determined and chooses her own path, an aspect of her personality that I feel would not have developed had she been forced to start school a year earlier. She still plays beautifully and I feel all of her confidence to do this flourished in her deferred year.

More recently I deferred my September born daughter (after a very stressful battle) and again I feel it was absolutely the best thing for her. She finds learning effortless, she has developed into a sociable and bubbly little girl and finds all aspects of school life (as well as extra curricular activities) very enjoyable. She loves to play in a great range of activities and situations and is wonderfully independent. We have moved past separation anxiety, she now sleeps well and it is wonderful to see how much her deferred year has impacted on her development.

I am forever grateful that we chose (and fought) to do this for our children as I feel the one extra year we gave them will make a positive difference to them both forever.

98 My son has had time to work on his speech issues which means he is now more easily understood and this has significantly increased his confidence in communicating with others.

He has become more sociable and will now have friends with him when he transitions to p1.

His ability to concentrate has improved and he has begun to show an interest in learning which he did not have 6 months ago. He will be going into p1 a happy confident boy, which would not have been the case if he had started school last August.

99 Time to develop socially and emotionally at a pace suitable for my child

- 100 A huge difference. My son not only has grown up physically but socially and emotionally too. It is like night and day to where he was this time last year. He is confident about starting school now and will thrive rather than just cope.
- 101 Given him a year to develop his speech before starting P1 and being able to cope with learning sounds, blends and spelling strategies to hopefully support him becoming a confident reader.
- 102 Our autistic son was originally due to start P1 in August 2020, but was granted an extra year in nursery. He will now be commencing school this summer. We applied for the extra nursery year as developmentally our son was nowhere near school readiness, both emotionally and academically. It would have been akin to sending a toddler to school.

Our son had poor emotional regulation, limited socialisation skills and poor safety awareness. His fine motor skills were delayed and he could only grip pencils in his fist and scrawl. One of our biggest concerns was his delayed communication skills as he was still unable to hold a basic to and fro conversation nor answer most basic questions.

Being permitted an extra year before starting school has made an extraordinary difference to our son across all developmental areas. He has recently started to hold two way conversations with us, is starting to answer "where/who/why/how" questions, has a richer vocabulary and a better use of grammar. We've also noticed a big improvement in his concentration, critical thinking and general awareness of the world. We find he is more interested in role play and demonstrates more creativity. He can now hold a pencil correctly, make recognisable drawings of people and objects, and has the fine motor control to form letters and numbers. We observe him to be much more interested in social engagement with other adults and children, and he is actively initiating interactions. Finally, his emotional regulation has dramatically improved, particularly when dealing with changes to routine or other difficult situations.

Recently, we have been able to prepare our son for his school transition and use the photos, videos and other transition documents to talk with him about P1. None of this would have been possible last year due to his limited conversational skills and lack of comprehension.

We cannot over-emphasise the benefits to our son in giving him an extra year to flourish. We are so grateful that he was given this opportunity.

- 103 She blossomed! Became confident, chatty and interested in 'finding things out'. Before she was clingy, tired and anxious. Deferral worked wonders and I would have liked her to stay even longer....till 7?
- 104 My grandson did an extra year - and as he moves into P5 the benefits are still so obvious. He is small for his age/class BUT he leads. He shows an interest in astonishing things and it is all down to the extra year of play, and exploration and asking questions!!
- 105 My prem daughter was born on 26th Dec. She was turned down for deferral - but we fought this in Edinburgh. She was then funded for an extra year - a real bonus. allowing her to thrive not just survive.
- 106 It allowed my daughter time to play and grow in confidence. Physically she was really small too so this meant she was not starting school being obviously much smaller than her peers as they often picked her up and called her a baby. It also seemed happier and more ready for school. Her bone age was a year behind (she was attending the paediatricians for checks on her size) and she struggled to hold pencil properly. When she started school she was not nearly as clingy as she had been the year earlier. She fits in much better with her deferred year group maturity wise.

- 107 She has had a year to learn through play, strengthen friendships and learn so much about relationships. I live in a very rural, remote place and am a single parent. Home schooling is not an option. She needs to be as ready as possible for all the shenanigans going to school involves. I'm not bothered about the academics and being more ready to learn (although I believe this is the case with her being a year older), it's purely given her a stronger foundation for weathering all the experiences she will have once in school, and managing the 5 day a week routine better. I follow as best I can attachment and positive parenting, believing connection and relationship to be the most important things to experience and manage. Her deferral year will help her head into school this year a little more able to make the most of the experiences she will have and of staying as whole as possible.
- 108 My single-word answer to this question is "HUGE"! The additional year at nursery made a huge difference for our daughter.
About 18 month ago I filled in the Moving on to School questionnaire (via our NHS Board website) and I had to answer "no" to about half of the questions. Our daughter couldn't hold a pencil the proper way, she couldn't draw a person (she nearly wouldn't draw at all), she had problems with using scissors and with dressing herself fully, etc. Then I filled the same questionnaire several days ago, and I answered "yes" to all questions, and, in addition, now she can write her own name.
More importantly, a year ago her social and emotional skills were not quite there yet. I can't even start to imagine what a disaster it would have been, should she have started primary school last August. Having high levels of anxiety in general, it was difficult for our daughter to go through a very disrupted year even at her nursery, which she likes a lot (where she's been at since 2.5 years of age and is attached to the nursery staff). If she were at a new school environment, I'm pretty sure it would be 10 times worse.
- 109 Greater confidence to make friends. Time to mature. Time to toilet train. Social confidence.
- 110 December birthday, so was due to go up to school at age 4. At that point he was hitting and biting the other children and staff in the nursery. He couldn't share and couldn't control his emotions. His speech was really poor and only those closest to him could understand him. Multiagency all agreed on deferral for him and this was approved. During his extra year in nursery he matured considerably. He stopped lashing out and even made some friends. He was definitely best placed for the move to P1 and has had such a successful year. His nursery teacher actually said that from the check ins she's had with the P1 teacher, he is one of the most responsible in the class. He is always helping others and is now a very popular classmate.
- 111 Deferring our December born daughter has been THE best decision we could have ever made. We had no specific concerns about her development or progress - we simply wanted her to make the most of her childhood. She is so full of curiosity and absorbs so much. She was quite shy and had one very special friend who was moving on to school so we questioned our decision so many times. However, there is not a day that goes past now that both ourselves and the nursery staff don't comment on how beneficial the additional year has been to her social and emotional development. She is an advert for deferral - she skips in and out of everything in life so happy with confidence and resilience. She has been supported by the most amazing early years workers and is absolutely thriving. As a primary one teacher with a huge personal and professional interest in early childhood development I have long been aware of the benefits of deferral and have often encouraged parents to do it, but when it came to my own daughter I was filled with doubt and what ifs - so conscious of making the right decision. I have no idea why I worried and having this experience now I would whole heartedly recommend to any parent that they consider how many benefits can come from the additional time to just be a child. You are not 'holding them back' - you are giving them time - time that they will never get back. You have one chance to be 4, let them have it! We will never look back and we know that we have given our daughter the best start we possibly could.