Expansion of Early Education Funding

Get Ready for Autumn 2024

Information for early years and childcare providers

Starting from April 2024, existing early education entitlements will be expanded, helping working families with their childcare costs.

By September 2025, most working families with children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare support.

The changes are being introduced gradually to make sure that providers can meet the needs of more families. This means that:

- **From April 2024** - Up to 15 hours for eligible working families in England with a 2-year-old. (This is from the term following their second birthday.)
  A big thank you to all providers for all your work and support, promoting the new early education funding offers, adapting to new systems, and supporting families to get eligibility. Your efforts helped a successful rollout of this phase of the expansion of the childcare entitlements.

- **From September 2024** - Up to 15 hours for eligible working families in England with a child between 9 and 23 months old. (This is from the term after the child reaches 9 months old.)
  In this information update we are focussing on what providers can expect to get ready to deliver the new 15 hours offer for working families with a child aged 9 - 23 months old from September 2024.

- **From September 2025** - Up to 30 hours for eligible working families in England with a child from 9 months old up to school age. (This is from the term after the child reaches 9 months old.)

1 **by no later than** **31 August 2024**	**Providers should remind parents to check if they are eligible.** For Autumn 2024 funding period (from 1 September 2024 – 31 December 2024) parents must confirm eligibility by 31 August 2024 to access: • a 15-hour funded place for their 9–23-month-old. • a 15-hour funded place for their 2-year-old child. • a 30-hour funded place for their 3 – 4-year-old child.

Working parents can apply for 15 hours free childcare if their child will be 9 months old by 31 August 2024.
Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Please let all your parents know that their child might be eligible for at least 15 hours funded childcare, either through the new working parent offer, or if the child is two the 2YO funding offer for disadvantaged families.

- **Parents have until 31 August to get their working parent code from gov.uk to start in September**.
- **Parents can make an application** for **2YO disadvantaged offer on the Southend Citizen Portal.**

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by no later than

31 August 2024

Parents should submit eligible code details via Southend Citizen Portal and providers will need to accept (or validate) the code.

There are two ways that providers can validate a working parent eligibility code to confirm the code is eligible.

a) You can validate the code manually How to validate a working parent eligibility code manually | Southend Learning Network

b) Instead of completing a manual check to validate the working parent eligibility code, you can now give parents a link to allow the parent to enter the details of their working parents' eligibility code, along with details about their child via the Southend Citizens Portal.

   We have listened to providers and are trying to reduce the amount of administration and data input involved in claiming early education funding. When the parent has submitted the code via the Southend Citizens Portal, you just need to check and accept. The information about the child and the code details will transfer to your headcount task so you will save time inputting the information.

How does it work?

If your parents have a working parent entitlement eligibility code that begins with either 50 or 11 please ask them to register the code details on the Southend Citizen Portal.

Parents may have used the Southend Citizen Portal before to:

- Make school applications.
- Check if you are eligible for a funded Two-Year-Old Childcare place if you are on a low income and in receipt of Universal Credit.

What parents need to do

1. Log into the Southend Citizen Portal Note: If parents have not used the Southend Citizens Portal before, they will need to register to get an account.

2. Select 'the **Working parent Entitlement** box at the bottom of the first screen. Follow the steps to complete child details and enter your eligibility code details.

3. The parent will then be able to share eligibility with their chosen childcare provider by selecting the childcare provider's name from the list (if the parent is splitting funding they can share with multiple providers).

The parent will need to let you know that they have submitted their code details onto the Citizen Portal. Then you just need to check the details and accept the code. How to accept a working parent entitlement eligibility code | Southend Learning Network

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June/July/ August 2024

Before child starts a place at your setting in Autumn 2024

Parents must complete a Parent declaration form for Autumn 2024

The parent declaration form for providers to use for Autumn 2024 funding claims has been published. Parent Declaration form AUTUMN 2024 - For claims from 1 September 2024 - 31 December 2024 | Southend Learning Network

- All providers must ensure a Parent/Carer Declaration Form is completed for all parents/carers accessing a free early education place.
- Parents or carers must complete and sign a Parent/Carer Declaration Form before the start of **every funding period** to confirm the agreement between the provider and the parent for the duration of the funding period.

There will be just one parent declaration form which you should use for all types of funding claims as follows:

- the new 15 hours offer for children from term after the child reaches 9 months old.
- the 15 hours 2YO offer for disadvantaged parents.
- the 2YO 15 hours expanded childcare offer for working parents.
- the 15 hours universal funding offer for all 3- and 4-year-old children
- the 30 hours extended funding offer for working parents.

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June/July/August 2024

Before child starts a place at your setting in Autumn 2024

Issue a privacy notice to new starters.

Providers must issue a Privacy Notice to parents/carers ("parents") when a child starts at the setting. This notice summarises the information held about the child, why it is held and third parties to whom it may be passed strictly in accordance with guidance supplied to the provider by the Council. The Privacy Notice for parents is available on the Southend Learning Network Early Education Funding - Privacy notice | Southend Learning Network

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July 2024

By 8 September 2024 at the latest

You will need to complete an estimate task.

The Autumn 2024 Estimate task will be open from:

Monday 8 July 2024

(it will close during the first week of September 2024)

We recommend that all providers try and complete the task in July.

If you complete the task as far as possible in July, this will allow sufficient time for us to support you with any questions or technical issues by the close of the task window in September. It will also alert you to any eligibility issues early.

The task is only open until September to allow any parents who request a place during the summer to be added to your claim.

Before adding a child to your estimate claim please ensure that:

- The child is eligible – please check you have checked date of birth.
- A Parent Declaration Form has been fully completed for the child.
- You have asked all parents if they will be accessing early education funding at any other providers in Autumn 2024. Where the parent is accessing early education at another provider you must contact the other provider to confirm the claim
- For 2-year-old funding claims (disadvantaged application route): an approved application code starting with TYF882 for 2-year-old free childcare is in place, and you have completed a placement notification on the Early Years Provider Portal
- Check that a valid working parent entitlement eligibility code is in place for children accessing working parent entitlement places i.e:
  - children aged 9- 24 months and 2-year-olds accessing up to 15 hours
  - and 3- and 4-year-olds accessing up to 30 hours Remember to check.

The validity start date of working parent eligibility code should be on or before 31 August 2024
The validity end date of working parent eligibility codes should be on or after 1 September 2024

6 Training and support

Childcare providers are encouraged to contact earlyyears@southend.gov.uk at any time if you have questions about delivering the new offer for 9 -23 month children, or any of the other entitlements.

Providers can also join virtual sessions to keep updated and ask any questions about claiming for the new early education funding offers. Details of session times and dates will be circulated by 29 June 2024.

7 Funding Policy

Providers delivering Early Education Funding in Southend must ensure that they publish an early education funding policy so that parents clearly understand which hours/sessions can be taken as free provision and any additional charges, including for meals and additional hours.

We wrote to providers in early May 2024 to ask you to complete and return a copy of your funding policy by 31 May 2024. Thank you to those providers who have returned a copy of your policy.

We are working as quickly as possible to review the policies and either advise or confirm that you can use them. For policies received by 10 June we aim to assess and agree your funding policy by end of June.
This is a reminder for those providers who have not yet returned your policy to complete and return to us earlyyears@southend.gov.uk by **Friday 28 June 2024**.

All parents accessing funding must be given or emailed a copy of the early education funding policy for your setting before starting a place at your setting.

The updated version of the funding policy includes detail about the childcare expansion reforms from April 2024. Please download a copy of the Funding Policy and amend it to reflect how you intend to deliver early education funding at your setting. Please refer to the guidance notes for help completing the document.

If you have any questions or need support to complete this document, please contact us earlyyears@southend.gov.uk

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Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Early Years Pupil Premium is paid to eligible children across all funding offers.

We have received enquiries from providers asking how the EYPP payments are calculated, or why they receive less EYPP each month in the Summer compared with Spring.

Please see table below for help calculating EYPP payments.

	Total number of hours claimed in funding period	Multiplied by	EYPP hourly rate	Divided by	Number of payment months in funding period
Summer 2024	13 (weeks) x 15 (hours) = a total of 195 hours claimed in Summer 2024.		EYPP is calculated at 195 (hours) x £0.68 (EYPP funding rate) = a total of £132.60 total EYPP funding due for Summer 2024.		Then the total EYPP Funding for Summer 2024 is divided by number of months in funding period. For summer 2024 there are 5 monthly payments. So £132.60 divided by 5 = **£26.52 per month**
Autumn 2024	14 (weeks) x 15 (hours) = a total of 210 hours claimed in Autumn 2024.		EYPP is calculated at 210 (hours) x £0.68 (EYPP funding rate) = a total of £142.80 total EYPP funding due for Autumn 2024.		Then the total EYPP Funding for Autumn 2024 is divided by number of months in funding period. For Autumn 2024 there are 4 monthly payments. So £142.80 divided by 4 **= £35.70 per month**
Spring 2025	11 (weeks) x 15 (hours) = a total of 165 hours claimed in Spring 2025.		EYPP is calculated at 165 (hours) x £0.68 (EYPP funding rate) = a total of £112.20 total EYPP funding due for Spring 2025.		Then the total EYPP Funding for Spring 2025 is divided by number of months in funding period. For Spring 2025 there are 3 monthly payments. So £112.20 divided by 3 **= £37.40 per month**

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Before child takes up place then ongoing on invoices

Provider responsibility to inform parents about support with childcare costs.

If a childcare provider fails to inform parents about **support with childcare costs, in particular funded early education,** it can impact the financial wellbeing for families. The Early education and childcare (applies from 1 April 2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) states that:
providers must work with parents so that parents understand which hours/sessions can be taken as free provision.

It is crucial for childcare providers to communicate effectively with parents about available free childcare options. Providers can do in the following ways:

- Talk to parents when they register for a place at your setting.
- Display information about help with childcare costs.
- Ensure that all parents accessing early education funding are given a copy of the Early Education Funding Policy for your setting. This document sets out for parents how you will deliver early education funding and contains information for parents about additional help with childcare costs.

We are strongly recommending that where providers issue invoices to parents for additional charges, or paid hours, this simple strapline is added to your standard invoice template:

Check what help you could get with your childcare costs.
Visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk and/or use the Government Childcare Calculator www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator.

This will ensure that all parents are signposted effectively to find out if they can get any help, and you will always be able to evidence that you have informed parents about the help available.

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Verification of data charges

Southend Council did not operate a charging policy in Summer 2024 to let providers adjust to the new 'Working Parent Entitlement' offers. Data verification charges will apply again for Autumn 2024 claims.
Where data issues need to be investigated by the Council which identify incorrect or incomplete claim submissions charges will apply, for example.

Incorrect date of birth	The correct date of birth must be entered on the claim as stated on the child's birth certificate	£50
Incorrect name/or incorrect spelling of name	Always use the child's legal name. Do not use shortened or abbreviated versions (e.g. if the child's name on birth certificate is Thomas, do not enter Tom on your claim.	£50
Claims which exceed the maximum hours (Double funding exceptions)	This normally occurs where parents are splitting funding between two settings. Where parent is accessing any hours at another provider you must contact the provider to confirm the claim. If you resolve the claim yourself, you will not be charged. Providers will only be charged if the exception requires one of the providers to be paid an emergency payment, or if the exception is not resolved by amendment task deadline at the end of the funding period.	£50
Early Education Funding claim not submitted by deadline.	If you miss deadline for submission of headcount you will incur a charge. Dates when claims and payments are due can be found on Southend Learning Network. Early Education Funding claims and payments schedule | Southend Learning Network	£50
Incorrect hours submitted	You must not claim more hours than the parent is accessing at your setting. If you enter incorrect hours and do not resolve this by amendment task, this is considered a fraudulent claim, and you will incur a charge.	£50
No parent declaration form in place	You must not submit a claim if you do not have a parent declaration form in place.	£50

The above list shows examples of the types of error that could result in a fine. This list is not exhaustive.

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Can reception age children continue to access a funded early education place at a nursery?

A child can continue to receive the funded hours until they start reception class. This will usually be the September following their fourth birthday. However, if the parent chooses to defer their school start date, they can continue to receive early education funding until their child reaches statutory school age, which is the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday.

Important matters to consider if parents are deferring the start date for their child ~~in~~ starting school.

Please follow the guidance about deferring a place in reception class in the Primary school admissions booklet – Southend-on-Sea City Council

By law, all parents must ensure that their children receive full time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday. This is known as "compulsory school age." The law also entitles parents to full time education from the September after the child turns four and therefore you have access to education before your child is of compulsory school age.

Most children start school on a full-time basis from the September. However, where parents feel it appropriate, they can request that their child attends part time, or defer to the next term, until reaching compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday). Schools must accommodate these requests where it is in the best interest of the child. If parents wish their child to attend part time they must discuss this with the headteacher of their allocated school. The local authority is not involved in these discussions and decisions.

Parents are not able to defer admission beyond the beginning of the term after their child's fifth birthday. Or beyond the start of the Summer Term (April) of the academic year for which the original application was made. There is no appeal process in the admissions process for requests that are declined by schools.

In the case of children born prematurely or during the late summer months, parents may request admission outside the normal age group and start reception a year later. Further details are available in the Primary Admission Booklet.

Children starting school reception class September.

Parents cannot claim early education funding in addition to a full-time reception place in a maintained school, academy, or independent school.

Some childcare providers receive requests from parents for their child to continue to access an early education funding place in September until their school reception place starts.

If the child is registered to start Reception class at a school in September - even if the children do not start full time reception class until three weeks into the Autumn term:

- the Council cannot pay early education funding for children once they are registered to start reception.
- parents will not be able to access a free early education funding place at a nursery class at a school, or PVI provider in September.

Arrangements for starting school at the start of Reception is a matter for schools, reflecting their local and specific circumstances and judgements of what is in the best interests of their pupils.

Parents can discuss their childcare needs with the allocated school. Schools should try where possible to prioritise parents with childcare needs when they are planning intake for September so that children of working parents with childcare needs can start reception early in September.