

Early Years Education

Provider Agreement for the Provision of Funded Early Education for children aged 9 Months to 4 Years



April 2025

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Section 1

Overview

About this Agreement

This provider agreement sets out how Slough Borough Council (the council) and Early Years Providers in Slough will deliver Funded Early Education entitlements for children from 9 months to 4 years old. It sets out the requirements and constraints that the council and providers must adhere to and includes the **Parental Declaration Form that must be completed and signed by all parents and carers**. The agreement meets the Department for Education's expectations regarding the contents of a provider agreement as outlined in: 'Model Agreement: Early years provision free of charge and free childcare2025'.

[Model Agreement: Early years provision free of charge and free childcare](#)

This provider agreement is for

- Slough Borough Council
- Early years providers, including:
 1. Early years providers and childminders registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register.
 2. Childminders registered with a childminder agency that is registered with Ofsted.
 3. Schools taking children 2 and over and which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider.
 Schools Registered with Ofsted to take under 2s

Preliminary

A reference to a statute or statutory provision is a reference to it as it is in force for the time being, taking account of any amendment, extension, or re-enactment and includes any subordinate legislation for the time being in force made under it.

The local authority reserves the right to vary this agreement in response to changes in legislation and guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Failure to exercise, or any delay in exercising, any right or remedy provided under this agreement or by law shall not constitute a waiver of that (or any other) right or remedy, nor shall it preclude or restrict any further exercise of that (or any other) right or remedy.

No single or partial exercise of any right or remedy provided under this agreement or by law shall preclude or restrict the further exercise of that right or remedy.

A waiver (which may be given subject to conditions) of any right or remedy provided under this agreement or by law shall only be effective if it is in writing. It shall apply only to the party to whom it is addressed and for the specific circumstances for which it is given. It

shall not prevent the party who has given the waiver from subsequently relying on the right or remedy in other circumstances.

Unless specifically provided otherwise, rights arising under this agreement are cumulative and do not exclude rights provided by law.

If any court or competent authority finds that any provision of this agreement (or part of any provision) is invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, that provision or part-provision shall, to the extent required, be deemed to be deleted, and the validity and enforceability of the other provisions of this agreement shall not be affected.

If any invalid, unenforceable or illegal provision of this agreement would be valid, enforceable, and legal if some part of it were deleted, the parties shall negotiate in good faith to amend such provision such that, as amended, it is legal, valid and enforceable, and, to the greatest extent possible, achieves the parties' original intention.

This agreement and any documents referred to in it constitute the entire agreement between the parties and supersede and extinguish all previous drafts, arrangements, understandings, or agreements between them, whether written or oral, relating to the subject matter of this agreement.

Each party agrees that it shall have no remedies in respect of any representation or warranty (whether made innocently or negligently) that is not set out in this agreement. Nothing in this clause shall limit or exclude any liability for fraud.

Nothing in this agreement is intended to, or shall operate to, create a partnership between the parties, or to authorise either party to act as agent for the other, and neither party shall have authority to act in the name or on behalf of or otherwise to bind the other in any way.

A person who is not a party to this agreement shall not have any rights under or in connection with it.

Freedom of Information requests are responded to in line with [Slough Borough Council procedures](#)

Section 2

Provider Agreement Requirements

Introduction

The Childcare Act 2006 fulfils the government's commitment to give every child the best start in life and parents greater choice about how to balance work and family life. The act places a duty on all local authorities in England to improve outcomes for young children, to reduce inequalities between them and to secure sufficient childcare to enable parents to work.

Local authorities must follow the model agreement when carrying out their duties. This is set in [section 7\(1\) of the Childcare Act 2006](#) and [regulation 49 of the Childcare \(Free of Charge for Working Parents\) \(England\) Regulations 2022](#).

This Provider Agreement is currently underpinned by the following frameworks and legislation:

- Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local authorities 2024
- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Equality Act 2010
- School Admissions Code 2021
- Statutory Framework for the early year's foundation stage 2024
- Local Authority, (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Due consideration has also been given to:

- The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2024
- Model Agreement: Early years provision free of charge and free childcare. DfE 2025
- Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2025 – 2026

Key local authority responsibilities

Slough organises meetings and briefings across the sector and distributes questionnaires, information, and updates to providers regarding legislative changes and the local provision. This is part of the service designed to facilitate effective delivery of free entitlement places and includes support from the members of the Early Years Education and the Schools Finance Team for individual providers and specific circumstances.

The Principal Area SENDCo offers support, advice and training to providers and the Early Education Team manages an early years SEN inclusion fund which provides small grants to aid inclusion, for providers needing to make changes to provision that they cannot fund themselves. Information about this fund and applying for grants can be found at Appendix B.

Slough providers are encouraged to apply for a fixed annual lump sum payment of £938 from the Disability Access Fund for children in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance who are accessing a free entitlement place at their setting. Information about this fund can be found at Appendix C.

Local offer information is collected and collated by Slough's Family Information Service (FIS) and made available through the [Slough Family Information Service website](#).

The FIS also provides a brokerage service for parents needing further support to find the childcare that is suitable for their needs, including for parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Slough is part of the Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Children Board which provides safeguarding procedures and information on its website. The Slough Procedures can be accessed at: [Procedures Online](#).

Slough Children First provides a contact point for anyone concerned about a child's safety, at: [Slough Children First](#).

Key provider responsibilities

Compliance: All providers have a legal duty to ensure compliance with the principles, processes and procedures outlined in the Department for Education's 'Model Agreement: Early years provision free of charge and free childcare' (June 2018) and this provider agreement.
The Local Authority will carry out compliance checks to audit the provision of the funding entitlements. All providers can expect to have an annual monitoring visit and must comply with the facilitation of these arrangements. [Please see paragraphs 103-105 on page 24.](#)

The Early Education Team often includes updates regarding changes to legislation in its communications with providers and at termly meetings; however, it remains the provider's duty to be aware of and compliant with the statement above.

The provider shall at all times comply with all relevant legislation and all applicable codes of practice and other similar codes or recommendations and shall notify the local authority immediately of any significant departure from such legislation, codes or recommendations.

The provider shall comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and any other acts, orders, regulations and codes of practice relating to health and safety, which may apply to employees and other persons.

The provider has and shall keep in place adequate procedures for dealing with any conflicts of interest.

The provider has and shall keep in place systems to deal with the prevention of fraud and/or administrative malfunction.

All information concerning the provider which has been disclosed to the local authority is to the best of the provider's knowledge and belief, true and accurate.

The provider is not subject to any contractual or other restriction imposed by the provider's own or any other organisation's rules or regulations or otherwise which may prevent or materially impede the provider from meeting the provider's obligations under this Agreement.

The provider is not aware of anything in the provider's own affairs, which the provider has not disclosed to the local authority or any of the local authority's advisers, which might reasonably have influenced the decision of the local authority to enter into this Agreement.

The provider shall maintain in force at least the following insurance policies with reputable insurance companies to cover its relevant potential liabilities in connection with this agreement:

A public liability insurance policy with a limit of at least £5 million per claim; and

An employer's liability insurance with a limit of at least £2 million for claims arising from a single event or series of related events in a single calendar year.

On the written request of the local authority, the provider shall provide the Council with a copy of each insurance policy.

Slough providers are encouraged to use the [Slough's Family Information Service Website](#) and providers are expected to update the Early Years 'provider self-update portal' to inform prospective parents about their funded places offer. Providers should publish and make available for parents their admissions policy, their charging policy and publish their charges on their websites, or where they do not have a website, on local authority Family Information Services website (except for childminders and small providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time) by January 2026 and information regarding when the free places are being offered. Those children accessing the free entitlements should receive the same quality and access to provision as privately- paying children. Providers requiring information support or guidance to ensure that their communications to parents are clear and concise can contact earlyyears@slough.gov.uk to request support from the Early Education Team.

The local authority encourages providers where practicable to offer the free entitlements over more than 38 weeks a year to stretch the financial support for families and maximise the number of places available. It is anticipated that all providers will consider the needs of working families when offering the free entitlements.

All providers must follow the EYFS and have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place that link to the local authority's guidance for recognising, responding, reporting, and recording suspected or actual abuse.

Early years settings are expected to be inclusive and provide for all children, including those with SEND. Slough early years providers must have regard to the [special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice: 0-25 years: \(January 2015\)](#). Slough settings may request support regarding inclusion and provision from the Principal Area SENDCo by contacting eyinclusion@slough.gov.uk.

Information about Slough's Early Years Inclusion Fund and the Disability Access Fund is available in Appendices B and C of this provider agreement.

The local authority expects a provider to update their local offer regularly and review at least once a term.

Local offer information is collected and collated by Slough's Family Information Service (FIS) and made available through the [Slough's Family Information Service Website](#).

Safeguarding

1. All providers must follow the EYFS and have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place that link to the local authority's guidance for recognising, responding, reporting and recording suspected or actual abuse. [Slough Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures](#) are available online.
2. The local authority has overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They have a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts which make this clear, and the ['Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023](#) guidance sets these out in detail.
3. For advice and support when seeking to arrange training for practitioners and for further information and advice regarding Safer Recruitment please contact Slough Early Years Education earlyyears@slough.gov.uk.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

4. Early years settings are expected to be inclusive and provide for all children, including those with SEND. Slough early years providers must have regard to the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years: (January 2015). Slough settings may request support regarding inclusion and provision from the Principal Area SENDCo by contacting eyinclusion@slough.gov.uk.
5. The local authority must strategically plan support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to meet the needs of all children in their local area as per the [Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years \(January 2015\)](#).
6. The provider must ensure owners and all staff members are aware of their duties in relation to the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010.
7. The local authority shares regular communications and updates regarding Early Years SEND via [The Link](#) and through termly SENDCo meetings.

Early Years Inclusion Fund

Information about Slough's Early Years Inclusion Fund and the Disability Access Fund is available in Appendices B and C of this provider agreement. To support high quality Early Years inclusive practice, it is expected that providers are actively engaged in the Dingley's Promise Early Years Inclusion Project.

The Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF) is funding available to early years providers to support children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). The funding is for use in the setting that the child attends and will be given to the provider to be used to support the needs of individual children with SEN.

The EYIF is intended to be used as a contribution towards providing additional resources and support for children presenting with additional needs in the moderate to profound delay range.

Examples of how early years providers can use the Early Years Inclusion Fund include:

- Building capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions/strategies for the child with SEND
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs
- Purchase of resources/equipment to support specific interventions/strategies

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

This is an annual fixed lump sum payment of £938 per eligible child per year, paid to early years settings that are providing a funded early education place for **a child in receipt of Disability Living Allowance**. The purpose of the fund is to support early years providers to make initial adjustments, build on the capacity of their setting to support disabled children and aid access to places.

Please note that four year olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding. Providers should see appendix C for further information about the DAF funding.

Admissions and Settling in

The Early Years SEND team have produced a form to provide some ideas and suggestions for developing your setting's admission form for new children or perhaps help in designing a separate 'Settling In' form. Engaging with our families by gathering this additional information on the 'settling in form' highlights the importance of working collaboratively with children and their families to gain a picture of their lived experiences to enable the most appropriate support and interventions.

Slough settings would benefit by learning more about the child and how their family works to help gain a clearer picture of families lived experiences enabling them to build on good practice and improve the journey for Slough children and families in the future. Providers should see Appendix D for the Transition Information Template

Local Offer

8. The local authority expects a provider to update their local offer regularly and review at least once a term. Local offer information is collected and collated by Slough's Family Information Service (FIS) and made available through the [Slough's Family Information Service Website](#): Local Offer.

9. The local authority must be clear and transparent about the support on offer in their area, through their Local Offer, so parents and providers can access that support. Slough parents can access each provider's local offer.
10. The Early Education Team expects early years settings to provide for all children and the Principal Area SENDCo offers support to providers about matters relating to inclusion and provision for specific needs. A school's SENDCo provides this service for their schools.

Eligibility for funded early education

11. Slough Borough Council expects each provider to check original copies of documentation to confirm a child has reached the relevant age on initial registration for all free entitlements. The provider can retain paper or digital copies of documentation to enable the local authority to carry out audits and fraud investigations. Where a provider retains a copy of documentation this must be stored securely and deleted when there is no longer a good reason to keep the data. Please refer to the data [privacy guidance](#).

The provider should offer disadvantaged 2-year-old places (Bright Futures for 2 year olds) on the understanding that the child remains eligible until they become eligible for the universal entitlement for 3- and 4- year-olds.

Parent Declaration

12. Slough Borough Council expects all early years' providers (including schools) to obtain written consent from parents/carers to share personal data with the local authority and this can be obtained using the Parental Declaration form in Appendix A.
13. Slough Borough Council will fund free entitlement places for all eligible children from the start of the term **after** eligibility has been confirmed.

Eligibility: Bright Futures for 2 year olds

14. Two year olds are eligible for 570 hours of funded early years provision, starting in the term after they become two, if the family are in receipt of:
 - [Income Support](#)
 - [Income based Jobseeker's Allowance \(JSA\)](#)
 - [Income related Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#)
 - [Universal Credit](#) and the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods.
 - [The Guaranteed element of Pension Credit](#)
- A child can also get free early education at the age of two, if:
- they are looked after by a local authority
 - they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
 - they receive Disability Living Allowance

- they have left care under a special guardianship order; child arrangements order or adoption order.

Non- UK citizens who cannot claim benefits

Parents whose immigration status states they have 'no recourse to public funds' may be able to receive 2 year old funding if:

- Their household income is £26,500 a year with one child (outside London)
- Their household income is £30,600 a year with two or more children (outside London)
- They have no more than £16,000 in savings or investments

Application process for Bright Futures for 2 year olds

15. Parents can apply for a Bright Futures for 2 year olds online via the Slough Borough Council website '[Slough early years](#)'.

The eligibility checking process incorporates information held by a number of government departments. In some cases, further details and evidence of income may be required. For example, the local authority would require evidence that the child is in receipt of DLA, such as a recent awards letter.

When an application has been submitted all applicants will receive a reference number and confirmation of the outcome of their application.

If the applicant is eligible the parents must give their reference number to their chosen provider. **Providers are required to verify the eligibility of the reference number before confirming a place with the family.** To do this providers are required to have an account with, and log into, the 2 year old application system via 'Early Years Provider Portal'.

Eligibility 3 & 4 year olds Universal Entitlement

16. All three and four year olds are entitled to 570 hours of funded early years provision (15 hours per week) from the start of the term beginning on or following the date set out below until the child reaches compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday) or starts in a reception class in a state funded school. Eligible 3 & 4 year old children attending an independent school will receive funded early education entitlements until they reach statutory school age.
 - For children born 1st January to 31st March the start date is 1st April following the child's 3rd birthday
 - For children born 1st April to 31st August the start date is 1st September following the child's 3rd birthday.
 - For children born 1st September to 31st December the start date is 1st January following the child's 3rd birthday.

Application process for 3 & 4 year olds Universal Entitlement

Parents can apply directly to their chosen provider, following the provider's admission policy. Providers must obtain the appropriate paperwork and consents (see paragraph 72).

Eligibility for Working Families Entitlement for children from 9 months old

17. Children aged from 9 months are entitled to 15 hours of funded provision per week term time only (570 hours) from the term following this age if the child's parents meet the [eligibility criteria](#) set out below.

Note: From the 1st September 2025, qualifying 9 month to 2 year olds will be entitled to 30 hours per week term time only (1140 hours of funded provision)

Three and four year olds are entitled to the 'extended entitlement' of 1140 hours of funded provision (30 hours made up of 15 hours Universal Entitlement and 15 hours Working Families Entitlement) from the term following this age if the child's parents meet the [eligibility criteria](#) set out below:

- The parent of the child (and their partner where applicable) should be in [qualifying paid work](#). Each parent or the single parent in a lone parent household will need to expect to earn the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or their national minimum wage over the forthcoming quarter. Part of the definition of qualifying is the parent expects to start or return to work within 31 days of their application.
- Where one or both parents are in receipt of benefits in connection with sickness or parenting, they are treated as though they are in paid work.
- Where one parent (in a couple household) is in receipt or could be entitled to be in receipt of specific benefits related to caring, incapacity for work or limited capability for work, they are treated as though they are in paid work.
- Where a parent is in a start-up period (i.e., they are newly self – employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months in order to qualify for the extended entitlement.
- If one, or both parents' income exceeds £100,000 the family will not be eligible for the extended entitlement.
- A parent is classed as being in paid work if they expect to start work/return to work within 14 days.
- Children in foster care will be able to receive 15 hours (for children aged from 9 months) and 30 hours (3 & 4 year olds) funded childcare, if the following criteria are met:
 - Accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision making, and
 - In single parent foster families, the foster parent engages in paid work outside their role as a foster parent.

- In two parent foster families, both partners engage in paid work outside their role as a foster parent. If one partner is not a foster parent, then they must be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum/national living wage.

Application for Working Families Entitlement for children from 9 months old

- Parents apply for the Working Families Entitlement through an online eligibility checking system developed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC): [Apply Now.](#)
 - To obtain a copy of a Foster Carer application form please email eyfunding@slough.gov.uk
 - An application form must be obtained from the authority that is looking after the child and is therefore the child's corporate parent.
 - The application form will be completed by the foster parent and be counter-signed by a designated person determined by the responsible local authority to confirm eligibility.
 - Foster parents will be required to reconfirm their eligibility every three months to mirror the existing process and support the work enabling objective of the Working Families Entitlement.
 - Agreement that the foster parents can take up the extended hours should be recorded and the care plan for the child should be updated as appropriate. Further guidance on the application process for foster carers can be found in the [Early Years entitlements: operational guidance, For Local authorities and providers.](#)
18. Alongside the eligibility code, which is the child's unique 11-digit number, and original copies of documentation, a provider must acquire written consent from the parent using the parental declaration form at Appendix A which asks the parent for the necessary information and consents.
 19. A Working Families Entitlement place can be secured with a provider from the term after the child turns 9 months old and the application process has generated a start date. The start date issued with the 11-digit code identifies the date the application was completed via the parent's Childcare Services account. Providers can offer a funded entitlement place the term after the identified start date **and once the code has been validated by the provider.**
 20. Local authorities are encouraged to consider securing the additional free hours for parents who have applied (or reconfirmed) by the deadline but received their valid eligibility code after the beginning of term, up to the dates set out below. Parents must provide evidence to show that they applied by the deadline date.
 - Parent applied / reconfirmed by 31st March – but code with validity start date between 1st - 14th April

- Parent applied / reconfirmed by 31st August – but code with validity start date between 1st - 14th September
- Parent applied / reconfirmed by 31st December – but code with validity start date between 1st -14th January

21. Local authorities are not expected to secure the additional free hours where the parent has applied after the 31st March, 31st August or 31st December nor for any codes issued after the relevant dates set out above.
22. Please be aware that if a parent reconfirms late i.e., after their code's 'validity end date' then the 'validity start date' will change to the date of the successful reconfirmation. This is required to show that there was a gap in eligibility.

Example

A child is in a place in the spring term, and has a reconfirmation date of 7 March, and grace period end date of 31 August.

- Parent reconfirms late, e.g., on 8 April. The start date will now change to 8 April, and therefore your system may flag that this parent is not eligible for a 30 hour place in the summer term.

- However, the parent is in their grace period which covers them until the end of August and is therefore eligible to continue their 30 hours place in the summer term.

23. The Early Education Team will support the process to confirm the validity of eligibility codes through the [Early Years Provider Portal](#). This will support providers to carry out eligibility checks themselves. See paragraph 71 for more information regarding the Early Years Provider Portal.

Validating eligibility Codes

24. Providers **must** search for the child. Failure to do so could cause complications with their Headcount submission.
- a. If you find the child using the "find a child" search box, please click on their name. Their information will move into the relevant boxes, enter any missing information. Click on the "run check" box, this will complete the eligibility check.
 - b. If you do not find them using the "find a child" search box, enter child's forename and surname, if no results are shown, click on "Child not found". A box will appear and ask, "Do you want to add a new child?". Click "OK". Populate child's date of birth, parents National Insurance number and the 11 digit eligibility code and click on "Run check". This will give you the eligibility dates.
25. Parents can verify their own eligibility code via their account using the ['Citizen Portal'](#).

Audit checks for Eligibility Codes

26. The Early Education Team will complete audit checks to review the validity of eligibility codes for children who qualify for the Working Families Entitlement within the working week of the dates outlined in the table A below.
27. The Early Education Team will alert providers that they may have parents who have yet to revalidate their codes and are at risk of falling out of eligibility.
28. It is a parent's responsibility to reconfirm their eligibility before their end date.

Table A:

Date parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	LA audit date:	Grace Period End date:
1 January – 10 February	11 February	31 March
11 February – 31 March	1 April	31 August
1 April – 26 May	2 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

The Grace Period (Working Families Entitlement)

29. A child will enter the grace period when the child's parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Childcare (Free of Charge for Working Parents) (England) Regulations 2022 as determined by HMRC (or where the child is in foster care, the responsible local authority) or a First Tier Tribunal in the case of an appeal.
30. Providers can access the eligibility checking service via the early years provider portal to check if a child has ceased to meet the eligibility criteria and entered the grace period. The grace period end date will automatically be applied to eligibility codes.
31. Slough Borough Council will continue to fund a place for a child who enters the grace period. Funding will end when the grace period ends unless eligibility is reconfirmed.
32. If a parent falls into their grace period before their child has started the Working Families Entitlement place, they should not take up a place. A child attending a setting cannot move to another provider whilst in their grace period.
33. Slough will notify providers, following each half term that they may have parents with children attending their setting who have fallen into their grace period. All providers are advised to check the details regarding parents in their grace periods on the early years provider portal expiration dashboard.

34. The 'validity start date' is the date on which the parent has applied and been issued with a code. The 'validity end date' is the parent's 'deadline' for reconfirming. Their 'grace period' date is the last date on which they should receive their Funded place.

Flexibility: relating to Under 2, 2, 3 and 4 year old places

35. Provision must be offered within the national parameters on flexibility as set out in Section A2 of Early Education and Childcare [Statutory guidance for local authorities](#).

The provider should work with the local authority and share information about the times and periods at which they are able to offer free entitlements to support the local authority to secure sufficient stretched and flexible places to meet parental demand in the local authority. The provider should also make information about their offer and admissions criteria available to parents at the point the child first accesses provision at their setting. To this end the Early Education Team will:

- Consult with parents and involve them in local assessments of demand for flexibility directly through childcare sufficiency work.
- Act as a broker between overall parental demand in an area and provider capacity, seeking to provide the maximum possible flexibility for parents. Inform providers of sufficiency information and support them to establish clear communications with parents that outline charges and offers of funded places in an informative and transparent manner.
- Facilitate meetings and briefings to encourage strong partnership working between providers from all sectors to offer maximum flexibility for parents to access funded hours that meet their needs and the needs of their child.
- Encourage providers to offer flexible packages of funded hours that meet the statutory guidance standards outlined below:
No session longer than 10 hours
No minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration)
Availability between the hours of 6am to 8pm
A maximum of two sites per day
- Ensure that, wherever possible, children are able to take their funded hours in continuous blocks, avoiding artificial breaks.
- Ensure that parents and providers are made aware that funded places can be delivered outside of maintained school term times and at weekends, for up to 52 weeks of the year.
- Ensure that parents and providers are aware that there is no requirement that funded places must be taken on or delivered on particular days of the week or at particular times of the day.

- Ensure that parents and providers are aware that there is no requirement for providers to be open for at least 38 weeks of the year, or that providers must offer 30 hours in order to receive monies to deliver funded places.
 - Providers who operate for less than 30 hours are encouraged to work in partnership with other providers to meet the extended entitlement needs of their families.
 - Ensure that providers are aware that they can choose not to deliver funded places.
 - Ensure parents are aware that the entitlement to a funded place does not offer a guarantee of a place at any one provider or a particular pattern of provision.
 - Ensure parents and providers are aware that a child's funded place can be taken in patterns of hours that 'stretch' a child's entitlement by taking fewer hours a week over more weeks of the year. For example, a 570 hour entitlement can be taken as just under 12 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year.
 - Encourage providers to use the Family Information Service to maintain a record on the Slough's Family Information Service Website of their funded places and opening times to support parents with identifying providers who can offer funded places on the days and at the times they need.
 - Encourage providers to work with parents to ensure continuity of care for children and effective transitional arrangements where a child takes up a funded place at more than one provider or on more than one site.
 - Use the Family Information Service and the development of partnership working arrangements to publicise childminders and other providers of wraparound provision in specific areas and help match providers with parents.
 - Make full use of the maintained nursery schools in offering the 30 hours entitlement and supporting the development of high-quality local provision.
36. Providers must publish information about their admissions criteria, funded place hours, opening hours, funded place availability and (except for childminders and small providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time) publish their charges on their websites, or, where they do not have any website, on local authority Family Information Services. Website. This process is supported by the Family Information Service.
37. Providers are reminded that an offer to an individual family may require a mix of funded and non-funded hours.
38. Slough Borough Council encourages providers to discuss the benefits of a stretched offer with working families. Where a family is accessing their entitlement with more than one provider the universal and extended entitlement providers should be clearly stated on the **Parental Declaration Form** and this information

should be used to submit headcount data via the Early Years Provider Portal to facilitate payments.

39. Providers needing to create new or more effective partnership working can contact the local authority for advice and support. There is also useful information available at: [Family and Childcare Trust](#).
40. The local authority requires providers to complete an annual provider audit for sufficiency purposes.

Charging

41. **The Early Education Team reminds providers that parents / carers have the right to access funded early education without incurring charges or additional services as a condition for obtaining a free entitlement place.**
42. Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. That is, that whilst providers can charge for extras there must not be any mandatory charges for parents in relation to the free hours.

The provider can charge for meals and snacks as part of a free entitlement place, and they can also charge for consumables such as nappies or sun cream and for services such as trips and musical tuition. Costs should be clear to parents upfront. Providers may wish to agree a termly arrangement with parents prior to that term commencing (which includes their policy on paying additional charges when the setting is closed, or the child is absent) as long as charges are not mandatory. Providers should be mindful of the impact of additional charges, especially on the most disadvantaged parents. Where parents are unable to pay for meals and consumables, providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on providing parents with options for alternatives to additional charges, including waiving or reducing the cost of meals and snacks or allowing parents to supply their own meals.

43. The provider should deliver the free entitlements consistently so that eligible children accessing them will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.
44. The council will not intervene where parents choose to purchase additional hours of provision or additional services, provided that this is not a condition of accessing the free entitlement. The provider should be completely transparent about any additional charges.
45. The provider should publish their admissions criteria and ensure parents understand which hours/sessions can be taken as free provision. Not all providers will be able to offer fully flexible places, but providers should work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the pattern of hours are convenient for parents' working hours.

46. The provider can charge parents a refundable deposit to secure their child's free place but should refund the deposit in full to parents within a reasonable time scale. The Early Education Team advises that once the child / family have established a settled pattern of attendance any deposit should be returned. Deposits can be retained by the provider if the child does not take up the place without sufficient notice.
47. The provider cannot charge parents "top-up" fees (any difference between a provider's normal charge to parents and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver free places) or require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's free place.
48. The provider should ensure their invoices and receipts are clear, transparent and itemised, allowing parents to see that they have received their free entitlement completely free of charge and understand fees paid for additional hours. Any additional charges for services must be clearly itemised and priced. The provider will also ensure that receipts contain their full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider.
49. The Early Education Team will facilitate opportunities for sharing best practice and exemplars at managers' forums and / or cluster meetings.

Partnership working

50. The Early Education Team will support partnerships through various different means including running network/cluster meetings, training opportunities, steering groups, transition sessions, family events, and the sharing of information and advice via TheLink Website and the Family Information Service.

These initiatives will support partnerships between:

- Local authorities and providers
 - Providers working with other providers, including childminders, schools and organisations
 - Providers and parents
 - Local authorities and parents
51. Providers should work in partnership with parents, carers and other providers to improve provision and outcomes for children in their setting. An [interactive toolkit](#) has been developed to help providers set up or join a partnership, maximise the benefits of working together and tackle the challenges joint working can bring.
 52. The provider should discuss and work closely with parents to agree how a child's overall care will work in practice when their free entitlement is split across different providers, such as at a maintained setting and childminder, to ensure a smooth transition for the child.
 53. All providers should work in partnership with parents and other providers to consider smooth transitional arrangements which promote positive outcomes for all children involved.

Social mobility and disadvantaged children

54. The local authority should promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children and children in need by removing barriers of access to free places and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.
55. The provider should ensure that they have identified the disadvantaged children in their setting as part of the process for checking **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) eligibility**. They will also use EYPP and any locally available funding streams or support to improve outcomes for this group.
56. In Slough, Early Years providers who care for children meeting the Early Years Pupil Premium criteria will receive a deprivation supplement and the Early Years Pupil Premium for each of these children. These monies must be used to support the children's development. For information about EYPP criteria please see Appendix A.
57. For children who meet the income criteria all checks will be processed in accordance with headcount submissions. Please see paragraph 58 for children who meet the 'other' criteria for EYPP such as:
 - they are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
 - they have left care in England or Wales through:
 - an adoption order
 - a special guardianship order
 - a child arrangements order
58. The provider will need to be made aware of the specific circumstance that makes the child eligible and this could be recorded on the parent declaration form. Providers will be expected to share this information with the local authority via the telephone, outlining who they would like to claim EYPP funding for and what criteria is met. Providers will also be expected to support the local authority to establish the validity of the eligibility claimed.
59. From April 2025, there may be some circumstances where households meet the eligibility criteria for both the disadvantaged two-year-old entitlement (Bright Futures for 2 year olds) and the Working Families Entitlement. In these circumstances, the childcare should be provided under the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement. The child will remain on the disadvantage entitlement until they become eligible for the universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds or the Working Families Entitlement, 30 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds if they meet the eligibility criteria. Therefore, households will not lose eligibility for their 15 hours free early education, as is currently the case for the disadvantage entitlement.
60. From September 2025, when the working parent entitlement increases to 30 hours, where households meet the eligibility criteria for both 2-year-old entitlements, they should be recorded as taking up 15 hours of the disadvantage entitlement and 15 hours of the working parent entitlement. They will need to reconfirm eligibility every 3 months for the working parent entitlement and from September 2025, they will

not be defaulted automatically onto the disadvantage entitlement should they lose eligibility for the working parent entitlement.

Quality

61. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework is mandatory for all schools that provide early years provision and early years providers registered with Ofsted or with an Ofsted-registered Childminder Agency in England. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.
62. Ofsted are the sole arbiter of quality for all childcare entitlements and Ofsted and inspectorates of independent schools have regard to the EYFS in carrying out inspections and report on the quality and standards of provision. Childminder agencies (CMAs) are organisations that can register and quality assure childminders as an alternative to registering with Ofsted.
63. The Early Education Team provides information, advice and training on meeting the requirements of the EYFS, meeting the needs of children with SEND and effective safeguarding and child protection for providers who are rated less than 'Good' by Ofsted or newly registered providers.

Information and advice from Slough's Advisory Team can be accessed by phoning 01753 476554 or emailing earlyyears@slough.gov.uk.

64. Provision must be offered in accordance with the national parameters on quality as set out in Section A3 of Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2023 and the EYFS statutory framework. The Early Education Team offers providers with a less than good outcome the opportunity of developing a Focused Improvement Partnership Plan (FIPP). This outlines joint targeted work designed to address each of the Ofsted statements about what the setting needs to do to improve.
65. It is the intention of the Early Education Team to ensure that, as far as possible, funded early education places are delivered by providers who have achieved an overall rating of 'outstanding' or 'good' in their most recent Ofsted inspection report. However, where there is not sufficient, accessible good or outstanding provision Slough may need to fund places in settings with an outcome of Requires Improvement. Places will also be funded at a provider judged Requires Improvement at a parent's request.
66. When Ofsted publish an inspection judgement for a provider including Childminder Agencies, of 'inadequate' or when a Childminder Agency notifies us that a childminder is not of appropriate quality, funding will be withdrawn from that provider as soon as is practicable, after the end of that funding period. When considering the withdrawal of funding the Early Education Team will take into account continuity of care for the children who are already receiving their free hours at a provider or with an agency registered childminder as well as any available Ofsted monitoring or re-registration information.

67. The council will support families to seek alternative provision for their children if they are attending a setting where funding has been withdrawn.
68. Where a local authority-maintained school is judged by Ofsted to require significant improvement or is placed in special measures Slough Borough Council will take appropriate action to improve the quality of provision. The Early Education Team supports school improvement services within the early years foundation stage.
69. Providers who do not actively promote fundamental British values will not be funded by the Early Education Team. Providers promoting views or theories contrary to established scientific or historical evidence will not be funded.

Business planning and funding process

70. The Early Education Team supports the processing of funded entitlement checks and data submissions via an 'Early Years Provider Portal' All approved providers will be given access to the Early Years Provider Portal once the required paperwork and relevant checks are submitted to the Early Years Service. For further information or to request access to the Early Years Provider Portal please email eyfunding@slough.gov.uk.
71. The [Early Years Provider Portal](#) enables providers to:
 - Check the validity of codes for Bright Futures for 2 year olds and Working Families Entitlements
 - Submit headcount data including the details of children and their parents in order to receive funding
 - Update provider details via the Self update Portal
 - Submit census information
72. The Early Education Team expects all providers to facilitate the completion of parental declaration forms, see Appendix A, for all children being offered a funded place. This provides the setting with the information required to complete headcount submissions and consent to share information with the local authority so that appropriate eligibility checks can be made. It is vital that this form is completed fully and accurately, to enable the local authority to complete all census data (including ethnicity) and provide EYPP for all qualifying families.
73. Parental Declaration Forms do not need to be routinely sent to the local authority but may be asked for as part of an audit, compliance check or complaint resolution.
74. Parents eligible for the working families 30 hour entitlement must indicate on the parental declaration form which setting is their choice as the provider of universal entitlement and which is their extended entitlement provider.
75. Parents can choose for their child to take their universal entitlement (and extended entitlement) at up to 2 sites per day. These sites should be named on the parent declaration form.
76. During the spring term all providers receive an overview of their estimated yearly funding allocation including a breakdown of their typical monthly payment for the next financial year.

77. PVI providers' monthly amounts will be calculated by reviewing actual place provision over a twelve-month period.
78. The Early Education Team administers monthly payments to all settings. Monthly payments will be made to PVI providers via a direct payment arrangement and will be in the providers accounts by the first working day of each month.
79. All settings are advised to review their annual overview and to contact the Early Education Team if they are projecting unusually high or low participation numbers for the forthcoming year. The Early Education Team will then use these figures to aggregate the monthly amounts.
80. Please note schools receive their payment schedule for the year including their monthly payments directly from Schools Finance.

Example:

Setting A claims for:

570 under 2 year old hours for 2025-26

4,920 2 year old hours for 2025-26

13,307 universal 3 & 4 year old hours for 2025-26

2,487 working families 3 & 4 year old hours for 2025-26

195 EYPP and deprivation hours

These hours, using the 2025-26 hourly rates total £157,090.74

The monthly payments will be £ 157,090.74 divided by 12 = £13,090.90

The payments will be made by Direct Payment into the setting's bank account

81. Each provider will be required to submit termly headcount data to the local authority. A headcount task will be sent to a provider via the Early Years Provider Portal. The table below outlines the dates when a headcount task is due.

Table B:

Term/ Funding Period	'Forecast Headcount' end date	'Actual Headcount' end date	Final adjustment Payment date
Summer 2025 April – July	21/03/2025	16/05/2025	N/A
Autumn 2025 Sept – Dec	11/07/2025	03/10/2025	N/A

Term/ Funding Period	'Forecast Headcount' end date	'Actual Headcount' end date	Final adjustment Payment date
Spring 2026 Jan - March	05/12/2025	16/01/2026	31/03/2026

82. Tasks will be live on the system approximately two weeks prior to the task end date.
83. A headcount task provides the local authority with a record of each child's details including their attendance and parent information. The information submitted will be used by the local authority to check for additional funding entitlements such as EYPP and maintain a central record of the entitlements being received. This information will be used to generate a financial statement.
84. Following the submission of a task via the provider portal, settings will receive a statement. All information on the statement should be checked thoroughly for accuracy. It is essential that the list of children being claimed for, and their attributed hours are accurate at the point of task completion. If any information is incorrect or missing such as the start and/or end dates, funded hours, or missing carer's details then payments will not be made.
85. Settings can request an adjustment task following each funding period to appropriately fund any headcount changes. This payment will be made at the end of the financial year, unless there are exceptional circumstances. See table B above.
86. Adjustment payments will be based on actual headcount of the Under 2s, 2, 3 and 4 year olds and will be calculated on total number of hours attended during the funding period (not exceeding 570 hours per year in the case of under 2s and 2 year olds and 3 & 4 year universal entitlement and 1140 hours per year for children in receipt of both universal and working families entitlements). From September 2025 this will be not exceeding 1140 hours per year in the case of Under 2s and 2 year olds Working Families entitlements). If a child leaves a setting after the headcount date the system will instigate an adjustment to be applied, either as a carry over to the next funding period or as a request for a repayment. (An actual headcount includes the hours when a child has not attended the setting due to illness.)
87. Providers must follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts must be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. Providers must consider a child's personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged. Evidence of this may be required for a compliance check or audit. If providers are unable to explain absences and there is no evidence of contact with parents, the Early Years Service may request repayment of the claimed hours.

88. In the event of payments being made in excess of the entitlement, reimbursement will be requested from the provider, or a payment adjustment will be carried over into the next funding period.
89. Adjustment payments can only be made within the financial year and when approaching the end of the financial year it is the provider's responsibility to inform Slough Borough Council of any final adjustments.
90. When a provider wants to start a new child after headcount data has been submitted, they are required to check with the Early Education Team that the child is not already in receipt of their full entitlement with another provider.
91. If you have any starters or leavers after headcount date it is your responsibility to request an adjustment task to record this information. If you fail to notify us we will not be able to make any adjustment payment.
92. Requests for adjustments or the resetting of tasks outside of the usual task schedule, see table B, may be subject to an additional charge of £50 per request.
93. The provider should maintain accurate financial and non-financial records relating to free entitlement places and should give the local authority access on reasonable notice to all financial and non-financial records relating to free entitlement places funded under the provider agreement, subject to confidentiality restrictions.
94. If a provider is planning permanent closure or relocation out of the authority they must notify the Early Education Team as soon as reasonably practicable to ensure accurate financial distribution is made.

The funding process in Slough

95. Providers will be funded at the hourly rates in table C below in 2025-26 Extended entitlement hours will be paid at the same rate as the universal entitlement rate.

Table C

	Hourly rates for Private, Voluntary, Independent settings, maintained nursery schools and childminders	Early years provision in Primary schools
3 & 4 year old	£6.51	£6.51
2 year olds	£9.46	£9.46
Under 2s from 9 months old	£12.95	£12.95

96. The Early Education Team will calculate funding by determining the **actual hours** the child attends the setting. **The date the child starts at a setting marks the start of the funding and the last date they attended marks the end of the funding.**
97. If a child is already attending a setting and the parent chooses to transfer the child part way through the term to another provider, both providers and the parent

should agree the end and start dates, as **Slough Borough Council will not double fund a child. Should this occur, funding will be removed from both providers until the apportionment issue is resolved**

Maintained schools sector

98. Maintained schools in Slough receive Early Years funding initially using an annual estimate of take up based on the previous financial year. The Early Education Team and School Finance will work in partnership to ensure that payments are made monthly by the Schools Finance Team for schools, adjustment payments will be made following the submission of the actual headcount task that captures the actual take up of free entitlement hours.

Additional Funding Supplements for

	Hourly rates
Deprivation	£0.78
EYPP	£1.00

99. An hourly deprivation supplement and Early Years Pupil Premium is payable for children who meet the free school meals criteria. See Appendix G.

EYPP checks

100. All providers will be set a forecast headcount task before the start of term to enable the local authority to process early checks for providers to establish which children will be attracting Early Years Pupil Premium and deprivation funding. It is vital that you provide accurate names, NI numbers and dates of birth of all parents to enable the local authority to do so.
101. Providers will be required to submit an actual headcount submission in line with census dates (please see table B). Following the actual headcount entry, the Early Education Team will generate a table for each provider to outline which children will be in receipt of deprivation and EYPP funding, a summary of each child's entitlement and spot payments (DAF) where applicable.
102. For examples of how to spend EYPP please refer to [EYPP ideas in funding allocation](#) and examples of how to use DAF please refer to Appendix L

Compliance

103. Slough Borough Council has a duty to monitor providers' delivery of the funded entitlements to ensure compliance with the principles, processes and procedures outlined in the Department for Education's 'Model Agreement: Early years provision free of charge and free childcare' and this provider agreement. These checks will take the form of a rolling programme of audits that aim to monitor the compliance of all providers, utilising a sampling process whilst retaining capacity to respond to parental concerns.
104. The Early Education Team and the Family Information Service will consider the variety of information that providers supply to parents. This will include but not necessarily be limited to the provider's website, local offer statements, contracts, fee structures, invoices, partnership working arrangements, and the registration process and welcome packs.

105. As part of the compliance check the Early Education Team will need to see providers' documentation. There is no expectation that providers will need to create documentation for this checking process but requested documentation will need to be provided in a timely manner, within 28 working days of the request.

Termination and withdrawal of funding

106. It is the responsibility of the LA to secure alternative provision and withdraw funding from a provider (other than a local authority maintained school), as soon as is practicable, when Ofsted publish an inspection judgement of the provider of 'inadequate' or when Ofsted publish a second consecutive inspection judgement of a childminder agency of 'ineffective'. Following a second consecutive 'ineffective' inspection judgement, local authorities should continue to fund the childminder agency's providers if the childminder agency has assessed them as being of acceptable quality and Ofsted has not identified any concerns about the childminder agency's assessment arrangements and should endeavour to treat all the childminder agency's other providers in a comparable way to Ofsted-registered providers with equivalent judgements. Subject to this, it is for the LA to determine an appropriate timeframe for withdrawing funding. When withdrawing funding, the LA should consider the continuity of care for children who are already receiving their free hours at a provider or with an agency registered childminder and Ofsted monitoring information about the provider or agency. When withdrawing funding from a childminder agency-registered provider, LAs should also take account of parents' wishes. LAs should take appropriate action to improve the quality of provision at a local authority maintained school which has been judged by Ofsted to require significant improvement or has been placed in special measures.

Appeals process

107. A Slough provider who has their funding withdrawn or is denied approval to offer the free entitlements can appeal by writing to the Associate Director Education and Inclusion at the address below within 14 days of receipt of the termination notice referred to above.

Associate Director Education and Inclusion, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough, SL1 2EL.

Complaints process

108. Parents wishing to complain about matters related to the funding entitlement should, in the first instance, discuss this with their provider and if they feel the matter is unresolved the parent may contact the Early Education Team.

Telephone the Early Education Team on 01753 476554 or, **Email** earlyyears@slough.gov.uk or **Write** to the Early Education Team, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough, SL1 2EL

109. The Early Education Team will try to resolve the parents concern and will respond to the complaint using the parents preferred contact method within 28 days of receiving the complaint through the above contact channels.

110. Slough providers must produce their own complaints procedure in line with statutory guidance but may also refer to the process outlined above for complaints that they are unable to resolve.
111. If a parent or provider is not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been dealt with by the local authority or believes the local authority has acted unreasonably, they can make a complaint to the local authority Ombudsman. Such complaints will only be considered when the local complaints procedures have been exhausted.

Website: [igo complaints](http://www.slough.gov.uk/igo-complaints)

Telephone: 0300 061 0614 for help making a complaint

Contact Details

The Early Education Team	01753 476554 earlyyears@slough.gov.uk
Associate Director Education and Inclusion	01753 787672 Neil.hoskinson@slough.gov.uk
Funded Early Education	01753 875719 / 01753 476575 eyfunding@slough.gov.uk
Schools Finance Team	Education.finance@slough.gov.uk
Early Years Inclusion	eyinclusion@slough.gov.uk
Children's Centre Team	
Chalvey Grove Children's Centre SL1 2TE	01753 574387 Chalveygrove.childrenscentre@slough.gov.uk
Monksfield Way Children's Centre SL2 1QX	01753 578691 Monksfieldway.childrenscentre@slough.gov.uk
Penn Road Children's Centre SL2 1PG	01753 574420 Pennroad.childrenscentre@slough.gov.uk
Romsey Close Children's Centre SL3 8PE	01753 540797 Romseyclose.childrenscentre@slough.gov.uk
Yew Tree Road Children's Centre SL1 2AR	01753 527571 Yewtreeroad.childrenscentre@slough.gov.uk
Family Information Service (FIS)	01753 476589 FIS@slough.gov.uk



Department
for Education

Free childcare entitlements parental declaration form

Step 1: Your child's details- parents/carers to complete

Child's Surname(s):	
Child Forename(s):	
Name by which the child is known (if different from above):	
Date of Birth: You will need to show your childcare provider evidence of your child's date of birth.	
Sex:	
Ethnicity:	
Address:	

Step 2: Your details-parents/carers to complete

Parent / Carer 1	Parent / Carer 2
Surname:	Surname:
Forename:	Forename:
Date of Birth:	Date of Birth:
National Insurance number or Asylum Support Reference Number (previously NASS):	National Insurance number or Asylum Support Reference Number (previously NASS):

Step 3: Your child's eligibility- parents/carers to complete

To be completed with assistance from your chosen provider(s). Please tick which entitlement you will be using. If your child is two years old and eligible for both entitlements, you should use the entitlement for children from 2 years old receiving some additional forms of support first.

- ☐ Entitlement for children from 2 years old in families receiving additional forms of support:
- If parents/carers live in England and are in receipt of certain benefits,
 - If a child is looked after by a local authority, has an EHC plan, gets Disability Living Allowance or has left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.
- ☐ Working parent entitlement for children from 9 months old.
- ☐ Universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Your provider could receive extra funding for your child if certain criteria are met, please opt in by ticking the below boxes if they apply to you or your child:

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is used to help providers to make reasonable adjustments in their settings, either to support an individual child, or for the benefit of all children attending the setting.

Is your child entitled to the Disability Living Allowance? Ticking yes will enable your chosen provider to receive the DAF.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is paid to childcare providers to provide extra support for your child. EYPP can be used to improve teaching and learning facilities and resources to impact positively on your child's progress and development. Ticking yes to the questions may enable your chosen provider to receive the EYPP.

Are you in receipt of Universal Credit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is your child currently looked after by a local authority/have they ever been looked after by a local authority in England or Wales?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you an asylum seeker receiving support under Part Six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Step 4: Document check-provider to complete

Documentary proof of DOB Type (e.g. birth certificate, passport):	
Document recorded by (name of staff member):	
Date document recorded (dd/mm/yyyy):	
Working parent eligibility code: (e.g. 12345678912)	
[If LA uses codes] 2-year-old eligibility code (if applicable):	

Step 5: Setting and attendance details- parents/carers to complete

You need to agree and complete this declaration form with each setting your child attends for their funded entitlement in order to ensure that funding is paid fairly to each of them. Your provider should help you to complete this section.

Your child can attend a maximum of two settings in a single day and if your child attends more than one setting the local authority will distribute the funding appropriately between the settings.

Setting name:	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total no. of hours per week	Total weekly charge	No. of weeks per year (e.g. 38,45,51)
Total funded entitlement hours attended per day							n/a	
Total extra (chargeable) hours per day								
Total daily hours attended								

To fill in if your child attends more than one setting:

Total funded entitlement hours attended per day

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total no. of hours per week
Setting name:						
Setting name:						

To note: the maximum number of funded hours your child can receive is:

- 1) for 2-year-olds in families receiving additional forms of support: 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year
- 2) for children aged from 9 months of eligible working parents: 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year (this will increase to 30 hours from September 2025). For 3 and 4 years old this can be combined with the below entitlement to a maximum of 30 hours.
- 3) for all 3 and 4YOs: 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year

If your child is splitting their funded entitlement across more than one setting, please nominate their main setting:

.....

Provider to complete:

Additional charges: Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible early education and care. The 15 or 30 hours must be able to be accessed free of charge to parents; that is, there must not be any mandatory charges for parents in relation to the free hours.

Government funding is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. Providers can charge for consumables, meals and snacks, extra activities and additional hours provided they are not mandatory charges or a condition of accessing a place.

The costs of chargeable extras should be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on local authority Family Information Services. These should be clear, up-to-date and easily accessible to parents, to enable parents to make an informed choice of provider.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total weekly charge
Additional charges for consumables or additional charges per day						

Provide details of the charges made for consumables and additional services and itemised details of what these charges relate to:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total weekly charge
Additional charges for meals and snacks per day						
Additional charges for activity consumables per day						
Additional charges for nappies wipes, sun cream etc per day						
Additional charges for trips						
Additional charges for additional tuition such as languages, music, sport per day						
TOTAL						

Step 6: Parent/Carer/Guardian with legal responsibility declaration

Declaration: I (name)

of (address)

confirm that the information I have provided above is accurate and true. I understand and agree to the conditions set out in this document and I authorise (Name of Provider/s)

to claim free entitlement funding as agreed above on behalf of my child. I understand that the data collected in this form will be shared with my chosen provider and local authority.

Parent/Carer/Guardian with legal responsibility	Childcare provider
Signed:	Signed:
Print name:	Print name:
Date:	Date:

Slough Borough Council is collecting your data for the purposes of checking your eligibility for the free entitlements, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) or Disability Access Fund (DAF), in accordance with its statutory functions under the Childcare Acts 2006 and 2016, and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Please note that from April 2024 2-year-olds will qualify for DAF and EYPP, and under 2's will qualify from September 2024.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act) puts in place certain safeguards regarding the use of personal data by organisations, including the Department for Education, local authorities, schools and other early education providers. The Act gives rights to those about whom data is held (known as data subjects), such as pupils, their parents and teachers. This includes:

- The right to know the types of data being held
- Why it is being held; and
- To whom it may be disclosed

Should you have any concerns relating to how your information or the information relating to your child/ren is being or will be used, please contact your provider or Slough Borough Council. Please note that information about whether a child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance is, under the Act, Special Category Data which should be handled appropriately. Providers are asked to pay particular note to advice from the Information Commissioner's Office on holding personal data including sensitive personal data available at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/training-videos/handling-more-sensitive-information/>

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we are required to gain your permission to keep personal details for you and your children on our database. Slough Borough Council and its agents may share this information with government and local authority departments and other authorised organisations for administrative, statistical and research purposes. For further information please visit: [Data Protections and FOI](#)

Completing this form and signing it gives us your informed consent. If you are unable to access the provided links or wish to submit a query in relation to fair processing, please contact the data protection officer at DataProtectionOfficer@slough.gov.uk

Appendix B

Early Years Inclusion Funding EYIF

Guidance notes and process

The Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF) is funding available to early years providers to support children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). The funding is for use in the setting that the child attends and will be given to the provider to be used to support the needs of individual children with SEN.

Background

The Early Education Team recognise that, despite the best efforts of providers to meet the needs of children with SEND, occasionally settings will need to implement strategies that are additional to or different from their typical provision. Therefore, the Early Years Service manages a small budget to enable providers to cater for the support needs of children aged 0 - 4 years old where additional care or resources are required at additional cost.

The EYIF is intended to be used as a contribution towards providing additional resources and support for children presenting with additional needs in the moderate to profound delay range.

It should be noted that Early Years settings are expected to provide for all children regardless of need and this should be taken account of within the business model. For more information, please refer to:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice
- Early Years Foundation Stage

It is important to emphasise that the Early Years Service cannot guarantee that this fund will continue or be maintained at the current levels in future years, and providers are reminded that they have a responsibility to meet the needs of children with SEND. Providers should not rely on this supplementary, short term funding as part of their long term business planning.

Who can apply:

A registered Early Years provider who cares for children aged 0 - 4 years old (excluding children in reception classes) in the borough of Slough.

How the funding can be used

The funding is to support the inclusion of a child with SEND, promote early intervention and improve outcomes for the child.

Examples of how early years providers can use the Early Years Inclusion Fund include:

- Building capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions/strategies for the child with SEND
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs
- Purchase of resources/equipment to support specific interventions/strategies

*Note: All grants are for funding revenue only and therefore cannot be spent on capital projects.

How funding will be allocated

Early Years Inclusion Funding will be allocated on a case by case basis in the form of termly lump sum payments to the setting based on a level of need banding system.

Early Years Inclusion Funding – Tier 3 Emerging Needs

Settings can apply for funding up to £600 per term to enable early years providers to cater for the support needs of children aged 0 - 4 years old with low level emerging needs. The grants from this fund are intended to be used as a contribution towards providing;

- Building capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions / strategies for the child
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs
- Purchasing of resources / equipment to support specific interventions / strategies

Early Years Inclusion Funding – Tier 4 Individual High Needs

Settings can apply for funding up to £1,000 per term to enable early years providers to cater for the support needs of children aged 0 - 4 years old with complex / high levels of need. The grants from this fund are intended to be used as a contribution towards providing;

- Building capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions / strategies for the child
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs
- Purchasing of resources / equipment to support specific interventions / strategies

The panel may agree requests for funding for individual children outside of Tier 4. These requests will only be considered where there are professional recommendations and evidence to support the need.

What can't we apply for?

- Funding for children from the Reception Year of School (Year R) upwards to access provision during the normal school working day
- Funding to support a child where your setting is already in receipt of SEN funding, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is because this provision is already funded by Slough Borough Council from other sources
- Funding for a child accessing a setting outside of Slough local authority area

What are the principles underpinning this process?

- The setting will explore the best ways to meet the child's needs prior to making an application and will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and the Senior Area SENCo or school SENCo.
- Alternatively, the setting will have discussed with the Senior Area SENCo the overall inclusivity of the setting and explored all options prior to making an application
- The setting will engage with outside support agencies to meet the needs of the child/ren
- The funding is intended to be used as a contribution towards staffing costs where a provider is unable to meet the costs from their own funds, and is not necessarily expected to cover full costs
- Where applicable robust risk assessments will be carried out and provided along with the application
- The funding is intended to be used as a contribution towards providing additional resources and support where a provider is unable to meet the costs from their own funds, and is not necessarily expected to cover full costs
- The settings Local Offer must be complete and updated with in the last year.

Process for allocating Early Years Inclusion Funding

Parents/carers should agree to the request and should give consent to share information with the local authority.

The early years provider will need to complete an Early Years Inclusion Funding Request Form for each child they are requesting funding for. The request will include detail of the child's level of need, as well as information on how the funding will be used. Please note that this application could be submitted prior to the child's start date.

Decisions about whether to allocate funding and the amount are made by an Early Years Inclusion Funding Panel. They will assess the information provided in the request and make a decision against level of need as referenced in tier descriptors.

The Early Years Inclusion Fund panel takes place monthly.

An Early Years Inclusion Funding Impact and Renewal Application must be completed and returned when requesting additional funding for the same child. The review document will evidence how previous funding has been used and provide update on the child's progress. Early years providers will also be required to provide a Record of Intervention and Support for each term that funding is accessed.

Funding process

Record of Intervention and Support must show clearly where spending has occurred.

Payment of grant

Following the panel's approval payments will be made to providers via a direct payment arrangement that will go directly into the nominated bank account. An invoice is not required from providers. There will be a short delay before payments reach the bank accounts to enable all internal SBC processes to be completed.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the Early Years Inclusion Fund:

Email: eyinclusion@slough.gov.uk

Early Years Inclusion Funding Initial Request - Form A

The Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF) is funding available to early years providers to support children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). The funding is for use in the setting that the child attends and will be given to the provider to be used to support the needs of individual children with SEN

	Yes	No
Have you read the EYIF Guidance document before making this request?		
Is the child's parent/carer in agreement to this request?		

Child Information	
First name(s)	
Surname (in uppercase)	
Date of birth	
Home address	
Postcode	
Email (parent /carers)	
Telephone (parent /carers)	

Placement Information		
Name of early years provider (<i>please use Ofsted registered name</i>)		
Email (<i>to be used for all correspondence related to Early Years Inclusion Funding</i>)		
Date child started at provision / due to start (<i>sufficient time should be given to allow for settling</i>)		
Type of placement (<i>please select 'Funded' if the child is in receipt of any type of government funding even if they attend any additional hours that are non-funded</i>)	Funded	Non-funded
If 'Funded', please select funding type		Under 2's (15 hour working families entitlement)
		2- year funded (Bright Futures for 2 year olds)
		2- year funded (15 hour working families entitlement)

		3- and 4- year funded (15 hour universal entitlement)
		3- and 4- year funded (30 hour working families entitlement)
Is child accessing their full government funding entitlement?	Yes	No
If 'No', please state the number of hours the child attends per week		
Please tick reason child not accessing their full government funding entitlement		Not applicable
		Hours not available at provision
		Parental choice
		Reduced Timetable
		Other
If 'Other', please specify		
If 'Non-funded', please state the number of hours per week the child attends		

SEN and Disability Information		Yes	No
Is child in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?			
If you answered 'Yes' to the above? Please check if child is eligible for Disability Access Fund (For further information go to Slough's Local Offer – Disability Access Fund)			
Is child undergoing an EHC needs assessment?			
If 'Yes', date EHC needs assessment started			
Primary area of need (please tick/check only <u>one</u> box):			
Developmental Delay (DD)		Personal, Social and Emotional Difficulties (PSED)	
Hearing Impairment (HI)		Speech Language & Communication (SLCN)	
Visual Impairment (VI)		Social Communication Difficulties (SCD)	
Physical Need / Disability (PN/PD)		Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)		Medical (M)	
Other			

If 'Other', please specify	
Information on diagnosis, disability, medical condition and/or areas of need that have been identified by outside professionals	

What do you consider overall level of need to be? This is an indicator and does not determine the outcome of the SEN Inclusion Fund Panel's decision (please tick/check only <u>one</u> box):			
Moderate	Severe	Significant	Profound/Complex

Agencies / Professionals child known to (include referral and/or assessment information)						
Health Professional	Referred to		Date of referral	Known to		Date of last assessment
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Health Visitor						
Speech and Language Therapist						
Occupational Therapist						
Physiotherapist						
Paediatrician (Child Development Clinic)						
Other (please specify)						
Education Professional	Referred to		Date of referral	Known to		Date of last assessment
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Educational Psychologist						
Early Years Inclusion / SEND Team						
Sensory Consortium						
Other (please specify)						
Social Care						
Known to Early Help Services	Yes	No				
Known to a Social Worker	Yes	No				

How do you intend to use the Early Years Inclusion Funding?

	To build capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions / strategies for the child
	Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs
	Purchase of resources / equipment to support specific interventions / strategies
If you <u>only</u> ticked to 'Purchase resources / equipment' you must provide a description along with total cost	
Description of Resources / Equipment	Total Cost
	Other
If you ticked 'Other', you must provide a description along with total cost	
Description of Resources	Total Cost

Early years provider Declaration

The information provided on this EYIF Request Form is accurate.

I confirm that if the child is in receipt of government funding entitlements that the hours stated in this request are in line with government funding entitlements claimed via the Capita One Provider Portal.

I confirm that the purpose of this request and the content of the form has been discussed/shared with the Parent/Carer and that they understand that the information provided in this form will be discussed by professionals for the purpose of requesting additional funding for their child and that they agree to the sharing of this information. Also, they are aware that it will be held by Slough BC and may be used by the Council and other partner organisations.

I confirm that the Parent/Carer is aware their personal data and that of their child will be processed in accordance with UK data protection legislation on the basis of public duty to comply with legislation such as the Children and Families Act 2014. They have also been made aware of the full Children's Social Care, Education and Early Intervention Privacy Notice available at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/data-protection-foi/privacy-notices>.

Name of professional who has completed Request Form	
Designated role	
Date	

Returning by email:

To ensure compliancy with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), please ensure the EYIF Request Form is sent securely to eyfunding@slough.gov.uk, using a Egress email account.

Returning by post:

Send to:

Early Years
EYIF Request
4th Floor – Observatory House
25 Windsor Road
Slough
SL1 2EL

Early Years Inclusion Funding Impact and Renewal Application - Form B

It is a requirement to complete and return this document if you have accessed Early Years Inclusion Funding in order to evidence the impact of Inclusion funding. It is also a requirement to return the 'Record of Intervention and Support' for each term that funding has been allocated.

If you wish to reapply for the same child, you will need to complete all of Form B.

Failure to complete and return these documents may result in future requests for funding not being considered.

Child Information	
First name(s)	
Surname (in uppercase)	
Date of birth	

Placement Information	
Name of early years provider (Please use Ofsted registered name)	
Email (to be used for all correspondence related to Early Years Inclusion Funding)	

Confirm previous use of Early Years Inclusion Funding	
How has the Early Years Inclusion Funding been used to support the child? (Please tick relevant boxes) – this will be checked against initial EYIF Request	
<input type="checkbox"/>	To build capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions/strategies for the child with SEND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to the individual child's needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchase of resources/equipment to support specific interventions/strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please provide additional information:

Impact of Early Years Inclusion Funding		
Over the time that funding has been provided, has the child made progress in relation to:		
Targets relating to the child's IEP	Yes	No
EYFS Development Matters / Birth to 5 Matters	Yes	No

If you ticked 'No', please provide further information on possible reason(s) for this

--

Child's level of attendance at setting over the period of funding

Infrequent	Regular	Full (no absences)
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Early Intervention Information

Child is on your SEND Support Register	Yes	No
Assess, plan do, review / IEP is in place and being implemented	Yes	No
Advice from outside agencies/professionals being implemented	Yes	No

Current Targets / Strategies (taken from current Assess, Plan, Do, Review/or recommendations from professionals and/or outside agencies)

Record of Intervention and Support (Please tick relevant boxes to indicate Record to be returned). These should be sent with EYIF Review Document in pdf format.

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term

Renewal for Early Years Inclusion Funding

How do you intend to use the Early Years Inclusion Funding if renewed? *Please leave blank if you are not reapplying.*

	To build capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions / strategies for the child with SEND
	Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs

Purchase of resources / equipment to support specific interventions / strategies	
If you <u>only</u> ticked to 'Purchase resources / equipment' you must provide a description along with total cost	
Description of Resources / Equipment	Total Cost
Other	
If you ticked 'Other', you must provide a description along with total cost	
Description of Resources	Total Cost

Please ensure that you send any supporting evidence / assessments / reports that you have available from outside agencies / external professionals.

Assessment Information (Referring to Birth to 5 Matters non-statutory guidance for the EYFS provide current assessment information) – Please ensure box is checked in both Range and Emerging / Developing / Secure

State age of child in months at point of assessment									
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Range						Emerging	Developing	Secure
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	0 - 12 months	12 - 18 months	18 - 24 months	24 - 36 months	36 - 48 months	48 - 60 months			
Making relationships									
Sense of self									
Understanding emotions									

Communication and Language	Range						Emerging	Developing	Secure
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	0 - 12 months	12 - 18 months	18 - 24 months	24 - 36 months	36 - 48 months	48 - 60 months			
Listening and attention									
Understanding									

Speaking									
----------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Physical Development	Range						Emerging	Developing	Secure
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	0 - 12 months	12 - 18 months	18 - 24 months	24 - 36 months	36 - 48 months	48 - 60 months			
Moving and handling									
Health and self-care									

Please provide any additional assessment information that you have completed to support the above judgements

Descriptors of need: Please provide quality statements in each section below referencing each of the areas / describing the nature of the child's needs (*Insufficient information will result in the request being declined*)

Communication and interaction

- *Listening and attention*
- *Understanding*
- *Expressive communication/speaking*
- *Social interaction*

Cognition and learning

- *Learning style (refer to characteristics of effective learning)*
- *Play skills and imagination*

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation/setting • Making relationships • Managing feelings and behaviour (self-regulation) • Managing changes/transitions
Sensory and/or physical needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross motor skills • Fine motor skills • Sensory
Hygiene and personal needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding • Toileting

What do you consider overall level of need to be? This is an indicator and does not determine the outcome of the EYIF Panel's decision (please tick/check only [one](#) box):

Moderate	Severe	Significant	Profound/Complex
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Early Years Provider Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this EYIF Review Document is accurate.

I confirm that information has been shared with the Parent/Carer on how the EYIF has been used. Also, that they are aware that this information will be held by Slough BC and may be used by the Council and other partner organisations.

I confirm that the Parent/Carer is aware their personal data and that of their child will be processed in accordance with UK data protection legislation on the basis of public duty to comply with legislation such as the Children and Families Act 2014. They have also been made aware of the full Children's Social Care,

Education and Early Intervention Privacy Notice available at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/data-protection-foi/privacy-notices>.

Name of professional who has completed Review Document	
Designated role	
Date	

Returning by email:

To ensure compliancy with General Data Protection Regulations (GDRP), please ensure the EYIF Request Form are sent securely to eyfunding@slough.gov.uk, using a Egress email account.

Returning by post:

Send to:

Early Years
 EYIF Review
 4th Floor – Observatory House
 25 Windsor Road
 Slough
 SL1 2EL

Early Years Inclusion Funding – Record of Intervention and Support

General Information			
Child's name		Term and year	
Child's date of birth		Payment for this period	

To build capacity within the setting with additional staffing to support specific interventions / strategies for the child with SEND						
Intervention / Strategy	Targeted Plan and/or other professional advice/reports	Staffing (initials) / Child ratio	Impact and progress (Exceeded, Fully Met, Partially Met, Not Met) (Made limited / expected / rapid progress)	Frequency (= hours per week)	Duration (total number of weeks)	Total Cost (hrs per week x number of weeks x hourly pay rate)

Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s) linked to individual child's needs			
Name of Training & Provider	Cost of training	Supply / cover costs if applicable	Total Cost

Purchase of resources / equipment to support specific interventions / strategies (receipts should be kept and available on request)		
Description of resource / equipment	Where resource was purchased	Total Cost
Overall Total		

Early Years Inclusion Funding

I agree for my child's details to be shared with the Local Authority for the purpose of an application for Early Years Inclusion Funding.

Child's name....

Date of Birth

Signature of Parent/Carer

Date

Appendix C

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

Provision for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN)

Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and all providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

Disability Access Fund provides an annual lump sum payment of £938 , per eligible child, to be paid to early years settings that are providing a free universal entitlement place for three and four year olds in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The purpose of the Disability Access Fund is to support early years providers to make initial reasonable adjustments, build on the capacity of their setting to support disabled children and aid access to places.

Eligibility

Children in receipt of funded early education will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of child disability living allowance and;

Please note that four year olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding. Children become eligible for free early education at different points in the year depending on when they turn 3.

Entitlement

The settings with eligible children will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of £938 per year. If the child changes provider within the financial year, the new setting will not receive another payment of the DAF. The new provider will need to wait until the following financial year.

Identifying eligible children

Early years providers are ultimately responsible for identifying eligible children and providers are encouraged to speak to parents in order to find out who is eligible for the DAF. Providers will ask parents to complete a DAF application form and provide a copy of the child's DLA award letter.

Distributing DAF funding to early years providers

If a child eligible for the DAF is splitting their free entitlement across two or more providers the parent is only able to complete one application form which asks parents to nominate the main setting (usually setting where child accesses the majority of hours). This setting will be where Slough Borough Council will pay the DAF for the child.

In cases where a child who lives in one authority area attends a provider in a different local authority, the provider's local authority is responsible for funding the DAF for the child and eligibility checking.

A DAF payment will be made to a provider following an actual headcount submission in line with the final funding payment for each term.

Slough Early Years Disability Access Fund

Parent Application Form

Providers who offer funded early years education can apply to claim Disability Access Funding (**DAF**) to support disabled children to access the free entitlement. A lump sum payment of £910 per year is available to providers who have eligible children in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance who are claiming free early years education universal entitlement.

By completing this form you agree to DAF funding being paid to one Early Years provider as an one- off payment. If you move your child to another provider during the year then the DAF funding is not transferable.

Please return this completed form to your early years provider along with a copy of your child's Disability Living Allowance letter confirmation. The early years provider will then send the form and proof of eligibility to Slough Borough Council.

ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Child's legal first Name:

Child's legal Surname:

Child's Date of Birth:

Home address and postcode

Name of early years provider you wish to receive DAF funding:

Child's start date:

PARENTAL CONSENT AND DECLARATION (please read above before signing)

I declare that:

- I am the parent/legal guardian of the child named on this form
- The above detailed information relating to my child is complete and accurate and I will notify the provider of any changes.
- I have provided evidence that my child is in receipt of child disability living allowance
- I confirm that my child is in attendance and claiming their free early education at the early years provider named above.
- I understand that if I move my child to another provider that the DAF funding is not transferable
- *Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we are required to gain your permission to keep personal details for you and your children on our database. Slough Borough Council and its agents may share this information with government and local authority departments and other authorised organisations for administrative, statistical and research purposes. For further information please visit: [Slough data protection](#)*
- *Completing this form and signing it gives us your informed consent. If you are unable to access the provided links or wish to submit a query in relation to fair processing, please contact the data protection officer at DataProtectionOfficer@slough.gov.uk*

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:.....

PROVIDERS CHECK

I confirm that the child named above is in attendance and claiming their free early education and I have attached official documentation validating the child's details.

Signature of Provider:

Date:.....

Setting: (insert setting name and logo if preferred)

Child/family Transition Information

Child's Name:	D.O.B:
Address:	Required start date:
Parent/Carer Name: Do you need with completing this form Yes/No	Contact telephone Number:
Who will usually collect your child?	Is there anyone who should NOT have contact with your child? (Please speak to a member of the management team)
FAMILY: Tell us about your family; Who lives in the family home? How many siblings? Have any siblings been to this setting? Yes/No Do you have any pets? Yes/No If yes what pets do you have? Tell us about your home; What type of accommodation do you live in? How will you travel to the setting?	ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
What language/s do you use at home? What is the primary language used by your child?	
Is your child in the public care of a local authority? Yes/No	If yes please state which authority:
If yes please provide a letter from social services confirming the legal status of the child and the local authority responsible.	
Is your child above privately fostered? Yes/No	(A child is considered to be privately fostered if they are cared for by someone other than the parent without the involvement of the local authority.)
Do you receive Disability Living Allowance for your child? Yes/No	
CHILD INFORMATION:	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Is your child comfortable being left with a friend or family member when you go out? Yes/No	If yes please specify which one:

<p>Has your child previously attended any other child care provision such as pre-school, nursery, child minder? Yes/No</p> <p>What does your child enjoy playing with?</p> <p>Can your child play on their own for short periods of time? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child enjoy being with other children, and will they play with them? Yes/No</p>	
<p>SELF CARE SKILLS:</p> <p>Is your child able to;? Use the toilet alone? Yes/No Help to wash their hands? Yes/No Put on their own coat? Yes/No Dress without support? Yes/No Eat and drink without help? Yes/No Does your child use an open cup, or spout cup?</p> <p>Does your child have any comforters e.g., dummy, blankets, or bottle?</p>	
<p>SLEEP ROUTINES:</p> <p>Does your child sleep during the day? Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes when do they sleep and for how long?</p>
<p>FOOD:</p> <p>DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE ANY FOOD ALLERGIES? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child have any eating or drinking difficulties? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child have any specific dietary requirements? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child require food to be blended at mealtimes? Yes/No</p>	<p>IF YES PLEASE STATE CLEARLY WHICH FOODS THEY ARE ALLERGIC TO;</p> <p>If yes please specify;</p> <p>If yes please specify;</p>
<p>HEALTH & MEDICAL INFORMATION:</p> <p>Has your child had their 9 month/2 year review with a health visitor? Yes/No</p> <p>Has your child visited a dentist? Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes were any concerns raised?</p> <p>If yes were there any concerns raised?</p>

<p>Does your child have any allergies such as medications, plasters, detergents, creams etc.? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child suffer from any medical or health condition that the setting needs to be aware of? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child take any regular prescribed medication? Yes/No</p> <p>Are there any concerns regarding your child's hearing or vision? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child have any mobility needs? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child require any specialist equipment? Yes/No</p> <p>Does your child have any contact with any of the following services?</p> <p>Paediatrician Child Development Centre Yes/No</p> <p>Speech Therapy Yes/No</p> <p>Occupational Therapy Yes/No</p> <p>Dietician Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes please state the specific allergy.</p> <p>If yes please state specific medical/health condition.</p> <p>If yes please specify medication.</p> <p>If yes please give medical details.</p> <p>If yes please specify.</p> <p>If yes please specify.</p> <p>If yes please specify.</p>
<p>SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION:</p> <p>Do you have any concerns regarding your child's speech and language development? Yes/No</p> <p>Is your child showing understanding of language, do they respond verbally when spoken to? Yes/No</p> <p>How does your child communicate (gestures, single words, short phrases, signs)?</p>	<p>If yes has your child been referred to a speech and language specialist?</p> <p>Any further information:</p>
<p>Do you have any concerns about your child's behaviour?</p> <p>e.g., very active, challenging behaviours, difficulty sharing, shyness Yes/No</p> <p>How do you comfort your child when they're upset?</p>	<p>If yes please specify.</p> <p>Please specify.</p>

PARENT/CARER PREFERENCES How would you like to be updated about your child's day?	
OTHER Is there any other additional information you would like to share with us or information you would like from us?	Additional Information.

Parent/carer name: Signed:



Manager name: Signed:

[Appendix E](#)

Free School Meal Criteria

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if a parent is entitled to Universal Credit they must have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £7,400, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods.

Appendix F

 <p>Slough Children First</p>	<h1>MULTI-AGENCY REFERRAL FORM</h1> <p>FOR ALL CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES</p> <p>Referral Tel: 01753 875362</p> <p>New Email: Send securely to: sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk</p>	
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Please send electronically in a Word Document

<p>Making a Referral:</p> <p>Any additional evidence can be attached to the form.</p> <p>If the reasons for referral include Child Exploitation, Neglect or Young Carers please ensure that the screening tool has been completed and is attached.</p> <p>Child Exploitation Screening Tool Neglect Screening Tool Young Carers</p> <p>The levels of need set out in the Slough Safeguarding Partnership Threshold Document, should be used by ALL agencies and practitioners to identify needs and risks.</p>
--

Referrer Details:
Completed by:
Designation:
Organisation:
Address:
Telephone No:
Date:
Email:

<p>Consent and Permission: Seeking consent is the responsibility of the referrer.</p> <p>Do you have consent to make this referral? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If NO, please provide details here:</p> <p>Do you have permission to share information with agencies? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If NO, please provide details here:</p>
--

1. Child / young person details:			
Full name of child:			
Any alternative name:			
DOB:	Age:	Tick if estimated: <input type="checkbox"/>	If unborn, estimated date of delivery
Gender:	Click here to select from list		
Ethnicity:			
Religion:			
First language:		Will an interpreter be required? Click here to select from list	
Current Home address:			Post code:
Previous home address: (if known)			

Home telephone and Mobile no. of parent / legal guardian:		Email of parent / legal guardian:	
School / Pre-school:		Address & Contact number :	
Does the child have a disability?	Click here to select from list		
If yes give details of the disability:			
Unique 13 digit Pupil Number (UPN):			
S.E.N.D or E.H.C.P in place:	Click here to select from list	Date commenced:	
NHS Number:			

2. a) Additional information about the child or young person (including other siblings)								
Parent / legal guardian, children and others living in the household (THIS MUST BE COMPLETED)								
Last name	First name	Relationship to child(ren)	DOB / EDD	Gender (M / F)	Ethnicity	Focus of referral Yes/No	School / preschool	Does this person hold Parental responsibility?
b) Other significant adults								
Last name	First name	Relationship to child(ren)	DOB	Ethnicity	Address		Does this person hold PR	

Professionals involved with the child and family:			
Agency	Name	Address / email (full email address)	Telephone Number
GP			
School			
Health visitor			
CAMHS/MH			
Other			

Reasons for Referral:
(please include presenting issues and any historical concerns & complete as fully as possible)

Chronology of Significant Events:

Views of Child / Young Person:
I confirm this is, to the best of my knowledge, a true reflection of the views of the child / young person <input type="checkbox"/>

Views of Parent / Carer:
I confirm this is, to the best of my knowledge, a true reflection of the views of the parent / carer <input type="checkbox"/>

What is your summary? What needs to change and what are your recommendations?
What is going well?
What are you worried about?
How have you as an agency helped the child/young person/family?
What additional support is required?

Signed (typed name accepted):	Designation:	Date:

Appendix G

Consent statement

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we are required to gain your permission to keep personal details for you and your children on our database. Slough Borough Council and its agents may share this information with government and local authority departments and other authorised organisations for administrative, statistical and research purposes. For further information please visit: [Slough Data Protection](#)

Completing this form and signing it gives us your informed consent. If you are unable to access the provided links or wish to submit a query in relation to fair processing, please contact the data protection officer at DataProtectionOfficer@slough.gov.uk

Freedom of information

The provider acknowledges that the local authority is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and shall assist and co-operate with the local authority to enable the local authority to comply with these information disclosure requirements.

The provider shall:

Transfer the request for information to the local authority as soon as practicable after receipt and in any event within two working days of receiving a request for information;

Provide the local authority with a copy of all information in its possession or power in the form that the local authority requires within five working days (or such other period as the local authority may specify) of the local authority requesting that information; and

Provide all necessary assistance as reasonably requested by the local authority to enable the local authority to respond to a request for information within the time for compliance set out in section 10 of the FOIA or regulation 5 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The local authority shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether the information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004;

is to be disclosed in response to a request for information, and in no event shall the provider respond directly to a request for information unless expressly authorised to do so by the local authority.

The provider acknowledges that the local authority may, acting in accordance with the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs' Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities' functions under Part 1 of FOIA (issued under section 45 of the FOIA, November 2004), be obliged under the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to disclose information:

without consulting with the provider; or

following consultation with the provider and having taken the provider's views into account,

provided always that, where this applies, the local authority shall, in accordance with any recommendations of the Code, take reasonable steps, where appropriate, to give the provider advance notice, or failing that, to draw the disclosure to his attention after any such disclosure.

The provider shall ensure that all information produced in the course of the Agreement or relating to the Agreement is retained for disclosure and shall permit the local authority to inspect such records as requested from time to time.

Anti-discrimination

The provider shall not unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of any law, enactment, order, or regulation relating to discrimination (whether in race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age or otherwise).

The provider shall take all reasonable steps to secure the observance of this clause by all members of the provider's staff.

Appendix H

Short Consent Form Funded Early Education

Child's first name	
Child's last name	
Child's DOB	
Parents National Insurance number	
11 digit unique code	

I confirm that I am the legal parent/carer for the child named overleaf and that the information on this form is correct. I agree that you may use the information I have provided to process my claim for a free early education place and to contact other sources, as allowed by law, to verify my initial and ongoing entitlement. I agree that the information may be used to assess further benefits for my child and my child's school (or other setting), ensure accuracy of records across the local authority and the check against fraud. I agree that my chosen early years provider may share information about my child's progress as part of ongoing research to support the development of services for young children in Slough.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we are required to gain your permission to keep personal details for you and your children on our database. Slough Borough Council and its agents may share this information with government and local authority departments and other authorised organisations for administrative, statistical and research purposes. For further information please visit: [Slough Data Protection](#)

Completing this form and signing it gives us your informed consent. If you are unable to access the provided links or wish to submit a query in relation to fair processing, please contact the data protection officer at DataProtectionOfficer@slough.gov.uk

I have read and understood the statements above and would like to apply for a free early education place for my child.

Parent's signature	
Print name	
Date	

Appendix I

Funding offer

Starting a new funded child

Consider how many weeks you will be operational during the child's funded year

- When does the funded year start and how many weeks holiday will you have?
- For term time only provision consider how does the above compare to the academic year?
- Divide the total yearly funding entitlement (either 570 or 1140) by the number of weeks open to give the number of funded hours offered per week.

Financial Year 2025-26

Funded period	Term time only	Hours	Stretched	Hours
Summer 2025/26 1 st April – 31 st August	13 weeks	195	22 weeks	241
Autumn 2025/26 1 st September – 31 st December	14 weeks	210	17 weeks	186
Spring 2025/26 1 st January – 31 st March	11 weeks	165	13 weeks	142
	38 weeks	570	52 weeks	569

Academic year: Most schools will operate according to their academic year which usually runs from September – July /August.

Term dates: Term dates are set by the local authority as a guide, but schools are not required to adopt them. Some schools will choose their own term dates that will fall within the funding periods but not total more than 38 weeks per year (39 weeks including inset dates).

Financial year: The local authority's financial year begins on 1st April and ends on the 31st March. The local authority is allocated funds from central government to pay for funded early education places across the borough and the total budget is for the financial year.

Funded year: Each child has a funded year that begins the term after the child's 3rd birthday and ends on the last day of the term in which the child turns 4 years old.

Funded period: Funded periods are the three periods that run throughout the financial year, beginning on the 1st April and ending on 31st March.

Summer term: 1st April – 31st August

Autumn: 1st September – 31st December

Spring: 1st January – 31st March

Term time only funding: Claims for funded early education can be made as 38 weeks over the child's funded year for a total of 570 hours of funding per year (universal offer) and no more than 1140 hours per year (extended entitlement).

Stretched offer: Providers can choose to offer funded early education over more than 38 weeks a year and up to 52 weeks per year. Providers must consider the child's funded year and then decide how many weeks during that funded year they will be open. Providers must then divide the total number of funded hours by the total number of operational weeks.

Example funding offer:

1. Child A DOB is 08/10/2020
Their funded year is 1st January – 31st December
The child is only eligible for universal funding (570 hours)
The provider is open for 38 weeks over the child's funded year so the provider can offer 15 hours per week (570 hours per year).
2. Child B DOB is 08/03/2021
Their funded year is 1st April – 31st March
The child is only eligible for universal funding (570 hours)
The provider is open 51 week during the child's funded year so the provider can offer 11.17 hours per week or 11 hours per week total (561 hours per year)
3. Child C DOB is 10/04/2020
Their funded year is 1st September – 31st August
The child is eligible for the extended entitlement funding (1140 hours)
The provider is open 47 weeks during the child's funded year so the provider can offer 24.25 hours per week or 24 hours per week total (1,128 hours per year)

Appendix J

Early Years Provider Agreement 2025

Provider Declaration Form

How many weeks is your setting open each funding period

Funding period	Number of weeks
Summer 2025	
Autumn 2025	
Spring 2026	

	I currently offer <i>Please tick all that apply</i>	The date we plan to start offering FEL <i>Please insert a date</i>
Bright Futures for 2 year olds funding		
Working Families Entitlement for 9 months - 2 year olds		
Universal 3 & 4 year old funding		
Working Families Extended entitlement for 3 & 4 years olds (30 hours)		

The person legally responsible for your establishment must sign the following declaration:

- I certify that this provision conforms to all the conditions of eligibility for registration 2025 and that this provider will ensure all elements are met.
- I have read carefully the various documents referred to in this agreement.
- I agree to all the terms and conditions in the Provider Agreement 2025
- I understand that, as a provider if we fail to meet the conditions set, the council acting reasonably, may withdraw funding and require repayment of the whole or part of any funding we have been paid in respect of the provision of funded places.
- I understand that the information supplied on this declaration will be used by the local authority to communicate with the provider regarding funded early education
- Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we are required to gain your permission to keep personal details for you on our database. Slough Borough Council and its agents may share this information with government and local authority departments and other authorised organisations for administrative, statistical and research purposes. For further information please visit: [Slough Data Protection](#)
- Completing this form and signing it gives us your informed consent. If you are unable to access the provided links or wish to submit a query in relation to fair processing, please contact the data protection officer at DataProtectionOfficer@slough.gov.uk

Setting Name:	
Contact Name:	
Position:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Please sign and return to:

earlyyears@slough.gov.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. We are a Prep School & charge termly fees less the funding amount dependent on the sessions attended. This covers additional hours, lunch etc. Is the guidance saying we now can't charge in this way & anything extra can only be charged on a voluntary basis? I don't anticipate anyone would pay a voluntary charge. There are extras for some internal trips, again if this is made voluntary, we wouldn't get payments & therefore wouldn't be able to offer these extras.

A. Funded and fee paying sessions must be invoiced separately, and must clearly show that all the funded hours are free at the point of delivery.

Providers can charge parents for the following extras in connection with the free hours, **but these charges must be voluntary for the parent:**

- consumables to be used by the child, such as nappies or sun cream
- meals and snacks consumed by the child
- extra optional activities such as events, celebrations, specialist tuition (for example music classes or foreign languages) or other activities that are not directly related or necessary for the effective delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework

For activities and extra services, participation in any optional extra activity should be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

Parents must be able to opt out of paying for chargeable extras and the associated consumable or activity for their child.

The costs of chargeable extras should be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on local authority Family Information Services. These should be clear, up-to-date and easily accessible to parents, to enable parents to make an informed choice of provider.

Q. We offer cooked meals for all children, and we charge. Does this have to be voluntary contribution now?

A. Settings can charge parents for meals and snacks in connection with the free hours, but these charges **must be voluntary** for the parent:

Providers should be mindful of the impact of additional charges, especially on the most disadvantaged parents. Where parents are unable to pay for meals and consumables, providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on providing parents with options for alternatives to additional charges, including waiving or reducing the cost of meals and snacks or allowing parents to supply their own meals.

Q. So any setting income must be recorded via invoices other than funded hours?

A. Invoices and receipts should be itemised, to ensure their invoices break down separately into:

- the free entitlement hours
- additional private paid hours

- food charges
- non-food consumables charges
- activities charges

Itemised invoices must be in place by January 2026. This is to allow parents to see that they have received their child's free entitlement hours completely free of charge and understand that any fees paid are for additional hours or optional services.

Q. I have seen that the Early Years Alliance have released info today that many providers will be forced to limit government-funded places.

A. The Childcare Act 2006 Section 6 places a duty on English local authorities, so far as reasonably practicable to secure sufficient childcare in their area for working parents

Q. Can we charge Admin fee

A. providers cannot charge parents for business running costs

Q. We ask for a voluntary donation of £1 or £2 when we hold an EID/Christmas/Other party. Some parents bring it in and contribute, others don't - do we somehow need to invoice this?

A. If it is a completely voluntary charge that parents are free to opt in or out of, then it would not need to be added to an invoice

Q. Regarding charges for deposits, are there now restrictions, this isn't clear?

A. Providers cannot charge parents **non-refundable deposits** as a condition of taking up a child's free entitlement place. It is therefore permissible to charge a **reasonable refundable deposit** in relation to the entitlement hours, that must be paid back to parents within a reasonable period after taking up their place (but can be retained if the child does not take up the place without sufficient notice.)

Q. Charges for children being sick or on holiday?

A. The local authority will continue to fund if a child is off sick or on holiday. However, providers must follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts must be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. Providers must consider a child's personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged.

Q. Charging a private rate for additional hours outside the funded hours including the lunch break?

- A. Providers can charge parents for any additional, private paid hours according to their usual terms and conditions provided taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a free place. However, providers should ensure that, wherever possible, children are able to take their funded hours in continuous blocks, avoiding artificial breaks.

Q. Do the changes need to be in place by 1st April 2025?

- A. The changes to the statutory guidance came into force 1 April 2025. In relation to the transparency changes, the guidance sets out the expectation providers will have set out additional charges clearly and upfront on websites and invoices by January 2026

Q. what if a parent only takes the hours between the offer which means they have an hour plus that they cannot take. Can they then take the additional hours at another provider to make up this time – especially falling between setting and childminder to allow for drop off and collection cover or to provide holiday childcare.

A. Parents can choose to take up their offer at a maximum of 2 sites in a single day

Q. Is it a MUST we have to put all this on our website e.g funding

A. The costs of chargeable extras should be published on provider websites or, where they do not have any website, on local authority Family Information Services. These should be clear, up-to-date and easily accessible to parents, to enable parents to make an informed choice of provider. They should set out, for each setting, the amounts charged for all the chargeable extras listed. Childminders and providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time are exempt. This should be fully implemented by January 2026 at the latest.

Q. Can we offer the voluntary charged session on certain days for example Monday and Friday only where parents if they don't want to pay for meals nappies etc can only attend those days?

A. Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. The 15 or 30 hours must be able to be accessed free of charge to parents.

Providers should deliver the free entitlements consistently, so that all children within a setting accessing any of the free entitlements receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they choose to pay for voluntary hours, voluntary extra services, meals or consumables.

Q. What happens if a child doesn't give our 4 weeks notice?

A. The funding follows the child and is not covered by any notice period.

Any contract in place relating to private fee paid sessions would be treated differently as this is covered by the terms and conditions of your own business

Q. Can we still claim the 4 weeks funding if they have left?

A. No, the funding follows the child.

Q. How often do we need to complete a declaration form?

A. The provider agreement must be signed and returned annually.

Q. Do we need to update the Parents Declaration Forms for our current parents?

A. It is more important that all new parents sign the updated form. The local authority does not expect all old forms to be updated, unless changes are being made to the original declaration

Guidance for Childminders

Early Education and Childcare Entitlements Statutory Guidance

Summary

The Department for Education publishes guidance which governs the delivery of the early education and childcare entitlements (the 15- or 30-hours working parent entitlement, universal 15hrs entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds and the 15 hrs entitlement for children aged 2 years receiving additional forms of support).

The Department has clarified the guidance as it relates to additional charges - it is vitally important that the entitlements remain accessible and affordable for families as they are expanded.

The Department is not seeking to stop childminders from being able to charge for voluntary extras. However, charges must not be mandatory or a condition of accessing an entitlement place. This has always been the case and has been reaffirmed by a recent High Court judgment.

Government funding for the entitlements does not cover consumables like meals, nappies or sun cream or additional activities, such as trips, so providers are able to ask parents to pay for these things. The Department is not encouraging parents to opt out, and we know that many parents prefer to purchase consumables from their provider.

The updated guidance has introduced some new expectations around transparency for parents, although these don't take effect until January 2026. This includes asking providers (including childminders) to break down invoices into categories of charge. Larger providers are expected to detail charges on their websites, but the guidance says LAs can exempt childminders from this.

We know childminders do a brilliant job for parents and children and the updated guidance should support transparency and consistency. Childminders are a key part of the early years sector, providing high-quality, flexible, and affordable early education and childcare, and playing an important role in delivering entitlements and wraparound care.

Frequently Asked Questions for Childminders about charging

Are you stopping childminders from charging?

No, the updated guidance does not stop childminders from being able to charge for voluntary extras, which they can continue to do. The guidance makes clear that childminders can charge parents for extras, as long as charges are not mandatory or a condition of accessing a place. This has always been the case.

How do we manage if parents change their mind about paying for consumables?

Childminders may wish to agree a termly arrangement with parents prior to that term commencing regarding the additional hours or consumables purchased, to aid with business planning and provide for stability of income, as long as charges are not mandatory.

This may include asking parents to decide on a term-by-term basis whether they want to opt in or out of any charges for food, consumables or additional services

Are the new entitlements good for childminders?

Like other registered early years providers, childminders can deliver the government's funded early years entitlements. This includes the universal 15 hours for all 3- and 4-year olds and some 2-year-olds, and 30 hours for eligible working parents.

Childminders can contribute to the delivery of the expanded entitlements to younger children and the expansion could benefit childminders in different ways. We know the expansion is likely to stimulate demand for childminder places or additional hours and the additional funding going into the system should support the sustainability of the sector.

Although hourly funding rates will vary between local authorities reflecting the different communities that local authorities serve, the overall DfE funding rates for the new entitlements are substantially above the average level of private paid fees charged by Childminders, so the expansion should support increased revenues.

Why does the funding rate decrease when children turn 3?

The early years is a diverse market, made up of a range of for-profit and not-for-profit provider types including chains of nurseries, single site providers, school-based providers and childminders. Therefore, our principle since the introduction of the EYNFFs in 2017 has been to distribute funding fairly, efficiently, and transparently across the country and across provider types.

The hourly funding rate paid to local authorities for these entitlements is designed to recognise the average costs across different provider types and is intended to reflect staff and non-staff costs.

We know, from listening to the sector and from our own regular research, that the cost of care is highest for younger children, which the funding rates reflect. However, funding is not ring-fenced by age, and we know many childminders often look after children at a range of ages, often below and above age 3.

Where this is the case childminders can use all the funding they receive from their local authority to support with costs across all the children they look after.

Overall, through our regular research we know that the funding rates for younger children will often be significantly above previous parent paid-rates and the childminding sector will benefit from the expanded entitlements for working parents.

Childminders are not prohibited from using any surplus generated from funding for younger children to support older children.

If parents want to make a voluntary contribution, are they able to?

If a parent wishes to make a voluntary contribution, then they can do so, provided that it is wholly voluntary, and they are not being charged a 'top-up fee' or for other services or items detailed at paragraph A1.41 of the guidance. This has always been the case.

Can providers charge deposits?

Local Authorities must ensure that providers do not charge parents non-refundable deposits as a condition of taking up a child's entitlement place. It is therefore permissible to charge a reasonable refundable deposit in relation to the entitlement hours, that must be paid back to parents within a reasonable period after taking up their place (but can be retained if the child does not take up the place without sufficient notice.)

Do providers need to itemise everything so the cost for each item in a day or week, or can they aggregate over a week/ month?

Local authorities should work with providers to ensure that by January 2026, their invoices break down separately into:

- the free entitlement hours
- additional private paid hours
- food charges
- non-food consumables charges
- activities charges

As long as the categories of charge are clear as above, including how many free hours parents are getting per day and per week, a pragmatic approach to aggregating costs can be taken and every single individual cost does not need to be itemised.

Paragraph A1.35 of the updated guidance also says that costs of chargeable extras should be published online by January 2026. However, local authorities may exempt childminders from this expectation regardless of the number of funded and non-funded children they care for.