

## EARLY EDUCATION FUNDING – STRETCHED OFFER GUIDANCE

### Stretching funded hours

1. The LA has a statutory duty to ‘enable parents to take up their child’s free place in patterns of hours that ‘stretch’ their child’s entitlement by taking fewer hours a week over more weeks of the year, where there is provider capacity and parental demand’. (DfE Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities June 2018, A2.12, page 16)
2. There is no requirement on any individual provider to deliver a stretched offer and parents do not have the right to demand one.
3. There are advantages and disadvantages of stretching – some entitlement may be lost by providers or parents or both – see **other considerations** below.
4. Maximum funded hours available **570** or **1140** (38 weeks x 15/30 hours). Maximum weekly funded hours available **15/30**.
5. You need to decide which period you are stretching funding over and for how many weeks :-
  - 12 months/3 terms (up to max of 52 weeks)
  - 2 terms (35 weeks maximum for Spring and Summer)
  - 1 term (22 weeks maximum for Summer)
6. Settings can only stretch funded hours over their published opening hours and weeks e.g. 48, 50 or 51 weeks.

### Stretching process and examples

1. Example stretching over 52 weeks (Autumn, Spring & Summer terms - equivalent to 38 weeks funding)

A	B	C	D
Maximum funded hours available	Weeks attending	Funded Hours per week <i>Col A / Col B</i>	Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col B x Col C / 38</i>
570	52	10.96	15
1140	52	21.92	30

### Child Attending 10 Hours per week

A	B	C	D
Weekly Hours attended	Weeks attending	Hours attended per year <i>Col A x Col B</i>	Funded hours to be entered on to the portal <i>Col C / 38 weeks</i>
10	52	520	13.68
20	52	1040	27.37

**2. Example Stretching over 35 weeks (Spring & Summer terms – equivalent to 24 weeks funding)**

A	B	C	D
Maximum funded hours available	Weeks attending	Funded Hours per week <i>Col A / Col B</i>	Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col B x Col C / 24</i>
360	35	10.29	15
720	35	20.57	30

**Child Attending 10 Hours per week**

A	B	C	D
Weekly Hours attended	Weeks attending	Hours attended per year <i>Col A x Col B</i>	Funded hours to be entered on to the portal <i>Col C / 24 weeks</i>
10	35	350	14.58
20	35	700	29.17

**3. Example Stretching over 22 weeks (Summer term – equivalent to 13 weeks funding)**

A	B	C	D
Maximum funded hours available	Weeks attending	Funded Hours per week <i>Col A / Col B</i>	Funded Hours to be entered onto the portal <i>Col B x Col C / 13</i>
195	22	8.86	15
390	22	17.73	30

**Child Attending a 10 Hours per week Stretch Model – WARNING -** *There are a maximum of 195 funded hours for the Summer term. Settings will have to charge for the additional hours attended at their standard fees.*

A	B	C	D
Weekly Hours attended	Weeks attending	Hours attended per year <i>Col A x Col B</i>	Funded hours to be entered on to the portal <i>Col C / 13 weeks</i>
10	22	220	15 (1.92 hours to be charged at standard rate)
20	22	440	30 (3.85 hours to be charged at standard rate)

### Other considerations:-

- Depending on when a child starts in an academic year, not all children will attend for a full 52 weeks in their second year of claiming – when stretching over less than a 52 week period you will need to reduce the number of funded hours offered and shown on invoices.
- Stretched funding for leavers is particularly difficult as it will vary depending where a child is up to in their stretched cycle. If a child leaves and has stretched their funding, early education funding paid should match the funded hours allocated on your invoices. This may need to be adjusted according to when the child leaves in the stretched cycle.

For example if a child leaves before Headcount in the 3<sup>rd</sup> term of an expected 3 terms stretch, you may have been paid more funding than would have been due for the whole of the year because of accumulated funding from previous terms. You will need to contact the funding office to arrange for funding to be re-paid.

In the event that the funded hours are less than the hours allocated on your invoices for stretch i.e. a child starts in the Summer term and leaves at the end of the term, please be aware that you will need to charge the parents for the difference see example 3. (Maximum funding is dictated by the funding caps in place – Autumn 210/420, Spring 165/330 and Summer 195/390 hours).

Funding would have been accumulated in subsequent terms had the child stayed for 3 terms.

- Please be aware that there may be different funding implications for each term. It is the responsibility of the setting to notify parents of any charges that may apply.
- The same Headcount rules will apply to children on a stretch offer as the term-time offer. A child must be on role for the hours that you are claiming for the whole of the term at the Headcount date, as advised by the LA. We will not be able to increase funded hours after the Headcount date.
- If a child has moved settings and stretched their funding at their previous setting, please contact the Funding Team (01926 742233) for confirmation of individual amounts available for funding as stretched periods may differ across the settings.
- Stretch models must be clearly written into Fee information for parents with the specific models available stating number of weeks available, funded hours offered and cost for any additional services.
- Parents may choose to vary their child's funded hours each term throughout the year. It is necessary to have robust systems in place to manage the calculations that will need to be made to ensure that claimed hours are correct and parents receive the correct number of funded hours for their child. Children must have accumulated sufficient funded hours.

- Funding can be shared between a maximum of two sites in a single day. Communications may be required with the other settings to ensure that all settings are clear on who will be claiming which hours and how many.
- Parental Declaration Forms (PDF's) must show the correct number of stretched hours and include all providers and models on the form.
- Averaging for invoicing purposes e.g. spreading annual funded hours and charges over equal monthly amounts is NOT the same as stretch.
- Be transparent and consistent to ensure parents / carers are clear on how they are being charged and funded hours given. Fee information must be reflected on invoices.
- Extended periods of absence may affect a child's funding and the stretch may need to be re-calculated
- Please ensure that as a setting the team dealing with funding, charging and invoicing fully understand the models that the service offers.

*Thank you for working with us to ensure parents can access their funded hours in a way that best suits their needs.*

For further information or queries please contact:

**Funding Office:**

3 & 4 Year funding - 01926 742233

2 Year funding - 01926 742218

[eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk)

**Early Years Business Support Officers:**

Jessica Holderness - 01926 742995

[earlyyears@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@warwickshire.gov.uk)

**Disclaimer:** *This guidance is provided to support settings to develop a stretched offer. Settings can choose whether to use this guidance or develop their own offer and are responsible for ensuring their offer meets the statutory guidance.*

