

Early Years Sufficiency and Entitlements



Warwickshire County Council Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

2026



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Warwickshire County Council Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding 2026

Summary of Main Changes:

The Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding 2026 has been updated in line with the Early Education and Childcare, Statutory guidance for Local Authorities April 2026.

Particular changes apply to the Ofsted inspection framework as follows:

- All sections that include information linked to Ofsted inspection outcomes have been updated to include the new score card outcomes as stipulated in the statutory guidance. Where relevant, the Ofsted gradings pre-April 2026 are also included to provide the necessary information where a previously non funded provider joins the provider directory to offer places and remains on an Ofsted judgement of pre-April 2026. (Sections 4 & 5)

Specific Changes:

- Wording change throughout the document from '2Help' to '2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds'
- Section 2 - Funding Rates and payment information have been updated for the financial year 2026/2027, including information on the pass-through percentage
- Section 2.4 – Charging
- Section 4 – update to team name to reflect amalgamation of the Integrated Disability Service with the Early Years Quality, Standards and Safeguarding Team. The service is now the Early Years Quality, Inclusion, SEND and Safeguarding Team
- Section 8 - update to team names and contact emails for services

1 Introduction, Roles and Requirements

1.1 Introduction

Welcome to Warwickshire County Council's 'Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding'.

The requirements reflect the ['Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities'](#) issued by the Department for Education. The Statutory Guidance refers to legislation contained in The Childcare Act 2006 and The Childcare Act 2016.

The Statutory Guidance applies to the duty on Local Authorities:

- to secure early years provision free of charge
- to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, including wraparound childcare
- To secure childcare free of charge for parents of 2-year-olds from families receiving additional support - 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds
- to secure childcare free of charge for eligible working parents of 9 months +, 2-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-olds
- ensure the provision of information, advice and assistance to parents, and
- ensure the provision of information, advice and training to childcare providers

Warwickshire County Council's Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding document sets out the Local Authority's expectations for registered providers offering Funded Early Education Entitlement places, and the Local Authority support available and explains:

- what the funding entitlements are
- who is eligible
- how to apply for it
- how to meet the Local Authority requirements
- what will happen if settings receive an Ofsted judgement of Needs Attention or Urgent Improvement in Leadership and Governance, or Safeguarding standards are 'Not Met' (including what happens if settings are unable to make the necessary improvements)

1.2 National and Local Requirements

The free entitlements enable eligible children aged 9 months +, 2-, 3- and 4-years-old to access early years provision before they reach compulsory school age.

Local Authorities receive the funding to enable them to meet their statutory responsibility to provide these free places through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – this is calculated from information collected during the Early Years Census dates as specified by the DfE.

Completing census information is important. If providers do not accurately complete the information on time, it has an impact on the amount of funding the Local Authority receives (and therefore the amount of funding providers may receive). Submitting such information is included in the Provider Agreement for Funded Early Years and Childcare Provision which providers must sign before being included on to the Local Authority Directory of Providers.

The Local Authority is responsible for maintaining the Directory of Providers, detailing those eligible to claim funding for the provision of funded places.

To be added to the Directory a setting must be:

- An early years provider or a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register, and have received a Certificate of Registration (including schools delivering early years places for children under 2 years old via separate registration) OR
- A childminder registered with a childminding agency which is itself registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register OR
- An Independent School or Academy taking children aged two and over and which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider OR
- A school taking children aged two and over and which is therefore exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider

The owner / person responsible for the setting must read and sign an annual Provider Agreement and grant reasonable access to all financial and non-financial records relating to early years funded entitlement places for financial monitoring and audit purposes to officers from the Early Years Sufficiency and Entitlements Team.

All Providers must have regard to the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](#)

These Requirements explain how the early years entitlements are administered in Warwickshire, and how to apply for funding.

Please contact the Early Years Entitlements Team for any specific information not included in this document:

01926 742233 / 01926 742218 / 01926 743039

Or eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk

childminderfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk

1.3 The Role of Early Years Providers

All children should be able to take up their entitlement to free early education in a high-quality setting. All models of providers (including school partners) should consider how to raise the quality of provision through continuous self-evaluation. Throughout the self-evaluation process, everyone connected to the setting should be involved – staff team, children, parents and families – to get a clear picture of strengths and limitations and how to address any gaps. Areas for development might include learning new skills, personal or professional development, more training, sharing values and ideas, taking on new staff or creating a more flexible offer.

All providers (including school partners) should be clear about how to deliver a more flexible service. The universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds and 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds equates to 570 hours a year accessed over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (equating to 15 hours a week). Providers can ‘stretch’ this offer, so families receive fewer hours per week, but over more weeks per year. This may meet some families’ needs better than a set pattern of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year, which has been the traditional offer. The working parent entitlements for all eligible children equates to 1140 hours per year and can also be stretched.

Availability, flexibility, business sustainability, affordability and inclusivity are key issues, and this guide highlights information sources which can help with these areas. Consideration also needs to be given to learning, development, safeguarding, SEND and welfare requirements. Well-evidenced evaluation will support providers in maintaining the necessary Ofsted grading that will retain a place in the Local Authority’s Directory of Providers.

If a setting (not including maintained school places) is judged as Requires Improvement or below (prior to April 2026) or ‘Needs Attention’ or below in Leadership and governance or where safeguarding is ‘not met’, the funding from the Local Authority is at risk. The Local Authority will adhere to the requirements of the [‘Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities’](#) when making a decision to withdraw or suspend funding. The Provider Agreement sets out arrangements for termination and withdrawal of funding in more detail. This is a contract between the setting and the Local Authority for delivering funded places and contains details of the Local Authority’s expectations of what providers should do to maintain their place in the Directory of Providers.

Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes: -

Where a maintained school is judged by Ofsted to be at a standard of ‘Needs Attention’ or below in Leadership and governance or safeguarding is ‘not met’, support will be overseen by the Local Authority Early Years Service: Quality, Inclusion, SEND & Safeguarding Team. The level of support will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may depend upon the issues raised in the Ofsted report, and any other support that is being provided to the school e.g., by other schools.

1.4 The Role of the Local Authority

The Childcare Acts 2006 and 2016 place a duty on all English Local Authorities to secure free early years provision for all eligible children in their area. The Acts stipulate the type and amount of provision and the age of children to benefit.

'Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities' is a legal framework which all Local Authorities must follow for the delivery of funded early years provision for eligible children.

Local authorities must secure availability of 570 hours of free provision over at least 38 weeks of the year for each child eligible for 2 Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds and all 3- and 4-year-olds in each 12-month period from the date at which the child's entitlement starts until the child reaches compulsory school age. This works out at 15 hours per week if spread over 38 weeks.

Local authorities must secure availability of 1,140 hours of free provision over at least 38 weeks for eligible children of working families aged 9 months, 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds in each 12-month period from the date at which the child's entitlement starts until the child reaches compulsory school age. This works out at 30 hours per week if spread over 38 weeks.

The entitlement can be delivered through a range of providers including private and voluntary sector providers, nursery schools and classes, school-run provision, independent schools, and childminders.

Wherever possible, the Local Authority will concentrate early education funding on the highest quality providers, only funding others where it is necessary to maintain sufficiency, continuity care and accessibility.

Warwickshire County Council administers the funding for all children receiving the early years entitlements within the Local Authority area. The funding is paid directly to providers, rather than parents, and is calculated on the number of hours each eligible child attends the setting.

Providers from all parts of the early years sector are funded on the basis of a single funding formula – the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). This is a government requirement, and must be 'participation led', which means the Local Authority funds providers based on how many children they have in the setting each term, and how many hours they attend.

A universal base rate must be used for all types of providers, although additional funding is available for Maintained Nursery Schools via a specific Government grant (Supplementary Funding).

In exceptional circumstances, to protect funds, Warwickshire County Council may be required to make a financial adjustment for a provider. In these situations, the Local Authority will contact the setting and confirm the arrangements in writing - for example, where information is received that supports concerns about financial sustainability or closure.

2 The Early Years Education and Childcare Entitlements

2.1 Determining Eligibility for the Entitlements

2.1.1 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement

Reference: A1.1 – A1.5 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds is the name for the entitlement for eligible families receiving some additional forms of government financial support, such as certain benefits or credits or those meeting other criteria as detailed at: [Help paying for childcare: Free education and childcare for 2 year olds if you get extra support - GOV.UK](#)

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, a child will be entitled to the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds funded entitlement when **both** of the following criteria are met: (1) from the term after the child has attained the age of two and (2) the child or parent meets the eligibility criteria, (either through a successful application or via an ECE check on the Provider Portal).

Local authorities are required to secure free places offering 570 hours a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year. This equates to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year. Children may stretch their entitlement over more than 38 weeks (and up to 52 weeks). This means taking fewer hours per week, subject to a maximum of 570 hours a year.

Full details of the government’s eligibility criteria for the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

Families can apply online for 15 hours 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement for families receiving some additional forms of government support at: [15 hours 2Help childcare funding for two-year-olds for families receiving some additional forms of government support - Warwickshire County Council](#) or a paper application is available if the parent does not have access to the internet and can be requested from 2help@warwickshire.gov.uk

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement funding (all dates are inclusive):

A child born between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:
1st January and 31st March	<i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following their 2nd birthday</i>
1st April and 31st August	<i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following their 2nd birthday</i>

1st September and 31st December	<i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following their 2nd birthday</i>
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2.1.2 Universal Entitlement - All 3- and 4-year-olds

Reference: A1.6 – A1.9 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, **all** 3- and 4-year-old children are eligible for the 15 hours Universal Entitlement from the start of the term after their 3rd birthday, until they reach compulsory school age.

Local Authorities are required to secure free places offering 570 hours a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year. This equates to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year. Children may stretch their entitlement over more than 38 weeks (and up to 52 weeks). This means taking fewer hours per week, subject to a maximum of 570 hours a year until the child reaches compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday or where the child is taking up a full-time school place in reception).

3- and 4-year-old children moving to England from another country can access their funded place on the same basis as any other 3- and 4-year-old child in the local authority area.

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds (all dates are inclusive):

A child born between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:
1st January and 31st March	<i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i>
1st April and 31st August	<i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i>
1st September and 31st December	<i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i>

There is **NO** application process required for the Universal Entitlement.

2.1.3 Working Parent Entitlements

Reference: A1.10 – A1.11, A1.16 – A1.21 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

2.1.3.1 3- and 4-year-old 15 hours Extended entitlement (30 Hours in total)

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, a child is entitled to an additional 15 hour entitlement for working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds (30 hours in total) from the term after both of the following criteria are met: (1) the child has attained the age of three and (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC, i.e., a valid eligibility code.

This equates to an additional 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year. Children may stretch their entitlement over more than 38 weeks (and up to 52 weeks). This means taking fewer hours per week, subject to a maximum of 570 hours, or a total of 1140 hours where both the Universal and Working Parent entitlements are claimed, a year until the child reaches compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday or where the child is taking up a full-time school place in reception).

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the 3- and 4-year-old 30 Hour Working Parent Entitlements (all dates are inclusive):

A child born between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:
<i>1st January and 31st March</i>	<i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i>
<i>1st April and 31st August</i>	<i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i>
<i>1st September and 31st December</i>	<i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age</i>

2.1.3.2 2-year-olds

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, a child is entitled to the 30-hour entitlement for working parents of 2-year-olds from the term after both of the following criteria are met: (1) the child has attained the age of two and (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC, i.e., a valid eligibility code.

This equates to 30 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year. Children may stretch their entitlement over more than 38 weeks (and up to 52 weeks). This means taking fewer hours per week, subject to a maximum of 1140 hours.

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the 2-year-old Working Parent Entitlements (all dates are inclusive):

A child born between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:
1st January and 31st March	<i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following their 2nd birthday</i>
1st April and 31st August	<i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following their 2nd birthday</i>
1st September and 31st December	<i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following their 2nd birthday</i>

There may be some circumstances where households meet the eligibility criteria for both the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement and the 2-year-old working parent entitlement. In these circumstances the first 15 funded hours should be provided under the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement, before the working parent hours are funded. Children eligible for both entitlements will be able to access 15 hours under the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement plus 15 hours under the working parent entitlement, until they become eligible for the 15 hours universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds and 15 hours working parent entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds if they meet the eligibility criteria. Therefore, households will not lose eligibility for their 15 hours funded early education, as is currently the case for the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement.

2.1.3.3 9 months old and above

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, a child is entitled to the 30-hour entitlement for working parents of children 9 months old and above from the term after both of the following criteria are met: (1) the child has turned 9 months old and (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC, i.e., a valid eligibility code.

This equates to 30 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year. Children may stretch their entitlement over more than 38 weeks (and up to 52 weeks). This means taking fewer hours per week, subject to a maximum of 1140 hours.

The following table shows when a child is eligible to receive the Working Parent Entitlements from the age of 9 months (all dates are inclusive):

A child turning 9 months old between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:
1st January and 31st March	<i>The start of the Summer Term (on or after 1st April) following the date of turning 9 months old</i>
1st April and 31st August	<i>The start of the Autumn Term (on or after 1st September) following the date of turning 9 months old</i>

1st September and 31st December	<i>The start of the Spring Term (on or after 1st January) following the date of turning 9 months old</i>
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Full details of the government’s eligibility criteria for the Working Parent Entitlements can be found in the separate **Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document**, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.1.3.4 Application Process for the Working Parent Entitlements

Reference: A1.13, A1.20 - A1.21 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

In order to receive the Working Parent Entitlements funding, the parent **MUST**:

- have applied through the HMRC’s website: [Childcare & Early Years Education | Best Start in Life](#)
- have a current confirmation of eligibility from HMRC via their Gateway account
- be issued with an 11-digit eligibility code starting with 50, to give to their childcare provider to verify eligibility. If a permanent code cannot be issued, parents must have a temporary code beginning with 11
- have a valid eligibility code for the term in which they want to start the working parent entitlement funding, provided that the eligibility code remains valid on:
 - 31 March to take up a place during the term beginning on or after 1 April
 - 31 August to take up a place during the term beginning on or after 1 September
 - 31 December to take up a place during the term beginning on or after 1 January
- ensure the eligibility code is renewed, as required by HMRC, usually every 3 months. The parent should be prompted by text or email from HMRC; however, providers should also prompt the parent prior to the validity end date

Where a parent requires further guidance, they should contact the Customer Interaction Centre at HMRC on 0300 123 4097.

Where the parent does not agree with the eligibility outcome, there is an appeal process available. The review and appeals process is managed by HMRC. Their complaints form is available at: [Complain about HMRC - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Local Authorities do not have any involvement in the application process for the working parent entitlements eligibility code.

Once the parent has been issued with an eligibility code, the process for parents and providers is as follows:

- The parent must give the details of the eligibility code to their early years provider together with their NI number and child's date of birth
- Written consent **MUST** be obtained from the parent(s) whose details are being checked, the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) should be completed or the provider's equivalent document and signed by the parent
- On receipt of an eligibility code from the parent the provider must validate the code using the Eligibility Checker on the Access Synergy Provider Portal to confirm the validity dates of the code before a start date for the working parent entitlement funding is agreed with the parent, preferably the term before funding will start
- The provider must make a note of the validity start date, end date and Grace Period end date to be aware of the expiry dates

Refer to the Termly Information Letter on the website at [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements) for details of the accepted eligibility codes for the term.

2.1.4 Working Parent Entitlements for children in Foster Care

Reference: A1.12 – A1.15 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

Children in foster care who have attained the relevant age are also eligible for the working parent entitlements, provided the foster parent is in paid work outside their fostering role, does not expect their adjusted net income to exceed £100,000, and the responsible local authority confirms it is satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan. The foster parent does not have to meet the minimum income requirement.

To make an application, foster carers should apply directly to the responsible Local Authority, who will allocate an eligibility code to the foster carer, as the Government Childcare Service will not be able to make the relevant checks. Where the local authority looking after the child is in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, the responsible local authority is the English local authority in whose area the child is currently living.

Where foster carers are unhappy about the decision made by the local authority with regard to eligibility, they should seek resolution through their social worker, or through the local authority complaints process. Warwickshire County Council complaints procedure can be found here: [Customer feedback and complaints - Warwickshire County Council](#)

Other than the application, reconfirmation process and the minimum income requirement, all other eligibility criteria and provision set out in Section 2.1.3 above apply to children in foster care taking up the working parent entitlements in the same way as they do to all other children.

Full details of the application process and the government's eligibility criteria for the Working Parent Entitlements for children in foster care can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.1.5 Working Parent Entitlements - The Grace Period

Reference: A1.22 – A1.30 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The Local Authority will continue to fund a place for an existing funded child where parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlements upon reconfirmation of the code, or do not reconfirm their eligibility code at the validity end date, until the end of a limited **Grace Period** as set out in the table below. The end date of the grace period is shown on the Eligibility Checker.

During the grace period they should continue to receive the working parent entitlement funding, as set out in Section 2.1.3 above.

If the parent has not been able to reconfirm their eligibility code before the end of the grace period, the funding will cease for the expanded or extended hours at the grace period end date, and they will not be funded for them in the following term. Information about parents that have entered the grace period will be identified from the Eligibility Checking Engine via the Access Synergy database and Provider Portal.

The Local Authority should complete an audit check on eligibility codes at 6 fixed points in the year, both at the start of the term and half-term across the year (in line with the dates as listed in the table below).

The Local Authority will send reminders to the provider when an eligibility code falls into the grace period asking them to remind parents to reconfirm their code before the end of the current term. This is to avoid parents and providers from losing their working parent entitlements funding in the following term.

The Local Authority should communicate the grace period (through providers) to parents who are found to be ineligible for the working parent entitlements at the audit check date, being aware of the importance of prompting providers to notify parents in good time.

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	27 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 Local Authority should consider extending the grace period set out above for a short time in very exceptional circumstances, if the parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment, for example, where the parent is a victim of domestic abuse or in other emergency situations.

Children should not start a new working parent entitlement place at a provider during the grace period. This includes:

- where a parent falls into their grace period before the child has started a place
- where a parent falls into their grace period whilst their child is in a place, and the parent seeks to move the child to a different provider

In some exceptional circumstances, that are outside of a parent's control, parents may need to move providers during the grace period. The Local Authority will use their discretion to allow the child to continue their working parent entitlement place in a new setting. Circumstances may include if the provider closes or receives an Ofsted inspection judgement of 'Leadership and governance requiring Urgent Improvement' or where Safeguarding is 'not met' or where the Local Authority withdraws funding, or the parent(s) moves home as a result of domestic abuse or other emergency situation.

A parent can take up a working parent entitlement place in their grace period if their eligibility code is valid on the termly deadline (31st August, 31st December, or 31st March), even if they fall out of eligibility in the period after the termly deadline but before a provider's term start date.

Where a child ceases to be a foster child and the parent has a special guardianship order or has adopted the child, the same guidance relating to the grace period applies.

Local Authorities should ensure that parents are aware that if they cease to meet the eligibility criteria and the grace period has expired, children aged 3 and 4 can continue to take up the 15-hour universal entitlement, provided they have not exceeded the number of hours as set out at Section 2.1.2.

If the parent has been taking up the free hours at more than one provider, the local authority should continue to fund 15 hours at the provider of the parent's choice.

Local Authorities should make parents aware of the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement and encourage them to check their eligibility for this entitlement. Falling out of eligibility for the working parent entitlement will not necessarily make a 2-year-old child eligible for the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement. Any child who has not previously been recorded as using the 15-hour 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement, must have their eligibility checked before they can receive funding for a 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds place.

2.2 Additional Premiums

2.2.1 Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding of £1.15 per hour from April 2026, paid termly based on the funded hours claimed, to providers who have children who are accessing the entitlements and meeting the eligibility criteria up to a maximum of 570 hours. EYPP will be paid on the first 15 hours, up to a total of 570 hours in a year, where a child is accessing any of the working parent entitlements.

For children who are eligible for EYPP by virtue of being looked after by a local authority, the local authority must fund the early years provider for 570 hours per year.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) provides additional funding to providers to support the quality of early education for eligible children taking up the funded entitlements.

Providers are able to use this extra funding to support each eligible child to improve outcomes for them. Detailed information for each child should be kept about what the funding was used for, how the decision was made to use it, and how outcomes for each child have been improved – Ofsted may ask providers about how they have supported eligible children when they inspect the setting.

The DfE fund local authorities for the funded places taken up in the local authority in which a setting is based. Therefore, in cases where a child who lives in one local authority attends a setting in another local authority, funding the EYPP for the child is the responsibility of the local authority in which the setting is based.

Full details of the government's eligibility criteria for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and how to claim the additional funding can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.2.2 Deprivation Factor (DF)

The Deprivation Factor (DF) is an additional premium of 68p per hour paid to the provider based on children living in a postcode that falls within the most deprived 30% of postcodes as determined by IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index). The DF is paid automatically to the provider.

If this has been added to the child's funding base rate for all funded hours claimed, 'DF' will show in the **Weightings** column next to the child's name on the Access Synergy Provider Portal.

Providers must use these funds to support children to improve their outcomes.

2.2.3 Disability Access Fund (DAF)

The DAF is in place to support disabled children's access to the entitlements for eligible children from 9 months, 2, 3 and 4-years-old.

DAF funds can be used, for example, to support providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity, be that for the child in question or for the benefit of all children attending the setting. Settings may want to use DAF funding to pay for staff training to help meet children's specific needs, resources and adjustments to support the individual child's needs.

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) supports eligible, disabled children's access to the entitlements.

Full details of the government's eligibility criteria for the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and how to claim can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

Four-year-olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding.

All early years providers who are eligible to receive funding for the early years entitlements, qualify to receive DAF payments if they have eligible children.

Local authorities must fund all settings providing a place for DAF eligible children at the current annual rate of at least £975 per child. The DAF is payable annually as a lump sum and will not be reduced if a child does not take up their full 15 hours entitlement.

Local authorities should distribute DAF funding in its entirety to providers, and DAF funding should not be offset against any other funding which the local authority may ordinarily be providing for children eligible for the DAF.

If a child is in receipt of the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds Funded Entitlement due to being in receipt of DLA, DAF will be paid automatically to the provider the child attends.

If a child eligible for the DAF is splitting their funded entitlement across two or more providers, the local authority will ask parents to nominate the main setting. This setting will receive the full DAF payment for the child.

If a child receiving DAF moves from one setting to another, the new setting is not eligible to receive DAF funding for this child until the anniversary of the first payment has passed. DAF funding received by the original setting will not be reclaimed. However, in this situation, and where local agreement can be reached, we encourage providers to transfer relevant resources or unspent funding to ensure continued support of the eligible child in their new setting.

When the child takes up the relevant entitlement for children aged 9 months up to 4 years, local authorities should issue DAF payments to providers as soon as possible. Where children are still eligible for the DAF, providers should receive successive payments annually until the child starts school. The successive payments will be made in the next payment run after the 12 month payment anniversary.

In cases where a child who lives in one local authority attends a setting in another local authority area, the local authority where the setting is based is responsible for funding the DAF for the child and eligibility checking.

2.3 Claiming the Funded Entitlements

2.3.1 Funding Rates

Reference: A4a, A4.1, A4.2, A4.3, A4.4, A4.6 & A4.10 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The 2026/2027 Early Education Funding rates are as follows:

Early Education Funding Rates	2026– 2027 £ - per hour
Funding Rate for 9 months to 2 years old – Working Parent Entitlement hours	10.96
Funding Rate for 2 Year Olds – 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds and Working Parent Entitlement hours	8.05
Funding rate for 3- & 4-year-olds -Universal and Working Parent (Extended) Entitlement hours	5.80
Maintained Nursery School Supplementary Funding paid for 3-&4-Year-Old Universal Entitlement Hours Only	5.47
Early Years Pupil Premium- allocated to Universal Hours for 3- & 4-year-olds, under 2's and 2-year-olds, up to a maximum of 15 hours per week	1.15

Deprivation Factor – allocated to all hours	0.68
Disability Access Fund – annual payment for eligible children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance	975.00

Providers will be informed in advance of any changes to these rates.

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations set out the framework for early years funding. These regulations are updated annually for each financial year.

To fund places, the Local Authority is required by legislation to use locally determined, transparent formulae to set the funding rates for all types of providers. Any proposed changes to the formulae must be consulted on locally.

For 2026/2027 the main requirements imposed on Local Authorities by the regulations are as follows:

- to pass-through a minimum of 97% of government funding to providers for each of the early years entitlements separately (note for 3- and 4-year-old entitlements, the pass-through rate is calculated together for the universal and working parent hours)
- to ensure that the total funding rate (base rate plus supplements if applicable) they pay to providers for the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement is at least equivalent to their total funding rate for the 2-year-old working parent entitlements
- to include a mandatory deprivation supplement for the 3- and 4-year-old entitlements in their local formula (the deprivation supplement is not mandatory for the working parent entitlements for children aged 9 months up to and including 2-years-old, or the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement)
- to restrict the total amount of planned value of funding supplements to a maximum of 12% of the total planned formula funding to providers for the early years entitlements (note for 3- and 4-year-old entitlements, the supplements cap is calculated together for the universal and working parent hours)
- to pay providers the Disability Access Fund in respect of their eligible children
- to establish a special educational needs inclusion fund for children with special educational needs taking up any of the entitlements for 9 months, 2-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-olds
- to pay providers the Early Years Pupil Premium in respect of their eligible children

- pay any early years providers who request it, for free entitlements, on a monthly basis. This will be the chosen method for the whole academic year and mid-year changes cannot be made.
- provide free school meals (FSM) for children who are registered pupils of a state funded school, who attend places both before and after lunch and who meet the FSM eligibility criteria. This requirement is distinct from the duty to secure a free place for those who meet some of the criteria also used for FSM, and Universal Infant Free Schools Meals (UIFSM) for infants who are registered pupils in maintained schools

2.3.2 Patterns of Payments

Reference: A4.9 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The Early Years Entitlements Funding is provided for a minimum of 38 weeks per year. In order to assist in your financial planning, the funding will always be paid as follows:

Autumn Term	14 weeks
Spring Term	11 weeks
Summer Term	13 weeks

This pattern may not always correspond to school term dates. A Termly Information letter will be sent out, prior to the end of each term, with all relevant dates and deadlines for the following term and can be found on the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements)

Funding will continue to be paid for specific inset days taken up to a total of 5 days per school year; however, it must be noted that **funding is paid for 38 weeks** per year and a school year is classed as **39 weeks including inset days.**

The Local Authority is required to secure a minimum of 38 weeks of pre-school education over the course of an academic year. Any phased induction should be in the best interests of the child and the family and should usually be completed within three weeks.

2.3.2.1 Early Years Providers (excluding Childminders)

Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) Providers, Academies and Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes are paid twice termly or monthly for those providers who have requested it.

Full details of the process can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.3.2.2 Childminders

Childminders are paid monthly.

Full details of the process can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.3.2.3 Childminders registered with a Childminder Agency

Reference: A4.11, A4.19 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The local authority will discuss and agree with each childminder or childcare provider registered with each agency whether funding is paid directly to childminders or is routed to the childminder or childcare provider through the agency. Payment will be made to the bank account nominated by the childminder.

Childminder Agencies must not retain a percentage of the funded entitlement payments for services supplied. A childminder can however expect to be charged separately for any support services they may access from the agency.

2.3.3 Funding Claims - Dates and Payment Dates

Full details of Headcount Dates set by the Department for Education, deadline dates for submissions and payment dates can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.3.4 Entering the Estimate and Headcount Claims

All funding claims for the Early Years Entitlements must be made using the Access Synergy Provider Portal.

This can be accessed using:

<https://wcc.synergy.hsc.accesscloud.com/synergyweb/Providers>

The Provider is solely responsible for submitting accurate details of children and claims on time as requested by the Local Authority. Failure to do so will result in payments to the Provider being delayed.

The Provider must have access to the internet and the relevant associated resources and equipment to complete funding claims, sufficiency, census returns, and other requests for information. All related communications are made using internet linked systems or email.

To ensure Providers are kept informed a Termly Information Letter will be sent via email at the end of each term which includes all key dates and deadlines needed to enter the Estimate hours and Headcount claim for the next term.

Full details of the Estimate and Headcount claims process can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

Full guidance on how to access and use the Access Synergy Provider Portal can be found in the FIS Synergy Online Provider Portal Guidance which is emailed to providers at the start of each term and can also be found on page 2 of the website at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers](#)

2.3.5 Payment Summary

The Access Synergy Provider Portal must be used to check your final Headcount **Summary** at the end of each term.

This can be accessed using:

<https://wcc.synergy.hsc.accesscloud.com/synergyweb/Providers>

The funding details on the Summary tab from the previous academic year are to be used for the setting's Indicative Budget information (see Section 2.3.6).

2.3.6 Indicative Budgets

Reference: A4.2 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

Historical payment information is supplied to enable providers to manage their financial planning and give an initial budget.

Providers can access this information via the Summary Tab in the Access Synergy Provider Portal which gives the actual funding amounts paid to the setting for the Summer, Autumn and Spring term in the previous year.

Providers will be able to access actual updated budget information on a termly basis once each term's Headcount is completed. This information will be notified via The Summary Tab for the current term.

2.3.7 Summer Term Sufficiency Return

The Local Authority collects funded entitlements place and vacancy information from funded Early Years providers in the Summer Term during the Headcount period. The submission deadline date will be notified in the Termly Information letter.

The return is completed by selecting the **Sufficiency Tab** on the Access Synergy Provider Portal: <https://wcc.synergy.hsc.accesscloud.com/synergyweb/Providers>

For details on how to complete the Sufficiency return please refer to the **How to Guide: Sufficiency Synergy Provider Portal** which can be found on page 2 of the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers](#)

By completing this information, the setting is giving Warwickshire County Council an accurate insight into place sufficiency in the local area. Being able to follow the trends in sufficiency helps Warwickshire County Council to locate areas of high demand and investigate the need to create additional early years places to ensure parents can access their funding entitlement or reduces risk of too many places in an area. Any information used for reporting purposes will be anonymised.

The Sufficiency return **MUST** be completed in line with the requirements in the Provider Agreement, there may be a delay to the final termly payment where a return is not completed.

2.3.8 Adjustment to Payments

Reference: A4.32 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The Early Years Entitlements funding will normally be paid for the whole term to the provider the child attends on Headcount Day.

For children attending a setting on Headcount Day (or within the week of the specified Headcount date), a claim should be made for the whole of the term. This will enable the local authority to fund another Warwickshire setting if the child has already taken sessions with them, where both settings agree. This must then be completed by entering an adjustment claim via the Adjustments tab on the Provider Portal.

Where a child leaves a setting after Headcount, providers should make arrangements between themselves to add adjustments to the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal for the proportion of funding to be transferred for the remainder of the term. There is no obligation to transfer funds, however where this is agreed between providers the process **must** be undertaken via the Synergy system Adjustment tab. Refer to Sections 2.3.9 to 2.3.12 below.

Adjustment claims should only be entered via the Adjustment tab for a child where a claim has already been made at Headcount, when both settings have agreed to make corresponding online adjustments.

Where a parent's contract is terminated by the provider, the provider is not entitled to retain the early years entitlements funding claimed from that date to the end of the term. An adjustment must be added, by the provider, for that proportion of the funding via the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal.

Note: It is Warwickshire's policy that funding claimed at Headcount **cannot** be transferred to another setting outside of Warwickshire.

Where an arrangement is made by a setting from another local authority to transfer funding to a Warwickshire setting, the setting will be paid at the funding rate of the other local authority. This may be higher or lower than the funding rate paid by Warwickshire and no additional funds can be paid by Warwickshire e.g., to adjust a lower hourly rate.

Adjustments to the Headcount claim must be made using the Online Adjustment process via the Access Synergy Provider Portal:

<https://wcc.synergy.hsc.accesscloud.com/synergyweb/Providers>

Full details of the Adjustment process can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.3.9 Child Leaving Before Headcount

Where a child leaves before the Headcount date, they **cannot** be included in the Headcount funding claim, and the Local Authority **cannot** pay for any hours they have already attended.

Please ensure that parents are aware of this, as they will be responsible for paying for these hours as outlined in the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF).

Providers **may** be able to receive this proportion of the term's funding by agreement from the setting who makes the Headcount claim. Both settings can enter an adjustment via the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal to change their claims for the proportion of funding to be transferred for the start of the term.

2.3.10 Child Leaving After Headcount

Where a parent terminates a child's place and a child leaves after the Headcount date, and the provider has made a funding claim for them, they are entitled to retain the funding for the remainder of the term.

If there is agreement, both settings must enter an adjustment via the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal to change their claims for the proportion of funding to be transferred for the remainder of the term. This should be arranged directly between the providers concerned as this is not mandatory.

Where a setting terminates a child's place and a child leaves after the Headcount date, and the provider has made a funding claim for them, they should enter an adjustment via the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal to reduce their claim by the number of weeks not attended.

2.3.11 Child Starting After Headcount

Where a child starts the setting after the Headcount date and has moved from another setting where funding has been claimed they will not normally be entitled to further funding until the following term. See Section 2.3.8.

If a child joins the setting after headcount for whom a claim has not been made at another setting in the current term and fits within the below specified categories, a claim must be made via the Adjustment process via the Access Synergy Provider Portal during the specified dates as notified in the Termly Information Letter.

Categories where adjustments may be made after the termly headcount:

- A house move into the area for the child or parent
- If the child's primary care giver changes resulting in the need to change setting

- Where a sibling moves school and the child needs to move to attend adjacent/nearby nursery provision
- Military family posted in / out of the area
- Child protection and safeguarding reasons
- Where the child has not previously taken up a place and is a new starter eligible for funding
- Family requirements change and funded hours need to be increased e.g., change in parents working patterns

Children who are eligible for the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds funding entitlement may start immediately at any point during the term if they meet the age criteria for the term.

Please ensure that all parents/guardians review and sign their Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) each term, which sets out the hours and patterns of attendance for the funded entitlement that the parent and provider have agreed.

The current PDF can be found on the website at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Education-Funding-Entitlements)

Please contact the Early Years Entitlements Team to discuss individual situations or for further advice.

Adjustment payments will be made for the number of weeks in the term from when the change or start date occurred.

2.3.12 Sharing of Funding

Every session attended by a child must be declared on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF). Where the free entitlement is accessed through a partnership of two providers or more, the child's attendance at all providers they attend must be shown on the PDF and their combined offer should be within the national minimum standards outlined in Section 2.

The Parent / Carer /Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) must show how the funding is going to be split over all providers and where the Universal entitlement or 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds is to be paid if the working parent entitlement for 2, 3- and 4-year-olds is being claimed.

Where a child attends two providers and receives in total more than the maximum funded entitlement, the Local Authority will apportion the amount of funding payable in respect of that child, based on the number of hours accessed at each setting. Parents will be liable to pay the provider(s) for any additional hours taken over and above the funded entitlement.

The Local Authority will review the PDFs in place at each provider prior to apportioning the amount of funding to each provider.

2.3.13 Child Attendance

Providers are responsible for ensuring parents understand the need to achieve regular, fully attended patterns of attendance, including the claimed funded entitlement hours. Settings should refer to their policy and always check and record why a child is absent and record any follow up action they have taken if they have any concerns about the absence.

Providers must be alert to patterns of absence that may indicate wider safeguarding concerns (please also refer to Section 4.2.2 Safeguarding).

Issues of poor attendance must be proactively managed by the provider and will be reviewed at audit. Failure to take robust action may result in loss of funding for the setting.

Providers can only claim for hours that are regularly attended by the children, and the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) must reflect the attendance and claim patterns for every child.

Warwickshire County Council will ensure providers are not penalised for short term absences of children, for example, sickness, arriving late or leaving early, or a family emergency through withdrawing funding, but use their discretion where absence is recurring or for extended periods, taking into account the reason for the absence and the impact on the provider. If absence is recurring or for extended periods, the Local Authority may reclaim funding. The provider's attendance/absence management policy will be considered and how effectively appropriate follow up action has been taken or support provided to the family, when considering whether funding should be reclaimed.

The provider should keep all correspondence and records relating to the management of poor attendance issues.

Providers will not be penalised through withdrawal of funding for short-term closures of a setting, for example, as a result of local or national elections, or circumstances beyond the provider's control, such as strike action or damage to the premises.

For Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes:

All absences must be recorded on SIMS or other similar system or paper registers to show a true reflection of the absence. Absence codes must be used in line with other school pupils e.g. H - holiday (agreed), I - illness (not medical or dental appointments). 'DfE Code X - 'non-statutory school aged absence - not required to be in school' must not be used to record absences on planned booked sessions and must only be used to record non-attendance for a child who is not booked to attend specific sessions, e.g., where a child attends for morning sessions only, the X code would be used to record attendance for this child for the afternoon session.

For further information for SIMS reporting see the WCC MIDAS team – 'SIMS Attendance' guidance available from your MIDAS Support and Training Team - 01926 414100. And School attendance guidance issued by the DfE Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

If further guidance on how attendance can affect funding is needed, please contact the Early Years Entitlements Team.

Further guidance on Warwickshire's Children Missing from Early Education can be found here: [Child Missing from Education \(safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk\)](http://safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk)

2.3.14 Cross-Border Arrangements

The Local Authority where the child is accessing the free place, rather than where they live, pays the early years funded entitlement. Therefore, providers in Warwickshire should claim for all eligible children on their register irrespective of where the children live. If a child also attends another setting which is not in Warwickshire, please ensure that no more than the maximum entitlements of 15 hours for 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds and Universal hours for 3 & 4 years old and the 30 hours working parent entitlement for children 9 months, 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds are claimed between the different authorities. These details should be clearly indicated on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) to avoid any potential over-payments.

Cross checking arrangements are always carried out with neighbouring local authorities to identify any potential funding issues.

Out of County Children Looked After (CLA) must be identified by the Provider. The CLA child's carer will need to show them evidence that the child is CLA or supply details of the child's social worker for the Early Years Entitlements Team to contact. It is requested that this information is sent via the Notes tab on the Access Synergy Provider Portal during the Headcount period. After the Headcount has been completed an email will be sent to providers requesting that the Access Synergy Provider Portal is checked, and that Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) has been allocated to all children as expected. The Early Years Entitlements Team will need to be contacted where there continues to be a query around allocations.

2.3.15 Early Years Census

Reference: A4.11 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

Local authorities should;

- ensure that providers are aware that they are required by legislation to accurately complete the school census or the early years census and submit their census returns to the local authority.

For all settings, **excluding Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes:**

the Early Years Census must be completed on a termly basis, in line with DfE deadlines and requirements. The information will be collected from the Actuals tab in the Funding section and the Census option in the My Details tab, on the Access Synergy Provider Portal each term.

For Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes: -

The Early Years Census information is collected using SIMS or other similar software for school nursery class places.

Where a school has **both** allocated maintained nursery class pupils and additional s27 nursery places Early Years Census information will be collected separately - maintained nursery class pupils via termly SIMS or other similar software uploads and s27 pupils via Synergy Early Years Census as specified by the DfE.

Full details of the Early Years Census process can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

2.3.16 Information for Parents

Copies of the information leaflets for parents and providers are available from the Early Years Entitlements Team on **01926 742233 / 01926 742218 / 01926 743039**

All leaflets included translated versions can be accessed via the website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/early-education-funding-entitlements)

Parents may also obtain information about the early education entitlements, and access help in choosing and applying for childcare, by going to the Warwickshire County Council website: [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs)

Information for parents regarding all government help with childcare costs can be found at: [Childcare & Early Years Education | Best Start in Life](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childcare-early-years-education)

2.3.17 Changes to Provider Details

The Local Authority and Ofsted must be informed in writing, of any changes to a registered providers details e.g., change of premises, ownership or payment details. Both **MUST** be informed immediately should the setting close.

Providers should give parents reasonable notice of any changes that may impact on the level of services provided.

A change in registration with Ofsted may mean that the old registration will close, and a new registration is opened. If this is the case, it may have an impact on funding and access to the Access Synergy Provider Portal. A new Provider Agreement and new access to the Access Synergy Provider Portal may be required. This will result in delays to payments if the Local Authority is not made aware of changes in advance.

Changes to bank details:

If there is a change to bank details, providers must contact the Warwickshire County Council, Exchequer Services Department, email: suppliermaintenance@warwickshire.gov.uk

Changes to setting contact details:

If there is a change to contact details, especially the email address or telephone number, please advise the following as soon as possible as most correspondence and information is sent electronically:

Early Years Funding at: eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk and earlyyearsadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk

Childminder Funding at: childminderfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk

Early Years Advisory Team at: earlyyearsadvisors@warwickshire.gov.uk

Exchequer Services at: suppliermaintenance@warwickshire.gov.uk

Ofsted at: 0300 123 1231

2.3.18 Deferred or Delayed Entry into Reception Year

Warwickshire County Council provides full time places in school reception classes for all children in the September following their fourth birthday. The Universal 3- and 4-year-olds and 3- and 4-year-old working parent entitlements funding as detailed in these requirements does not apply to children attending school reception classes of maintained schools, as they will be funded through school budgets and have different administrative arrangements.

Children attending a non-maintained (independent) school remain eligible to claim funding until they are of statutory school age, which is the term after their fifth birthday.

The Local Authority's (LA) policy is that pupils should be educated in the year group appropriate to their chronological age.

Some children may start in Reception later in the school year, due to medical issues or because they are a summer-born child and are not considered ready to start school in September. This is referred to as Deferred Entry. The child has a school place, in their correct academic cohort, but is not taking up the place until later in that academic year.

Early Years Entitlements funding may be claimed in the usual way in respect of a child whose parent/guardian has **formally** arranged with the Head Teacher and Local Authority to **defer** the child's entry into school, until they reach statutory school age, the term following their 5th birthday. Please note that this does not apply to a child who is being "phased in" during the Autumn Term at the beginning of the reception year, as Early Years funding cannot be claimed once a child is on the school's register.

Parents must still apply for a school place in line with the co-ordinated admission arrangements, and meet the standard Local Authority deadlines, so that an offer of a school place can be made **before** the request for deferred entry is agreed. Parents must be made aware of this requirement, and all enquiries about deferred entry should be referred to the School Admissions Service at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

In a small number of cases, it may be appropriate for parents to request that the child starts school a year later, so that the child is educated in the chronological year group below where they would normally be. This is referred to as Delayed Entry.

In September 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) wrote to all Local Authorities to advise that the School Admissions Code (2014) would be updated in respect of the admission of summer born children into schools. Requests for children who are due to start school can be made to the Local Authority, and those requests will be considered in line with Local Authority guidance. Requests for children to be educated outside of their year group who are already of compulsory school age will be considered on an individual basis, in line with the guidance. Warwickshire's 'Guidance Notes relating to the education of children outside of their chronological year group' can be found at [Deferring or delaying your child starting school – Warwickshire County Council](#)

Additional DfE guidance for parents on delayed entry considerations can be located, here: [Summer born children starting school: advice for parents - GOV.UK](#)

Parents need to make a formal request for delayed entry, along with an application for the child to start school, in line with the co-ordinated admission arrangements. Parents must be made aware of this requirement, and all enquiries about delayed entry should be referred to the School Admissions Service at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

There are significant implications for a child who is educated out of year group, and parents need to consider the long-term view of their child's educational needs. It is important to also be aware that children who are in receipt of Warwickshire's SEND Inclusion Grant are not eligible to receive the grant where they delay/defer their entry into school.

If providers are aware of potential deferred or delayed entry children, please refer to the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#) for childminders or settings, as the EYFS Profile must be completed for a child who has not started school by the final term of the year in which the child reaches age 5. If you require more information about returning

early years profile data, the Statutory Assessment Team can be contacted at: edassessmentteam@warwickshire.gov.uk

2.4 Charging

Reference: A1.31 – A1.52 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

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. There must not be any mandatory charges for parents in relation to the free hours. Government funding is not intended to cover the cost of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

Providers should be aware that they 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

Providers can also 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.

Local authorities should ensure that providers are mindful of the impact of additional charges on parents, especially the most disadvantaged.

Providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy clarifying alternative options to additional charges. This policy must offer reasonable alternatives that allow parents to access the entitlement for free, which may include allowing parents to supply their own items for example: food or nappies or waiving the cost of items.

Alternative options must not impede a child from accessing their free entitlement if their parents choose not to pay for meals, consumables or extra activities, and must not include requirements that significantly restrict this option, including requirements that any food provided by parents must be prepackaged, that any food provided by home must be delivered part way through a nursery day, or that children must be collected for meal times. Alternative options must be reasonable. Providers should make their policy clear in writing to parents prior to a child taking up a place.

In all cases, these chargeable extras must not be a condition of taking up a free place. All parents, including disadvantaged families, must have fair access to a free place.

Parents must be able to opt out of paying for chargeable extras, consumables or activities for their child. For activities and extra services, providers should be made aware that participation in any optional extra activity should be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. In these circumstances, local authorities should ensure that children who do not participate in optional activities continue to receive provision that complies with the EYFS.

The local authority 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 funded entitlement hours.

Children accessing any of the free entitlements must receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether their parents choose to pay for additional non funded hours, voluntary extra services, meals or consumables.

Providers must ensure that the free entitlements are available free of charge and therefore that providers do not charge parents for the following in connection with the entitlement hours:

- 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)
- the supply of or use of any materials, including, but not limited to, craft materials, crayons, paper, books, instruments, toys, or other equipment or learning resources that are necessary for the effective delivery of childcare
- business running costs, including, but not limited to, rent, mortgage payments, staff wages, cleaning materials, disposal of waste materials, insurance, or utility bills such as energy, gas or water
- non-refundable registration fees as a condition of taking up a child's free entitlement place
- non-refundable deposits as a condition of taking up a child's entitlement place
- additional support costs for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as part of their entitlement hours or as a condition of accessing an entitlements place. See section 1.6 regarding the Disability Access Fund and special educational needs (SEN) Inclusion Fund
- general charges, including but not limited to, non-itemised enrichment charges, specific teaching pedagogy as per registration such as Montessori, sustainability charges, business continuity charges, additional charges, enhanced ratios, hourly rates, or any other supplementary charges on top of the free hours
- any additional fees that are not specifically identified and itemised as being for chargeable extras.

The Local Authority must ensure that no other fees are being charged in relation to the free hours, for example for registration or uniform. Providers risk removal from the Directory of Providers and withdrawal of funding if they do so. Providers must also ensure that parents are not charged in advance for free places and then refunded at a later date (other than a

deposit). Providers can charge a refundable deposit to parents accessing the entitlements hours but should also consider if this would prevent take up, especially for disadvantaged families. The purpose of the deposit is to give providers certainty that a parent will take up the place. For parents just accessing the free entitlement hours, providers should refund the deposit in full to parents within a reasonable time scale and, except in exceptional circumstances, by the end of the first month of attendance. Providers are entitled to retain the deposit if parents subsequently do not take up the place they have reserved.

Providers should not charge a deposit where families are accessing a 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds place or where the provider is aware that the family are on a low income or not in employment.

Providers should ensure that invoices and receipts are itemised, and local authorities should work with providers to ensure their invoices break down separately into:

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

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. Invoices and receipts should include the provider's full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider. These must include the setting's name and address.

Where a child is accessing free entitlement hours only, settings must issue a zero charge invoice or receipt specifying the numbers / sessions of free hours accessed at £0.

Providers should publish on their website any fees for consumables, additional hours and services and make these easily available to parents to enable parents to understand the entitlements hours are available free of charge and to make an informed choice of provider or, where they do not have any website, on that of Warwickshire Family Information Services Childcare Provider Search site. They should set out, for each setting, the amounts charged for all the chargeable extras listed, as well as the pattern of hours that parents can take the entitlements:

- Activities Charges – for example: trips, forest school, optional lessons
- Additional private paid hours- for example: extra hours or sessions
- Food charges- for example: meals and snacks
- Non-food consumables charges - for example: nappies, wipes, sunscreen
- Opening times - for example: 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday

Childminders and providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time are exempt by Warwickshire County Council from publishing the costs of chargeable extras on a provider website or the Family Information Service website however it is encouraged to consider this as good practice and to aid clarity and transparency for parents alongside marketing of the settings offer.

Providers must adhere to the following terms, regardless of whether they charge any chargeable extras.

Providers must work with parents so that parents understand which hours and 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 the entitlement hours are convenient for parents' working hours.

All Providers, including school provision, should ensure that children are able to take up their free hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, **and there should be no artificial breaks in the entitlement hours**. For example, *a provider should not offer 10am to midday and 1pm to 3pm as entitlement hours and offer only private paid hours in between*.

Providers should be aware that the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) provides additional funding to providers to support the quality of early education for eligible children taking up early education and childcare entitlements. The Disability Access Fund (DAF) supports eligible, disabled children's access to the entitlements.

2.5 Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

Reference: A1.45 – A1.51 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

To ensure an inclusive approach, providers must have regard to the [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) and the Equality Act 2010 and ensure all staff members are aware of their duties under it.

Providers:

- must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. This can best be presented with an up to date Inclusion and SEND Policy that meets the requirements of EYFS, the Equality Act and the SEND Code of Practice and describes how the provider plans to meet the needs of all children, identify, assess and intervene with regard to SEN and disabilities. It will include how the provider works with families.
- are expected to identify a SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator). Where this is a school, this will be a qualified teacher. The SENDCo's will be clearly identified for all. They will receive training in their role and will be specific to the setting. The SENDCo will regularly review and evaluate the quality and breadth of the support offered or accessed for children with SEN or disabilities.

- will ensure all those who work with young children should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. This is best achieved through regular professional development for the SENDCo and all staff. It is expected that providers will attend at the majority of Early Year Inclusion and SEND Team SENDCo Surgeries. It is expected that the majority of EY practitioners will access Autism Education Trust "Making Sense of Autism".
- ensure there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision. The early years practitioner, working with the setting SENCO and the child's parents, will consider the child's needs as part of an individualised Assess Plan Do Review cycle. This graduated approach should be led and co-ordinated by the setting SENDCo working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting.
- ensure where assessment indicates that support from specialist services is required, it is important that children receive it as quickly as possible, and referrals are made in a timely manner.
- should recognise that parents know their children best, and it is important that all practitioners listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. Where a provider identifies a child as having SEND, they must work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children themselves.
- must maintain a record of children under their care as required under the EYFS framework. Such records about their children must be available to parents and they must include how the setting supports children with SEN and disabilities. This will show the individualised Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle throughout the graduated approach from Universal through to Specialist level.
- ensure information on Warwickshire SEND and Advice Service (SENDIAS) is available to all parents. Parents must also be signposted to the Local Authority's Local Offer.

To support providers in meeting their duties support and training will be available from the Early Years Inclusion and SEND team. Providers will be able to access general SEND support and advice when needed. Training is available on a variety of SEND issues delivered online and in person.

Providers can access support and guidance from the Early Years Inclusion and SEND Team for children with specific needs and/or disabilities on completion of a referral made with the agreement of the family. The Early Years Inclusion and SEND Team also administer SENIF (Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding) known in Warwickshire as Inclusion Grant. See Section 8 for contact details.

The Equality Act 2010 offers protection against discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and applies to statutory and non-statutory early years organisations.

The Equality Act 2010 requires providers to comply with two main duties:

- Not to treat a child, parent/carer or member of staff with a disability 'less favourably'
- To make 'reasonable adjustments' for those with disabilities

Local authorities must comply with the provisions of the Act in finding suitable provision for eligible disabled children.

Providers who have funded entitlement children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at their setting are entitled to receive an additional payment to support disabled children's access to funded sessions - the Disability Access Fund (DAF). Providers are responsible for identifying eligible children, and ensuring parents complete the relevant section on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF). Please see Section 2.2.3 for more information.

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is to support disabled children's access to all the entitlements. The funds could be used, for example, to support providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity, either for the child in question or for the benefit of children as a whole attending the setting.

Full details of the government's eligibility criteria for the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and how to claim can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

3 Flexibility

3.1 Delivering the Funded Entitlements

Reference: A2.1 – A2.17 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

In delivering the funded entitlements and to secure flexible delivery, Local Authorities should consult with parents and involve them in local assessments of demand for flexibility and act as a broker between overall parental demand in the area and provider capacity, seeking to provide the maximum possible flexibility for parents. Local Authorities should support providers to establish parental declaration forms which set out their hours and patterns of hours during which free places are offered. Strong partnership working should be encouraged between providers from all sectors (maintained schools, academies and free schools, private, voluntary and independent providers and childminders) to ensure the market offers maximum flexibility for parents to access the free entitlement hours to meet their needs and the needs of their child.

Providers can choose not to deliver free entitlement places, however, where free entitlement places are offered, Local Authorities should encourage providers to offer flexible packages of free entitlement hours, subject to the following standards which will enable children to access regular, high-quality provision, whilst maximising flexibility for parents and ensuring a degree of stability for providers. These standards are:

- No session longer than 10 hours
- No minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register)
- Not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- A maximum of 2 sites in a single day (separate provision on a school site is counted as one site)

In order to meet their statutory responsibilities, Local Authorities should ensure that children are able to take up their free hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, and avoid artificial breaks being created throughout the day, for example, over the lunch period, this includes school delivered provision.

Providers can 'stretch' the entitlement by offering fewer hours a week over more weeks of the year, where there is provider capacity and parental demand. This means they can deliver free entitlement places:

- Over up to 52 weeks of the year (settings must be open for the number of weeks to be stretched)
- Outside of maintained school term times
- At weekends

Further guidance on delivering a ‘stretched’ offer can be found in the separate [Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document](#), which accompanies these Requirements and on page 2 of the website at [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers](#)

Parents must be made aware that whilst they have a choice of provider, they may not always be offered the full entitlement at the times they want at their provider of choice. The free entitlement is to an early education place and does not guarantee a place at any one provider, or a particular pattern of provision.

Providers are encouraged to work with parents to ensure continuity of care for children and effective transitional arrangements to support children’s learning and wellbeing when enabling children to take up their free place at more than one provider or on more than one site.

Parents and providers must be made aware that there is no requirement that providers must be open for at least 38 weeks of the year, or that providers must offer all the free entitlements in order to receive funding to deliver free places.

The free entitlement hours cannot be compressed i.e.; a parent cannot take more than 15 or 30 hours per week over fewer than 38 weeks of the year. However, a parent can choose a provider that is open for fewer than 38 weeks of the year and therefore receive 15 or 30 hours a week during fewer weeks.

Providers should set out in writing how many free hours parents are receiving per day and per week, to ensure parents understand what free hours they are receiving over the calendar year from when their child first becomes eligible.

3.1.1 Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF)

Reference: A1.43 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

The Local Authority issues Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms each academic year to support Providers to establish parental declarations setting out their hours and patterns of hours during which the funded entitlement places are offered.

The Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) is an agreement between providers and parents to commit to the provider the number of hours they claim for the whole of the term and provide parental consent to make the claim.

In order to claim the early years entitlements funding, a Parent/Carer//Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) must be fully completed, signed and retained for each child by the provider.

Funding will be reclaimed from a provider where a provider does not complete a parental declaration form as evidence of a funding claim.

Early years provision is defined in section 20 of the 2006 Act as the provision of childcare. “Childcare”, as defined in section 18 of the 2006 Act, specifically excludes care provided for a child by a parent, stepparent, foster parent or other relative, or by a person who fosters the child privately or has parental responsibility for the child. **Early years provision by a childminder (either independently registered with Ofsted or registered with a childminder agency) for a related child does not count as childcare in legal terms. The early education funding entitlements cannot be claimed by childminders providing childcare for their own child or a related child, even if they are claiming for other children.**

The parent should be directed to [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](#) for full details of the funding entitlements **and** the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) terms and conditions of funding before signing the form.

A copy of the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF) can be found at [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Full details of how to complete the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

4 Quality

It is the government's intention that all children can take up their funded entitlement hours in a high-quality setting. Evidence shows that higher quality provision has greater developmental benefits for children, particularly for the most disadvantaged children, leading to better outcomes.

The Local Authority relies solely on the Ofsted inspection judgement of the provider or the childminder agency as the benchmark of quality.

4.1 Securing Quality for the Funded Entitlements

Reference: A3.1 – A3.21 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

To secure quality, Local Authorities are required by legislation to deliver funded places through either:

- early years providers other than a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register (including schools registered to take children under the age of 2 years old)
- a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- a childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted
- schools taking children aged 2 and over and which therefore are exempt from registration with Ofsted as early years providers

The Local Authority will fund 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds places for eligible children at any provider judged 'good' or 'outstanding' or where Leadership and governance is 'Expected standard' or above with safeguarding 'met' by Ofsted or at any childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency judged 'effective' by Ofsted if a parent wants their child to take up their funded entitlement place at that provider and the provider is willing to accept the Local Authority funding and any other Local Authority requirements, in line with the Provider Agreement.

The Local Authority will fund places for children eligible for the universal or working parent entitlements at any provider judged 'Requires Improvement' or better, or where Leadership and governance is 'Needs attention' or above with safeguarding 'met' by Ofsted or at any childminder or childcare provider registered with a childminder agency judged 'effective' by Ofsted if a parent wants their child to take up their funded entitlement place at that provider and the provider is willing to accept the Local Authority funding and any other Local Authority requirements, in line with the Provider Agreement.

The Local Authority will not usually fund 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds places for eligible children at providers in these categories but may choose to do so to ensure sufficiency of funded places where there is not sufficient accessible provision which is judged by Ofsted

as 'good', or 'outstanding' or where Leadership and governance is Needs Attention or below with safeguarding 'met' in the local area or to ensure continuity of care of children already receiving their early years funded entitlement.

The Local Authority will fund places for children eligible for a funded entitlement place at new providers registered with Ofsted until the provider's first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published or at a childminder or childcare provider registered with an agency until the agency's first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published if a parent wants their child to take up their funded entitlement place at that provider and the provider is willing to accept the Local Authority funding and any other Local Authority requirements, in line with the Provider Agreement.

Where the Local Authority agrees to fund Providers in an Inadequate setting or where Safeguarding is 'not met' or leadership and Governance needs Urgent improvement or for 2 Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds in a Requires Improvement setting or where Safeguarding is 'not met' or Leadership and governance Needs Attention, this will be on the understanding that the Provider will work closely with the Early Years Quality, Inclusion, SEND & Safeguarding Team (EYQISS team) at a targeted support level to address the issues raised in the Ofsted report. The EYQISS team will generate regular update reports to ensure that substantial progress is being made in addressing the identified areas. The Local Authority is under no obligation to maintain this arrangement and is doing so on the basis that progress is being made in addressing the identified areas.

The Local Authority will fund providers with exemptions from the Learning and Development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage if a parent wants their child to take up their funded entitlement place at an exempt provider and the provider is willing to accept the Local Authority funding and any other Local Authority requirements.

The Local Authority will fund individual children who have exemptions from the Learning and Development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Further information on exemptions for provider and individual children can be found at [Exemptions from the EYFS for providers and individual children](#).

The Local Authority will not fund Providers who do not actively promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of other faiths and beliefs, as detailed in the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities.

The Local Authority will 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 where Safeguarding is 'not met' and / or Leadership and governance requires 'Urgent Improvement' 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 of the childminder agency's

other providers in a comparable way to Ofsted-registered providers with equivalent judgements. Subject to this, it is for local authorities to determine an appropriate timeframe for withdrawing funding. When withdrawing funding, local authorities should consider the continuity of care for children who are already receiving their funded hours at a provider or with an agency registered childminder or childcare provider and Ofsted monitoring information about the provider or agency. When withdrawing funding from a childminder agency-registered provider, local authorities should also take account of parents' wishes.

Local authorities should take appropriate action to improve the quality of provision at a local authority maintained school where Leadership and governance has been judged as 'Needs Attention' or below by Ofsted.

The Local Authority will not withdraw funding from providers or from childminders or childcare providers registered with an agency until the provider's or childminder agency's Ofsted inspection judgement is published.

The Local Authority will not fund childminders or childcare providers registered with a childminder agency where the agency has indicated to the local authority that the childminder or childcare provider is not of the appropriate quality unless it is necessary to do so to ensure sufficiency of accessible places or support parental choice. Local authorities should also consider any information provided by a childminder agency about the childminder or childcare provider registered with them and the childminder's premises.

The Local Authority will consider any information published by Ofsted about a provider or childminder agency including the recent history about childcare provision by a particular provider or agency or childcare provision at a particular address. This may include, for example, where the local authority has concerns that a provider judged 'inadequate' Safeguarding is 'not met' or Leadership and governance requires 'Urgent Improvement' by Ofsted may have re-registered their setting with Ofsted to avoid making the quality improvements identified by Ofsted. This includes where a new legal structure is established by individuals.

4.2 Continuous Quality Improvement, Workforce Development and Safeguarding

4.2.1 Quality Improvement

Every child should have access to an Early Years setting where there is excellent learning and development adapted to the needs of each individual child and delivered by well qualified and well-trained practitioners. All parents should be confident that the setting their child attends is aspiring to deliver the best quality provision.

To ensure that children have the best start in life, they need high quality provision.

Further information for advice support and guidance on early years quality, standards and safeguarding is available on the early years web pages for Warwickshire County Council.

[Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life](#)

Settings can access training at other providers, including those delivering online training, if they wish.

4.2.2 Safeguarding

Every setting has a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage, under which they are required to demonstrate that they take the necessary steps to safeguard all children in their care. Please also refer to Section 2.3.13 Child Attendance and Warwickshire's Children Missing Early Years Education guidance.

Providers who receive Early Education Entitlement Funding must meet all the requirements laid down in the Provider Agreement that all settings must sign before they are entitled to access funding. This will include completion of an annual Safeguarding Audit. Failure to complete the Audit, or any other return that the Local Authority requires, may result in a delay to funding payments.

Providers must also comply with all safeguarding arrangements as laid down by Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory documents for Group and School Based Providers, and for Childminders.

Information may be shared with other agencies to ensure effective safeguarding and promote the welfare and protection of children.

4.2.3 Ofsted

Before being accepted by Warwickshire County Council onto the Directory of Providers and deemed eligible to claim the funding entitlements, settings must be registered with Ofsted. A childminder may register with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted, instead of holding an individual Ofsted registration.

The Local Authority will withdraw funding with immediate effect if it is notified by Ofsted or a Childminder Agency that they have suspended or terminated a provider's registration.

Providers **MUST** inform the Local Authority of the outcome of an Ofsted or Childminder Agency inspection **within 3 working days**. If the Ofsted inspection has resulted in a judgement where Safeguarding is 'not met' or where Leadership and Governance are judged as 'Urgent Improvement' or 'Not Effective' judgement, the Local Authority will not usually fund any places for children who have started at the setting after the publication of the Ofsted inspection report.

Following inspection, if a setting is judged by Ofsted to be less than 'Good' (pre April 2026), or where safeguarding is 'not met' or Leadership and governance is 'Needs Attention' or 'Urgent Improvement' it is a requirement that the setting works to improve the quality of their provision, by addressing the issues identified in the Ofsted inspection report. The

requirements may include, where applicable, participating in training or other quality improvement programmes.

Providers delivering 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds funded places must generally hold an Ofsted grading of Good or above or Leadership and governance is 'Expected standard' or above with safeguarding 'met', unless the Local Authority cannot otherwise secure sufficient local provision.

If a provider receives Safeguarding 'not met' or Leadership and governance 'Needs Attention' judgement or childminder agency receives a 'Not Effective' judgement, Warwickshire County Council will not usually fund any new 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds places at the setting, although new places for children eligible for the universal and working parent entitlements will continue to be funded, and existing funded 2Help Early Learning 2-year-olds may retain their place.

Funding will be withdrawn and alternative provision secured for new funded children if Ofsted publishes an inspection judgement of Safeguarding 'not met' or Leadership and governance needs Urgent Improvement (or 'Not Effective' in the case of a childminder agency). Warwickshire County Council may allow existing funded children to remain at the provision to maintain continuity of care and sufficiency, but each individual case will be considered separately. The Local Authority will not usually fund any new places in a setting that receives an Ofsted judgement of Safeguarding 'not met' or Leadership and governance needs Urgent Improvement (or 'Not Effective' in the case of a childminder agency).

Warwickshire County Council will adhere to the requirements of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance when deciding to withdraw or suspend funding.

4.3 Advice and Support for Settings

Where early years providers, including maintained nursery classes and schools, categorised by Ofsted as below 'Good' or Leadership and governance is 'Needs Attention' or below or safeguarding is 'not met' are delivering the funded entitlements, they must improve the quality of their provision, and complete actions identified in their Ofsted or Childminder Agency inspection report. This may include, where applicable, participation in training or other quality improvement programmes, alongside peer support from other settings.

The Local Authority currently offers support via an Early Years Adviser or Early Years Advisory Practitioner to providers who are judged less than 'Good' or where Leadership and governance is 'Needs Attention' or below and / or safeguarding is 'not met' by Ofsted. This support will focus on addressing the issues identified in the Ofsted report, which will form the basis for the setting action plan.

Support will also be available following a Business Health Check and Funding Audit by Early Years & Childcare Sustainability Officers where areas have been identified for development or actions are required to be completed by the setting.

A written record of visit will be sent to the setting following any support visits given.

Copies of all documents associated with the Business Health Check and Funding Audit can be found on the website at: [Early Years and Childcare Business Support – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/Early-Years-and-Childcare-Business-Support-Education-and-Early-Years-providers)

5 Local Directory of Providers

All Local Authorities are required to keep and maintain a Directory of Providers. Providers cannot offer funded places until they have been registered on this Directory.

2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds

To become eligible to register to offer 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-old funded places, providers must be based in Warwickshire and be one of the following:

- A Private, Voluntary or Independent early years setting registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- A school taking children aged 2 and over and therefore exempt from separate registration with Ofsted as an early years provider
- Independent School or Academy taking children aged two and over and which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider
- A Childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register (or registered with a Childminder Agency which is itself registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register)

All newly registered providers can normally offer 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds funded places until their first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published. When providers have received an Ofsted inspection, Warwickshire County Council will normally only fund eligible 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds places if the judgement is 'Good', 'Outstanding' or 'Expected Standard' or above in Leadership and governance with safeguarding 'met', although the Local Authority may sometimes allow 'Requires Improvement' or 'Needs Attention' in Leadership and governance with safeguarding 'met' providers to offer 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds funded places if sufficient local places cannot otherwise be secured or to maintain continuity of care.

Universal and Working Parent Entitlements

To become eligible to register to offer the universal and working parent entitlements funded places, providers must be based in Warwickshire and be one of the following:

- A Private, Voluntary, or Independent early years setting registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register (this includes schools offering places for under 2-year-olds that are registered separately with Ofsted)
- A school taking children aged 2 and over and therefore exempt from separate registration with Ofsted as early years providers
- Independent School or Academy taking children aged two and over and which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an Early Years Provider
- A Childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register (or registered with a Childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register)

All newly registered providers can normally offer funded places for children eligible for the universal and working parent entitlements until their first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published. When providers have received an Ofsted inspection, Warwickshire County Council will only fund children eligible for the universal and working parent entitlements if the judgement is at least 'Requires Improvement' (or 'Effective' in the case of a childminder agency) or 'Needs Attention' or above in Leadership and governance with safeguarding 'met'. Where this is a school setting and no overall judgement is given, this will be based on the early years grading of the schools published Ofsted report.

Prior to acceptance onto the Directory of Providers, the owner / person responsible for the setting (or childminder) must make contact with their Warwickshire County Council Early Years and Childcare Sustainability Officer to arrange completion of the current Provider Agreement. Providers will then be issued with the full Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding.

5.1 Provider Agreement and Local Authority Requirements

5.1.1 Provider Agreement

All providers registered to claim funding for the early years funding entitlement places must sign to agree to the annual Provider Agreement, **unless** they are a Maintained Nursery School or a school with a maintained nursery class with an allocated **PAN*** for 2, 3- and 4-year-olds, and not providing any additional hours or places paid for separately by parents.

For Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes: -

*Published Admission Number (PAN) - All maintained nursery schools and classes have a Published Admission Number (PAN). This number is allocated by the Local Authority. Schools must ensure they do not exceed their PAN when claiming early education funding for maintained places. If there is demand at the school for additional early years places, then the school can consider creating these via a governor run (s27) nursery.

This agreement is reviewed and reissued annually each academic year. All providers must have regard to the current ['Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities'](#) and follow all Department for Education requirements.

For existing settings on the Directory of Providers:

The annual Provider Agreement will be sent electronically from DocuSign EU, usually at the end of the Summer Term or in line with updates to the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities issued by the Department for Education.

For new settings being added to the Directory of Providers:

To join the Directory of Providers a Provider Agreement must be requested and completed prior to offering places to parents.

Providers **MUST** have adequate equipment to access the internet as all funding claims and communications are made via the internet and email.

A copy of the Provider Agreement can be found on the website at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers](#)

Full details of how to complete and return the Provider Agreement can be found in the separate Guidance for Early Years Entitlements Funding document, which accompanies these Requirements.

5.1.2 Local Authority Requirements

The Local Authority is required by legislation to secure information, advice and training for the following childcare providers:

- Those registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register who are judged less than ‘Good’ or Leadership and Governance is below Expected Standard with safeguarding ‘met’ or ‘not met’ by Ofsted in their most recent inspection report
- Newly registered providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register who have not yet had an inspection report published

Information, advice and training must include the following:

- Meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Effective safeguarding and child protection

The Local Authority currently offers support via the Early Years Quality, Inclusion, SEND & Safeguarding Team to settings who are judged less than ‘Good’ or Leadership and Governance are below Expected Standard with safeguarding ‘met’ or ‘not met’ by Ofsted.

The Local Authority will undertake Business Health Checks and Funding Audits conducted by Early Years and Childcare Sustainability Officers to ensure that providers are meeting the requirements laid down in the Provider Agreement.

These requirements include:

- The Early Years Entitlements funded places are delivered completely free of charge to parents
- Funding provided is used properly and in accordance with any local authority arrangements made with providers
- Providers receiving Early Education funding offer free places in accordance with the [‘Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities’](#)

Please see Section 5.6 for details of Audit Requirements.

5.2 Withdrawal from Delivering the Funded Entitlements

Where a provider (***other than maintained nursery schools or classes**) chooses to withdraw from delivering the funded entitlements, or closes, they should inform the parents and the local authority in writing, giving where possible at least 3 months / one term’s notice to enable parents to make alternative arrangements.

The person(s) responsible for the setting will be invoiced if an overpayment of funding occurs when a setting closes or withdraws from the directory of funded providers.

The setting will be removed from the Directory of Providers by the Local Authority.

*Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes must contact the local authority to discuss any place change requirements.

5.3 Rejection or Removal from the Directory

If a provider (*other than Maintained Nursery Schools or Classes) fails to meet any of the conditions that Warwickshire County Council has set, in line with Statutory Guidance, the setting may be removed from the Directory. The provider may be required to repay the whole or part of any funding that has been paid in respect of funded places. If removed from the Directory of Providers, the setting will no longer be eligible to claim for the funded entitlement places.

Rejection or removal from the local Directory of Providers **will** occur if:

- The local authority is notified by Ofsted that they have suspended or terminated a Provider’s registration
- Any finding by Ofsted or any other agency, including Warwickshire County Council, concludes that children are not adequately safeguarded by the Provider and, as such, children are being placed at risk of harm.

- The Provider receives a second consecutive Inadequate (or equivalent) and / or 'Needs attention' or below in Leadership and governance and / or safeguarding is 'not met' Ofsted inspection judgement or a childminder agency receives a second 'Not Effective' judgement.

Rejection or removal from the local Directory of Providers may occur if:

- The setting receives a 'Needs attention' or below in Leadership and governance and / or safeguarding is 'not met' Ofsted judgement and does not make significant progress in working towards improved quality with an agreed action plan. This must address the required improvements as identified in the provider's Ofsted inspection report
- The setting fails to comply with the conditions of Warwickshire County Council's Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding

Any decision regarding refusal or removal from the Directory will be made in writing and the provider will be given the date by which an application to appeal against the decision must be made.

Should the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, or any other competent authority, recommend that Warwickshire County Council makes a compensatory payment to any individual or organisation as a consequence of acts or omissions by a Provider which are in breach of the Provider Agreement, then Warwickshire County Council shall recover all such monies payable from the Provider.

5.4 Appeals Procedure

Providers wishing to appeal against the decision to be removed from the Directory of Providers should:

- Write to the Early Years Entitlements Team (which will have provided a written explanation of the reason for removal from the Directory), clearly stating the grounds for having the decision re-considered. Providers should take into account the requirements of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance when considering this step
- If the original decision is upheld, the provider may then write to the Director of Education, Warwickshire County Council, who will review the case

No further appeals are available, but providers have the option to write to the Local Government Ombudsman if they believe their case has not been correctly considered

The address for the Local Ombudsman is:

Local Government and Social Care
Ombudsman
PO BOX 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

5.5 Financial Management Guidance

All providers in receipt of the Early Years Entitlements funding must ensure that they have robust financial procedures in place to ensure that payments for free places are administered appropriately.

Financial guidance from Warwickshire County Council can be found on the website at: [Early Years and Childcare Business Support – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://warwickshire.gov.uk)

The website also includes a number of financial controls that are essential tools to help provide a degree of financial security from the misappropriation of money from the business and sets out how employees can protect themselves from allegations of theft or impropriety.

To ensure that there are robust financial management procedures in place, officers from the Early Years Sufficiency & Entitlements Team will conduct regular Business Health Checks and Audits. A copy of the Business Health Check and Audit template can be found on the website at: [Early Years and Childcare Business Support – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://warwickshire.gov.uk)

5.6 Audit Requirements

The Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities places a duty on the local authority to ensure:

- early education places are delivered completely free of charge to parents
- early education places are provided flexibly in a pattern which should meet the needs of parents
- that the funding provided is used properly and in accordance with any arrangements made with providers
- that providers meet the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs
- effective safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of the children for whom the early education is provided
- that providers actively promote fundamental British values
- that providers take any measures identified in a report from Ofsted or Childminder Agency to improve the overall effectiveness of the provision
- there are effective administration arrangements

Warwickshire County Council will audit providers on a regular basis, in conjunction with a Business Health Check, to monitor the above requirements. The Local Authority may also audit where a concern or complaint has been received, or where additional support

may be required – e.g., if there is a new manager or owner, or the setting appears to be in financial difficulties. Settings must agree to these visits as part of the Provider Agreement.

Please visit the website at [Early Years and Childcare Business Support – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Early_Years_and_Childcare_Business_Support_Education_and_Early_Years_providers) for clarification on the information that will be requested as part of the audit process.

The Local Authority will need to be satisfied that the required paperwork has been completed correctly, the funding claim has been made in accordance with the instructions given by the Early Years, Sufficiency and Entitlements Team and that the setting complies with the Provider Agreement and Statutory Guidance.

Guidance will be given at the time of the health check and audit, or on request, to support providers if they are not sure of the correct procedures or if it is found that they are not administering the funding correctly. Guidance may be in the form of email / phone support, in person visit, online meeting or by signposting to written guidance.

Particular attention is given to:

- The number of hours claimed on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF), that all the relevant sections are completed and signed, and that it corresponds to the 'Actual' funding claim made and the setting's attendance records
- Children's attendance, which must match the hours claimed for by the provider
- The funded place being given completely free at the point of delivery, with no mandatory or 'top up' fees charged.
- Invoices issued to parents/guardians must clearly state the number of free hours delivered and provide a breakdown of any additional private paid hours, food charges, non-food consumables charges or activities charges the parent has opted to access.

Following the health check and audit, a report with the outcome, detailing any actions, will be sent. The provider will be required to make any necessary changes identified as actions to meet the requirements of funding within the time scale specified.

The Local Authority may need to undertake further visits to confirm that the requirements of funding are being met.

Where actions following the health check and audit remain outstanding, the Local Authority may review the provider's ability to offer funded places and future funding could be at risk.

In such instances, written contact will be made notifying the provider of this intent.

The Early Years Entitlements funding payments may be suspended if a setting does not take reasonable steps to comply with any changes required by the Local Authority.

The provider must ensure that the following information is retained for 7 years (6 years plus current year):

- Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms (PDFs)

- Actual session reports – Synergy system
- Registers or records of attendance
- Invoices and / or £0 Charge forms
- Copies of receipts

5.7 Additional Requirements

The additional conditions that providers must meet are as follows:

- Settings must ensure that standard Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms (PDF) are **fully** completed for every child eligible to claim funding prior to making the funding claim. Only one PDF needs to be completed each academic year and this form should be updated and amended termly as necessary

Parental Contributions and Charges:

- Warwickshire County Council must ensure that the funded entitlement is completely free at the point of delivery – providers **MUST NOT** charge any fees in respect of the funded entitlement. Any charges made for additional services such as additional private paid hours, food, non-food consumables and activities must be clearly listed in writing. The setting should have a policy which details the ‘reasonable’ alternative options available to parents and how the setting would respond should a parent choose not to pay. Providers must also ensure that parents are not charged in advance for funded places and then refunded at a later date (other than a deposit, which must be refunded to the parent within a reasonable time scale and, except in exceptional circumstances, by the end of the first month of attendance)
- Providers can charge for additional services over and above the funded hours and the level of such fees should be a private matter for agreement between the provider and the parent. However, parents must not be required or expected to take up additional services to access a funded place. Arrangements for charging for additional services must be clear and transparent, including itemised charges for additional private paid for hours, food, non-food consumables and activities.
- As a condition of receiving the Early Years Entitlements funding all settings will need to comply with all auditing and monitoring requirements for children accessing funding. This will include the requirement to:
 - Accurately complete and submit online 3 headcount forms per academic year using the Access Synergy Provider Portal (or any replacement Warwickshire County Council system)
 - Accurately complete the online sufficiency return in the Summer Term each year using the Access Synergy Provider Portal (or any replacement Warwickshire County Council system)

- Accurately complete and submit online the Department for Education (DfE) Early Years Census Information using the Access Synergy Provider Portal (or any replacement Warwickshire County Council system)
- Accurately complete and return any other audit or monitoring information required by Warwickshire County Council or the Department for Education in relation to the Early Years Entitlements funding

Please note that all forms must be completed online, as advised in termly communications. Where a provider does not complete all required forms and meet the specified deadlines funding may be delayed or withdrawn.

SUMMARY

All of the requirements detailed in this document and the Provider Agreement **must** be met. They have been introduced to ensure that funding is spent in accordance with the 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' and to meet the financial requirements of Warwickshire County Council.

Where a setting fails to meet these requirements, Warwickshire County Council will take action which may result in the withdrawal of funding.

6 Government Help with Childcare Costs

All information about government help with childcare costs, including the Early Years Entitlements, can be found at [Childcare & Early Years Education - Best Start in Life](#)

6.1 Tax Free Childcare

Working parents are able to apply for Tax-Free Childcare through the digital childcare service, [Tax-Free Childcare | Best Start in Life](#). For every £8 parents pay into their childcare account, the Government will add an extra £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year, or £4,000 per year, if the child is disabled. Parents can then use these funds to pay for registered childcare outside of the funded entitlements.

The eligibility criteria for Tax-Free Childcare are broadly aligned with the working parent entitlements funding. The main differences are that Tax-Free Childcare is available for children 11 or younger, or 16 or younger if disabled, and is not available to parents in receipt of, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers.

As part of their childcare service application, parents in receipt of Universal Credit or childcare vouchers can choose whether they want to keep these benefits and apply for the working parent entitlement only or apply for Tax-Free Childcare as well as the working parent entitlement.

Parents can use Tax-Free Childcare alongside the working parent entitlement to cover additional childcare costs, e.g., during school holidays.

Many parents are not aware of the benefits of Tax-Free Childcare, and Warwickshire County Council encourages providers to promote the scheme to parents - this additional funding can help to make the business more sustainable financially, because parents are getting help with their childcare fees. This makes it easier for settings to charge a realistic market rate for their services.

Childcare providers need to sign-up to the childcare service in order to receive Tax-Free Childcare payments using the Childcare Service at [Tax-Free Childcare | Best Start in Life](#). All providers registered with a regulator (e.g. Ofsted) will have received an invitation to apply, containing the information they need to sign up.

Providers who need assistance with the sign-up process should contact the digital childcare service helpline on 0300 123 4097.

6.2 Universal Credit for Childcare

Eligible working parents on Universal Credit are now able to receive even more financial help with their childcare costs for children under 17. This can be up to the maximum amount of £1071.09 per month for 1 child or up to £ 1,836.16 per month for 2 or more children. Parent(s), and any partner, must be in paid work, or due to start work in the next month, and claiming Universal Credit.

Universal Credit for Childcare is for working families claiming Universal Credit, in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales:

- With children under 17
- Up to 85% of eligible childcare costs
- Who aren't receiving Tax-Free Childcare

And can be used to help pay:

- Registered childminders, nurseries, and nannies
- Registered after-school clubs and playschemes
- Registered schools
- Home care workers working for a registered home care agency

Parents can find out more information about both Tax-Free Childcare and Universal Credit for Childcare at [Childcare & Early Years Education | Best Start in Life](#)

6.3 Wraparound Care

Wraparound childcare is *childcare that wraps around the conventional school day*, offering before and after school childcare for primary school aged children in England during term time, such as breakfast clubs and regular afterschool provision that run until 6pm or later. Wraparound childcare should be available every school day outside of regular school hours and is aimed at helping parents access more childcare and work the hours they want to.

Wraparound childcare is different from out-of-school activities, or school clubs, which are less frequent and can be a one-off activity.

From September 2024, parents can expect to see an increase in the number of wraparound childcare places available across the country with the start of a two-year national programme of wraparound childcare support to enable schools and childcare providers to set up wraparound childcare provision either side of the school day, so that parents of school-age children can access childcare in their local area from 8am – 6pm, with the expectation that by September 2026, parents who need it have access to wraparound care, either from their school or from another provider in their local area.

Further information is available from: [Education Hub: Wraparound Childcare](#)

7 Frequently Asked Questions

When can a child access a funded place? Section 2

- 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds places: eligible 2-year-old children are funded from the start of the following term after their second birthday until they are eligible for the 3- and 4-year-old Universal Entitlement
- Universal Entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds: all children are funded from the start of the following term after their third birthday; all children are entitled to up to six terms of funded early education before reaching statutory school age (the first term following their fifth birthday)
- Working Parent Entitlements: eligible children are funded from the start of the following term after they reach the age of 9 months until they reach statutory school age (the first term following their fifth birthday).
- Depending on local arrangements for admission to school, many children start full time education in school reception classes before reaching compulsory school age
- The start date of each term is on or after:
 - Autumn term - 1st September
 - Spring term - 1st January
 - Summer term - 1st April

What is the minimum funded early education entitlement? Section 2

- The 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds funded entitlement with an EY Voucher Code, is for up to 570 hours per year delivered over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (equating to 15 hours a week)
- Where a child is eligible for both the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds and the working parent entitlement Expanded hours with an eligibility code, they are entitled to 1140 hours per year (equating to 30 hours per week)
- The 3- and 4-year-old Universal funded entitlement is for up to 570 hours per year delivered over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (equating to 15 hours a week) and up to 1140 hours funding per year over a minimum of 38 weeks if the working parent Extended hours with an eligibility code is used (equating to 30 hours per week)
- The Working Parent (Expanded) Entitlement with an eligibility code, for children aged 9 months to the term in which they turn 3 years old is for up to 1140 hours per year delivered over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (equating to 30 hours a week)
- The funded entitlement is a guarantee of a funded place, but it does not offer a guarantee of a place at any one specific provider or to a particular pattern of provision
- Parents may need to contact more than one provider to obtain the offer that meets their particular circumstances.

What if providers are not open for the full 38 weeks?

- A parent can choose a provider that is open for fewer than 38 weeks of the year and receive 15 or 30 hours per week during fewer weeks
- The funded entitlement hours cannot be compressed, i.e., a parent cannot take more than 15 or 30 hours per week over fewer than 38 weeks of the year.

Does it matter which Local Authority the child is resident in?

- All Local Authorities have a duty to provide sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for the Universal 3- and 4-year-olds entitlement, the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement and the Working Parent Entitlements
- Local Authorities receive funding for the number of children attending funded Early Entitlement places within their area, regardless of where the children live
- No child should be refused a funded place based on where they live and the Local Authority in whose area the setting is situated will receive and administer the funding.

Will parents be expected to make a financial contribution towards their child's funded early education place? Section 2.5

- Parents cannot be required to contribute to the cost of the basic funded entitlement but may be charged fees for meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. Parents must be able to opt out of these charges
- Parents should be made aware of these charges in advance of their child taking up a funded place and given a choice as to which, if any, they wish to purchase
- Providers must not levy any fee in respect of the funded entitlement, nor should they charge parents fees in advance for their entitlement to be refunded later (other than a deposit to reserve a place, which must be refunded within a reasonable time scale)
- All invoices for parents must be itemised and clearly show the number of funded entitlement hours they have received completely free, and additional private paid hours, food charges, consumables and activities charges should be shown separately.

Do parents have a right to a place with a particular provider?

- The right to a funded early education place is for a funded place in the local area, not the right to a funded place with a particular provider or for a specific session or pattern of attendance.

What happens to the early years entitlements funding if a child moves from one provider to another during the course of a term? Sections 2.3.8 to 2.3.12

- Normally the setting where the child is attending during headcount week receives the funding for the whole of the term
- If there is agreement to pass over a portion of the funding between settings, both settings must enter an adjustment via the Adjustment tab on the Provider Portal to change their claims for the proportion of funding to be transferred for the remainder of the term. This should be arranged directly between the providers concerned as this is not mandatory
- Adjustments to payments for the early entitlements funding will only be made in exceptional circumstances as outlined in Section 2.3.8 of the Requirements of Early Years Entitlements Funding
- Providers should use Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Forms, which set out the hours and patterns of access to the funded entitlement that the parent and provider have agreed to, usually on a termly basis. The Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration

Form can be found on the website at: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers](#)

What happens if a child attends sessions at more than one provider?

- Parents should detail the hours and pattern of attendance for all settings their child attends on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF).
- Where a child attends two providers and receives in total more than the minimum funded entitlement, if a local agreement cannot be made on how the funding will be allocated, the Local Authority will apportion the amount of funding payable in respect of that child, based on the number of hours accessed at each provision on a pro-rata basis. The PDF will be reviewed in this situation.

Can parents receive the early entitlements funding if their child attends both a School Nursery and Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) provider?

- The same rules apply to the Maintained and Academy Nursery Classes, Maintained Nursery Schools, and PVI sector. Parents should detail the hours and pattern of attendance for all settings their child attends on the Parent/Carer/Guardian Declaration Form (PDF).
- If a child attends two providers and receives in total more than the minimum funded entitlement, if a local agreement cannot be made on how the funding will be allocated, the Local Authority will apportion the amount of funding payable in respect of that child based on the number of funded hours accessed at each provision on a pro-rata basis. The PDF will be reviewed in this situation.

How is funding for the provision of the early years entitlements places allocated to Local Authorities?

- Funding is provided through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is a ring-fenced grant provided to Local Authorities to fund educational provision in all types of providers. This includes Private, Voluntary and Independent providers offering the funded early years entitlements
- The Warwickshire Schools Forum approves how the DSG is allocated, and the Early Years sector has representatives who sit on this body. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient funded places for the Universal 3- and 4-year-olds entitlement, the 2Help Early Learning for 2-year-old entitlement and the Working Parent Entitlements
- Local Authorities are responsible for determining the rate at which providers will be funded for delivering the funded entitlements and the arrangements for making associated payments in line with the statutory guidance.
- The Warwickshire Schools Forum and the Early Years Partnership Working Group review and approve the level of funding rates for early years providers, based on the Department for Education's guidance.

8 Where to Get Help and Useful Contacts

Early Years, Sufficiency & Entitlements Team
Shire Hall
Market Place
Warwick CV34 4RL

Website: [Early Years and Childcare Providers – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare-providers-education-and-early-years-providers)

Mandy Latham

Strategy Manager for Early Years, Sufficiency and Entitlements Tel: 01926 742216
Email: mandylatham@warwickshire.gov.uk

Early Years & Childcare Business Support
Early Years Sufficiency & Entitlements Team
Email: earlyyearsadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk

Early Years Entitlements Funding Enquiries

PVI, Academies, Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes
Tel: 01926 742233 and 01926 746992
Email: eyfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/early-education-funding-entitlements-education-and-early-years-providers)

Childminder Funding Enquiries

Tel: 01926 743039
Email: childminderfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website: [Early Education Funding Entitlements – Education and Early Years providers \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/early-education-funding-entitlements-education-and-early-years-providers)

2Help, Early Learning for 2-year-olds Funding Application Enquiries

Tel: 01926 742218
Email: 2help@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website: [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs-warwickshire-county-council)

Early Years & Childcare Sustainability and Business Support Enquiries

Email: earlyyears@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website: [Early Years & Childcare Business Support](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/early-years-childcare-business-support)

Early Years Advisors

Tel: 01926 742547
Email: earlyyearsadvisors@warwickshire.gov.uk

Early Years SEND and Inclusion Team (formerly IDS)

Tel: 01926 413737 (option 6) or 01926 413 777
Email: eyinclusionandsend@warwickshire.gov.uk



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Tel: 0800 408 1558 or 01926 742274

Email: fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

Department for Education

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HMRC

Apply for the working parent eligibility code and Tax-Free Childcare – [Childcare & Early Years Education | Best Start in Life](#)

Customer Care Line: 0300 123 4097



www.warwickshire.gov.uk

[Help with childcare costs: Early Years and childcare entitlements in Warwickshire](#)