



FUNDED EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENT: PARENT AGREEMENT GUIDANCE NOTES

CHILDCARE PROVIDERS:

PARENT AGREEMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED FOR ALL FUNDING CLAIMS. YOU SHOULD PROVIDE THE PARENT AGREEMENT FOR COMPLETION PRIOR TO THE END OF THE PREVIOUS TERM AND ENSURE PARENTS UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION IN THESE GUIDANCE NOTES AND WHERE NECESSARY EXPLAIN THESE VERBALLY TO THEM AND/OR SUPPORT THEM TO COMPLETE THE FORM.

PARENTS/CARERS:

The Parent Agreement Form is a declaration of what Entitlements you will be taking up, and what optional extras you have agreed to pay your provider. It is important your Parent Agreement is kept up to date and accurate. By signing this Parent Agreement your child will receive up to 15 or 30 (where eligible) hours per week of funded early years provision, these hours are often referred to as Early Years Entitlements. These hours can be taken up at the setting(s) of your choice.

Please note:

Early Years Entitlements can only be claimed up to a maximum of **10 hours** in any given day and taken across a **maximum of 2 settings** in the same day.

Some childcare providers may allow for these hours to be spread over more than 38 weeks; this is known as **stretched funding**. If you choose to “stretch” your funding this would result in a lower number of funded hours each week, but they would be stretched over a longer period, resulting in the same number of hours received across the year.

The childcare/early education offer is not intended to cover the costs of meals, consumables (such as nappies or sun cream), additional hours or additional activities (such as trips). Providers may charge a fee for these additions. If you choose to pay for these it is an arrangement between you and the childcare provider. However, you must not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a funded place and must be offered alternative options.

Please speak to your childcare provider for information about their funded offer.

What are Early Years Entitlement hours and how do I know what I am eligible for?

Information on childcare support, eligibility criteria and how to apply, can be found via the Best Start in Life website [Childcare & Early Years Education - Best Start in Life](#).

In this guide on how to complete your Parent Agreement we provide a summary of each Entitlement below for your convenience.

Universal Entitlement (U) – 15 Hours – For 3- and 4-year-olds only

All 3- and 4-year-olds in England and Wales can access up to 15 hours of funded childcare hours each week (570 hours per year), starting from the term after the child's third birthday. There is no application process for this Universal Entitlement and parents should speak to their childcare provider for more information and to check their availability. Parents will be asked to provide proof of their child's date of birth when completing this Parent Agreement, this is a requirement of accessing your child's funded hours. By completing and signing this Parent Agreement you agree to the childcare provider claiming these Early Years Entitlement hours as detailed in this agreement on your behalf from the Council.

Extended / Expanded Entitlements (E) – 15 Hours for eligible working families across different age groups.

3- and 4-year-olds

For eligible working families up to 15 additional funded childcare hours are available per week for 3- and 4-year-olds, starting from the term after the child's third birthday. Parents can apply for this Entitlement via the Best Start in Life website ([Childcare & Early Years Education - Best Start in Life](#)), this can be applied for from the term the child turns 3-years-old onwards. Eligible parents will then receive an eligibility code from HMRC confirming their eligibility. This code will need to be entered onto your Parent Agreement for your childcare provider to check the code is valid for the term ahead. Providers are also required to see proof of your child's date of birth. Your eligibility code and a signed Parent Agreement allows the childcare provider to claim for your child's Funded Entitlement hours from the Council.

Children aged 9-months and above

Eligible working families in England with children aged 9-months and older can claim up to 30 funded childcare hours per week (1140 hours per year), starting from the term after the child's 9-month anniversary. Parents can apply for this Entitlement in the term where the child turns 9-months old onwards via the Best Start in Life website ([Childcare & Early Years Education - Best Start in Life](#)). For example, if a child turns 9-months old in July 2025 they would be able to apply in the summer term and if found to be eligible could start their funded Entitlement in Autumn 2026 (from 1st September), which would be the term after they turned 9-months old.

Please note that for parents on maternity, paternity or adoption leave the dates for when you can apply and access childcare provision will be dependent on when you are due to start or return to work as detailed in the 'When can my child start their funded Entitlement' section below.

Eligible parents will receive an eligibility code from HMRC confirming their eligibility. This code will need to be entered onto your Parent Agreement for your childcare provider to check that the code is valid ahead of your child starting their funded place the term after. Providers are also required to see proof of your child's date of birth. Your eligibility code and a signed Parent Agreement allows the childcare provider to claim for your child's funded Entitlement hours from the Council.

Please note that eligibility codes will need to be reconfirmed by the parent/carer every three months through their government childcare account. This also applies to eligibility codes received prior to the child starting their childcare place.

Early Learning for 2-Year-olds (D) – 15 Hours.

Children living in England from families in receipt of additional support, such as those on certain benefits, children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, children receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or children in the care of the local authority or children have left care, may be eligible for up to 15 hours of funded childcare per week (570 hours per year). Details on this Entitlement criteria and how to apply can be found here: [2-Year-old eligibility](#), or by speaking to your local Children's Centre.

Once your eligibility has been confirmed you will need to speak to your local Children's Centre who will need to send an eligibility confirmation letter to your chosen childcare provider. This allows the childcare provider to validate your child's eligibility and to claim for your child's funded hours from the Council.

If your child is 2 years old and eligible for both entitlements, your provider must use the Early Learning for 2-year-olds funding first, with up to 15 additional hours claimed through the Expanded Entitlement for working families. This is so that should your circumstances change resulting in you no longer being eligible for the Expanded Entitlement for working families, you will continue to access the Early Learning for 2 year olds Entitlement until your child becomes eligible for the Universal 3 and 4 year old Entitlement.

When can my child start their Funded Entitlement(s)?

Early Years Entitlements usually start from the term after the child's relevant birthday or 9 month anniversary. If your child was born or their 9 month anniversary is:

- between 1 January and 31 March, they will become eligible at the start of **April**
- between 1 April and 31 August, they will become eligible at the start of **September**
- between 1 September to 31 December, they will become eligible at the start of **January**.

However, for parents on maternity, paternity or adoption leave the start date will depend on when you are starting or returning to work as detailed below:

Date starting or returning to work	When you can apply	When you can access your Entitlement
1 October to 31 January	1 September to 31 December	1 January
1 February to 30 April	1 January to 31 March	1 April
1 May to 30 September	1 April to 31 August	1 September

Please note actual start dates for each term will depend on how your chosen childcare provider operates, please speak to your childcare provider for their term dates.

Funded hours can only be claimed from the start of the term, so parents should apply for these Entitlements in the term their child turns the relevant age to avoid any delay in taking up their funded hours. For example: If your child turns 3 years old on the 31st of August but you do not apply for the additional 15 hours extended Entitlement until the 4th of September your child would not be eligible to claim the additional 15 hours until January. The child would still be able to access their 15 hours Universal Entitlement from September and should complete their Parent Agreement form prior to the start of the Autumn (September) term.

This is slightly different for the Early Learning for 2 year olds Entitlement, which can be accessed mid-term in any term after your child turns 2-years-old once the eligibility confirmation letter has been received by your childcare provider.

Eligibility codes and grace periods

Your eligibility code will only be valid for 3 months from the date of issue, **every 3 months** you will need reconfirm your eligibility through your government childcare account and should receive email reminders from HMRC regarding this. In some cases, codes may need to be reconfirmed prior to the 3 months lapsing as these eligibility reconfirmations and applications are often aligned with a child's Tax-Free Childcare reconfirmation.

If you fall out of eligibility you will enter a grace period. For example, if your code was given the ineligible status on 14th of January then your 15 Extended / Expanded Entitlement hours would be funded until 31st of March giving you time to regain a valid eligibility code by resubmitting your information for revalidation or obtain new and additional employment to regain eligibility. Please note that you cannot move providers in the grace period without permission from the Council and that permission will only be given in certain circumstances.

Details on the **grace period dates** are in the table below.

Code validity End date:	Grace Period End date:
1 Jan – 10 Feb	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	31 August
1 April – 26 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	31 December
1 September – 21 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	31 March

Early Years Pupil Premium

Children in receipt of Early Years Entitlements could be eligible for additional funding called the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). EYPP is extra funding paid to early years providers to improve outcomes for eligible children. Eligibility is based on your income and any benefits you may receive. EYPP is also available to children in care or who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or a child arrangement order, further details on eligibility criteria can be found online at [Early years pupil premium | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#).

If you think you are eligible you can either complete the EYPP section of the Parent Agreement for your provider to check on your behalf or complete an online application yourself via the link above. The Council recommends that every parent completes this section of the Parent Agreement where possible as some families may not be aware of their eligibility and circumstances may change.

Disability Access Fund

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) allows childcare providers to receive additional funding per eligible child each year. The funds could be used, for example, to support providers in making reasonable adjustments (such as ramps, or equipment) to their settings and/or helping with increasing staffing capacity.

SEND Inclusion Funding

Early Years providers can apply for SEND Inclusion Funding (SENDIF) for children with additional needs to support them to access their funded Entitlement. Further information is available via [Early Years Inclusion Support Funding | Live Well Cheshire West \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](#)

How to complete your Parent Agreement Form

Data Privacy - How we use your information

In collecting your data for the purposes of checking your eligibility for the free Entitlements, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) or Disability Access Fund (DAF) Cheshire West and Chester Council is exercising the function of a government department and is authorised to collect this data pursuant to Section 13 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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

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

The information you give in the Parent Agreement will be retained by your childcare provider(s) and Cheshire West and Chester Council. The childcare provider(s) hold information on children in order to support their development, monitor their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the childcare provider as a whole is doing. This information includes contact details, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs, and any relevant medical information. From time-to-time early years childcare providers are required to pass on some of this data to local authorities, the Department for Education (DfE) and to agencies that are prescribed by law, such as Ofsted.

This information will be used to contact you about Cheshire West and Chester Council services and about services provided by our Children's Centre delivery partners. It may also be used to contact you about research on Children's Services. In accordance with the data protection regulations, Cheshire West and Chester Council will hold all data securely and treat it confidentially.

The Council uses information about children for whom it provides services to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible. For example, the Council will make an assessment of any special educational needs your child may have. It also uses the information to derive statistics to inform various decisions. The statistics are used in such a way that individual children cannot be identified from them.

Should you have any concerns relating to how your information or the information relating to your child/ren is being or will be used, please contact your provider or the Council.

1. Child Details

Please ensure you complete all details in this section. You should use the child's **legal** name as shown on their birth certificate. Childcare providers and the Council are entitled to request sight of your child's birth certificate as proof of your child's age and eligibility to claim the Early Years Entitlements.

Ethnicity codes are listed below. If you do not want the ethnic origin of your child to be known, please enter the code REFU.

Ethnicity Codes

WBRI - White British, **WCOR** - White Cornish, **WENG** - White English, **WNIR** - White Northern Irish, **WSCO** - White Scottish, **WWEL** - White Welsh, **WOWB** - Other White British, **WIRI** - White Irish, **WIRT** - Traveller of Irish heritage, **WOTH** - Any other white background, **WALB** - Albanian, **WBOS** - Bosnian Herzegovinian, **WCRO** - Croatian, **WGRE** - Greek/Greek Cypriot, **WGRK** - Greek, **WGRC** - Greek Cypriot, **WITA** - Italian, **WKOS** - Kosovan, **WPOR** - Portuguese, **WSER** - Serbian, **WTUR** - Turkish/Turkish Cypriot, **WTUK** - Turkish, **WTUC** - Turkish Cypriot, **WEUR** - White European, **WEEU** - White Eastern European, **WWEU** - White Western European, **WOTW** - White other, **WROM** - Gypsy/Roma, **WROG** - Gypsy, **WROR** - Roma, **WROO** - Other Gypsy/Roma, **MWBC** - White and Black Caribbean, **MWBA** - White and Black African, **MWAS** - White and Asian, **MWAP** - White and Pakistani, **MWAI** - White and Indian, **MWAO** - White and any other Asian background, **MOTH** - Any other mixed background, **MAOE** - Asian and any other ethnic group, **MABL** - Asian and Black, **MACH** - Asian and Chinese, **MBOE** - Black and any other ethnic group, **MBCH** - Black and Chinese, **MCOE** - Chinese and any other ethnic group, **MWOE** - White and any other ethnic group, **MWCH** - White and Chinese, **MOTM** - Other mixed background, **AIND** - Indian, **APKN** - Pakistani, **AMPK** - Mirpuri Pakistani, **AKPA** - Kashmiri Pakistani, **AOPK** - Other Pakistani, **ABAN** - Bangladeshi, **AOTH** - Any other Asian background, **AAFR** - African Asian, **AKAO** - Kashmiri other, **ANEP** - Nepali, **ASNL** - Sri Lankan Sinhalese, **ASLT** - Sri Lankan Tamil, **ASRO** - Sri Lankan other, **AOTA** - Other Asian, **BCRB** - Black Caribbean, **BAFR** - Black African, **BANN** - Black Angolan, **BCON** - Black Congolese, **BGHA** - Black Ghanaian, **BNGN** - Black Nigerian, **BSLN** - Black Sierra Leonean, **BSOM** - Black Somali, **BSUD** - Black Sudanese, **BAOF** - Other Black African, **BOTH** - Any other black background, **BEUR** - Black European, **BNAM** - Black North American, **BOTB** - Other Black, **CHNE** - Chinese, **CHKC** - Hong Kong Chinese, **CMAL** - Malaysian Chinese, **CSNG** - Singaporean Chinese, **CTWN** - Taiwanese, **COCH** - Other Chinese, **OOth** - Any other ethnic group, **OAFG** - Afghan, **OARA** - Arab other, **OEGY** - Egyptian, **OFIL** - Filipino, **OIRN** - Iranian, **OIRQ** - Iraqi, **OJPN** - Japanese, **OKOR** - Korean, **OKRD** - Kurdish, **OLAM** - Latin/South/Central American, **OLEB** - Lebanese, **OLIB** - Libyan, **OMAL** - Malay, **OMRC** - Moroccan, **OPOL** - Polynesian, **OTHA** - Thai, **OVIE** - Vietnamese, **OYEM** - Yemeni, **OOEG** - Other ethnic group, **REFU** - Refused, **NOBT** - Information not yet obtained

Special Educational Need (SEN) Codes

The Council and childcare provider need to know if your child has any special educational needs which may affect the level of funding your child receives. Please enter the appropriate code on the Contract where indicated.

N = No Special Educational Needs **K** = SEN Support **E** = Education Health & Care Plan

2. Parent/ Guardian/ Carer Information

This should include the details of every person with legal Parental Responsibility for the child although the Parent Agreement only needs to be signed by one person with legal parental responsibility. You can find guidance on who has legal responsibility for a child at

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/ParentsRights/DG_4002954

3. Attendance patterns, splitting and stretching

It is important that we know how you as parents plan to claim your Entitlement to ensure the correct payments are made to your childcare provider. We ask you to agree how you will take your Entitlement hours each term with all your childcare providers. Please note that different settings may offer their funded hours in different ways although sessions can only be a maximum of 10 hours in length in a single day.

You are able to claim up to 15 or 30 (subject to eligibility) hours per week by either claiming all hours with one childcare setting or by splitting your hours across different settings, up to 2 settings (on different sites) in one day. For example your child could attend a preschool (on a school site) in the morning, the school nursery on the same site (in the afternoon) and a childminder at a separate site late afternoon, as 2 if the 3 providers are on the same site.

If you are claiming your Funded Entitlement at more than one setting you will need to sign a separate Parent Agreement with each setting and identify them both on each Parent Agreement.

The Parent Agreement form has an attendance table on page 1 of the agreement document. This will need to be completed and signed prior to your child starting their funded place.

Each term your provider(s) will ask you to complete and sign the next attendance table for the following term. This is to ensure that both parent and provider are clear on what hours you expect to use the next term, as this may change. It also provides the Council with confirmation that the provider can continue to claim for your child's funded hours in that term.

You will need to state on your Parent Agreement form if you are taking your Early Years Entitlement hours over the 38 weeks term time or 'stretched' across the year which is often over 51 weeks, but this will depend on how many weeks your chosen provider is open. Please speak to your childcare provider to confirm their stretching options and complete the form to reflect the number of weeks you will be accessing your Early Years Entitlement hours across the year.

If your provider offers a funded place stretched over 51 weeks and you choose to stretch your funded hours with your provider over this period, please see conversion table below.

Weekly hours	Weeks	Annual hours
15 hours	38	570
11.18 hours	51	570
30 hours	38	1140
22.36 hours	51	1140

Where your child (aged 2 or above) uses their Entitlement(s) across two or more different childcare providers, parents should designate a main provider. The main provider would claim for the child's hours under the Universal or Early Learning 2-year-olds Entitlement (where applicable) first, with any additional hours then claimed from the Extended or Expanded Entitlement for working families. This is important should you fall out of eligibility for the working families Entitlement element as you would still be able to access your Universal or Early Learning Entitlement at your main provider. Where the main provider claims for 15 or more funded hours, this provider should first claim for all of the 15 Universal or Early Learning 2-year-old Entitlement hours, the other provider(s) would then claim the remaining hours from any remaining Extended or Expanded Entitlement hours.

Example 1: 30 hours Entitlement taken across more than one provider

A child who is eligible for 30 hours of early years Entitlement plans to start taking their Entitlements over 38 weeks term time only in the autumn term. This table would need to be completed and signed in summer the term before, ready for the autumn term. They will use their funded hours at nursery on Monday (10 hours), Tuesday (5 hours) and Thursday (5 hours) but pay for the childminder to pick them up and look after them for 2 hours on Tuesday and Thursday. They also attend a school nursery on Wednesday for 6 hours. They attend their nursery on a Friday for 5 hours, even though these are not funded hours, they still need to be included in this table.

In this example, ABC Day Nursery is the primary provider as they are claiming for the child's 15 hours Universal Entitlement funding. If this child was to fall out of eligibility of the Extended

Entitlement after their grace period ends, ABC Day Nursery would be the provider who will claim for the 15 hours Universal Entitlement on behalf of the parent/carer.

Term	Autumn Term 2026											
Setting Name:	Please enter the number of hours attended per day					Type of Entitlement:	Total hours per week	No. of weeks per year (e.g. 38 or 51)				
ABC Day Nursery	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	U, U & E, E only, D						
Total number of hours at setting per day	10	5		5	5		25	38				
Number of funded hours per day	10	5		5	0	U & E	20	38				
Funding Start Date:	1 st September 2026				Funding End date:	18 th December 2026						
If your child is splitting their funded entitlement across more than one setting, please nominate their main setting :						ABC Day Nursery						
My child is also attending the following settings for Entitlement hours:												
XYZ School			6			E	6	38				
123 Childminder		2		2		E	4	38				
Total Daily Entitlement Hours	10	7	6	7	0		30	38				

Example 2: A child using one provider, stretching their funding over 51 weeks.

Term	Autumn Term 2026							
Setting Name:	Please enter the number of hours attended per day					Type of Entitlement:	Total hours per week	No. of weeks per year (e.g. 38 or 51)
ABC Day Nursery	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	U, U & E, E only, D		
Total number of hours at setting per day	11	11	11	11			44	51
Number of funded hours per day	10	10	2.36			U & E	22.36	51
Funding Start Date:	1 st September 2026				Funding End date:	24 th December 2026		

Changing your claim or starting late - IMPORTANT NOTE

The purpose of the Parent Agreement is to make sure that:

- your child is not funded for more than the number of hours they are eligible for, either 15 or 30 (subject to eligibility) hours per week for 38 weeks or a lower number of weekly hours if spread across more than 38 weeks per year: This equates to a maximum of 570 or 1140 (subject to eligibility) hours in total per year.
- the childcare provider(s) can make the right claim for funding.
- For 3- and 4-year-old Entitlements you agree the way you will take the Universal Entitlement 15 hours and the Extended Entitlement 15-hour place. If you stop being eligible for the Extended Entitlement place then you agree to revert to the pattern of Universal Entitlement hours as listed on this form.
- Similarly, for families eligible for both the Early Learning for 2-year-olds Entitlement and the Expanded Entitlement for working families, if you stop being eligible for the Expanded Entitlement then you agree to revert to the pattern of Early Learning for 2-year-olds Entitlement hours as listed on this form.
- you commit to the hours and pattern of access noted on this form at the childcare provider(s) of your choice for at **least one claim period (term)**.

If you start or change childcare provider(s) part way through the term (after the headcount date) you will **not be able to claim your Early Years Entitlement and will have to pay for your child to attend these hours until the next claim period (term)** unless you have received the express permission of the Council and the provider identified on the Parent Agreement, which will only normally be granted where there are exceptional reasons for the late start or change. It is important that the Parent Agreement Form is kept up to date and accurate should any changes be agreed. Parents and carers should also be mindful of their providers notice period in such circumstances.

If you change the hours of your claim part way through the term this change will only be accepted if you have exceptional reasons for making a change (even if you want to reduce the number of hours being claimed) as you have committed to the hours and pattern of attendance entered on this form for the whole of the claim period (term).

Examples of exceptional reasons may be:

- If your family leaves the area and the childcare provider is no longer accessible.
- Where the childcare provider is no longer accessible or providing you with the childcare.
- To accommodate a change in shift patterns, relocation, return to work or a new job.
- Suspension of the childcare provider's Ofsted registration or termination of their contract with the Council to provide the Early Years Entitlement.
- If your child's circumstances change on the recommendation of a professional (health visitor, family support worker, social worker, doctor) working with the child or family.
- Your childcare provider agrees that your contract can be ended or altered part way through the claim period.
- If you are not able to access your child's agreed Funded Entitlement hours with this childcare provider because they fail to provide it.

4. Additional service and charges

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

Should you wish to access these extra services on your funded days the cost of those additional services should be detailed on your Parent Agreement form for you to agree to or not by selecting yes or no to each category. Full details of additional services and charges should be available from your childcare provider including their policy on alternative options should you choose not to purchase their additional services.

By completing this document, you agree to pay these charges for any additional services selected for the duration of the applicable term on the days in which funding is accessed. You can review your selection for future terms prior to the start of each new term.

5. Signing the contract

You must read these conditions of your Parent Agreement carefully and confirm that you understand and agree to the terms of the Funded Entitlement by completing the required information as set out above and then sign and date the Parent Agreement where indicated.

If you have any queries or require further information you may want to contact the Early Years Payments Team

Email: earlyyearspaymentsteam@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk