



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Claiming Early Education Funding Guidance Notes

Private, Independent and Voluntary Providers
(including Academies and Childminders) claiming Early
Education Funding for **9-23 months, 2, 3 and 4-year-
olds** from Oxfordshire County Council

April 2024 – August 2024

IMPORTANT - Please read these guidance notes carefully. If you have any queries regarding the guidance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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A. General

These notes outline the claims and payments process for Private, Voluntary, and Independent providers (including academies) who have access to the Early Years Establishment Portal. It is best read on a computer as it contains hyperlinks to other important documents.

Where the word 'parent' is used in this document it refers to parents and caregivers who have a legal responsibility for a child accessing Early Education Funding.

All claims are to be made online via the Establishment Portal. Therefore, access to a private computer or tablet is essential for functionality.

The website [Forms and guidance notes | Oxfordshire County Council](#) has the following documents (there is also a link to this webpage within the Establishment Portal).

Termly Documents:

- **Funding Timeline** – key dates for the term. **Please save or print for easy reference.**
- **Parent Declaration** * - must be completed and signed for 2,3- and 4-year-old eligible children, **before** you claim funding. The form is the basis for the contract between yourselves and the parent for claiming Early Education Funding. Please do not offer a funded place if you haven't checked the families have a valid code. Codes are not needed for 3&4 year-olds that are only accessing 15 universal hours.
- **Privacy Notice**
- **When is my Child Eligible** – indicates the date of birth range for the different funding ages.
- **Guide on valid Working Parent code dates** – what the different dates mean for a Working Parent code; can it be used in current term? Not all codes are valid, you need to look at the specific dates on this guidance.

* You must ask to see the child's ID (e.g., the child's birth certificate, "red book" or passport) to verify the child's date of birth, name, and address before offering a place. We will request to see any Parent Declaration forms for audit purposes and claim queries. They **must** be retained for **6 Years** plus the current financial year.

You must comply with the [Early Education Funding Terms and Conditions](#) and will be asked to reaffirm this agreement every time you make a funding claim through the provider declaration on Headcounts submitted via the Establishment Portal.

Changes to your provision:

You must inform us immediately whenever there is a change in your circumstances, and these include but are not limited to:

- A change of ownership, governance, or premises.
- A change of name or address of the contact responsible for the free early education funding administration.
- A change to Portal User, new or revoked, including email addresses.
- A change of bank details.
- A change of the Ofsted inspection grade or Ofsted number
- If you are closing

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/business-and-funding-childcare-providers/early-education-fund/joining-and-leaving-scheme>

Where such a change results in a new provision, you will need to re-register with Ofsted and complete a new application form with the Council for the purposes of Early Education Funding. You must give us reasonable notice of these changes, especially if a payment is due to be made. Ideally changes should be kept to the beginning of terms or half term points.

You can choose whether to deliver the Working Parent funding, which will be bound by the same terms and conditions as the universal 15-hour funding.

Age eligibility

A child meets the required age for 9 -23 months, 2-year-old or 3-year-old funding the term after they turn that age.

For 9–23-month-old funding:

Child born in	Will turn 9 months in	Can get 15 hours from
January	October	Spring
February	November	Spring
March	December	Spring
April	January	Summer
May	February	Summer
June	March	Summer
July	April	Autumn
August	May	Autumn
September	June	Autumn
October	July	Autumn
November	August	Autumn
December	September	Spring

For 2-, 3- and 4-Year-old funding:

Turn 2 or 3 years old between	Can start to access the 2 or 3-year-old funding at
1 April to 31 Aug (inclusive)	The start of the school autumn term funding period (Sept)
1 Sept to 31 Dec (inclusive)	The start of the school spring term funding period (Jan)
1 Jan to 31 Mar (inclusive)	The start of the school summer term funding period (15 th April)

Payment is based on the set pattern of 38 weeks per financial year.

- **Summer Term** 12 Weeks
- **Autumn Term** 14 Weeks
- **Spring Term** 12 Weeks

B. 2023/24 Academic Year

The school term dates for the current academic year are shown below.

If you offer 38 weeks funding (i.e. not stretching the funded hours), you must follow the school term time calendar as a minimum.

Term	Start Date	End date	Number of days	Weeks	Paid as
Autumn	03/09/2024	25/10/2024	39		14 weeks 4
Autumn	04/11/2024	20/12/2024	35	74	day
Spring	06/01/2025	14/02/2025	30		12 weeks
Spring	24/02/2025	04/04/2025	30	60	12 weeks
Summer	22/04/2025	23/05/2025	23		12 Weeks
Summer	02/06/2025	22/07/2025	37	60	12 weeks

Number or Weeks
38 weeks 4 days 38 Weeks

Bank holiday, 5th May 2024 is not included in the count of days.

The 4 inset days reduce the weeks funded to 38 weeks. It might be better for parents if you follow your local school in planning when you are going to take these inset days. Let parents know in advance which will be inset days and that you are open for the remaining times. Otherwise, we will deduct any missing weeks from your payment.

You must show that you offered the funding over the full 38 weeks (190 days) if you have deviated from the Oxfordshire school calendar.

As an exception, if you are offering wraparound care (e.g., School Holiday Play Schemes), you can claim for fewer than 38 weeks per year. In this case you need to work in partnership with other providers to deliver the full offer.

Children starting school are legally entitled to a full-time reception place from the first day of the new school year. Schools receive place funding to cover this.

Make sure parents know that we do not fund children at your setting if they start reception later in the term. Any payments made based on an estimate or headcount that includes these children will need to be repaid. Our statutory guidance (paragraph A4.37) is clear that local authorities should ensure providers are not penalised through withdrawal of funding for short term closures of a setting, for example, because of local or national elections or damage to the premises.

You shall still be funded as usual for the 38 weeks of the year. Funding will be paid on actual attendance, with no notice periods for just funded children. However, you must inform the parents with plenty of notice if their contracted hours are going to change and be able to offer them, where possible, an alternative for their hours. If a parent wishes to take up their hours for that day elsewhere, they can do this if you are unable to offer an alternative for them.

C. 9 -23-Month-old funding for working parents.

This is a new entitlement starting from September 2024.

- The funding rate is £10.73 per hour.
- Parents need to apply for this funding via [Childcare Choices](#)/ 0300 123 4097. Please note if they apply via telephone, they will then also have to reconfirm each time via telephone.
- The criteria can be found on our [webpages](#) for this type of funding
- Once in receipt of an eligible code the family can claim up to 15 hours per week.
- Parents will need to reconfirm their code every 3 months via their government gateway account. It is important to note we as a Local Authority do not have access to these applications. The process is run and manned by the HMRC.
- Parents can fall out of eligibility if they do not reconfirm by the end of each term- the cut off dates are 31st March (for an April start), 31st August (for a September start) or 31st December for a January start.
- A child cannot claim funded hours for the first time nor start a funded place at a new provider if they are in their grace period.
- **Providers must validate codes on the Establishment Portal to confirm correct when the earliest time the parents can start their funding.** Please now refer to section G for more details regarding claiming

D. 2-Year-Old Funding for families that claim specific benefits

From April 2024 there are 2 types of 2-year-old funding.

Funding for families that claim specific benefits:

The Government's intention is that the funding for parents of 2-year-olds on specific benefits is delivered by providers with a rating of 'outstanding' or 'good' in their most recent Ofsted report. We will not automatically agree to fund these 2-year-olds in a provision with 'requires improvement' rating at their last inspection.

If you have re-registered with Ofsted and your previous judgement was less than good, you will not automatically be approved to take these funded 2-year-olds.

Newly registered providers can fund all eligible 2-year-olds.

- The funding rate is £7.83 per hour from April 24 – March 2025.

Criteria:

- The child turned two at least the term before (refer to chart in section A)
AND
- The parent(s) / carer(s) meet one of the below criteria:

Economic

1. Income Support
2. Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA)
3. Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
4. Universal Credit - if you and your partner have a combined income from work of less than £15,400 a year after tax
5. the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
6. The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
7. Tax credits and they have an annual income of under £16,190 before tax.

Non-Economic

1. They have a current education, health, and care plan. (EHCP)
2. They receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for the child.
3. They are looked after by their local authority, or they have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order.
4. They are currently looked after by a Local authority.

Other Criteria

If their immigration status says they have 'no recourse to public funds', they may still get free childcare for their 2-year-old. They must live in England and their household income must be no more than:

- £26,500 for families outside of London with one child
- £34,500 for families within London with one child
- £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children
- £38,600 for families within London with two or more children

They cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments.

To be eligible for up to 15 hours 2-year-old funding under this criterion the parents must have an eligible 2-Year-Old Funding code.

The code can be applied for by:

1. The parent applies via [Oxfordshire's Parent Portal](#)
2. Assisted application through our Family Information Service by calling 01865 323332. They will need their NI number to hand.
3. Alternatively as a provider you can assist the parent with their application via The [Establishment Portal](#) – Dashboard – 2 year old application. Please do remember you are applying on behalf of the parent so please use the parent's details, not your own.

Oxfordshire codes will be in the following format: XX-XXXX-XX.

An eligible code can be used with any approved 2YO provider in Oxfordshire.

Letter/Email / Text Eligibility:

Parents that claim specific benefits may receive a letter stating they **might** be eligible for 2-year-old funding. This letter is from our team, the data comes via the Department of Education. Each letter has a unique 7-digit reference, but it is important to note this code is purely for reference only and parents should be encouraged to apply as soon as possible after receiving the letter- even if they do not want to use the place straight away. The parent can make an application using method 1 above.

Be aware that a code is generated for every application, including those that return an ineligible result.

Once you have received an **eligible** code, and you have agreed to offer the family a funded place, you can **add the child to your Live Register** on the Establishment Portal. If they are yet to start, add them as a Future Starter on the Live Register page (academies do not have the future starter access so will need to wait until the child's actual start date to do this).

If a 2-year-old funded child under this criterion leaves your provision early:

You **must** complete a **Child Left Setting** form (as per clause 9.3 in the Terms & Conditions), as well as add an end date to your Live Register on the Establishment portal.

We use this information to assist families as part of our safeguarding duties.

A Child Left Setting form can be found here:

<https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/childleftsetting>

Please note this form is not to be filled out for working parents of 2-year-olds.

E. 2-year-old funding for working parents

This is a new entitlement starting from April 2024.

- The funding rate is £7.83 per hour.
- Parents need to apply for this funding via [Childcare Choices](#)/ 0300 123 4097. Please note if they apply via telephone, they will then also have to reconfirm each time via telephone.
- The criteria can be found on our [webpages](#) for this type of funding
- Once in receipt of an eligible code the family can claim up to 15 hours per week.
- Parents will need to reconfirm their code every 3 months via their government gateway account. It is important to note we as a Local Authority do not have access to these applications. The process is run and manned by the HMRC.
- Parents can fall out of eligibility if they do not reconfirm by the end of each term- the cut off dates are 31st March (for an April start), 31st August (for a September start) or 31st December for a January start.
- A child cannot claim funded hours for the first time nor start a funded place at a new provider if they are in their grace period.
- Providers must validate codes on the Establishment Portal to confirm correct when the earliest time the parents can start their funding.
- Please now refer to section F for more details regarding claiming.

F. 3 & 4-Year-Old Funding

Universal Entitlement:

- The funding rate is £5.30 per hour from April 24 - March 2025.
- All 3 and 4-year-olds in Oxfordshire are eligible for the universal 570 hours free early education the term after they turn three (see chart in section A).
- There are no eligibility criteria or codes required.

Working Parent Entitlement:

- The funding rate is £5.30 per hour from April 24 - March 2025.
- Some 3 and 4-year-old children of working parents may be eligible for the working parent 570 hours (in addition to the universal hours).
- Parents can find information, eligibility criteria and application process on Childcare Choices website <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>
- Or they can call the Childcare Services Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097. If they choose this option, they will then also have to reconfirm each time via phone.
- Parents need to have received their 11-digit code from HMRC before the entitlement date i.e. by 31st August (for a September start), 31st December

(for a January start or by 31st March (for an April start). **Parents are advised to apply for the working parent entitlement in plenty of time e.g., by July, November, and February) in the term before they wish to take up their funding.**

- Parents must reconfirm their code every 3 months through their government gateway account to remain eligible. It is important to note we as a Local Authority do not have access to these applications. The process is run and manned by the HMRC.

G. Working Parent Code Claims for 9-23 months, 2,3&4-year-olds.

As broken down above working parent codes can only be claimed for by:

- Children that have turned 9 months the term before their funding starts for 15 hours per week.
- Children who have turned 2 the term before their funding starts for 15 hours per week.
- 3&4-year-old who have turned 3 the term before their funding starts for an additional 15 hours per week (this is additional to the universal entitlement).
- In all cases the parents must have received / reconfirmed their 11-digit code with HMRC the term before they plan to take up a funded place.
- Each 11-digit code will begin with a 11 (this is a temporary code) or a 5 (most families) or a 4 (foster families).
- Working parent codes cannot be used if the code is within its grace period and the funding has not been claimed in the term before.

You must validate the working parent code in the Establishment Portal **before** offering the funded place. Please note there is a temporary manual checking process in place from January 2024- March 2024 for the new 2-year-old working parent code checks only. Please refer to the separate comms that have been sent out via email. For 3&4-year-olds you can check these codes in the portal as usual.

Dates relating to a Working Parent Entitlement code:

There are 2 parts to check if a code is eligible. One is to check the result states eligible. Then you must check the dates There are three dates that apply to a Working Parent Entitlement code:

- 'Validity Start' date - when the code was issued/valid from, **BUT** this isn't the date that the child can start their funding (see table below).
- 'Validity End' date - the date the parent needs to reconfirm by via their government gateway account. The code falls into its Grace Period the day after this date.
- 'Grace Period End' date - **potential** date that the child could be funded up to if they fall out of eligibility.

Validity Start Date – any date up to and including:	Validity End Date – any date on or after	Actual point allowed to start taking Working Parent Entitlement funding
31st Aug 23	1st Sept 23	Autumn 2023-24
31 st Dec 23	1 st Jan 24	Spring Term 2023-24
31 st Mar 24	1 st April 24	Summer Term 2024-25

If you receive a result that states, ‘*Eligibility could not be determined using the details provided*’ Then please check the NI number, code, and child’s DOB match that of the parent’s government gateway account. If the problem persists then please contact The Early Education Funding team via email.

For more detail refer to the termly documents on [Working Parent Codes](#)

Audit Dates and Grace Periods:

Parents are required to reconfirm their code every three months with HMRC through their [government gateway account](#).

If they are no longer eligible, the funded hours will cease at the end of their grace period (provided they have taken up working parent hours the term before). We will inform you which families are in their grace period at the beginning of the term and at half-term points. You will also receive these notifications via messages on the Establishment Portal. Please note – for new children who have yet to start with you, you are required to run the checks and check the dates – we may not have this detail to send you a message about an ineligible code if you have not claimed for the children in a previous term. Please do not offer a place until the code dates have been checked.

The grace period enables parents to retain their childcare if they become ineligible for the working parent hours and will be able to take them up to the end of term. The grace period will not apply if the child didn’t claim working parent hours the previous term or if the child is trying to move providers in the grace period. A grace period will not continue beyond the age that a child has achieved compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday).

You are advised to monitor parents’ codes to see that they are reconfirming by using the working parent entitlement report on the Establishment Portal.

H. Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Deprivation Supplement

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) gives providers extra funding to support eligible 9–23-month, 2, 3 & 4-year-olds to develop, learn and ensure they are ‘school ready’.

- Children must be claiming funded hours to use this entitlement.

- This is paid at a rate of £1.15 per hour for 3- & 4-year-old universal hours. It is made up of 68p EYPP and 47p deprivation supplement (from April 2024-March 2025)
- The deprivation supplement is also applied to the 3 & 4 working parent extended hours (if eligible) at the rate of 47p per hour.
- For ages 9-23 months and 2-year olds the rate of £1.15 will be applied to the 15 hours.
- Here is a [link](#) to our webpage to find out more information

Families must meet at least 1 of the below criteria before claiming for this entitlement.:

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

Or the non-economic criteria:

- They have been in local authority care for one day or more in England or Wales (this will be paid via the virtual school)
- They've left care under a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order or Adoption Order.

Four year olds in primary school reception classes who already receive the school-age Pupil Premium are *not* eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium funding.

Children will be eligible from the term after their second birthday, in line with the universal entitlement to free early education for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds.

You can claim EYPP on the live register- **only if** the parent has given **permission** on the Parent Declaration form. To do this add the parents' details to the child's record. You will need the parent's National Insurance number and the parent's date of birth, as given on the Parent Declaration Form. You then need to press Yes to the parent giving consent and run a check.

You will receive an instant result and if eligible you will receive EYPP payments in your **main** and/or **mid-term change** payments, please refer to our termly timeline for the dates of these payments.

It's important to note that this check will only be completed under **economic** criteria. If you have a child that falls under the **Non – economic** criteria, then you will need to upload supporting documentation to the child's details on the Live Register and tell us via an Egress email.

I. Disability Access Funding (DAF)

Designed to help 9–23-month-olds 2,3&4-year-old children access learning activities and promote inclusion.

- The DAF funding is a non-transferable lump sum of £910 per year (from April 2024- March 2025) and the parent must nominate which provider will receive the funding.

If the child moves to another funded provider during the year, the DAF funding is **not** transferable to the new provider.

Criteria:

- the child is **currently** in **receipt** of child Disability Living Allowance
- **and** the child receives early education funding.

Apply for DAF via the Live Register on the Establishment Portal and attach the child's current DLA letter.

Parents will need to complete the appropriate section in the Parent Declaration form.

You will receive DAF funding with your **main** or **mid-term change** payments provided you submit a main headcount submission.

J. Special Educational Needs (SEN inclusion funding)

Inclusion funding is intended for 2,3&4-year-old* funded children with low level or emerging special educational needs. This funding is a limited amount, totalling £38.50 per week, term time, for specific children. The aim of the funding is to enable schools and settings to provide early interventions that will enhance the child's progress. It can be claimed by Oxfordshire providers in receipt of Early Education Funding.

The funding can be used flexibly e.g. to purchase additional resources, pay for staff training or pay for additional adult support, as long as it is being spent effectively and is making a difference.

Before claiming 'Inclusion Funding' for each individual child, the school or setting must have taken the following steps:

- Have identified that the child has low level and/or emerging special educational needs by using Oxfordshire Guidance for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support to complete the initial screening tool and relevant SEND descriptors.

***For 9–23-month-old working parent funded children the process is still to be confirmed- please do look out for a communication update within Autumn Term.**

- Have discussed the child's strengths and needs with the parents and explained how 'Inclusion Funding' will be used to support their child's progress.
- Have written and shared an individual support plan or pupil profile with parents and relevant professionals (if involved) which clearly outlines the next steps/outcomes you are aiming to support the child to achieve. (See example of a completed individual support plan)
- Have a clear process in place for monitoring the child's progress.
- Ensure the individual support plan or pupil profile is reviewed at least 3 times a year with parents and other relevant professionals.
- Have a record, kept in the child's file that records what the funding has been spent on and the impact for the child in terms of their well-being, learning and/or development. [Inclusion funding form \(docx format, 35Kb\)](#)
- For LA auditing purposes, provide evidence that the above steps have been followed.

To claim you need to select 'SEN Support' in the 'SEND Status' box, within the child's record on the live register. Please also add a Primary Need and a start date. If the child moves onto 'RAF' (Request for Additional Funding) or has an Educational Health & care plan (EHCP) then please go onto your Live Register and add an end date to the SEN Support in the child's record. You are not able to claim for both types of funding. Please also note that adding EHCP or RAF to the box in the portal will not result in funding via these methods – please apply to the relevant SEN team.

Temporary – if you are an academy, please email in any SEN claims that do not auto populate on your Live register from your MIS to earlyeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk

For information about Additional SEN Funding see:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/guidance-and-procedures-support-providers>

K. Quality Supplement

- Quality Supplement for nursery classes in mainstream schools relating to teachers' pay and pension grants – will be 16p per hour per funded 3- and 4-year-old (universal and working parent entitlement). This will be paid 3 times a year at the end of the term once all payments have been finalised. This is for academies – not independent schools.

L. Payment Process

Please refer to our [flowcharts](#) and [termly timelines](#) for a quick glance at the payment process. For Academies please follow the [schools flowchart](#).

All funding claims are maintained and submitted within the Establishment Portal. Within the portal you will find:

- **Dashboard:** This will provide you with an overview of the children you currently have on your Live Register. This screen allows you access to your messages and allows you to complete a 2-year-old application for those families on specific benefits and an age/eligibility check.
- **Live Register:** This is a register of government funded children currently attending your setting. You will need to maintain your Live Register on the Establishment Portal. You can make changes to this at any point in time. You can also check for instant results for Working Parent codes; EYPP eligibility and for 2YO eligibility for parent/s that claim specific benefits. **IMPORTANT – Your Live Register is NOT your headcount. You will NOT receive funding by populating it.**
- **Early Years drop down:** At the top of the portal page, you will see a drop down that leads to – estimate submission, key dates, Live Register, payments breakdown, provider details, reports, submissions (for headcounts) and staff details.

Each term you will need to follow the termly timeline dates to:

- Complete an estimated submission (if you would like to receive a payment in advance of your headcount for 60% of the total number of hours you submit) you can submit zero.
- Complete a headcount submission. This submission is required for payment by all providers.
- Complete any Mid-term changes within your Live Register for any change of children's hours, any leaver or for any new joiners since your headcount.

Payments will be made based on the above submissions provided the submissions are received on time. Any late headcount submissions will be subject to a £50 admin charge. (Estimate submissions and Mid-term changes are not subject to the charge). Payment will be made as below:

An Estimated Payment - Your estimated payments will be based on the Estimate Submission you complete by the deadline. Please note your estimate submission is pre-populated with the data from your Live Register, however you can override this each term if your Live Register is not yet up to date for the current term. From April 2024 this data will include any future starters you have added. Estimated payments are paid at the beginning of each term. An estimated payment will be made for 60% of the total hours submitted to us. Your 'Estimates' is found under the 'Early Years' drop down on the top menu bar in the Establishment Portal. Once submitted, the Funding Team will sense check these figures to help avoid making over payments. It is worth noting you will only be able to submit this once per term. If you do not submit any hours, then you will not receive the 60% payment and will need to wait until the main payment where you will receive 100 % payment from your submitted headcount claim.

Main Payment –

- the main payment is based on the data populated on your Live Register by the Headcount start date. Therefore, it is important the Live Register data is kept up to date.

- your Live Register is found under the 'Early Years' drop down on the top menu bar in the Establishment Portal. Please note your 'Live Register' is NOT your Headcount. Your Live Register is where you populate your data of children's hours and other funding claims. This data is then taken on the headcount start date and transferred to create a 'headcount submission'.
- Once your Live Register is up to date and you have made sure all your children have the correct funding checks and hours you can access your Headcount. This is found under Early Years – submissions. Please then complete the step-by-step wizard. Please note a headcount submission can only be made once per term but you do have access to make changes to hours as a Mid-term change (outlined below).
- All data, including children and parents' details must be entered accurately from information completed on the child's Parent Declaration form (including the child's full legal name and DOB according to the ID supplied by the parent). No payment will be made if Live Register and Headcount data has not been entered.
- Please note that if you have a child start at your setting with a start date that is after the date the headcount was issued then this child will show as a 'Mid-term-change submission. To access this and check you have claimed for that child please go to Early Years – Submissions – previous headcount submissions.

Please see the document [Headcount Portal Guidance Notes](#) for a full walk through of how to submit your headcount claims. If you are an Academy please follow these guidance notes [Headcount Guidance notes for Schools and Academies](#) Please note these documents are due to be updated in April 2024 to reflect the changes in entitlements.

Your payment will be made based upon your submission so please do double check the data is correct. For any queries please do contact earlyeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you received an estimated payment at the beginning of term, then this estimate payment will show as a deduction on your main payment. You will still have received 100 % of your total claim for the submission you have made.

If you did not receive an estimated payment at the beginning of term because you missed the deadline or chose not to then you will receive 100 % of your total claim.

Mid-term Change Payment –

If after a headcount claim, you have changes to make for example:

- a child has increased or decreased their hours,
- you have a new starter.
- you have a child leave.
- you need to add EYPP, SEN inclusion or DAF.
- or you made a mistake on the original headcount submission.

You can go to your Live register and make those changes. There is now a button under the claimed hours where you can select 'Yes' to 'Apply funding changes as a

Mid-term adjustment. If you do not press Yes, then you can make the changes ready for the next term without a change in claim being changed for the current term.

Provider Statements

You can check payment in several ways:

- You will receive an automated remittance from our central finance department each time a payment has been made. Please note if you have not notified us of an email address change then you may not receive this. We are unable to re send those remittances.
- You will receive a second remittance from our 'LIFT' system once a payment has been made that will break the payment down by child's data- unfortunately as this is sent by automated email, we can only add child's initials onto it and not their full names. However, these initials will be in alphabetical order according to the children's surnames.
- You can log onto the establishment portal- Early years – payments area for a breakdown – this is new functionality from April 2024. You can download the detail into an excel spreadsheet. Please note this area does not include any SEN inclusion payments, for this detail you will need to refer to one of the above remittances.

Should your setting have an **overpayment**, where the estimated payment was greater than the main claim, or due to a mid-term change claim, the monies owed to us will be deducted from your next payment. Should we require you to make a repayment before the following term, we will contact you detailing how. If for any reason your portal user does not receive a remittance, please notify earlyeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk .

M. Stretched Funding

Some providers make funding available over more than 38 weeks, i.e. a 'stretched offer'. Providers choosing the 'stretched offer' continue to claim the funding on the basis that the terms are split over 38 weeks (i.e. to a maximum of 12 weeks in the summer, 14 weeks in the autumn and 12 weeks in the spring). You must keep records to show how they have delivered the funding under the 'stretched offer'.

570 hours can be divided neatly into 15 hours delivered over 38 weeks. This is not the case for other delivery models. Parents can be asked to pay for the additional time or be given the option for their children to attend for fewer hours.

The table below illustrates the variation in hours for different delivery models.

15 hours of free entitlement Hours per five-day week	Number of weeks	Total annual hours	Variati on	Hours to claim on the portal p/w based on a TTO claim
15	38	570	0	15
14	41	574	4	15
13	44	572	2	15
12	48	576	6	15
11.5	50	575	5	15

30 hours of free entitlement Hours per five day week	Number of weeks	Total annual hours	Variation	Hours to claim on the portal p/w	Hour to claim on portal if offering the full 1140 hours across the year
30	38	1140	0	30	30
28	40	1120	-20	29.47	30
25.5	44	1122	-18	29.53	30
23.5	48	1128	-12	29.68	30
22.5	50	1125	-15	29.6	30

N. Local Authority Audit Process

We will audit a sample of providers each term in accordance with the Terms and Conditions. This is to ensure that funding is being claimed and paid correctly and that parents receive their child's entitlement free at the point of delivery.

You will be contacted by the Early Education Funding Team to arrange a convenient time to visit in person, or we may conduct an audit remotely by email.

You should expect a typical audit visit to last around an hour and it is the current term's funding claim that will be checked.

An audit report will be sent approximately 10 working days after the audit visit and details if any actions are required by you. If the audit identifies any incorrectly or falsely claimed funding, it will be recouped from you.

O. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I find help to use the Establishment Portal?

Guidance is provided on our web pages [Forms and guidance notes | Oxfordshire County Council](#).

2. Do providers have to offer 15 hours or 30 hours and nothing in between?

You can offer **up to** 15 or 30 funded hours to eligible parents. If you are offering fewer than the maximum hours for the age group, you should ensure that the parent is aware of their full entitlement.

3. Is the 2-year-old code for families claiming specific benefits just an Oxfordshire code?

Yes, the 2-year-old code for families who claim specific benefits is an Oxfordshire code only. If you have a child moving from outside Oxfordshire, they will need to do another eligibility application to obtain a new Oxfordshire code. The code is transferable between any Oxfordshire setting. Please note the 2-year-old working parent codes are not just Oxfordshire codes as they are applied for through HMRC.

4. I have a parent who has two 2-year-old codes – one is in format XX-XXXX-XXXX (a family who claim specific benefits) and one that is a working parent 11-digit- code starting with a 11, 5 or 4. Which code do I use to claim the funding.

From April 2024 there will be 2 sets of criteria for 2YOs to claim up to 15-hour funding per week.

- Families of 2YOs that claim specific benefits. That is those on our current [eligibility criteria](#) and who apply directly to our webpages. There is not a change to this application process or criteria, and you should use the Establishment Portal to check codes before offering a place. We encourage you to check if parents are eligible under this route first. If they are eligible then we encourage you to offer this funding to the parent. Once a child is eligible for this type of funding, they will not have to reconfirm their code and will therefore not fall out of eligibility.
- Families of working parents that have 2YO's. [Criteria and application](#) are completed directly to HMRC (Childcare choices). This is the new entitlement. HMRC will be making applications 'live' for parents to apply from 2nd January 2024 [here](#). HMRC are encouraging families to apply between Mid-January – Mid February 2024 for an April 2024 start. Parents will need to reconfirm these code every 3 months and can fall out of eligibility. If the parent is not eligible for the first type of 2-year-old funding, then we would encourage you to refer the parents to the HMRC applications pages for this working parent entitlement.

4. Can childminders claim funding for their own relatives or relatives of their childminding assistants?

A childminder cannot claim early education funding for providing childcare for their own children or those of any assistants employed by them or children related to the childminder or assistant. This is because the legal definition of childcare specifically excludes care provided for a child by a parent or stepparent or other relative (section

20 of the Childcare Act 2006). The provision by a childminder (for his/her own child) does not count as childcare in legal terms and therefore early education funding cannot be claimed, even if they are claiming for other children.

In addition to this Funding made available in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the entitlements to early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds cannot be claimed by, or spent on, childminders providing childcare for related children. The restriction for local authorities funding relatives is set out in the [Childcare Act 2006](#). Section 18(4)(c) of the 2006 Act specifically excludes care provided for a child by a parent or other relative, and section 18(8)(c) of the 2006 Act states that a relative, in relation to a child, means “a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister, whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership.” You may wish to seek further legal advice from your own lawyers if you require any further clarity.

[Childcare Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- (4) “Childcare” does not include care provided for a child by—
- (a) a parent or step-parent of the child;
 - (b) a person with parental responsibility for the child;
 - (c) a relative of the child;
 - (d) a person who is a local authority foster parent in relation to the child;
 - (e) a person who is a foster parent with whom the child has been placed by a voluntary organisation;
 - (f) a person who fosters the child privately.

5. A parent wants their child to access Early Education Funding after the Headcount deadline. Can I claim for funding for that child?

Yes, you can. You should update the Live Register in the Establishment Portal before the Mid-term Change deadline. We will not be able to back date any claims from previous terms.

6. How many hours per day can be offered to parents?

The Terms and Conditions allow for maximum flexibility so providers can claim up to 10 hours per day for eligible children. You are strongly encouraged to continue to offer a maximum of 6 hours especially for vulnerable funded 2-year-olds.

7. Can a child whose parent(s) is visiting be entitled to funding?

No. All 3- and 4-year-olds **living** in England are entitled to the universal entitlement irrespective of the immigration status of the child or their parent(s). However, if a family is **only visiting**, they are **not** entitled to funding.

P. Useful Contact Information

Early Education Funding Team (funding and portal queries)	earlyeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk	01865 894811
Family Information Service (parent queries)	fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk	01865 323332
Early Years Team (safeguarding forms)	Early.years@oxfordshire.gov.uk	0845 6042346
Early Years SEN Team	EYSENFunding@Oxfordshire.gov.uk	
Childcare Service working parent's entitlement Helpline (Gov) for parents	https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/	0300 123 4097
Household Support Fund Team	covidwintersupport@oxfordshire.gov.uk	