

# Early Years Entitlement April 2024-March 2025

## Funding for 9-months+, 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds

### Parent and Provider Information

#### What is the Early Years Entitlement?

The Early Years Entitlement (EYE) is funding provided by the Government to enable children to access Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) education opportunities at an Ofsted registered provision.

The EYE is designed to be flexible so parents can choose a setting where they want their child to attend and what hours they will attend (subject to availability). The entitlement is for regular attendance agreed between the parent/carer and provider.

The funding is claimed by the childcare provider on the parent's behalf, so if the child is not already attending childcare, the parents will need to find a provider who offers the funding.

The chosen provider will collect information and consent from the parents to claim the funding. The provider is responsible for submitting these details to Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES). The funding is then paid directly to the provider, parents do not need to contact the Local Authority directly.

Prior to each subsequent term the provider will ask the parents to reconfirm the funding they are claiming, along with a signed confirmation for any changes to the funding.

There are three main types of Early Years Entitlement provided by the Government according to child age and family situation:

1. Universal Funding: For **all** children aged 3- and 4-years-old childcare.
2. Low Income/Other Benefits Funding: For eligible children only aged 2-years-old.
3. Working Family Funding: Children aged 9-months-old to 2-years-old, may be entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare, and children aged 3- and 4-years-old may be entitled to 30 hours of funded childcare.

#### How can I find a childcare provider?

In B&NES, there are over 90 private or voluntary run providers where children can attend. In addition, many childminders offer places as do school nursery classes (not all schools have these classes). Parents should contact the individual providers themselves to check availability, how many funded hours they can offer and if there are any additional charges during the funding.

**N.B.** To be eligible for the 2-year-old funding for families on the low-income route, the provider must be graded "Good" or "Outstanding" by Ofsted.

The providers, along with details of their provision, can be obtained from the B&NES Livewell website: <https://livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/childcare-bnes>.

## Upcoming EYE changes April 2024-September 2025

The EYE will be expanded for children aged 9-months to 4-years-old over the next 18 months for working families.

This is happening over the following stages from:

- September 2024, working parents of children aged 9-months and above will be able to receive 15 hours of funding per week.
- September 2025, working parents of childcare aged 9-months to 4-years-old will be able to receive 30 hours of funding per week.

## When can my child access the EYE?

The following circumstances dictate when funding can be applied for and when funding will be received:

- Child age and date of birth
- The family's working income
- Return to work date (if not currently in work)

If eligible, funding is done by child age and is available the term after the child's birthday or for children eligible for 9-month funding, it is available the term after the child turns 9 months. In all cases, funding must be applied for the term before the funding will start.

Each year is divided into the traditional three academic periods (September-December, January-March, April-August). These are detailed in the tables below along with the term when children can access their funding depending on their date of birth.

Please note: For those families returning to work before their child's first birthday, they must apply for their child's funding the term before the child turns 9-months-old.

Child's Birthday between these dates (For children aged 9+ months).	Can receive Early Years Entitlement from
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023 and 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	Autumn term 2024 (September-December)
1 <sup>st</sup> December 2023 and 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	Spring term 2025 (January-March)
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024 and 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Summer term 2025 (April-August)
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024 – 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Autumn term 2025 (September-December)

Child's Birthday between these dates (For children aged 1, 2, 3 and 4-year-olds).	Can receive Early Years Entitlement from
1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August	Autumn term (September-December)
1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> December	Spring term (January-March)
1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Summer term (April-August)

### When does the EYE funding stop for children?

The EYE funding stops for children at the end of the summer term before they start school. No further funding is available for children starting school after 1<sup>st</sup> September regardless of any staggered school entry during the child's first term at school.

For children remaining at a nursery setting having turned 4, or attending an independent school nursery only, funding can continue until they are of mandatory school age i.e., the term after the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### How many hours of EYE are children entitled to and is a code needed?

EYE funding is paid for each hour a child regularly attends a setting up to the maximum available for the funding type and age of child.

The funding is generally referred to as '15 Hours' or '30 Hours'. This refers to the maximum hours available over a term time pattern of 38 weeks each year. The hours can also be spread over less hours per week and more weeks of the year to the same total hours as follows:

<b>'15 Hours'</b>	This means a total of 570 hours over a year so can be taken as a maximum of 15 hours each week. For childcare providers open all year this is typically reduced to 11 or 12 hours over the whole year, depending on how many weeks the provider is open.
<b>'30 Hours'</b>	This means a total of 1140 hours over a year so can be taken as a maximum of 30 hours each week. For childcare providers open all year this is typically reduced to 22 or 24 hours over the whole year, depending on how many weeks the provider is open.

For simplicity in this Factsheet, funding will be referred to as '15 hour' or '30 hour'.

A summary of funding hours available, whether a code is required and where to obtain the code is shown below:

Funding Provided	Code needed	Where do I get the code
<p><b>3- and 4-year-old Universal Funding</b></p> <p>All 3- to 4-year-olds in England can get '15 hour' funding</p>	NO	<p>No code is required.</p> <p>Apply to a childcare provider for a place with evidence of child's date of birth.</p>
<p><b>3- and 4-year-old Working Families Funding</b></p> <p>Some 3- and 4-year-old children in working families may be eligible to get '30 hour' funding</p>	YES	<p>Code for additional hours from HMRC via:</p> <p><a href="https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/">https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/</a></p> <p>Tel: 0300 123 4097</p>
<p><b>9-month to 2-year-old Working Families Funding</b></p> <p>Some children aged 9-months to 2-years-old in working families may be eligible to get '15 hour' funding</p>	YES	<p>Code for additional hours from HMRC via:</p> <p><a href="https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/">https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/</a></p> <p>Tel: 0300 123 4097</p>
<p><b>2-year-old Universal Entitlement for families in receipt of additional Government support</b></p> <p>Some 2-year-olds may be eligible to get '15 hour' funding if the family is in receipt of a government benefit such as: Income Support and Universal Credit.</p>	YES	<p>Code for 2-year funding from the Local Authority:</p> <p><a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/childcare-two-three-and-four-year-olds">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/childcare-two-three-and-four-year-olds</a></p> <p>Tel: 01225 395505</p>
<p><b>In summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No code is required for universal '15 hour' children aged 3- and 4-years-old.</li> <li>• All other types of funding require a code.</li> <li>• Once a code is obtained, the code should be given to the chosen childcare provider/s who will then apply to B&amp;NES for the child's funding.</li> </ul>		

## What are the maximum hours that can be claimed?

A summary of maximum hours that can be obtained is shown here:

Age	Term Time Only	All Year Round
9-months to 2-year-olds of Working Families	15 hours a week	12 hours a week
2-year-olds of families eligible for Government support	15 hours a week	12 hours a week
3- and 4-year-old Universal Funding	15 hours a week	12 hours a week
3- and 4-year-old Extended Funding	30 hours a week	24 hours a week

## How is it known which funding code a child is eligible for?

The criteria for both the '15 hour' funding for 9-month-olds to 2-year-olds of working families and the 3- and 4- year '30 hour' funding are the same and the working family 2-year-old funding will progress to 3- and 4- year funding using the same code.

Separate factsheets are available showing eligibility criteria for the two different types of 2-year-old funding and another showing the eligibility criteria for the 3- and 4- year '30 hour' funding.

Information is also available from Childcare Choices website: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

## Are there any restrictions on how the hours can be used?

The EYE is paid for hours attended only.

The EYE must be accessed in a regular attendance pattern and cannot be banked as total hours to use on an ad-hoc basis as required.

Regular use of hours provides benefits to the child and a degree of stability to the provider. It also enables accurate financial audit that the provider is correctly allocating the hours paid to them. A regular number of hours per week must be claimed for the whole term, B&NES allow **one** change to this number of regular hours per term. A change in the regular number of hours claimed in a term must be at the half term point in each term only.

There is a cap on the maximum hours and weeks that can be used during each of the three term periods. Parents cannot carry over unused hours into the next term.

Whilst the total annual hours (570 or 1140 for those with 30-hour eligibility) are available to fund a place for a child, if parents do not choose to have a regular pattern, then they should not expect that any hours remaining unused within a regular pattern are then available for any additional sessions.

### **What happens if the chosen provider is not open or offering EYE for the number of hours parents want to take?**

Any unused funding hours each week can be used at another provider up to the maximum available to the child.

If the provider is open for less than 38 weeks, the total number of weeks paid will be reduced to match the total number of weeks they are open. If the provider is open for less than 15 hours a week, the maximum hours funding paid will be the maximum hours they are open.

### **Are there any maximum or minimum hours the child can use?**

EYE can be taken anytime between 6am and 8pm on any day of the week (subject to the provider's opening hours). There is a minimum of 2.5 hours and maximum of 10 hours which can be claimed in any one day. The provider may structure their day to designate hours during the day or week when the entitlement can be taken. There is a minimum 4 week claim during one term.

### **Can a child attend more than one provider and split their funded hours?**

Children can claim the funding at a maximum of two providers in any one day and up to three providers in total during the one term.

Parents must declare to their provider if they are claiming with another provider either in B&NES or another local authority. Parents must state how they want the hours to be split between providers. If inaccurate information is provided and hours are over-claimed, parents will be liable for repayment of over-claimed hours at any point during the funding year.

If the providers are offering funding in term time only and the other/s is spread all year round, parents must agree an acceptable split pattern with their providers as shown in Factsheet 'Term Time and All Year funding.'

### **What happens if the child claims more than the maximum available to them?**

If the claim at all the providers exceeds the maximum allowed for that term or year, the funding will be reduced at each provider in proportion to the hours claimed and parents will be billed for the difference.

## **Can children attend providers in any local authority?**

Children can attend a nursery in any authority regardless of where they live. The claim for funding is done through the provider/s where the child attends. If the child is attending provider/s outside B&NES this must be declared on the claim form/s.

Parents should be aware that other authorities' funding entitlements may not be available at the time B&NES allocations are made, so adjustments to the B&NES funding may be necessary later in the term if incorrect information has been provided on the claim forms.

## **What does the EYE cover?**

The EYE is paid to provide early education opportunities at Ofsted registered provision. It does not cover all the services which the provider may offer. For example, meals and snacks, consumables, additional services, and additional hours are not covered by the EYE. A provider's normal hourly/sessional/daily rate will include charges for their complete service. Parents should discuss this with their chosen provider/s to understand what additional charges will be during the funded hours.

## **What can childcare providers charge for?**

- Providers can charge parents for any extras which the EYE funding is not intended to cover during the funded hours e.g., meals, snacks, consumables, extra activities.
- If a child attends more than the maximum entitlement per week, the provider is entitled to charge the parents for the extra hours.
- If the provider's term is longer than 38 weeks, they are entitled to charge parents for the extra weeks.
- The provider's fee policy should clearly state the charge for all additional hours offered.

## **How do parents find out about what they have to pay for that is not covered by the EYE?**

Parents will be able to find out what each provider offers when they are choosing a place for their child. The provider's terms and conditions will be available to parents within the contract that they will be asked to sign. Providers should provide a breakdown of additional charges or an example invoice so parents can understand what the EYE provides for and what charges will be applied.

## **Bank Holidays**

The provider will define term dates when EYE funding is available. Whilst the provider is expected to close for bank holidays, the place is still funded during this closure as the provider still has staff and premise costs so is not expected to offer the hours at another time.

## **What happens if the child switches providers in the middle of a term?**

If the maximum entitlement is not claimed, any unused hours could be claimed by a new chosen provider, subject to the minimum claim of 4 weeks.

Any release of the funded entitlement already paid is at the discretion of the old provider and their local terms and conditions. Many have a notice period during which they are entitled to keep any funding they have received for a child. This also applies to children who have moved from another Local Authority.

The providers may negotiate with each other as to whether they wish to retain or transfer funding in respect of the child. However, any decision regarding transferring the funding is at the provider's discretion and cannot be enforced by B&NES.

## **What happens if a family wants to remove their child from the current provider?**

If a family no longer wants their child to attend a setting, the family should ensure that they advise the provider in line with any notice period they require and any terms and conditions they have signed with them. The provider is entitled to keep the funding during a notice period.

If a child leaves a provider at the end of one term, parents should ensure their provider is aware of this in line with any notice period. The parent can then start claiming a full term of funding with another provider the following term.

As above, if a parent has removed their child mid-term any transfer of the funded entitlement already paid is at the discretion of the old provider and their local terms and conditions. This should always be discussed with the provider.

## **What happens if a child changes the number of hours they attend?**

If a child's hours have changed at the start of a term (increase or decrease), this must be communicated to the provider at the start of the term along with written confirmation (signature or email). If the child changes their number of hours part way through a term for a period of half a term, the provider can claim for the change in hours but again parents must confirm this with the provider. The provider is responsible for advising us of this information to adjust the claim for the term.

## **What happens to the funding if a child is absent for an extended period?**

Where a child has recurring absences or is absent for an extended period without agreement with the provider, B&NES reserve the right to withdraw the funding.

## **Is there any extra funding for children with special educational needs?**

B&NES recognises that some children with special educational needs (SEND) may require additional support during their early education. Parents should contact the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at the provision the child attends for further information. Parent can also contact the Livewell Team for advice on [livewell@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@bathnes.gov.uk).



**Find further information here:**

Childcare Choices: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Livewell: <https://livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/children-and-families>

Ofsted: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Bath and North East Somerset Council: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/>

Contact the Bath and North East Somerset Council EYE team on  
[eye@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:eye@bathnes.gov.uk) or 01225 395505.