

Early Years Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds

Information for Parents and Carers

September 2015—August 2016

Background

The Government provides a free entitlement for **all** 3 and 4 year old children to attend an early years provider, starting the term after the child's 3rd birthday. This is called the Early Years Entitlement. The entitlement is designed to be flexible so you can choose where you want your child to attend and what hours they will attend (subject to availability).

There is now an additional entitlement for **some** 2 year olds. More information on who is eligible and how to check this can be found in the section "How do I get the entitlement for my child?" over the page.

How does the free entitlement work?

You will need to register your child with a childcare provider. They will then provide you with forms to fill out to apply for the entitlement. They will send these forms to us in order for your provider to receive your allocation.

To claim the free entitlement in Bath & North East Somerset, your child does not have to live in the county, but they need to attend an early years provider in the county. If you live in Bath & North East Somerset, but attend a provider in another county you should make your claim in the other county.

When can my child have this free entitlement?

All children become eligible for this funding at the start of the term AFTER their birthday. (Terms are split into the traditional 3 academic periods September-December, January-March, April-August):

Child's 3rd birthday (or 2nd for eligible 2 year olds) between:	Can have the free entitlement from:
1 st April and 31 st August	the following 1st September
1 st September and 31 st December	the following 1st January
1 st January and 31 st March	the following 1st April

What provider can I use?

In Bath and North East Somerset, there are over 90 private or voluntary run providers where your child can attend, and also some school nurseries and childminders (but not all). For 2 year old funding, the provider must be graded “good” or “outstanding” by Ofsted. A list of providers and further details about them can be obtained from the Family Information Service on 01225 395343. You should contact the individual provider yourself to check availability and what they are able to offer you.

How much is the entitlement worth?

Most providers can offer funding for up to 15 hours early years provision each week. A small number may offer less than this if they are not able to open for a full 15 hours per week. The entitlement is for a regular attendance agreed between the parent and provider. The entitlement will provide for up to 38 weeks a year in school terms only. This will be paid in 3 termly amounts as follows:

Autumn - 14 week term; Spring - 11 week term; Summer - 13 week term

If your provider is open for less than 38 weeks, the total number of weeks provided will be reduced to match the total number of weeks they are open. If your provider is open for more than 38 weeks, your provider may choose to spread the full entitlement of hours over more weeks (see Appendix A).

Note A provider can optionally declare session times during the day or a maximum number of hours each day during which the entitlement can be claimed. You should always check this with your provider.

Will I need to pay for anything else?

- Providers cannot charge you any additional fee for the entitlement hours, although any extras could be billed for e.g. meals and snacks.
- If your child attends more than the claimed hours per week, your provider is entitled to charge you for the extra hours.

- If the provider’s term is longer than 38 weeks, your provider is entitled to charge you for the extra weeks.
- Your provider’s fee policy should clearly state the charge for all additional hours offered.

Note – the value and payment of fees for any additional hours not funded by the free entitlement is a matter between the parent and the provider.

How do I get the entitlement for my child?

For 3 and 4 year olds:

At the start of the term after your child’s 3rd birthday (or any time after this when you want to start claiming), ask your provider for a new starter form EYE 2 (Early Years Entitlement Starter). The form should be fully completed, signed and handed to your provider with a copy of your child’s birth certificate. This only needs to be completed once for any child attending a provider.

For 2 year olds:

If you think you may be eligible for 2 year old funding (see below), please telephone the Free School Meals team on 01225 394317, the Family Information Service on 01225 395343 or apply online at www.bathnes.gov.uk/2year (click “Apply online here”). Please have your National Insurance number with you. If confirmed, you will be sent an offer letter with a unique reference number, which you will need to show to your chosen childcare provider. You will need to complete and sign a new starter form (EYE2) and show a copy of your child’s birth certificate to the provider.

Eligibility criteria for 2 year old funding

All two year olds who are looked after by their Local Authority are eligible. In addition children are eligible who have left care through special guardianship, or through an adoption or residence order. Two year olds whose family meets the following criteria are also eligible:

- Income Support
- income- based Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA)

- income– related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- the guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) and have an annual income of not over £16,190
- Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of not over £16,190

From September 2014, two year olds who meet any of the above criteria or one of the following additional criteria will be eligible:

- if they have a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan
- if they attract Disability Living Allowance

All funded children:

At the start of each subsequent term (September, January and April), you will be asked to sign a form to confirm the number of hours your child is attending/claiming for this term (see note 2, Appendix A).

You must sign each term to confirm your child’s attendance/claim for the entitlement to be paid. This will be paid for the whole term unless otherwise stated.

What hours can I use the entitlement for?

The forms submitted to us will ask you to confirm the total number of hours your child attends and claims each week. In order to claim the full 15 hour entitlement, your child must attend 2 or more days. Please note that some providers may structure their day to designate ‘core’ or maximum hours a day during which the entitlement can be taken. You should check a providers local terms and conditions.

If your child attends for more than the hours claimed, the provider must clarify on any bill your free entitlement and additional hours for which fees are due.

What happens if my child changes the number of hours they attend/claim?

If your child’s hours have changed at the start of a term, this should be noted on the pre-populated form with a confirmation signature. If your child changes their hours part way through a term, ask your provider for a EYE 3 (Amendment form) to confirm the change.

What happens if I move my child to another provider in the middle of a term?

If you have not claimed the maximum entitlement, any unused hours could be claimed by your new chosen provider.

Any transfer of your free entitlement already allocated is at the discretion of the old provider and any contract signed with the provider. Many have a notice period during which they are entitled to keep any allocation they have received for a child. You should discuss this with your provider. They may negotiate with each other if they wish to retain or transfer the allocation in respect of your child. However, any decision regarding transferring the allocation is at the provider’s discretion and cannot be enforced by Bath & North East Somerset.

What is the maximum I can claim?

Note—not all providers are open or are able to offer all year round funding. You should check this with your provider

	Term time Only	All year round
Autumn Term 2015	14 weeks x 15 hours	210 Total
Spring Term 2016	11 weeks x 15 hours	165 Total
Summer Term 2016	13 weeks x 15 hours	195 Total

Can my child attend more than one provider?

Yes, you can claim at 2 providers and your total claim must not exceed the total hours allowed for that term. You must inform your provider if your child attends more than one early education provider.

Can I choose how the Entitlement is split?

Yes, you should state on each provider's headcount form how many hours you attend at each provider and how many hours you want to claim.

What if I claim more than the maximum available?

If your claim at 2 providers exceeds the maximum allowed for that term, the funding will be reduced at each provider in proportion to the hours claimed.

What if my child is absent for the funded hours?

A child is expected to attend for the funded hours on a regular basis. Where a child has recurring absences or is absent for an extended period without agreement with the provider, Bath and North East Somerset reserve the right to withdraw the funding.

Can I use a provider in Bath & North East Somerset and another in a different authority?

Yes, you can. You must make your claim for your child's attendance in Bath & North East Somerset as described above and declare on your form what other provision your child claims for. Your chosen provider in the other authority will also require a similar claim form to be filled out and signed which we will need to check before our funding can be confirmed.

You should be aware that other authorities funding entitlements may not be available at the time Bath & North East Somerset allocations are made, so adjustments to your Bath & North East Somerset funding may be necessary later in the term if these exceed the maximum allowed.

Is there any help for children with additional needs?

Bath & North East Somerset recognises that some children with special educational needs may require additional support during their early education. Please contact the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) at the provision your child attends for further information. You may also contact the Family Information Service for advice on 01225 395343.

Appendix A

- 1. For providers open more than 38 weeks** - Some providers may be willing to spread the entitlement over all the weeks they are open, but a smaller number of hours per week will then be allocated so the same total number of hours per year are funded.
- 2. Important dates** – in order to claim the free entitlement for your child, your provider must submit your signed forms to us by published dates (check with your provider). There is an allocated headcount week at the start of each of the 3 terms during which you must sign. If you miss this, there is a subsequent amendment week just after the traditional ½ term break during which you can sign a form to indicate any new claims or changes to your free entitlement.

Appendix B	2 year old EYE eligibility by date of birth	3 and 4 year old EYE eligibility by date of birth
Autumn term 2015	1st September 2012 - 31st August 2013	1st September 2010 - 31st August 2012
Spring term 2016	1st January 2013 - 31st December 2013	1st January 2011 - 31st December 2012
Summer term 2016	1st April 2013 - 31st March 2014	1st April 2011 - 31st March 2013

If you have any queries about the Early Years Entitlement, please contact us on 01225 395348 or email eye@bathnes.gov.uk.