

AfC Early Education Funding Claim and Payment Policy

Business Planning

AfC will clearly set out in this policy and the document EEF Dates and Deadlines the documentation that they need to receive from providers to support payment and delivery of free entitlements and the timetable which providers should follow when submitting their documentation, this includes setting out the importance of timely and accurate census returns.

AfC will not charge providers disproportionate penalties for providing late or incomplete information leading to additional administration in the processing of free entitlements. Any charges should be reasonable and proportionate to the inconvenience or costs incurred to AfC as a result of the lateness and AfC will ensure charges are clearly communicated to providers.

The provider should ensure they submit timely and accurate information, including, but not limited to, headcount data, census data, parental authorisations and invoices, as per AfC requirements within this policy. Failure to do so may result in inaccurate, delayed or suspended funding.

The provider should maintain accurate financial and non-financial records relating to free entitlement places and should give AfC access on reasonable notice to all financial and non-financial records relating to free entitlement places funded under the provider agreement, subject to confidentiality restrictions.

It is important that contact details for the setting are kept up to date using the forms section on your provider portal account.

AfC will provide regular training on how to submit data to the portal. Dates can be found on the provider portal page.

The Claim Process

In order to claim funding you must be registered on the synergy provider portal. An account can be requested by completing the online form on the provider portal page.

Once you have registered you will be sent an email confirming your user name and another confirming your password. When a member of staff with portal access leaves a setting, the provider must inform AfC in order for their account to be de-activated. Failure to do so may result in a provider's removal from the directory of providers.

There are two elements to the claim process:

1. Estimates: providers will receive email notification at the end of the term, where you are required to submit an estimate total number of funded hours that you will be delivering

in the upcoming term. Details of how to submit estimates can be found in the document Guide to submitting estimates available on the AfC provider portal page.

2. Actuals: providers will receive email notification when the Portal is open for submission. When the portal is open for actuals during the first half of the term, you are required to submit the actual data on the number of children and the funded hours that they will be taking up with you during that term. This is based on children with you on 'Headcount or Census Day', normally the 3rd Thursday of January, May and the 1st Thursday in October. Children no longer at your setting with zero hours should be deleted from the actuals.

Actuals can be submitted and subsequently amended any time during the period the portal is open. We advise that submissions are made as early as possible, any additions and amendments can be made up until the portal close date. This will enable prompt resolution of any errors and duplicate payments so as not to hold up the payment process.

Funding should be claimed for a set number of weeks for each term based on the total number of weeks that your setting is open for the academic year. Not the actual number of weeks you're setting is open each term. Please see the document '**EEF dates and deadlines**' for details on dates and the number of weeks to claim each term.

Inset days and bank holidays should be excluded in the calculation for the number of weeks that a setting is open for the term.

The number of hours claimed must reflect the number of hours agreed on the parental authorisation form.

A provider may stretch the funding up to the maximum number of weeks that they are open and available for childcare. In order to allow parents to access less funded hours per week over more weeks of the year. Subject to the maximum of 570 universal and 570 extended hours per year.

Where funding is stretched over more than 38 weeks in the year, the funding claim should be compressed back to 38 weeks. Funding can only be stretched up to the maximum number of weeks your setting is open for each year.

Claims should be up to a maximum of 15 hours universal and 15 hours extended per week in 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or whole hours. A maximum claim of 10 hours is permitted for one day. Please ensure that if you are claiming more than 10 hours a week you must tick the box 'attends two days or more'.

Each term, children on the provider's headcount will automatically be rolled forward to the following term with an entry of zero hours. It is the responsibility of the provider to either resubmit the required hours or delete any children that have left the setting.

Details of your funding submissions and the amounts owed can be found on the summary page of your Provider Portal account. This information should be checked prior to the portal close date to ensure your funding claim is as expected.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

Providers caring for children who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance can claim an extra £615 per financial year as long as no other provider has claimed within that financial year. To claim DAF the parents must have signed the relevant section of the parental authorisation form. When submitting the child's EEF claim, please specify yes in the 'Nominated for DAF' box and upload a copy of the child's current DLA award letter. Please see instructions on how to upload a document in the documents section on the Provider Portal page. Further information about DAF can be found on our website..

[Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#)

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/professionals-hub/information-for-childcare-professionals-working-in-kingston-and-richmond/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/disability-access-fund-daf>

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

To claim EYPP the parents must have agreed and completed the relevant sections on the parental authorisation form. To claim EYPP the parent's details, including NI number, parent's name and DOB must be completed on the child's funding submission and the consent to check for EYPP box must be ticked. Please see our website for further information about EYPP eligibility.

[Community Information / Information and Advice / Early Education Funding and 30 hours Childcare Offer / Early Years Pupil Premium \(EYPP\)](#)

Duplicate Claims

AfC operates a policy of funding on a termly basis. Funding cannot be transferred between providers within a term. The funding for the term is paid to the setting where the child is on roll on headcount date. On roll includes within a providers notice period subject to a maximum of one month.

We do ask, in order to prevent duplicate funding claims when a parent signs up after the start of the funding term, or leaves before the end of the term that providers remind parents that this may impact their funding arrangements and to discuss their options. Working with the parents to come to a fair agreement for the benefit of the child. Parents are asked to declare that they are not already in a funding agreement with another provider on the parental authorisation form to help identify such scenarios.

We advise that the scenario of a child proving ineligible for funding is covered in your private terms and conditions to avoid financial loss. This also provides an alternative option should a parent wish to end their funding agreement.

If more than one provider claims the same funded hours for a child then the following process will be followed.

- AfC early years team will contact both providers to inform them there has been a duplicate claim for the funding and will request the upload of the signed parent authorisation form.
- If no parent authorisation form is submitted within one week of the request the funding will be withdrawn for that child.
- If the parent authorisation form does not clearly state the hours and type (universal/extended) of funding for your claim then funding will also be withdrawn.
- If both settings produce valid parent authorisation forms, then the funding will be allocated to the provider with whom the form was signed first, unless the parent can evidence that they gave the agreed notice, subject to a maximum of 1 month.
- If a duplicate funding claim is not resolved within one week of the portal close date then funding will be withdrawn from both providers until the matter is resolved. This is to avoid any unnecessary delay in payments.

If you have any queries about this process please email the early years team early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Payments

AfC will pay all providers, particularly childminders, monthly unless a provider requests and the local authority agrees to continue an existing alternative sustainable method of payment.

The provider should accurately complete and submit headcount and other **necessary data returns** by the agreed date to support AfC to make payment.

There are three options available to receive funding payments.

1. Monthly payment. First payment of 30% of the estimated funding delivery for the term then a second 30% payment in the second month in the term. A third payment based on the final actual submissions less the interim payments already made. This is the default payment option.
2. Split payment 60/40. A payment of 60% of the estimated funding delivery for the term then a second payment based on the final actual submissions less the interim payment already made.

For both of the above methods an estimate must be submitted by the required deadlines set out in the document 'EEF dates and deadlines'. Details of how to submit estimates can be found in the document 'End of Term Funding Quick Guide'.

3. One lump sum. One payment based on the final actual funding submissions.

For all three methods a submission of actual funded hours per child must be submitted by the deadlines set out in the document 'EEF dates and deadlines'.

If it transpires that your interim payment is more than the total funding due for the term, AfC will reclaim the overpayment from your next term's payment or arrange for you to repay the money.

Payments for the above options will be made as follows:

Option 1 - The initial payment will be made in the first two weeks of term and the second payment will be approximately one month after the first payment and the final payment in the beginning of the third month.

Option 2 - The initial payment will be made in the first two weeks of term and the final payment in the beginning of the third month

Option 3 - will be one payment in the beginning of the third month following the verification of the headcount figures.

Providers will automatically default to the monthly payment option. A request to change the method of payment must be received by AfC before the final date of estimated funding submissions for the relevant term. Dates can be found in the document 'EEF Dates and Deadlines' for the relevant academic year.

Payments will be delayed if the information the claims or census information submitted is late or incorrect. Contact details are not up to date or for failure to comply with an audit request.

If you have any queries about the claims and payment process please email the early year's team early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk