

AfC Early Education Funding Eligibility Policy

Eligibility Criteria

AfC must ensure that a child has a free entitlement place no later than the beginning of the term following the child and the parent meeting the eligibility criteria for the free entitlements.

All eligibility criteria are set by Government, details and further information for providers and families can be found www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

It is the responsibility of providers to ensure a child is eligible for funding before the offer of a place is given. It is advisable that the scenario of a child proving ineligible for funding is covered in your private terms and conditions with the parent to avoid financial loss, this also provides an alternative option should a parent wish to end their funding agreement.

AfC administers early years funding on a termly basis. The setting where the child is on roll on headcount date claims the funding for the **full** term. On roll means that the contract has been started and the child would be expected to be actively attending the setting and included within the provider's contractual notice period, subject to a maximum period of one month. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the parent is not under notice with another provider for the early years entitlement.

A parent may access funding at more than one setting up to a maximum of 2 sites in one day. A provider must ascertain where a child is attending more than one setting and confirm the hours both providers should be claiming via the parent authorisation form.

Part claims for the term will not be accepted by AfC except in the circumstance where a child has moved into the borough or where the child has not accessed funded hours at another setting within the term. Please follow the procedure EEF Late Starter Policy.

When a child leaves or starts mid term, providers should remind parents that this may impact their funding arrangements and to discuss their options. Working with the parents to come to an agreement for the benefit of the child. Please see EEF Late starter policy and Duplicate Claim Policy for further information. Where this leads to an excess funding claim, the additional funding may be used to deliver funded hours for another eligible child that may have missed the headcount date / deadline.

There must be a completed and signed parental authorisation form in order to claim funding for the appropriate term. The number of hours claimed must reflect the number of hours agreed on the parental authorisation form. Please refer to the duplicate claims policy where the claims exceed entitlement.

The provider should check original copies of documentation and record confirmation on the parental authorisation form that a child has reached the eligible age on initial

registration for all free entitlements. The provider must retain either paper or digital copies of documentation to enable the local authority to carry out audits and fraud investigations.

Where a provider retains a copy of documentation this must be stored securely and deleted when there is no longer a good reason to keep the document. Please see the GDPR page for further information about data retention and storage.

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/professionals-hub/information-for-childcare-professionals-working-in-kingston-and-richmond/resources/gdpr>

For 2 year old funding child should be 2 years old by the following dates and can claim up until the end of the term in which they turn 3 years old: For 3 year old funding the child should be 3 years old by the following dates and can claim up until the end of the funding term in which they turn 5 or until the child starts in reception class in a maintained school whichever is soonest. Part claims cannot be made for the weeks between 1st September and a child taking up a place in reception.

Autumn term 31st August

Spring term 31st December

Summer term 31st March

Social Mobility and Disadvantage

AfC will promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children and children in need by removing barriers of access to free places and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.

The provider should ensure that they have identified the disadvantaged children in their setting as part of the process for checking EYPP eligibility. They will also use EYPP and any locally available funding streams or support to improve outcomes for this group.

Please see the EEF claim and payment policy for details on how to apply for EYPP.

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

Providers may have children whose post code entitles their setting to an additional payment for Social Deprivation which will be paid each term. This is determined based on the addresses entered into the synergy portal system. The Social Deprivation Payment (SDP) is not child specific and can be used to support any disadvantaged or vulnerable child within the setting.

The decision as to how to use this funding is up to the provider, but it should be used to help meet the Government's objective of narrowing the gap between children from different backgrounds.

Some suggestions are

- To help those families struggling to pay for nursery fees

- To take children to outdoor events where those children may not be able to attend due to financial or other restraints
- Help reduce cost of activities and trips
- Purchase healthy eating ingredients for all the children
- Fund activities that the Local Authority has supported in the past that they we probably will not be able to fund in the future
- Resources that enhance those activities

Two Year Old Funding

For 2 year old funding, eligibility to claim must be obtained by the parents via AfC and they must supply you with the eligibility reference in writing from AfC.. If a parent has applied for eligibility with another borough they must also apply via AfC we will only accept claims where there is an eligibility reference issued by AfC. Please see our website for further details about 2 year old eligibility.

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/where-to-apply-for-childcare/two-year-olds-free-childcare-and-early-education>

Providers should offer places to eligible two-year-olds on the understanding that the child remains eligible until the end of the term in which they turn 3. Regardless of any change in circumstance.

Where a child is moving from a 2 year old funding agreement to a 3 & 4 year old funding agreement, providers should inform parents at least a term in advance where the change may result in a difference to their contractual agreement. Providers should be mindful of disadvantaged families.

Extended / 30 hours Funding

For extended hour's claims, it is the parent's responsibility to apply for and renew their codes before the start of the funding term in which they intend to claim. Providers have a responsibility to remind parents of the deadline. If there has been a delay in obtaining a code from HMRC then parents should seek compensation through the HMRC complaints process.

Alongside the 30 hours eligibility code, which is the child's unique 11-digit number, a provider must acquire written consent from, or on behalf of, the parent to be able to receive confirmation and future notifications from the local authority of the validity of the parent's 30 hours eligibility code. This must be recorded on the AfC parent authorisation form and the 30 hour consent box on the child's record in the synergy portal must be ticked to confirm this. If a provider is checking the validity of a code prior to the parent authorisation form being completed then alternative written consent must be obtained in order to check the parents details.

Once a provider has received written consent from the parent, they should verify the 30 hours eligibility code using the eligibility checker function on the synergy provider portal.

30 hour codes must have a start date prior to the date above for the respective term and a grace period end date after the funding term start date. AfC will continue to fund an existing place for a child who enters the grace period as set out in the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities. A child may not start a new setting during their grace period. Please see the childcare choices website for more info on funding entitlements. <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

A child will enter the grace period when the child's parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016, as determined by HMRC or a First Tier Tribunal in the case of an appeal.

AfC will be able to access information about whether a child has ceased to meet the eligibility criteria and entered the grace period via the Eligibility Checking Service. The grace period end date will automatically be applied to eligibility codes.

AfC will run a code audit every half term, in line with the dates below which will update the child's eligibility on the portal and show on the child record where a child is in their 30 hour code grace period and communicate with providers once this process is completed. A child in their grace period will be identified with a warning symbol next to their name on the portal record.

It is a provider's responsibility to communicate with a parent in grace period and ensure the parent is clear about what will happen in respect of place and fees when they fall out of eligibility.

Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	LA audit date:	Grace Period End date:
1 Jan – 10 Feb	11 February	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	1 April	31 August



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for children**

1 April – 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

Please email early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk with any queries about eligibility for funding.