

3 to 4 year old Nursery Educational Grant 15 Hour Free Offer

A reminder of contract obligations under Funding Agreement for the Provision of Early Education and Childcare for 2, 3 & 4 year olds In Ealing.

All 3-4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of free early education for 38 weeks of the year (known as the free entitlement). Children become eligible for the free hours from 1 September, 1 January or 1 April (the start of term) following their 3rd birthday. They remain eligible until they reach compulsory school age.

The 15 hour entitlement **MUST** be offered as a completely **FREE** offer. Under no circumstances, should this be offered as a discount off a parent's current bill or additional top up fees requested.

Additional Charges:

Charges are able to be applied for services provided above the 15 hour entitlement. These charges need to be clearly agreed and documented between the parent and setting upon take up of the placement offer. If there are any changes to the pattern that the child attends please update your agreements and re-issue to the parents.

Examples of additional charges that can be applied are for meals, snacks, planned trips etc. However once again these charges must be presented and explained to the parent upon take up of their places. If there are any changes to these charges, please update your agreements and re-issue to parents.

Please review your current invoice layouts issued to parents and ensure they follow the correct format, examples can be found below;

Correct Invoice Example

For example;

Jim Smith is 3 years old and attends Ealing Nursery, for 20 hours a week. An example of what Jim's invoice should look like is as follows;

Invoice To:

Mr and Mrs Smith

Invoice Date:

06/05/16

NEG 15 hour Free Entitlement	£0.00
Additional Hours (5hours charged at £8.00 per hour)	£40.00
Food and Snacks (4 days Lunch £3.00 each day and Snacks 70p each day)	£14.80
Total	£54.80

Payment Terms:

Within 7 days of receipt of invoice date

Incorrect Invoice – NEG as a Discount

Invoice To:
Mr and Mrs Smith
Invoice Date:
06/05/16

Weekly Fees (20hrs * £5.20p/h)	£104.00
NEG Funding Received Discount (15hrs * 3.28p/h)	£49.20
Total To Pay	£54.80

Incorrect Invoice – NEG with Top Up Fees

Invoice To:
Mr and Mrs Smith
Invoice Date:
06/05/16

Weekly Rate (20hrs * £5.20)	£104.00
NEG Funding Received (15hrs * 3.28p/h)	£49.20
Top Up of Hourly Rate Received (£5.20 - £3.28)*15 hrs	£28.80
Additional Hours (£5.20*5hours)	£26.00
Total	£54.80

THESE ARE INCORRECT AND SUCH INVOICES ARE IN BREACH OF YOUR CONTRACT WITH EALING COUNCIL AND SHOULD NOT BE USED.

Early Education and Childcare FAQ's

The answers below may answer your queries, but if you need more information please contact the London Borough of Ealing's Family Information Service on 020 8825 5588

(email: children@ealing.gov.uk).

What is Early Education and Childcare?

3 & 4 year olds

All 3 & 4 year old children are entitled to up to six terms of early education before reaching statutory school age (the first term following their fifth birthday). The early education and childcare entitlement is for up to 15 hours per week, for between 33 and 38 weeks per year. Children can attend fewer than 15 hours a week (or none at all); it's the parent's/carer's decision.

2 year olds

In September 2013 this entitlement was extended to around 20% of all 2 year old children rising to around 40% from September 2014. Two-year-olds will be eligible if they meet any one of the following criteria:

They meet the eligibility criteria also used for free school meals;
Their families receive Working Tax credits and have annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190 per year;
They have a current statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care plan;
They attract Disability Living Allowance;
They are looked after by the LA;
They have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order.

What are the benefits?

Children have the chance to play and learn in an environment that will help to extend their skills and experiences, develop their confidence and build on what they already know.

When does a child become eligible for a funded place?

Children become eligible for a funded early education and childcare place from the term after their second or third birthday.

Child born between	Eligible for free nursery place from
1 September -31 December	Spring term (January)
1 January - 31 March	Summer term (April)
1 April - 31 August	Autumn Term (September)

Do families need to be a resident of the borough of Ealing?

Not for 3 & 4 year old places but a child must go to an eligible "setting" within the borough.

2 year old funded places in Ealing are only available to families living in the London Borough of Ealing

How is the funding paid?

In the first two weeks of each term teach the Council will carry out a headcount of all children who qualify for early education and childcare funding. The information is then sent to the Early Years Data Officer – 3 & 4 year olds the Childcare Funding Administrator – 2 year olds, funding is paid directly to the setting on the child's behalf, usually at half-term. All parents must sign a parent declaration to confirm that they are not receiving funding at any other setting

Please Note - If a 3 or 4 year old child attends a maintained nursery in a primary, the school nursery will receive all of the funding and the funding cannot be claimed by a private nursery, pre-school or childminder..

I have a child that has just moved into the area and have missed the headcount day, can I still claim?

Children moving into Ealing from another borough after headcount day **may** be eligible for funding. You will need to complete an addition to headcount form and send it to the Childcare Funding Administrator.

A child has just moved to England from another country. Are they eligible for the Free Entitlement?

Yes, they are entitled to Free Entitlement on the same basis as any other child, regardless of whether they have British Citizenship.

Can parents be asked to make a financial contribution towards the cost of a child's early education place?

No. parents **MUST NOT** be required to contribute to the cost of the basic entitlement, however many of the settings provide additional services as well as nursery education, for example, childcare beyond your child's 15 hour entitlement, meals and snacks or in some case additional tuition. In these cases, parents can be charged a fee for those additional services as they exceed the minimum entitlement. **The rates for additional hours are a matter for the provider to decide and the Local Authority cannot specify what those charges should be.** Parents **must** be made aware of the charges that will apply in advance of the child taking up a place.

Providers are not permitted under the scheme to levy any fee in respect of the free entitlement nor should they charge parents fees in advance for the free entitlement to be refunded at a later date. What this means is that providers cannot charge a registration fee or deposit for the funded entitlement, but they can apply these charges for any additional hours parents may choose to purchase.

Do parents have the right to take the entitlement with a particular provider?

No. parents have the right to an early education and childcare place for their child it is not a guarantee of a place at the provider of their choice, however, the family information service does make every effort to help parents find the best place for their child.

Do providers need to get parents to sign a contract relating to the free early education funded place?

A contract is an agreement that secures a child's free place for a minimum period of 1 term (or longer if required) and confirms a child's eligibility to the free place. The setting will be funded by the local authority for this period which allows the setting to employ sufficient staff and manage their business costs. The contract requires the parent to keep the child at this setting until the end of each term - unless there are exceptional circumstances such as moving house.

Early years providers should be clear on contractual arrangements, detailing notice periods / payment schedules etc. Parents should read these documents and ensure they understand all aspects, if they have any concerns over this document they should take these up with their chosen provider directly. Parents should be aware that they are entering in to a legally binding contract with the provider, and are liable for additional charges if this contract is broken, as stimulated in any contract. **The Local Authority cannot support parents or providers in disputes over contractual arrangements outside of the Nursery Education Funded hours.**

Can parents be charged during holiday periods?

If parents are attending a childcare provider that is open for more than 38 weeks, they can be charged for any additional time that a child attends. If parents do not attend any additional hours, the childcare provider cannot make charges and therefore is not required to guarantee a child's place for the following term. **Parents cannot be charged a retainer fee if they are only accessing a funded place**

I can only offer less than 38 weeks per year, can parents send their child to another setting to make up the difference?

No, extra weeks at the end of term/year cannot be claimed elsewhere.

Can parents access more than 3 hours a day with a provider?

Yes, parents can claim a maximum of 10 in one day **if** the provider is able to offer this.

Should a parent be provided with an invoice

Childcare providers in Ealing do differ in how they manage their business and the charges they set, outside the free early education and childcare sessions. Providers do have a responsibility to their parents to provide clear and concise information about their service charges and billing arrangements and therefore should be prepared to spend time going through any paperwork or queries with parents.

If a child has their Free Entitlement in a school nursery class; does that guarantee a place at the school?

No. Admission authorities should not give priority in their arrangements to children attending the school's nursery or otherwise imply that parents have to enrol their child at the nursery in order to secure a school place. This can disadvantage parents who have recently moved into the area or who chose to take up the free entitlement at an alternative local provider.

How do I get support with administering the early education and childcare scheme?

You can contact the London Borough of Ealing's Family Information Service on 020 8825 5588 (email children@ealing.gov.uk).

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. At all other times, you will be able to leave a message on their voicemail service.

Alternatively if you would like to discuss any of the above please do not hesitate in contacting Sandeep Sahota sahotasa@ealing.gov.uk.