



Ox Close Federation

Nursery Admissions Policy

Approved	October 2023
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All three and four year olds in England are entitled to free, part-time early learning, care and development. It lasts for up to two years, until children reach statutory school age.

Children can currently attend on a part-time basis for 15 hours a week, for 38 weeks of the year.

This can be taken flexibly over a minimum of two days, and a minimum of 2 ½ hours per day with up to two providers. Some two year olds are also able to access these places.

When does my child qualify for the free places?

Child born between 1st January – 31st August: September term intake

Child born between 1st September – 31st December: January term intake

In the event that all places have not been filled in January, we will then have an April intake for children born between 1st January - 31st March.

Free play and learn for 2 year olds

If a child is eligible, they could receive 15 hours a week (term time only).

The eligibility criteria are:

1. From households where a parent is in receipt of any of the following benefits:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The Guarantee element of the State Pension Credit,
 - or Child Tax Credit, provided they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC),
 - or are in receipt of Working Tax Credits (including those in receipt during the four-week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work fewer than 16 hours per week) with a household income of less than £16,190 as assessed by HMRC.
2. Looked after by their local authority
3. With a current statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan.
4. Who have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order.
5. In receipt of the Disability Living Allowance.

If a child qualifies for free childcare, they could take up their 'play and learn' sessions, the term after their second birthday.

Priority will be given to children entitled to 15 hours per week and these places must be allocated first. Places are allocated for the 15 hours per week entitlement according to the oversubscription criteria listed below:

- **Looked After Children**

Children who are 'Looked After' or a child who was previously Look After but immediately after being Looked After became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order*. A Looked After child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (a) in the care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their Social Services functions (see the definition in section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989).

An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangement to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- **Children In Need**

The Children Act 1989 defines a child 'in need' as:

- He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the Local Authority under Part 3 of the Act.
- His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services.
- He/she is disabled.

The Two Year Old Free Entitlement

Where a child has been accessing the free entitlement for 2 year olds in a maintained nursery school or unit, for a minimum of 15 hours per week for two terms immediately prior to the child becoming eligible for free entitlement, they shall receive priority for admission to that maintained nursery school or unit in order to preserve continuity providing that they also live within County Durham's administrative area.

- **Age**

The offer of a place will be prioritised according to date of birth. Normally, the earliest date your child can be accepted for Early Years Provision is the term after the child's 3rd birthday, although some 2 year olds can access the free entitlement. Where applicants have the same date of birth, priority will be given to the earliest date of application.

- **Those children who are only entitled to the universal entitlement of 15 hours free early education per week**

Those children who are not eligible for the extended 30 hours offer should be offered the 15 hours universal entitlement for a minimum of three terms before they are due to enter a full time school place in the Reception year. Maintained nurseries should plan for this provision to ensure those who are only entitled to 15 hours are offered a place.

- **Children Living in Other Authorities**

- Although there are no catchment areas for places, preference will be given to children whose parents live within County Durham's administrative area. Only when all children living within the boundary of County Durham have been allocated a place, may a child living in a neighbouring area be offered a place.

The three and four year old entitlement

30 hours funded early education per week, term time

This is for 3 & 4 year olds from working families that meet the eligibility criteria. The 30 hours funded place will consist of the current 15 hours universal entitlement for all 3 & 4 year olds, which will be **extended** by an additional 15 funded hours. The additional 15 funded hours will be known as the '**extended entitlement**'.

The maintained nursery school or unit will undertake a validation check on the eligibility code and details provided by the parent on the application form. On confirmation the code is valid the following criteria will be applied to all applicants:

- If there are more places available than applications, all children will be offered a place.
- Subsequent applicants will be offered places until the provision is full.
- Once all places have been allocated, further applications will be included on a waiting list and places will be allocated in accordance with the 30 hours oversubscription criteria.
- If there are more applications than places, the 30 hours oversubscription criteria will be applied as outlined below.

30 Hours Oversubscription Criteria:

Places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis on receipt of a verified code.

Responsible Officer:

Further information is available from Graeme Plews, School Places and Admissions Manager, Children and Young People's Services, telephone 03000 265777, email Graeme.plews@durham.gov.uk.