

Please find below the questions and answers raised across the 2 sessions held, for your information.

**Q1. Where can I find the hourly base rates for 2026/27?**

These will be on the [funding pages](#) of the Early Years website from 01/04/26.

**Q2. Can we split the universal and extended hours in other patterns other than 15/15?**

You can split the hours however it works best for you and parent and ensure you record this correctly on the headcount portal and ensure that any patterns are clearly agreed when offering a place. However, you need to be mindful if parent falls out of working parent eligibility and there is an element of universal at each setting that this may not meet the parents needs if there are minimal hours at each setting (e.g. 7.5/7.5) therefore it could become confusing on where parent decides to remain.

**Q3. Do schools have to offer all the early years entitlements?**

No, we know the vast majority of early years entitlements for children under 3 are delivered in the private, voluntary and independent sector. Schools should assess their own business models and decide which of the entitlements they can offer and for how many places. We know most schools offer the early years entitlements for 3 and 4 year olds, and some take children from 2 years of age. Whatever the model in your school, you should ensure this information is clear for parents accessing their early years entitlements with you.

**Q4. We have low numbers so are taking children into school as they turn 3, is there funding to support them or do we just 'take the hit'?**

This cohort of children are classed as rising 3's and may be able to access funding through the entitlement for early learning for 2 year olds or through the working parent entitlements. We would advise you to encourage parents to check their eligibility to see if you could claim funding for them. To check eligibility the early learning for 2 year olds, please contact the Families Information Service via [Ask Lion](#) and to check eligibility for working parent entitlements, parents should apply to HMRC through the [Childcare & Early Years Education - Best Start in Life](#) website. You may also be able to claim additional Early Years Pupil Premium Funding for these children if they are eligible. If the family are not entitled to either of these funding streams and you offer the child a place, your school won't be funded for their attendance and these costs will need to be met from your school budget.

**Q5. Why are there 2 different hourly rates for the 2 different entitlements for 2 year olds?**

LAs are required to ensure that the final hourly rate paid to providers for the early learning for 2 year olds is at least equal to (or more than) the final hourly rate paid for the 2 year old working parent entitlement to ensure providers are not disincentivised from offering the early learning for 2 year old entitlement.

**Q6. If a parent arrives today with a working parent eligibility code, can they start accessing their funded hours straight away?**

This depends on their 'eligible from' date. To ascertain the 'eligible from' date, you need to run a check on the portal under the working parent entitlement tab. The 'eligible from' date is the date they applied, and they can only begin accessing the working parent entitlement funding the term after this date. For example, if they arrived today, 10<sup>th</sup> February, with their eligibility code and their 'eligible from' date was before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, then they could access their funded hours straight away. If they applied today and their 'eligible from' date is 10<sup>th</sup> February, then they would have to wait until 1<sup>st</sup> April before



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being able to access their funded hours. The parent's letter from HMRC also states that they cannot start until the term after they receive the code.

**Q7. Do we need to check codes and eligibility before offering a place?**

Yes, with all funding streams, apart from the 15 hours universal 3 & 4 year old funding, you must be checking eligibility before offering places to ensure that you will receive the funding.

**Q8. How can I identify those children with EYPP?**

When the headcount task is open and you have submitted ahead of the deadline, any eligible checks will show with a green 'P' in the funding column in real time. Once the headcount is closed you can view the task in the historic list of tasks to identify, however any checks after headcount closure won't show on here, but schools funding will be given this data.

**Q8. If I have any questions regarding the early years entitlements, who do I contact?**

There is a wealth of information on our funding pages and particularly in the Provider Agreement, but if you need further support please email [eyfunding@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:eyfunding@nottinghamcity.gov.uk) and a member of the Early Years Funding Team will contact you.

*Early Years Team  
February 2026*