

Early Years Entitlements

Childcare Expansion Funding Application Form Guidance Notes



Important Information

- Submission of an Application Form is not a guarantee of securing funding through the Childcare Expansion Funding Programme.
- **Please read these Guidance Notes prior to completing your Application Form.**
- It is recommended that you read the [Childcare Expansion Capital Grant - Allocations Guidance](#)

What is the Childcare Expansion Funding for the Early Years Entitlements?

In the Spring Budget 2023, the Government announced transformative reforms to childcare to support and enable more parents into work. This included working parents in England being able to access 30 hours of funded early years provision, for 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their child is 9 months old to when they start school. This has been phased in since April 2024 when qualifying working parents of 2 year olds became able to access 15 hours funded provision a week and this extended to qualifying working parents of children aged 9 – 23 months becoming able to access 15 hours funded provision a week from September 2024. The final phase of roll out will see qualifying working parents of children from 9 months of age able to access 30 hours funded provision per week from September 2025, up until they start school. By 2027-28 the Government expect to spend over £4.1bn to fund extended funded hours for children over the age of 9 months.

As a Local Authority, Nottingham City Council has a statutory duty under The Childcare Act (2006) to ensure there are high quality, sufficient and sustainable childcare places. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated funding to local authorities to support the local delivery of these reforms.

In Nottingham City, capital funding is being made available to schools and childcare providers through a grant allocation programme to support the creation of new or additional early years entitlements places. The DfE estimates that there will be a shortfall of approximately 1,570 places for children under the age of 3, based on the number of registered places currently available and population estimates. We have layered this with our local Childcare Sufficiency Information to identify the priority wards these places need to be focused on (see page 2 of these Guidance Notes).

Nottingham City Council received a capital allocation of £490,743 to support the expansion of provision for children under 3 with the introduction of the new early years entitlements **and** to support wraparound childcare for primary school aged children. National guidance suggested an approximate allocation split of 80% for Early Years Entitlements place creation and 20% for Wraparound Childcare place creation. As such, Nottingham City has allocated £423,900 capital available to support the expansion of the early years entitlements. Information on the funding amounts available to apply for can be found on page 5.

Revenue Funding for these early years entitlement places is provided through the Provider Agreement on existing hourly rates levels.

For further support in growing, sustaining or starting your childcare provision, also check out the [Early Years Toolkit | from Childcare Works](#).

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE READ THIS ACCOMPANYING GUIDANCE
BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM**

Early Years Entitlements Provision Key Criteria

- Provision should be within an identified priority ward
- Premises must be secure and the project have approval from the premises owner
- Providers should be registered to accept payments through Tax Free Childcare (or intend to do so)
- Providers must be Ofsted registered or registered with Ofsted registered childminder agency (or intend to register)
- Places funded through this application must be open by 1st September 2026
- **Please note that no funding will be awarded in retrospect**

Section 1 – Your Details

The Application Form should be completed by the organisation that will be delivering the early years entitlement places that will be created through this capital project.

Question	Additional Guidance
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The company/organisational name is the legal entity to which any awarding grant will be paid to. This should be your company name as it registered with Companies House, on your constitution, governing document or registered with the Charity Commission, for example • Page 7 of the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant - Allocations Guidance details the organisations who can make an application for this funding
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The priority wards identified for early years entitlements projects are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aspley - Bestwood - Clifton West - Dales - Meadows - St Ann's • If your premises is not situated within one of the above priority wards, you can still make an application but will need to very clearly demonstrate the need for additional provision in your locality in Section 3.
9 - 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All providers must be registered with Ofsted, registered with an Ofsted registered childminder agency, be newly registered or intend to register at the time of application. • Ofsted registration must be in place before the project can commence. • Applications from good or outstanding graded settings will be prioritised, in line with national guidance • Providers offering, or intending to offer, the early years entitlements must be delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and should be registered with the LA to offer funded early years entitlement places or have the intention to do so. This involves agreeing to the terms and conditions outlined in the Nottingham City Provider Agreement.
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All funded places must be open and operational no later than 1st September 2026.

Section 2 – Your Premises

Question	Additional Guidance
16 - 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are leasing the premises from the school or a landlord, a lease agreement must be in place prior to the funding being awarded • The lease agreement must be for at least 3 years from the date of the places opening to support the sustainability of these places when the funding ends • A copy of the lease agreement must be submitted alongside your Application Form.
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the evidence of the School / Governing Body / Landlord's support of this application must be submitted with the Application Form. This could be an email or letter of support from the School / Governing Body / Landlord, for example, but must evidence that the school is in full agreement with the proposed developments.

Section 3 – Your Project

Question	Additional Guidance
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of your supporting Business Plan must be submitted with your Application Form • Provide a clear outline of your project – the number of and type of new/expanded places to be created, times, ages, schools supported, proposed capital works, experience of managing building projects • Include details of any assessments you have undertaken on what the impact of your proposed project would be on existing provision and confirmation of formalised working arrangements where working partnerships are, or are due to be, in place • The application should not cause market disruption i.e. putting a provision in direct competition with another where there is no evidence that current supply is not meeting demand or seeking to replace an existing offer where the current provision is meeting demand and the needs of children and families.
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail how demand for creating these new/additional places has been determined • Detail how you know what opening hours are needed and your fee structures, including how you know what parents are able to pay for your provision • Detail / supply evidence of demand analysis – this could include data from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, local market research, consultations, evidence of waiting lists or feasibility studies
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current number of existing places should be the maximum number that can be catered for at any one time
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of new or additional places to be created should be in addition to any places detailed at Q22. • These are on a full-time equivalent basis, not per session (for example 10 morning places and 10 afternoon places = 10 full time equivalent places, not 20 sessional places) • This should not be the overall number of places that will be available as a result of this expansion

Section 4 – Quality Childcare Practice

Question	Additional Guidance
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your knowledge, practice and understanding in relation to safeguarding children, families and staff. Include how you will ensure the premises and facilities are safe, suitable and meet children's needs, that the environment is safe, welcoming and inclusive, that there are positive staff-child interactions, that those who provide care facilitate child-led, choice-based activity and play and that resources are safe, stimulating, varied, age-appropriate and meet children's needs.
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your knowledge, practice and understanding in relation to inclusive practice. Include how equality and inclusion will be promoted for all children and how individual needs of children with SEND will be met. The provision should be accessible to all children.
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline a potential staffing structure Detail how many additional staff will be needed for the places to be created Outline your plans for recruitment, induction and retention Detail how you would ensure ongoing support to your workforce to enable them to provide high quality service for local children and their families. Staffing levels and ratios should be determined on an individual basis according to different levels of need of the children attending each provider, taking into account that some children with the highest needs may require 1:1 support. Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised and decide how best to deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met.
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your experience and understanding of the importance of partnership working with other professionals and within the local community to improve outcomes for children.

Section 5 – Capital Funding

Question	Additional Guidance
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide outline detail on estimated costs of the capital works needed to enable the delivery of new/additional wraparound places Pages 6 – 8 of the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant - Allocations Guidance details what capital funding can and cannot be used for, with examples of eligible projects Funding for capital projects must result in tangible assets (i.e. assets with physical substance) that are expected to be used for more than 1 year Grant funding is not intended for routine or general maintenance, refurbishment of premises, replacement of repairs of fittings within domestic premises, capital works to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate or revenue expenditure of any kind. Add all your expenditure headings to detail a total of capital works to create the new/additional early years entitlement places

29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State how much of the total capital project costs you are seeking in grant funding • Please note, capital costs are available on a per place basis for the number of new or additional, full time equivalent early years entitlement places being created. • The capital funding available from the LA will be at an average of £270 per place created. The formula is simply £270 per place x the number of full time equivalent early years entitlement places to be created • This funding will be paid in 2 instalments of 50% of the grant awarded, the 1st upon completion of the Grant Funding Agreement and the 2nd following evidence that the first instalment has been spent. • All capital costs must be paid and monitored before the delivery of the new/additional early years entitlement places begins
30 - 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the difference between the total project costs and the grant funding requested • If there is a shortfall between these two amounts you will need to detail how this shortfall will be met and provide evidence of this shortfall being secure
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are required to submit a 3 year cash flow forecast with your Application Form to cover the whole provision that these funded places will be a part of • This must clearly identify how occupancy plans to build for the new/additional places and demonstrate sustainability of these places from parental fees
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State if planning permission is required for the works detailed in this application • If you don't know if planning permission is needed, you should endeavour to find this out prior to submitting your application to enable this question to be answered
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If planning permission is needed, please indicate the status of your planning permission application. • If planning permission is needed, evidence it has been secured will be needed prior to any capital funding being released
35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure you submit the appropriate number of quotes to support your capital works project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 quote for individual works under £10k - 3 quotes for works over £10k • The costs detailed in Q28 should be 'like for like' for the quotes obtained • Quotes should be no more than 6 months old and still be valid • Quotes must include VAT where required • Quotes must be submitted with your application to enable the Grant Assessment Panel to assess your application in relation to representing value for money • Pages 9 – 10 of the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant - Allocations Guidance Detail the Planning and Procurement requirements of capital projects and outlines what due regard needs to be given to in relation to the relevant Frameworks and Acts • School applications will need to refer to the Schools Output Specification 2022 and the relevant statutory guidance on making significant changes to a school building as detailed on pages 9-11 in the above guidance

Section 6 – Declaration and Submission

In submitting this application, the key contact identified in Section 1 is signing to confirm that they:

- Have appropriate legal authority within their organisation to make this application, which they confirm to be true and accurate at the time of completion
- Will provide any supplementary documentation as requested in support of their application
- Understand that following Panel Assessment if a grant was to be awarded, a full grant agreement between the City Council and the organisation would need to be in place, prior to funding being released

Additional Information on Submitting Your Application

- Please use the Supporting Documentation Checklist at the end of the Application Form to ensure your application is fully complete.
- Incomplete applications, or applications received after the deadline date, will not be able to be assessed and will be deferred to a later funding round or rejected.
- Once complete, please email your Application Form and supporting documentation to earlyyearsexpansion@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
- The deadline dates for applications to be received are as follows:

Deadline Date	For Panel Meeting
27 th February 2025	The week commencing 10 th March 2025
9 th May 2025	The week commencing 19 th May 2025
19 th September 2025	The week commencing 29 th September 2025
23 rd January 2026	The week commencing 2 nd February 2026

- Any applications received after the 23rd January 2026 will not be assessed and the grant programme will run to these published dates unless funds have been fully allocated beforehand.

Panel Recommendations will be ratified by the Education Capital Board and applicants will receive one of the following outcomes:



Application Awarded

- Grant Agreement Issued
- Payment Schedule Issued
- Monitoring Schedule Issued
- 1st Instalment paid upon receipt of Signed Grant Agreement



Application Deferred

- Additional Information Requested
- Applicant to supply additional information
- Application taken to next Panel for reconsideration



Application Declined

- Applicant issued information about Appeals Process

If you have any questions about the Childcare Expansion Funding Programme, please contact your EYFS Support Worker in the first instance, email earlyyearsexpansion@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or check out the information on <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/earlyyears/>

Nottingham City Early Years Team, Revised June 2025