



meadows
montessori
nursery

Free Early Education Entitlement



10.12 Free Early Education Entitlement

All three and four-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours of free early education a week until they either go into reception class or reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). This free entitlement is paid from the term after your child turns three. Please see the cut-off dates below:

Born on or between	Terms for eligible funding
1 January – 31 March	Summer term (April onwards)
1 April – 31 August	Autumn term (September onwards)
1 September – 31 December	Spring term (January onwards)

Using Free Early Education Entitlement

The 15-hour entitlement can currently be used:

- over a minimum of two days or a maximum of five days, at a minimum of 2.5 hours a day and a maximum of 7.5 hours a day
- over 38 weeks (**afternoon sessions only 1-3.30pm**), or pro-rata over a maximum of 50 weeks per year.
- through a maximum of two childcare providers – you should arrange this with your chosen provider

How to claim Free Early Education Entitlement

We will be able to apply for Free Early Education Entitlement funding on your behalf from Essex County Council. The funding is then paid directly to us on a termly basis.

Each term we will ask you to sign a parent/carer agreement form. The form is your commitment to us for your child's place for the coming term. We will then submit the form to Essex County Council to claim the Free Early Education Entitlement for the next term.

Early Years Census and Personal Data

Each year, as we have children accessing the Free Early Education Entitlement for three and four-year-olds we are required to complete an Early Years Census. This information is passed by each setting to Essex County Council, which provides it to the Department for Education.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 early years settings must inform parents about the data they hold and how it is used. Data covers personal information such as names, addresses, date of birth, etc. This is known as a Privacy Notice. This should also include information about whether the data is passed to any third parties, for example the local authority.



If parents have any questions about how data is being used or stored within an early years setting, they should contact the us directly.

Local Authority use of personal data in relation to the Early Years

Census and the Free Early Education Entitlement

The Local Authority (LA) receives information about children attending early years settings as part of the annual Early Years Census and the Free Early Education Entitlement headcounts.

Essex County Council holds this personal data and uses it to:

- support children's learning and development
- calculate the amount of free early education entitlement funding to be allocated to each setting
- inform decisions about funding allocations for the LA's early years provision
- carry out its other statutory functions such as the assessment of any special educational needs a child may have.

It also uses the information to derive statistics on, for example, the number of additional early years places that will be required to meet future demand. The statistics are used in such a way that individual children cannot be identified.

Essex County Council handles information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, and is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998.