



Department
for Education

NCASC Conference: Delivering Childcare Reform Programme



Department
for Education

Introduction

Early Education and Childcare plays a vital role in enabling parents to work and supporting children's early development and school readiness, which in turn improve economic growth

- Decades of evidence shows us that quality early education has a positive effect on children's educational, cognitive, behavioural and social outcomes in the short and long term.
- Building a strong foundation for every child is at the heart of the work we do, it is critical to enable children to flourish and succeed in school and later in life. And that is especially true for those children who don't start off with the same advantages as others.
- This government has a strong track record of supporting parents with the costs of childcare and supporting disadvantage children, including:
 - 15 hours free early education for disadvantaged 2 year olds
 - 15 hours free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds
 - Additional 15 hours free childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds
 - Early Years Education Recovery Programme



Spring Budget March 23

The Budget announced a range of measures to support education and help parents with childcare so they can return to work more easily



Entitlements



Wraparound



Market reforms



EYFS changes



Childminder grants



Universal Credit reforms

These will be rolled out in stages, to ensure enough supply in the system

Autumn
2023

- Childminder grants become available
- Invest £204m into 3/4yo and 2yo funding rate
- Staff:child 2yo ratio change

Jan
2024

- EYFS flexibilities introduced

April
2024

- 15hrs for eligible working parents of 2-year-olds introduced
- Invest £288m into 3/4 yo and 2yo funding rates

Sept
2024

- National wraparound support begins
- 15hrs for eligible working parents of children 9 months plus introduced

Sept
2025

- 30hrs for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to primary school age introduced

Sept
2026

- All parents who need it are able to access 8am-6pm wraparound provision



Progress since the Spring Budget



Funding the early years entitlements

Investment in new offers will more than double spending on entitlements



On 29 November, we published the government's response to the recent consultation on early years entitlements funding, alongside the final 2024-25 local hourly funding rates for the existing and new early years entitlements.

In 2024-25 alone, we are investing over £400m additional funding to deliver a significant uplift to the hourly rate paid to local authorities for the entitlements. This includes £67m new funding to reflect the increase in the National Living Wage from April 2024, £57m in recognition of teacher pay and pension costs in 2024, as well as the £288m additional funding announced at Spring Budget in March 2023.

The national average hourly rates for 2024-25 are as follows:

- **Under 2s entitlement:** £11.22
- **2-year-old entitlement:** £8.28
- **3- and 4-year-old entitlement:** £5.88
- **MNS supplementary funding:** £5.27
- **Early years pupil premium:** £0.68 hourly rate
- **Disability access fund:** £910 yearly rate



Workforce

Communications and Marketing

We are supporting recruitment into the workforce by taking action to expand the pool of interested applicants. We are improving early years and school-aged childcare career advice in schools and job centres and have recently launched a digital and social media campaign promoting Early Years Educator apprenticeships through our [L3 apprenticeships campaign](#).

This is the start of a long-term communications drive to encourage people across the country to consider and then apply for a role in early years and childcare. It precedes a national, multi-media recruitment campaign which will launch in early 2024.



The EYFS consultation and associated workforce changes

The recently announced changes to the EYFS intend to offer providers increased flexibility and alleviate known burdens, giving providers more choice over how they operate and making it easier for them to deliver the EYFS. This should support settings to deliver the new entitlements announced at the Spring Budget by allowing them to better utilise the skills and experience in their existing workforce.

Further interventions

We are continuing to develop further workforce initiatives. This includes procuring for Early Years Skills Bootcamps with a pathway to accelerated level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeships. Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible employer-led courses that give adults the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track learners to a guaranteed interview with an employer.

We are also exploring what further interventions may be needed to build the workforce for school-aged childcare.

We will be updating LAs with further information on our workforce interventions over the coming months.



Wraparound



The government **will invest £289m over two years, from Jan 2024, to enable local authorities to work with primary schools and providers (including childminders) to set up or expand before and after school childcare in their area.**

In October 2023 we published:

- Details of LA level funding to set up new and expanded provision and build capacity in LA teams
- The programme handbook

Next steps:

- LA webinar on 7 December
- Release first tranche of grant funding to local authorities
- Publish guidance for schools (early 2024)
- Confirm early adopters
- Delivery Partner contract begins Jan 24
- Work with LAs to prepare for rollout from September 24.

Supporting early years children with SEND

Effective **early identification** of Special Educational Needs is essential to ensuring a child is provided with the support they need throughout their education and beyond into adulthood. This is a key principle in the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, published in March this year.

We want children with SEND in the early years to be able to take advantage of the childcare reforms. Priority work includes:

Workforce

We are working with the sector on to identify the support EY staff might need to be able to meet the needs of children with SEND.

- We are funding the training for up to 7,000 early years Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)
- There is also SEND-related content across the DfE-funded package of training, support and guidance for the early years workforce

Funding

We are also reviewing the operation of SEN Inclusion Funds within the current early years funding system, to ensure funding arrangements are both appropriate and well-targeted, to improve outcomes for pre-school children with SEND.



Working with local authorities

Increasing places

Data:

- Latest supply and demand modelling shared with LAs
- Termly LA readiness survey 1 completed and analysed

Progress:

Local Authority Support:

- £12m EY delivery support funding announced in October
- All wraparound funding allocations confirmed. MOUs all returned by local authorities.
- Interim LA support contract boosted until January 2024

Developing the Infrastructure

Operational Systems:

- Changes to the HMRC, DfE and LA systems underway
- Testing plans in development
- Guidance issues to LAs and software suppliers, setting out policy and technical changes for April 24 expansion.

Funding

- Consultation response on 2024-25 uplift and 2024-25 rates published

Data:

- Analyse Term 2 LA readiness survey

Local Authority Support:

- Full support contract in place from January 2024
- DfE and contractor regional events

Next steps:

Operational Systems:

- Progressing changes to and testing digital systems
- Working with LAs and their software suppliers to ensure systems are ready for April 24 rollout

Funding:

- Confirmation of LA level funding rates to providers

