

Free Entitlement Funding Policy

The Government provides early education funding so that your child can attend up to 15 hours of early years education per week for up to 38 weeks a year at pre-school from the "calendar block" after their third birthday, up to a maximum of 570 hours per year. This is available for all children.

From April 2013 this has been extended to some qualifying two year old children. You can find all the information you need at the Northamptonshire County Council website - www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/2yearfunding.

The on-line eligibility checker will take you through the process to determine whether you are eligible for the funding. Basically, if your children are eligible for Free School Dinners then your two year old will be eligible for 2 year funding. If you are eligible you will be given a reference number to bring into pre-school.

Calendar blocks

1 January - 31 March - children having their 3rd birthday between these dates can claim from the Summer funding block (after the Easter holiday)

1 April - 31 August - children having their 3rd birthday between these dates can claim from the Autumn funding block (after the Summer holiday)

1 September - 31 December - children having their 3rd birthday between these dates can claim from the Spring funding block (after the Christmas holiday)

The eligibility for funding is based on a 'headcount day' which is simply a cut-off date set near the start of terms 1, 3 and 5 (usually September, January and April). Children not attending pre-school by that date will not be eligible for funding until the following calendar block.

There will be three Headcount Days every year when all children within pre-school are counted and this is your chance to increase or decrease the number of sessions claimed for.

To make a claim for Early Education Funding you will be asked to complete a contract between you, as parents, and Guilsborough Preschool, as the 'Provider of Free Entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare'. This contract is signed three times a year. You will be seen by the Administrator and asked to complete the form in Pre-School. Your entitlement can be split between GPS and one other setting, if required.

It is a requirement that the Administrator sees your child's birth certificate and a utility bill showing the family address. Copies of these will be kept with the Contract. Failure to provide these items or acceptable alternatives will result in the Administrator being unable to process your claim and a bill will be generated for the hours attended. Please provide these items when registering your child so as not to delay funding. You will also be billed for any sessions attended over the 15 hours free entitlement.

The payment of the Early Education Funding is made directly to the setting that your child attends - it is not paid to parents.

Preschool is open for 190 days per year which, when divided by 5, equates to 38 working weeks a year. However, with the part weeks that we sometimes open for, preschool is actually open for 40 full or parts weeks a year. This means that, occasionally, some children may use up their free 570 hours of entitlement before the end of the school year. Any hours a child attends over the 570 will, therefore, need to be paid for. The administrator will give parents an indication of how many hours they are likely to be claiming by the end of the year and will give as much notice as possible of any additional fees which may be payable. Parents will be given the option of paying these additional fees as a one off payment in the final term or spread over the year.