

# Frequently Asked Questions about 2 Year Old Free Entitlement (FE) for Childcare Settings

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## Eligibility/Application Process questions

### **Are printed copies of the FE for 2 year old application form available?**

Please encourage all applications to be made online, however there is a paper based version of the application form available upon request.

### **Which parent is eligible for Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance?**

If a two-parent family, eligibility will be based on the parent who receives the funding. If a single-parent family, eligibility will be based on the main carer.

### **What if a parent/carers is currently paying but are eligible under the criteria?**

Please encourage the parent/carers to apply for FE for 2 year old funding as soon as possible so parents don't pay more than necessary. If eligible, funding will only be granted from when the application was made and cannot be backdated. A free place must not be started until eligibility has been checked and funding awarded by WSCC.

### **What if I have a parent with multiple births?**

They can apply only if they meet one of the eligible benefits or other specified criteria.

### **If a parent is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) for an older child and refuses to apply for FSM, how can we encourage the parent to apply for FE 2 year old funding under the FSM criteria?**

We need your help to break down this barrier. Children will be county-wide, not just in areas of deprivation. It is an entitlement not targeted at vulnerable groups

### **What if a parent/carers has been granted funding but their circumstances change which mean they no longer meet the eligibility criteria?**

Once eligibility is confirmed, funding will remain in place for that child regardless of a change in the family circumstances.

Future applications for siblings will be based on the current national criteria which has been set by Government. Unfortunately, WSCC have very little discretionary control over these criteria.

### **How can I be sure if a child is eligible under the Child Looked After criteria that has transferred to me from another setting?**

Please phone the Family Information Service on 01243 777807 who can double-check eligibility.

### **Can I as a setting use the FSM eligibility checker?**

No. Only WSCC have access to the FSM eligibility checker.

## Setting questions

### **Can a setting sit with a parent to go through the application form?**

If a parent needs additional support with completing the application form, they can [visit their local Children and Family Centre](#) for assistance. If this is not possible settings can support parents to complete the form. However, please be aware that the parent may need to supply sensitive information, particularly if they are applying under criteria other than Free School Meals, and so may require support away from other parents in the setting

### **Do I need to see the National Insurance or National Asylum Seeker Service numbers?**

No. WSCC use these references as part of the eligibility checks.

### **Do you have to supply an invoice even if the value is £0?**

Yes. For accounting and auditing purposes there needs to be a paper trail. It also needs to be made clear to parents that this service is offered free of charge and a secondary invoice offered to non-FE children or for ancillary services.

### **Can settings be made aware of the reasons FE for 2 year olds was granted?**

The only information we receive is confirmation that the family meets the criteria for funding. We will not have any additional information on the support needs of the child or family, and as the funding will be an entitlement, it may be that additional support needs are not required anyway.

### **Can a setting mix 2, 3 and 4 year olds or do they need to be kept separate?**

Settings are able to integrate 2, 3 and 4 year olds as long as you also address the additional needs of the younger children e.g. providing a rest area and time, changing facilities etc. For additional support and guidance, please contact your Early Years and Childcare Advisor.

## Funding queries

### **Why can 2 Year Olds start after headcount day?**

2YOs have always been able to start at any point in the term. This is in recognition of the fact that children may become eligible for funding or 'ready' for early education at varying times in the year

### **If a child moves setting mid-term, is there a timeframe of when balances should be transferred over?**

As per the Provider Declaration, a maximum of 4 weeks of funding may be retained in lieu of notice, the remaining amount of funding for the term must be passed onto the new provider.

### **Why is there a separate section for 2 Year Olds on the Post Headcount/Exceptional Payment form?**

2 Year Olds can start at any point in the term and the Post Headcount/Exceptional Payment is the correct way of ensuring payment is made. Settings should only request funding outside of the headcount process for 3&4 year olds if there are exceptional circumstances relating to why they missed the headcount day, and we need further details for these requests.