

## **'Stretching' a 2 Year Old Place**

### **Guidance for childcare providers**

Since April 2014, childcare providers have had the option to offer a FF2 place over 48 weeks rather than 38 weeks. This is referred to as 'stretching' and this document explains how it works.

- An eligible child's funding year will begin in the academic term following their second birthday and will be capped at a maximum of 570 hours per year. If a parent chooses to only take one or two terms of funding, they will not be able to access the full 570 hours.
- 15 hours spread over 38 weeks equals the full 570 hours. However, a 'stretched' place of 12 hours over 48 weeks equals 576 hours which exceeds the maximum entitlement by six hours.
- In the case of a parent taking up the 'stretched' offer, they must be made aware that they will exceed their free early education hours and be given the option of either (a) removing their child from the setting or (b) paying for the additional six hours. Under no circumstances can you insist that the parent pay; they must have the option to remove their child if this best suits their circumstances. The terms around these extra six hours must be agreed between yourself and the parent at the time they sign the Parental Declaration Form.
- Please complete the box on the Parental Declaration Form to indicate if you are offering a stretched place.
- The FF2 Scheme will not fund these additional six hours and it is your responsibility to ensure that each child does not exceed their maximum entitlement of 570 hours.
- If a child comes to you from another childcare provider, you must always check how many hours they have already received.
- Where a parent **changes their pattern** of receiving free early education, it is important to ensure that they do not exceed 570 hours.
- It is your responsibility, as the childcare provider, to keep a record of each individual child's hours to ensure that they do not exceed the maximum entitlement. This is more likely to happen if a child is taking their free early education place with two childcare providers or has moved to you from a provider that has been claiming the 'stretched' offer.

## Example

Two terms have been taken at 15 hours per week but the third term is 'stretched'.

In this case, you must check how many hours the child has already received over the two terms and subtract this from 570.

The remaining hours must then be divided by the number of 'stretched' weeks in the third term and it may mean that less than 12 hours per week can be taken.

Terms 1 and 2 (autumn) 2013	= 14 wks x 15 hours = 210 hrs (term time)
Terms 3 and 4 (spring) 2014	= 12 wks x 15 hours = 180 hrs (term time)
Terms 5 and 6 (summer) 2014	= 18 wks x 12 hours = 216 hrs (stretched)
Total	= 606 hours

In this example, the child would exceed their free early education hours, so you need to calculate how many hours they could take in the 18 week 'stretched' period.

Total number of hours taken in terms 1 to 4	= 390 (210 + 180)
Remaining hours	= 180 (570 – 390)
Hours that can be taken per week	= 10 (180 hours ÷ 18 weeks)

If you have any questions about 'stretching' or any other aspect of the FF2 Scheme, please contact the FF2 Team at [eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk](mailto:eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk) and they will be happy to help.