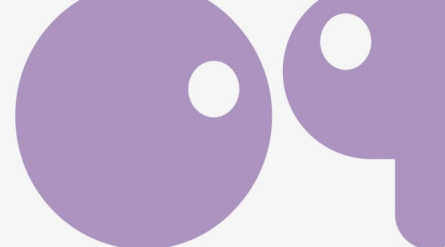


Frequently Asked Questions for Providers

<p>What will the hourly rate be?</p>	<p>Following the local early years funding formula 2024-25 consultation, Kent County Council intends to share the new funding rates by the end of February 2024.</p>
<p>Can I top up the fees to bring it in line with our hourly rate?</p>	<p>Government guidance states that Local Authorities must ensure that providers do not charge parents top-up fees (any difference between a provider's normal charge to parents and the funding they receive from the Local Authority).</p>
<p>Will we have to offer FULLY funded places – if so, can we cap how many we offer?</p>	<p>Government guidance on access to free places is clear that providers are free to set their own criteria for the admission of children, providing they comply with relevant legislation on equalities and non-discrimination. All parents should have the same rights to access a free entitlement place regardless of whether they choose to pay for additional hours of provision, additional activities or meals. Providers must publish their planned patterns of delivery including those that they will offer completely free.</p>
<p>What can I charge parents for?</p>	<p>Providers must be completely transparent about any additional charges when a parent first takes up their child's free place, for example, for those parents opting to purchase additional hours or additional services.</p> <p>Providers can charge for meals and snacks as part of a Free Entitlement place, and they can also charge for consumables such as nappies or sun cream and for services such as trips and specialist tuition.</p> <p>Providers should be mindful of the impact of additional charges on parents, especially the most disadvantaged. Providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on providing parents with options for alternatives to additional charges, including allowing parents to supply their own meals or nappies, or waiving or reducing the cost of meals and snacks.</p>



Can I claim for my relations?	Government early education funding cannot be claimed by or spent on childminders providing childcare for their own child or a related child.
Can I be paid monthly?	Following the local early years funding formula 2024-25 consultation, Kent County Council intends to share any changes to the payment process by the end of February 2024.
When will I be able to sign up to the new Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds?	There is not a specific 'sign-up' option. Once the new Kent Provider Agreement is released, you will need to tick the correct options on the Declaration of Agreement so that MI can make any changes to Synergy and enable the Working Parents Entitlement to be entered on the portal.
Can I just offer the 15 hours of Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds and not increase to 30 hours in September 2025?	No, there is no universal offer for two-year-olds and therefore when the entitlement increases to 30 hours providers will need to accommodate this increase or offer the maximum that they are open to if this is less than the 30 hours.
A parent has said they are unable to access a code for the new Working Parents Entitlement because they have recently confirmed their Tax-Free Childcare eligibility – what can they do?	Parents claiming Tax-Free Childcare for a child turning two on or before 31 March 2024 and have a reconfirmation window that opens after 15 February will have received a letter with a temporary code from HMRC before this date. This code can be validated like digital codes. Parents should not contact HMRC before receiving their letter.
Will parents still need to reconfirm if their window opens on or after 15 February?	Once a parent's reconfirmation window opens, they will still need to reconfirm via their childcare account and share the permanent code with you. This is because they will need to continue to reconfirm each term to ensure their eligibility does not lapse.
A parent has lost their letter containing their temporary code – what should they do?	If a parent has not received a letter from HMRC by 15 February or has lost it they should contact HMRC.
How will the new Working Parents Entitlements be claimed for and paid?	This will be claimed using a similar process to the current three- and four-year-old Extended Entitlement process. How this is paid will be confirmed following the consultation.



I have an all year round provision. Will the new entitlement start from 1 April?	This will begin at the start of term after the Easter holidays.
Will parents who access the new Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds be able to increase hours mid-term if their working patterns change like the current Extended Entitlement for three- & four-year-olds?	No, MI will update providers with changes to Working Parents Entitlement claims by the end of March 2024.
Will the new Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds follow the same processes as the current Extended Entitlement for three- & four-year-olds?	Yes, parents must apply for the entitlement through the Government's online Childcare Service, not Kent County Council or their provider. Eligibility for the additional free hours is determined by HMRC through this online application. HMRC will issue an 11 digit eligibility code and providers and Kent County Council's Management Information are responsible for checking the validity of the parent's code.
Where can I find a parental declaration for the new Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds?	Management Information has combined all funding entitlements into one form and streamlined the number of boxes parents need to sign. The new parental declaration form can be found on the two-year-old, three- and four-year-old and the Working Parent Entitlement pages on Kelsi. Free Early Education - KELS!
Do I need to use the new Parental Declaration Form for existing parents who have already begun claiming for their three- or four-year-old or can I continue with the existing one and use the continuation sheets each term until they leave?	Children already accessing entitlements can continue to use the existing forms. New children to any entitlement or those claiming the new entitlement should use the new Parental Declaration Form.
Where can I direct parents if they have more questions about the new Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds?	More information on the new Working Parents Entitlement for two-year-olds can be found on the Childcare Choices website and the Kent County Council website. Childcare Choices Kent County Council



<p>Will there be any way for us to know if the two-year-old funding is due to low income?</p>	<p>Free For Two funding will have a different type of code to the one issued by HMRC to working parents. It is important to note however that Free For Two eligibility criteria is not only limited to income levels.</p>
<p>Why are the entitlements still being referred to as free when other Local Authorities have dropped this word?</p>	<p>Whilst we acknowledge providers' feedback about referring to the entitlements as free, Government guidance issued to Local Authorities still consistently refers to free places.</p>