

Contact Us

Q. What if my child moves settings?

A. It is important to understand the admissions policy. It should show clearly the settings policy in offering the FE and any potential obligations, financial or otherwise, over and above the FE. You should understand all the policies of a setting before agreeing to the terms and conditions and signing a contract. Please note that not all settings may be able to deliver your preferred requirements, but this may be possible using more than one setting. If you have any queries regarding the policy, discuss this with the setting before signing a contract. For further help and support contact the FIS.

Q. If a setting is open for less than 38 weeks per year, can the remaining hours be claimed at another setting?

A. No.

Weeks per year	Hours per week	Minimum number of days	Total hours across the year
36	15	3	540
37	15	3	555
38	15	3	570

Q. I don't understand the invoice from my child's setting, what should I do?

A. In the first instance you should contact your setting to discuss your query. If you still require further assistance you should contact the FIS.

Q. Will it affect any benefits or Tax Credits I am receiving?

A. It shouldn't affect any benefits that you receive. However, if you are eligible for the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit, any reduction in childcare fees will affect the amount you receive from Tax Credits. If you have any queries contact Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs on **0845 300 3900** or online at www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Q. What happens when my child goes to school?

A. Legally all children must start in full-time education, usually in school, in the term after they become 5. When you take up a place in a West Sussex County Council school Reception Class, whether on a full or part-time basis, the Free Entitlement will cease. Further information about applying for a school place can be found on the West Sussex website: www.westsussex.gov.uk

Q. Where can I go for extra help and support?

A. Please contact the FIS on 01243 777807.

You can contact the Family Information Service for further information and guidance about your childcare needs.

By post West Sussex Family Information Service
Early Childhood Service
St James Campus
St James Road
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 7HA

Telephone 01243 777807

Fax 01243 520825

Opening Hours Monday - Friday 8.00 - 18.00

Out of Hours An answer phone is available

Email family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk

Internet familyinfoservice.westsussex.gov.uk

If you have any difficulties or feedback regarding this leaflet please call the Family Information Service on **01243 777807**. We are able to supply you with a copy of this leaflet in a version most appropriate to your needs, for example audio, braille, large print or in another language.



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Free Entitlement (Early Years Provision)

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Family Information Service



Q. What is Free Entitlement (FE), early years provision?

A. Free Entitlement is the funding which pays for 570 hours per year of flexible early education and care. This is for a maximum of 15 hours per week and can be accessed over a minimum of 38 weeks.

Q. What are the benefits for my child?

A. Your child will be able to go to a pre-school, nursery or accredited childminder, for free, on a part-time basis. Research proves that access to good quality early education and care can:

- improve confidence and social skills
- help with language development
- improve literacy skills
- increase levels of concentration
- help with behavioural issues



Q. Who is the funding for and when is my child eligible?

A. The funding is for all eligible children attending a setting in West Sussex regardless of disability, additional needs or citizenship. The funding can be accessed for up to two years. A year commences on the date your child becomes eligible and subsequent anniversaries of this date.

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE FREE ENTITLEMENT

A child born between:	Will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from:
1 April and 31 August	The start of the Autumn Term (1 September) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age.
1 September and 31 December	The start of the Spring Term (1 January) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age.
1 January and 31 March	The start of the Summer Term (1 April) following their 3rd birthday until statutory school age.

Q. What does FE cost?

A. The 570 hours per year is free. However, you may be charged by the setting for additional time or services. For example, if the FE is offered by the setting through the lunch period, you may be charged for meals.

(Alternatively you may bring a healthy packed lunch if you wish. For ideas please see our leaflet 'What shall I have in my lunchbox today?') Details of this will be included within the setting's admissions/pricing policy.

Q. How does FE work?

A. Contact the Family Information Service (FIS) to find details of local settings that offer FE places. Visit some settings then choose your preferred one. (Different settings may offer the FE in different ways and at different times.) Accept a place, if available, and agree the terms and conditions. Please note that not all settings may be able to deliver your preferred requirements, but this may be achieved by using more than one setting.

Q. How often should my child attend?

A. As a parent, you know your child best and should discuss your child's needs with the setting to help you decide. A regular pattern of attendance is important to ensure your child's continued development. Therefore, a consistent pattern is suggested such as:

- Every morning
- Every afternoon
- 2.5 days per week which are the same days each week

It can be hard to balance your own needs, especially for working parents, with those of your child. However, you should aim to use your chosen setting for as long as possible, avoiding the need to move your child every few months or term.

Q. How many FE hours can be taken in a day?

A. This will depend on the admissions policy of your chosen setting. However, the setting is required to work within the following limits:

- Maximum of 10 hours in one day
- Minimum of 2.5 hours in one day
- Between the hours of 8am and 6pm
- 15 hours over a minimum of 3 days *

* If you wish to access over 2 days, the maximum you can access is 12.5 hours. Claims can be made in half hourly increments.

Q. What is Flexibility?

A. Think of the entitlement as 570 hours and this cannot be exceeded. These hours can be stretched across the whole year dependent on the setting you choose. For example, not all settings will be able to stretch the FE over more than 38 weeks.

Weeks per year	Hours per week	Minimum number of days	Total hours across the year
38	15	3	570
45	12.5	2	562.5 *
51	11	2	561 *

*The remainder of hours cannot be claimed

Q. How do I get FE?

A. You will be asked to sign a parent declaration, and show proof of date of birth for your child, by the setting(s) in order to receive your FE. Any changes made to the amount of hours claimed will need to be agreed prior to the start of term and recorded on the parent declaration form.

Q. What type of setting can I access this from?

A. A nursery, nursery class, pre-school, playgroup or independent school that is part of the scheme or accredited childminder (who is a member of the West Sussex Children Come First quality assured childminder network).

Q. What is headcount day?

A. The headcount day is usually at the beginning of term when the setting confirms all FE children attending their setting to the local authority.

Q. Can I use FE at more than one setting?

A. Yes. You can split the FE hours across more than one setting per week but no more than two. When completing the parent declaration form (for each setting) you must say if you intend to split the FE across two settings.

