



## Parent and Carer Information

Providers are required to ensure parents/carers are well informed about the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) scheme and what they are entitled to.

Did you know that all parents and carers of children aged 3 and 4, can have up to 15 hours of FREE early learning and childcare each week, during school term time, regardless of how much money you earn? Up to 15 hours per week for a maximum of 38 weeks per year, will be paid for you at the start of the school term after your child turns 3.

Leicestershire understands that parents/carers want the best for their children and that the idea of someone else looking after their child, who isn't part of the family or a friend, can be very daunting. Reassurance can be taken from the fact that all childcare providers who offer the free early learning entitlement can only do so by meeting a minimum quality standard. Providers should be registered with Ofsted and the types of providers include full day care nurseries, playgroups, some children's centres and accredited child-minders, and are generally referred to as 'settings'. Staff are trained and qualified to care for your child, helping them to learn and develop. Many parents/carers will also be reassured to know that children who have experienced early learning and childcare will have an easier transition when they move into school. This is because they will already have had opportunities to express themselves and to socialise through a range of creative, physical, emotional and social play opportunities. They will be more confident in interacting with other children and different adults.

The Government funds early learning and childcare providers so that all 3 and 4 year olds across the country can have part-time, free early learning and childcare. It also helps them settle into school better. There are lots of different types of early learning and childcare places available in Leicestershire, but only you can choose the right place for you and your child - because you know your child best. Although you have a choice of providers, you may not always be offered the full entitlement at the times you want at the provider of your choice. The Leicestershire Family Information Service is a free and impartial service that can help you choose the right kind of place for your child and provide you with the contact details of settings in your area. They will help you find out more about day nurseries, accredited child-minders, playgroups and children's centres and will be happy to answer any queries you may have about free early learning and childcare places or to find you an alternative place if your current provider can no longer meet your needs. Please contact them on 0116 305 6545.

## **So, what are you entitled to?**

All 3 and 4 year olds in Leicestershire are entitled to 15 hours of free early learning and childcare per week, for a maximum of 38 weeks of the year. This equates to 570 hours over the period of a year, to be taken during term times. If you choose a setting that opens for less than 38 weeks per year, then you can still only take 15 hours per week so this will mean that you forfeit some of your entitlement as the remaining hours cannot be taken elsewhere. For some parents, this entitlement is up to 30 hours (1140 per year), which will be explained later in this document.

The early learning entitlement is often referred to as 'Nursery Education Funding' or 'FEEE'. You can access your 15 (or 30) hours of FEEE, but please note the following rules apply:

- you can take no more than 10 hours in any one day
- you can't use less than 2.5 hours in any one day
- you can access your 15 hours between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm
- If you take your full 15 hours, you must take these over at least 2 days per week
- you can spread your 15 hours free early learning entitlement between a maximum of 2 settings, providing they operate for at least 38 weeks per year. This might be split between two nurseries, or a nursery and a child-minder, or a playgroup and a child-minder, it is up to you as long as you do not claim more than 15 (or 30) hours a week. In cases of over claims Leicestershire County Council will determine how your payments are split between the two providers
- your child must be in attendance for all of the funded time claimed for by your early years provider, unless there is a valid reason such as illness or holiday. You may be liable to pay any losses incurred by the provider if your child is consistently not in attendance for the funded time.

## **30 Hours Entitlement**

You can usually get 30 hours free childcare if you (and your partner, if you have one) are:

- in work - or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave
- each earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week - this is £125.28 if you're over 25
- This earnings limit does not apply if you're self-employed and started your business less than 12 months ago.

You're not eligible if:

- your child does not usually live with you
- the child is your foster child
- either you or your partner has a taxable income over £100,000
- you're from outside the EEA and your UK residence card says you cannot access public funds

In order to access your hours, you must ensure you sign a Parental Statement of Undertaking (PSOU) for the setting each term and provide proof of your child's age by showing a document such as a birth certificate, passport or medical card.

The following is a national birth date eligibility table which will tell you when your child will be able to take up their free place:

<b>A child born between:</b>	<b>Will be eligible for a free place from:</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August	1 <sup>st</sup> September following the child's 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday
1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> December	1 <sup>st</sup> January following the child's 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday
1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March	1 <sup>st</sup> April following the child's 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday

### **Headcount Dates**

In order to access FEEE, your child has to be attending a provision before the dates of the headcounts. If your child is not in attendance (due to holidays or sickness etc.) but is registered with the provision and is able to take the place up within two weeks of this date, then you can still receive your free entitlement.

### **How will your child's place be paid for?**

Your 15 (or 30) hours are totally free and you should not be asked to pay any costs towards it. However, if you need to use the setting for more than the funded 15 (or 30) hours, you should agree the charges for these directly with the setting, preferably before you take up your place. In addition, you should discuss any further costs such as hot lunches. The local authority is unable to dictate what a provider charges from any additional hours taken or services offered outside of the free entitlement.

### **Your child's learning and development**

Parents/carers are invaluable in being the child's first educator so it's important that when children attend a setting, that you are confident to leave them in a safe, secure and exciting environment. Presently, your child will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is a play based curriculum. Children will learn how to develop their social skills, physical skills, speaking, listening, reading, writing skills and will learn through mathematical and creative activities. The practitioner at the setting will carefully match your child's learning to an age appropriate level. During the time your child attends, they will be able to experience learning opportunities outdoors too.

When your child leaves the setting to attend school, you are entitled to request your child's Learning Journey detailing your child's progress so far, and you should ensure you pass this on to your child's school to aid his or her transition. The same applies if your child leaves a childcare setting to attend an alternative childcare provision.

### **What if your child has Special Educational Needs?**

If your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and attends either Sketchley Hill or Wigston Menphys Centre's you may be able to access up to an extra 6 hours of FEEE per week. If this is the case, you should speak to your providers about claiming for this time - or for more information please contact the Family Information Service on 0116 305 6545.

### **How to arrange your place**

Once you have found a place that's right for your child, the childcare provider will ask you to complete a Parent's Statement of Undertaking (PSOU) and provide documentation to verify your child's date of birth, such as a birth certificate, passport or medical card.

The free 15 (or 30) hours entitlement is purchased by the local authority on your behalf and paid straight to the early learning and childcare provider. The hours you claim via the PSOU should be shown as free on your invoice/statement.

## Starting School

Legally, your child does not have to start school until he or she is of compulsory age which is the term after the child turns 5, you may still receive the FEEE until this point.

All schools under the control of Leicestershire County Council have a single start, i.e. Autumn term, for first time admission at 4+. However, parents must ensure full-time education for their child from compulsory school age, from 5+.

Once your child is attending school (even on a part time basis), your childcare provider will no longer be eligible to claim for the FEEE on your behalf.

<b>For those children born between</b>	<b>Leicestershire's school admission date for children aged 4+</b>	<b>Parent/carers have the option to defer child's place during this term</b>
1st September 2015 to 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2016	Autumn term 2020	Parents/carers can choose to take up their school place at the beginning of the Autumn 2020 term. However, places can be deferred until later in the school year, or until the child reaches compulsory school age. Places should be applied for prior to 15th January 2020.
1st September 2016 to 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017	Autumn term 2021	As above, but parents' must apply for a place prior to 15th January 2021.

For more information on school admissions please visit:

[www.leics.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.leics.gov.uk/admissions)

If you feel you have reason to complain, either about the setting or the administration of funded places, please contact the following agencies:

Ofsted: The National Complaints Team, Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Stove St, Manchester, M1 2WD. Tel: 0300 123 4666

Leicestershire County Council: Corporate Complaints Manager, Corporate Resources Department, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RI. Tel: 0800 0968 116

Or follow the procedure laid out in the setting policy.

