

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HEREFORDSHIRE LEA AND PROVIDERS RECEIVING NURSERY EDUCATION FUND

All references apply to 'A Code of Practice on the provision of free nursery education places for three and four year olds: April 2006'.

All settings wishing to claim Nursery Education Fund for three and/or four year old children should have a copy of the Sure Start publication 'A Code of Practice on the provision of free nursery education places for three and four year olds' and become familiar with the conditions detailed within. Herefordshire LEA, together with the Herefordshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, will continue to apply the conditions set out in 'A Code of Practice on the provision of free nursery education places for three and four year olds' for funding of three and four year old children. Herefordshire LEA confirms that it will follow these procedures.

Nursery Education Fund will be paid to registered providers, via the LEA, up to an annual maximum per eligible child. The funding must be spent on nursery education for eligible children and this will be checked through the audit arrangement (for entitlement see Section 5, for audit arrangements see Annex B).

Universal free early education for three year olds children is available in the term following their 3rd birthday

Those providers who do not comply with the conditions will not remain eligible for funding. They will be withdrawn from the Local Authority register of early years providers who are able to offer funded nursery education with the Herefordshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

REQUIREMENTS

In order to be registered with the Herefordshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, you must be an eligible provider as detailed in Annex A..

All providers registered to deliver funded early education with Herefordshire LEA and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Plan must agree:

- *To provide learning experiences which work towards the Early Learning Goals and follow the principles of the Foundation Stage guidance.*
- *To submit to Ofsted Inspection when required.*
- *To identify a setting based Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and implement a Special Educational Needs policy.*
- *To receive termly visits from an early years mentor.*

- Regularly attend local early years partnership meetings.
- Implement a clear training plan that demonstrates a commitment to professional development for all staff according to the setting needs and to attend relevant training sessions.
- Must work towards an accredited quality assurance scheme.
- Provide information to parents/carers at the start of each term, prior to taking up a free place, stating the fees charged in respect of additional services over and above the free entitlement of 2 ½ hours per session
- To provide those children eligible for Nursery Education Fund with free education that is a minimum of 2.5 hours per session and up to a maximum of 5 sessions per week.
- Provide information to the Local Authority in response to enquiries and complaints from the public, and from parent consultation.
- Be open to the monitoring/audit process put in place by the Local Authority to demonstrate accurate claims and to show that the money is being spent in accordance with the regulations (Annex B, paragraphs 12-15).
- **If a Voluntary Managed Group** – to provide the Local Authority with a copy of the setting's constitution and complete both sections (1 & 2) of the agreement declaration attached. Section 2 of which contains details of management contacts.

A funded place must offer not less than 2½ hours per session of up to five sessions per week, for 38 weeks in the year (although it is recognised that some providers may not be able to offer the full entitlement particularly in the first year), this basic entitlement must be free at the point of delivery (Section 5, Section 6 - Para 6.1). Parents are **not required** to take up or pay for additional services nor changed directly or indirectly for any part of the free entitlement, but will be expected to pay for any additional services they do access (ie extending the child's stay to over the minimum entitlement). The basic entitlement for each child is five sessions per week although parents may choose to take fewer than five sessions to meet their own individual requirements (Section 5 – Para 5.9).

Providers must ensure that parents complete a Parent Declaration Form (copies of which will be supplied to you with your claim pack) when an eligible child claims funding with them for the first time or if a child's claim has changed since the previous terms claim. Where a child attends more than one setting the parent **must provide information of all settings on the Parent Declaration Form which should be copied and returned immediately to the LEA before their deadline.** Copies of these forms should be retained by the provider and made available for audit purposes. The nursery education fund will be divided among the settings according to the number of sessions attended.

The funding for each term will be paid to providers *in two parts*:

- The *first* payment is 50% of the total claim based on the previous term's claim, after omitting any children who would be too old for the current term's claim, and therefore no longer eligible.
- The *second* payment will be made following a return of eligible children attending the provision on the actual headcount date for the current term and after completion of duplicate checking.

Herefordshire LEA will make every effort to ensure payments are made within 10 working days of the receipt of the completed claim form.

If a child commences attending your setting after the headcount date please contact the Forward Planning Section on 01432 383042. Groups must inform the LEA if a child has left their setting.

A formal appeals process has been agreed to comply with Section 11 - Para 11.12 – 11.14, of 'The Code of Practice' to deal with exceptional circumstances in which parents are not satisfied that their child has received the free nursery education grant to which they are entitled. Details of the process are available from the Early Years and Childcare Services Manager.