

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL 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: February 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 Council, together with the Herefordshire Early Years and Extended Services (EYES), 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 Council confirms that it will follow these procedures.

Nursery Education Fund will be paid to registered providers, via the local authority, 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 They will be withdrawn from the Local Authority register of early years providers who are able to offer funded nursery education with the Herefordshire Early Years and Extended Services Partnership. There is a good support network within the EYES and School Improvement Service (SIS) to help you fulfil the following requirements.

REQUIREMENTS

In order to be registered with the Herefordshire Early Year and Extended Services Partnership, you must be an eligible provider as detailed in Annex A.

All providers registered to deliver funded early education with Herefordshire Council and the Early Years and Extended Services Plan must agree:

- 1. To provide high quality care development and learning experiences which fulfil the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage*
- 2. To meet all regulatory requirements and achieve a minimum of a "Satisfactory" outcome at OfSTED inspection*
- 3. To identify a setting based Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and implement a Special Educational Needs policy.*

4. *To identify designated persons responsible for policy areas highlighted in the Early Years Foundation Stage.*
5. *To work in partnership with Early Years Mentor Teachers, Development Co-ordinators, Co-ordinators for Early Years inclusion and Quality Assurance.*
6. *Attend a minimum of two local early years partnership meetings each year.*
7. *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 as identified through self-evaluation and external advice.*
8. *Work towards an accredited quality assurance scheme.*
9. *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 requested over and above the free entitlement of 2 ½ hours per session*
10. *To provide those children eligible for Nursery Education Fund with free high quality care and education that is a minimum of 2.5 hours per session and up to a maximum of 5 sessions per week.*
11. *Provide information to the local authority in response to enquiries and complaints from the public and from parent consultation.*
12. *To respond 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).*
13. ***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, Section 13 – Para 13.5). Parents are **not required** to take up or pay for additional services, 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 local authority 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 60% of the total claim based on an estimate provided by the setting at the beginning of the term of the number of eligible children who will be claimed for by the setting
- The *second “balancing”* 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 Council will make every effort to ensure payments are made within 10 working days of the receipt of the completed claim form.

If children have not been attending any setting until after the headcount date (or during the week in which the headcount falls if they do not normally attend on that day), they will not be eligible for funding that term (Paragraphs 100-101). However the local authority will consider exceptions to this rule and to transfers between settings on an individual basis upon receipt of a written request. This may also result in an individuals funding being transferred from one setting to another.

Groups **must** inform the local authority 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.