

New Beginnings Early Education Funding Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how New Beginnings Day Nurseries administer and deliver Early Years Funded Childcare in line with national and local government guidance. It ensures that all families accessing funded childcare understand their entitlements, the conditions of funding, and how New Beginnings applies these entitlements within our all-year-round childcare model.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All parents and carers accessing Early Years Funding at New Beginnings Nurseries.
- All New Beginnings staff involved in the administration and delivery of funded childcare.
- All Local Authority (LA) agreements concerning the delivery of Early Years Funding, including Universal Entitlement (15 hours), Extended Entitlement (30 hours), and funding for eligible 2-year-olds.

3. Policy Statement

New Beginnings is committed to providing high-quality, accessible early education and childcare. We participate fully in the government's Early Years Funding initiative, ensuring funding is applied transparently, fairly, and in line with the Local Authorities Provider Agreement. Our aim is to help families make the most of their funded hours while maintaining high standards of care, education, and compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework.

4. Eligibility

- **3 and 4-year-olds:** 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (570 hours annually).
- **Working parents:** may be eligible for up to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks (1,140 hours annually).
- **Eligible 2-year-olds:** may receive 15 funded hours per week, subject to household income, additional needs, or local authority support.
- **Funding start dates:** 1 January, 1 April, or 1 September. Children must have reached the qualifying age before the start of a term.

For eligibility details and applications: www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

5. New Beginnings Funding Model

New Beginnings operates year-round and distributes Early Years Funding across 50 weeks instead of the standard 38-week model.

Example of Stretched Hours:

- 15-hour offer: $570 \div 50 = 11.4$ hours/week
- 30-hour offer: $1,140 \div 50 = 22.8$ hours/week

Pro-Rata Funding: If a child becomes eligible mid-year, funding is adjusted proportionally.

Example: 30 hours/week from January 2026: $24 \text{ weeks} \times 30 \text{ hours} = 720 \text{ hours}$; stretched over 34 weeks = 21.17 hours/week.

6. Funding Conditions at New Beginnings

- Funded sessions are available between 6:00am–8:00pm; no single session exceeds 10 hours. Our opening hours: 8:00am–6:00pm.
- Funded hours cannot be used on Bank Holidays.
- Parents are not required to use all eligible hours.
- Hours can be split between a maximum of two providers per day.
- Funding cannot be used for ad-hoc sessions outside agreed contracted hours.
- Permanent booking changes take effect according to contractual notice periods.
- From September 2025, new families must include a Monday or Friday in their booking pattern to access funded hours.

7. Additional Voluntary Charges (AVC)

At New Beginnings, we believe early years education should be **rich, engaging, and inspiring**. To maintain high standards and make life easier for families, we offer meals and snacks on funded hours and enrichment activities. When completing the Parent Declaration parents can opt in or out of these costs. All costs are itemised on the invoices provided by Family and available to view on the nurseries website and within the booklets provided on Family.

Government funding does not cover meals, snacks, consumables such as suncream, high-quality resources, or extra-curricular activities.

Parents may be charged for:

- **Consumables:** Charges include sun cream, wipes for general hygiene, etc.
- **Meals and snacks:** For costs, please see the nursery fees and funding policy. Unfortunately, packed lunches are not generally permissible. Alternatives are available (see Nursery Meal Policy).
- **Extra-curricular activities:** trips, celebrations, specialist classes not required by EYFS. Charges include:

- Access to the Family system, including activity ideas for home learning.
- Our bespoke Early Years curriculum “Watch Us Grow”, led by a qualified Early Years teacher.
- A lending library featuring speech and language resources with guided notes.
- Boogie Mites music programmes (Teenies, Minis and School-Ready)
- Trips and outings in the local community
- Sign and Sign (Makaton) sessions
- Seasonal events and celebrations
- Sensory room access for enhanced sensory therapy (not available at the Rainham site)
- Eco-Schools accredited activities, including seasonal gardening projects.
- A cooking and healthy eating programme
- **Additional private-paid hours:** beyond funded entitlement; optional and not a condition for accessing funded hours.

Additional information:

- Fees details are available in the Fees and Funding Guide on each nursery’s website.
- Parents can opt out of voluntary charges; alternatives can be discussed with management.
- Families experiencing financial hardship may be eligible for fully funded places (e.g., EYPP or 2-year-old funding).
- Once accepted on the Parent Declaration Form, charges remain until the following term.

8. Invoicing

- Funded hours appear at £0 on invoices.
- Additional private hours are charged at the advertised hourly rate.
- Invoices are clear, transparent, and itemised.

9. Parent Declaration and Documentation

- Parents must complete a Local Authority Parent Declaration Form each term; funding cannot be claimed without it.
- Required documents: child’s birth certificate/passport, HMRC eligibility code (30 hours), parent details (name, DOB, NI), LA confirmation for 2-year-old funding if applicable.
- Additional documents may be requested by the LA.

10. Local Authority and Provider Agreements

- Funding is claimed via agreements with the LA and paid directly to New Beginnings.
- Parents do not have a direct financial claim to funding.

11. Attendance and Absence

- Persistent absences must be reported to the LA.
- If funding is reclaimed due to absence, parents will be charged at the standard rate.
- Funded hours may be retained if notice periods are not met.

12. Shared Care Between Providers

- Funded hours may be split between two providers per day.
- Families must declare hour allocations to both settings.
- New Beginnings may not stretch funding if a child attends more than one provider.

13. Children Starting or Leaving Mid-Year

- Funding hours are recalculated based on attendance and LA claims.
- Any differences are adjusted in the final invoice.
- Funding may be retained until the end of the funded period if notice is not observed.

14. Additional Funding Streams

New Beginnings administers additional funding:

- **SEND Inclusion Funding** – for children with special educational needs.
 - **Disability Access Funding (DAF)** – for children receiving DLA and EYFS funding.
 - **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)** – to enhance learning outcomes.
 - **Deprivation Funding** – supports children in disadvantaged areas.
- All funding is used transparently to support inclusion and improve outcomes.

15. Parent and Provider Responsibilities

- **Parent Declaration Form (LA):** must be completed each term; full fees apply without it.
- **New Beginnings Parent Agreement:** confirms understanding of funding allocation and charges.

16. Funding Loop System

- Funding Loop is a secure online portal for electronic collection of funding documents: [Funding Loop Info](#)

17. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents must:

- Provide accurate eligibility information.
- Complete required forms each term.
- Notify the nursery of changes in bookings or eligibility.

New Beginnings will:

- Administer funding accurately and transparently.
- Comply with LA and DfE requirements.
- Communicate clearly with parents about entitlements and conditions.

Local Authority will:

- Verify eligibility.
- Pay funding directly to the provider.
- Monitor compliance and audit claims.

18. Review and Policy Approval

- Policy exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

19. Complaints

If parents are not satisfied with how their child's funded entitlement is provided, they should first speak to the nursery manager, who will explain the complaints procedure.

Policy Adopted: 1st November 2025

Signed: J Wilkinson

Next Review: 31st March 2026