

FEE POLICY

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CONTENTS

Background	3
Minimum Attendance Requirements:	4
1. Our Guidelines	7
Registration Fee and Settling	7
Non - payment of fees, Arrears, and late payment charges	7
Notice of Withdrawal	9
Schedule for paying nursery fees	9
Receipts for payment of fees	10
Nursery holidays and closure and fees during a child absence	10
Rationale for Bank Holiday Charges	11
Additional Sessions Outside of Regular Schedule	11
Fees during Absence	11
Re-enrolment and Breaks in Attendance	12
Late Collection & Fees Review	12
Emergency Closure	13
Consumables	14
Discounts	14
Fee Structure and Compliance with FEEE Guidance	16
Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE)	18
FEEE Grace Periods	20

BACKGROUND

Please see below supporting policies:

- Registration and Admissions Policy
- Settling in policy and Procedure

What this policy covers:

- Paying the Registration Fee and Settling in
- Non- payment of fees, Arrears and late payment charges
- Giving notice to withdraw a child
- Schedule for paying the nursery fees
- Receipts for payment of fees
- Nursery holidays and closure and fees during a child absence
- Additional Sessions Outside of Regular Schedule
- Fees during absence
- Re-enrolment and breaks in attendance
- Late Collection & Fees Review
- Emergency closure
- Consumables
- Discounts
- Fee Structure and Compliance with FEEE Guidance
- Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE)
- FEEE Grace Period

Holly Trees understands that the cost of registered childcare may seem expensive to a parent/carer. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating service for children requires considerable investment, funding, astute planning and curriculum development, trained cooks, facilities and resources, trained professionals with ongoing development on all matters relating the education, health & safety, wellbeing and safeguarding of children, senior leadership and management of provision and operational tasks, finance, accounting, HR, statutory compliance and strategic oversight to ensure the continued high standards and sustainability of the Nursery.

The above is not an exhaustive list and therefore we must ask that parents/carers respect its policy in respect of fees.

For the reasons above we have a sole funding policy and therefore your full entitlement must be used with our nursery only. There may be some extenuating circumstances in which this is reviewed however this would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In addition, we aim to ensure that:

- The level of fees will be reviewed annually, in the light of the Nursery's financial position, its future strategic plans and any other broader economic or social considerations deemed relevant.

All childcare fees are charged based on the following structure:

1. Blended Plan (Funded Hours + Hourly Rate):

- For families using government funding (11.2 or 22.4 hours stretched funding per week).
- Minimum booking of three days per week.
- Applies to children under 2 years, 2-3 years, and 3 years plus.
- Session duration is 10.5 hours, from 7:30am to 6:00pm.
- Hourly rates vary by age group.

2. Independent Plan (Non-Funded Hourly Rate):

- For families not accessing government funding (private paying parents).
- Minimum booking of three days per week.
- Standard session duration is 9 hours, from 8:00am to 5:00pm.
- Option to extend the day to 10.5 hours (7:30am to 6:00pm) by adding a full day bolt-on fee per day.
- Flexi optional bolt-on fee applies to each scheduled day and is charged in addition to the standard session fee.

3. Fully Funded Plan (Funded-Only Places):

- For families using only government funding (no additional paid hours).
- No minimum booking requirement, but a daily £10 consumables charge applies (if applicable).
- Sessions are structured to align with funding hours:
 - Morning Session: 7:30am – 1:00pm
 - Afternoon Session: 12:30pm – 6:00pm
 - Full Day Session: 8:00am – 6:00pm (maximum 10 hours per day)
- A maximum of 10 funded hours can be claimed per day as per government guidelines.

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Blended Plan:** Minimum of three days per week to provide consistency and social experience for the child.
- **Independent Plan:** Minimum of three days per week to provide consistency and social experience for the child.

- **Fully Funded Plan:** There is no minimum day requirement for families accessing our Fully Funded Plan, as we recognise that for some households this may be the only financially accessible option. However, all funded-only places must be taken on a stretched basis across the full year, and families must use their full entitlement. This means:
If eligible for 15 hours per week, this equates to 11.2 hours per week stretched, and all 11.2 hours must be used
If eligible for 30 hours per week, this equates to 22.4 hours per week stretched, and all 22.4 hours must be used. Families are advised that fewer sessions may impact a child's ability to settle and engage effectively in the nursery environment.

Additional Information:

- All fees are charged on a monthly basis, calculated by multiplying the weekly fees by 52 weeks and then dividing by 12 months.
 - Fees outside of the regular schedule are charged at a higher rate to account for additional operational costs and resource allocation.
 - Please read our fee information document for cost of full-day bookings for additional days.
 - Discounts are available for full-week bookings and siblings attending full time. Please see our fee information document for more details.
- Please speak to the manager for more information.

Please note that parents who require funded only session will incur a charge per day for consumables which contributes to costs relating to snacks, football sessions, dancing sessions, external trips, resources and equipment. Parents and families on FEEE2 will not be required to pay a consumables fee as set by the government. The consumables rate can be found on our fee information document

- Fees are payable 52 weeks of the year, including during bank holidays, family holidays, and periods of sickness. The nursery is closed on all English bank holidays, three inset training days, and for one week over the Christmas and New Year period. These closure days are billable and have been accounted for within our hourly rate, which reflects the annual cost of your child's place.
- We also close at 3pm on Christmas Eve or if Christmas Eve falls at the weekend, the nursery will close at 3pm on the last working day before Christmas and is also billable and factored into your annual rate.
- Under extenuating circumstances when the nursery must close for Health and Safety reasons the nursery fees are fully payable. For example: Water supply unavailable, Electricity supply unavailable, Gas Leak, Adverse weather conditions etc.

Our guidelines are as follows:

1. OUR GUIDELINES

REGISTRATION FEE AND SETTLING

Registration Fee:

Once you have been offered a place at Holly Trees, you will be required to complete a registration form, sign a Parent/Carer Contract, and pay a £150 non-refundable registration fee. Please note that payment of the registration fee does not guarantee a place but secures your eligibility for a place, subject to availability and successful completion of our family onboarding process. Without completing the registration process, you will not be considered for a place.

Eligibility for a place indicates that your child will be placed on a waiting list, and a confirmed place will be offered based on availability and the completion of the family onboarding process.

If you choose to accept a place elsewhere while remaining on our waiting list, or if we are unable to offer a place due to limited availability, the registration fee will not be refunded. This is because the registration fee covers the administrative time and costs involved in processing your child's registration.

Parents and family accessing funding only session or FEEE2 will not be required to pay a registration fee.

Settling In:

Parents and Carers will not be charged during the Settling in period, which lasts for 3 sessions.

Session 1: 1 Hour

Session 2: 2 Hours

Session 3: 2 Hours

NON - PAYMENT OF FEES, ARREARS, AND LATE PAYMENT CHARGES

Holly Trees Day Nursery invoices on a monthly basis, statements are issued on the 20th of each month. Payment is due on or before but no later than the 1st of every month.

Invoices are due to be paid in full prior to the period the invoice relates to a £5 per day, daily late fee will be added to your bill.

Should a Parent/ Carer have problems paying their child's fees on time they should communicate in confidence to the Nursery manager (info@hollytreesdaynursery.co.uk).

If the fees are not paid on time, the Nursery may notify the parent/carer in writing and request payment at the earliest possible opportunity. The Nursery reserves the right to refuse requests made for extra hours / sessions or days until outstanding fees have been settled in full.

If an arrangement has not been made, then the following procedure will apply:

Procedure

1. If you do not pay your fees on time and have not spoken to the Manager, we will charge a late fee payment fee of £5.00 per calendar day and failure to pay fees by 12th of the month (and without speaking to the Manager) would result in suspension or termination of space.
2. Should an invoice remain unpaid beyond its payment terms without an agreed payment plan in place, your nursery place will be suspended with immediate effect.
3. From the date your place at Holly Trees Day Nursery has been suspended you have 14 days to fully clear your account, failure to do so will result in your balance being passed to a debt collection agency who will add up to 15% charges and may proceed with court action against you.
4. Should you clear your account in full within the 14 days and wish to return this will be at the discretion of the Nursery Management.
5. Invoices can be queried by parents and families up to 5 days after the invoice has been issued.
6. Any queries after 5 days will not be taken into consideration.

Parents/carers are encouraged to speak to the Nursery Manager if they have any query about the fees policy, or if, for any reason, they are likely to have difficulty in making a payment on time.

Parents/carers are strongly advised to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity, to avoid the late charges and jeopardising their child's place at the Nursery.

Holly Trees understands the financial difficulties that families face from time to time.

We actively encourage to discuss their needs with the manager as soon as possible so a confidential, mutually agreed payment plan can be set up. This may well be in the form of smaller instalments, staggering or delaying payment and temporarily reducing sessions.

Holly Trees Day Nursery thanks all Parents and Carers for their understanding and will do all that it can to avoid the above situation.

NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL

Holly Trees Day Nursery specifically reserve the right to end your agreement with immediate effect.

- You have not paid the agreed fees within the timeframe indicated in point 3 of our late/non-payment procedures.
- If you wish to withdraw your child from the nursery. Holly Trees Day Nursery requires you to complete an Exit Form giving a minimum of 4 weeks' notice.
- A written notice must be provided in writing to the Manager. You may do this by sending an email to info@hollytreesdaynursery.co.uk
- Any sessions not used within the notice period will not be refunded (dependent upon Funding /Fee paying protocols).
- All invoices must be paid in full prior to leaving Holly Trees Day Nursery.
- Any additional charges you incur during your notice period will be invoiced on the next available invoicing date and must be paid within 14 days.
- Holly Trees requires one months' notice in writing should an extra booked session no longer be required. All fees are payable during this period.
- If your child is accessing FEEE and your child leaves us part way through the term, ECC request that funding follows the child, but it is at the discretion of the provider. This is a private arrangement between the parent and the 2 providers. Other than in extenuating circumstances if a child leaves us part way through the term, we retain the funding as transferring the funding would leave us financially out of pocket in the instance in which we can replace the space at the point of your transfer we may transfer the funding, however this would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that any outstanding balances on your account must be cleared before a funding transfer can be considered.

SCHEDULE FOR PAYING NURSERY FEES

Invoices are on a monthly basis, statements are issued on the 20th of each month. Payment is due on or before but no later than the 1st of every month.

Invoices are due to be paid in full prior to the period the invoice relates to.

Accepted Payment Methods at Holly Trees Day Nursery:

1. Childcare Vouchers: We accept all major childcare vouchers as part of the Childcare Voucher Scheme, which offers tax and National Insurance relief. If your employer participates in this scheme and you'd like to use vouchers to pay your nursery fees, please let us know. We accept vouchers

from various providers, including Care4, Busy Bees, Fidelity, Co-op, and others. If you have vouchers from a different provider, just ask us if we can accept them.

2. Direct Debit Payments: Effective from 1st September 2025 all fee payments must be made by Direct Debit. Parents and carers are required to register for Direct Debit as part of the onboarding process and must ensure that the Direct Debit mandate is fully set up and active prior to their child's start date. Your child's place is not secured until the Direct Debit mandate has been fully set up.

We no longer accept payments via BACS or other bank transfer methods. Direct Debit ensures efficient and secure payment processing and forms a core part of our operational and financial sustainability.

Failure to set up a Direct Debit mandate before the child's start date may result in the child's place being withdrawn or delayed until compliance is confirmed.

3. HMRC 20% Fee Reduction Scheme: We also accept payments through the HMRC 20% fee reduction scheme.

If you have any questions about these payment methods, feel free to contact us

Fees are paid by direct debit. The monthly fees are calculated by multiplying the weekly fees by 52 weeks/ year and then dividing by 12 months/ year to obtain an equal monthly fees amount.

RECEIPTS FOR PAYMENT OF FEES

A receipt for the payment of the fees will be issued by email to the Contracting Parent or Carer by the Nursery following payment of fees.

Please notify the nursery if your email address has changed or you have not been receiving invoices or a receipt.

NURSERY HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURE AND FEES DURING A CHILD ABSENCE

We are open all year round.

The Nursery is closed for one week between Christmas and New Year, all Bank Holidays and up to three Staff Training Inset days per year which is factored into your annual fee. Parents/ Carers will be given advanced notice of these closures. Fees remain payable throughout closure periods.

Parents and Families who access FEEE places on our Training days will not be able to access their entitlement on these days. Early years childcare providers can claim FEEE for up to 1 day per term when they are open in order to carry out staff training.

This policy is to make parents aware before they sign the parent/carers agreement that they will lose a day of FEEE per term and will not receive any refund for this day as there is no cash value to the FEEE funding. We provide a minimum of a half term's notice of any planned closures.

Parents and families with FEEE places whose attendance falls on a bank holiday will not be able to access their entitlement on bank holidays. Therefore, you will not receive your full entitlement where there are bank holidays within the funded weeks as these days cannot be taken with another provider and we still incur costs, such as staff wages, even though we are not open. However, we will not charge for consumables on bank holidays.

RATIONALE FOR BANK HOLIDAY CHARGES

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, our fee structure is designed to ensure high-quality childcare while maintaining the financial sustainability of the setting. As part of this structure, fees remain payable on bank holidays, even though the nursery is closed.

This policy is in place because:

- **Fixed Operational Costs:** The nursery continues to incur essential overhead costs such as rent, utilities, insurance, and staff salaries, which are calculated across the full year.
- **Annualised Fee Structure:** Fees are spread evenly across 52 weeks, ensuring consistency in payments for families while allowing us to effectively budget and sustain high standards of care.
- **Staff Contracts & Holiday Pay:** Our staff receive paid leave on bank holidays as part of their contractual entitlements, ensuring we retain skilled and experienced practitioners.
- **Ensuring Nursery Sustainability:** Maintaining fee payments during closures helps prevent unexpected increases in childcare costs, ensuring affordability and stability for all families in the long term.

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS OUTSIDE OF REGULAR SCHEDULE

Booking Requirement: Extra sessions will be available only as full-day bookings, covering the period from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.

Fee Structure: For more information regarding the charge for these additional full-day sessions please read our Fee Information Document.

Holly Trees Day Nursery requires one month's notice in writing should an extra booked session no longer be required. All fees are payable during this period

FEES DURING ABSENCE

If your child is absent from the nursery due to sickness or holiday, the full fees must be paid for the place to be kept.

RE-ENROLMENT AND BREAKS IN ATTENDANCE

Families who withdraw their child from the nursery and seek to return within six months of termination will be subject to a re-enrolment fee of 60% of their final monthly invoice prior to leaving, or £500 whichever is greater.

This applies unless the withdrawal was due to permanent relocation or exceptional circumstances agreed in writing by the nursery.

Re-enrolment is not guaranteed, and places are subject to availability. Returning children will not be prioritised over those on the waiting list.

Where a child's withdrawal and return are deemed to have been made in order to avoid nursery fees (e.g. during extended holidays), the nursery reserves the right to refuse re-admission and treat the action as a breach of good faith under our terms and conditions.

Rationale:

This policy prevents families from exploiting short-term withdrawals to avoid paying fees, while ensuring fairness to those maintaining consistent attendance. The re-enrolment fee helps recover administrative costs, protects staffing and occupancy planning, and supports the financial sustainability of the setting.

LATE COLLECTION & FEES REVIEW

Parents must collect their children on time at the end of their booked session. Late collection places additional strain on staff and can impact the safety and wellbeing of children and staff.

A late collection fee of £15.00 will be charged for every 10 minutes (or part thereof) that you are late in collecting your child. This fee will apply to each child in your care, should you have more than one child at the nursery during the session in which you are late collecting.

If you are late collecting your child after 6:00 pm on three or more occasions within a calendar month, a flat late collection fee of £60.00 will be charged on the third and each subsequent late collection during that month, regardless of how many minutes you are late.

If you have not collected your child by 7:00 pm, Social Services will be contacted to collect your child.

Parents who wish to receive a thorough handover at the end of the day are encouraged to arrive in good time to ensure staff can provide this before closing. Handovers are not expected to be completed at closing time or close to it, as this places additional strain on staff who need to close the room safely and complete their end-of-day duties.

The late charge will apply to each child should you have more than one child at Holly Trees Day Nursery for the session in which you are late collecting

Holly Trees Day Nursery will occasionally arrange day trips out which may come at additional costs. Should you approve the trip, the cost will be added to your next invoice and is to be paid within the terms stated. In certain circumstances, we may require payment upfront for trips, and this will be clearly communicated to you in advance.

Holly Trees Day Nursery reviews and adjusts its rates annually, with changes taking effect each September.

Holly Trees Day Nursery will give a minimum of 6 weeks' notice of any rate change.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE

We understand that emergency closures may present a financial burden for families. While we regret any inconvenience caused, it is necessary for fees to remain payable in these instances to maintain our operational stability and staff employment.

In unavoidable and exceptional circumstances, such as notifiable infection, significant staff shortage, Water supply unavailable, Electricity supply unavailable, Gas Leak, Adverse weather conditions or consequential damage following a fire etc, it may be necessary to close all or part of the Nursery at short notice.

It is not the nursery's policy to refund fees in such circumstances.

Why Fees Remain Payable During Emergency Closures:

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, we are committed to providing high-quality childcare while ensuring the sustainability of our services. In unavoidable and exceptional circumstances where the nursery must close at short notice for health and safety reasons such as a gas leak, loss of water or electricity supply, extreme weather conditions, or infectious disease outbreaks, our policy states that fees remain payable.

This is because:

- **Ongoing Operational Costs:** The nursery continues to incur fixed costs, including staff wages, rent, utilities, insurance, and other essential expenses, regardless of whether the setting is open.
- **Staff Salaries & Retention:** We maintain staff employment during closures to ensure continuity of care and prevent disruptions for children upon reopening.

- Sustainability of Service: Temporary closures do not reduce our financial obligations, and continued fee payments ensure we can reopen as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Limited Alternative Options: In many cases, emergency closures are beyond our control and occur with little notice, meaning alternative care cannot always be arranged in time.

We understand that closures may be inconvenient for parents and families, and we will always strive to minimise disruptions. Where possible, we will communicate alternative arrangements, such as rescheduling missed sessions (subject to availability) or providing home learning resources to support children's continued development during closures.

CONSUMABLES

Government funding is intended to cover the delivery of education and care, but not the costs of meals, consumables, or additional services. Therefore, a daily consumables fee is applied for funded places to cover items and services that fall outside the scope of the government's funding contribution.

This daily consumables fee covers:

- All meals provided by the nursery: morning snack, lunch (provided by Zebedees), and afternoon tea
- Resources used directly by the child, such as nappies, wipes (if not provided by the parent), sun cream, and creative materials
- Enrichment activities including football, yoga, dance, and trips

Families opting out of food provision are opting out of all three nursery meals: snack, lunch, and tea. In this case, parents are required to provide all three meals in accordance with the nursery's Parent-Provided Food and Packed Lunch Policy, which includes strict guidelines around allergens, food safety, and healthy contents.

Meals brought from home must fully comply with the policy. If any food is:

- Missing (i.e., not all meals are provided)
- Contains non-permitted or allergen-risk items
- Not labelled correctly

the nursery will replace the item(s) with its standard provision, and the food portion of the daily consumables charge will be applied to the parent's invoice for that day.

Should a parent wish to switch from receiving nursery-provided meals to providing meals from home, or vice versa, a minimum of four weeks' written notice must be given. During the notice period, the original arrangement remains in place, and any consumables charges already due will continue to apply until the notice period ends.

Non-payment of consumables fees will be treated in the same way as any other invoice non-payment. As per the nursery's terms and conditions, failure to pay may result in the suspension of your child's place until the outstanding balance is cleared.

Persistent non-compliance may result in the withdrawal of permission to provide meals from home. Families on FEEE2 (funding for disadvantaged two-year-olds) are not required to pay the consumables fee, in accordance with Essex County Council guidance.

The statutory guidance is clear that government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

Core costs of running a business that delivers government-funded childcare are not considered consumables used by the child or additional services provided to the child. These include, but are not limited to, insurance, Ofsted registration, maintenance, business rates, training costs, rent, energy bills and staffing. These are core costs of running the business and we expect these to be covered by government funding and that parents should not be charged.

We charge for meals and snacks as part of a free entitlement place, and we also charge for additional items such as wipes and sun cream only if these are not provided by the parent, as it is our expectation that parents will supply these. We also charge for additional services such as trips, specialist tuition, and extracurricular activities including dance, yoga, football, and other sports sessions.

All additional costs listed above are charged as consumables and contribute to the overall cost of providing these services. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

In cases where a parent or family is unable or chooses not to pay the consumables charge for certain items, an alternative may be offered. For example, you may wish to provide your child with a packed lunch and snack from home rather than using meals prepared by our kitchen staff.

Parents are welcome to opt out of individual items included in the consumables charge. However, if opting out of a specific item, an appropriate alternative must be provided by the parent (e.g., packed lunch)

An alternative to having a child sit out on a service that is offered to other children is that based on availability we will offer provision on days in which we know those services are not provided for example offer your session on day when there is no football or yoga classes.

Another alternative is in some instances we may waiver the consumables fee or offer a reduced rate based on the family's situation however this would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Parents and families on FEEE2 will not be required to pay a consumables fee as set by the government.

DISCOUNTS

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, we value and support families who entrust us with the care and education of multiple children. To recognise this commitment, we offer a sibling discount for parents whose children attend on a full-day, full-time attendance pattern.

This discount applies as follows:

- A sibling discount is applied to the eldest child's nursery place, commencing from the first full month in which multiple children from the same family are enrolled.
- The discount is only available for children attending full days, five days per week.
- This offer cannot be combined with any other discounts or promotions.

Our sibling discount aims to support families while ensuring we continue providing high-quality childcare with experienced staff, enriching activities, and a well-resourced learning environment. Please speak to the Nursery Manager for details on eligibility and how this discount is applied.

We also offer a discount for families with children under the age of three who attend on a full-time basis (five full days per week), applied to the oldest child's account from the first full month of attendance.

FEE STRUCTURE AND COMPLIANCE WITH FEE GUIDANCE

As an early years provider offering places to both funded and non-funded families, we are committed to ensuring that our fee structure is transparent, fair, and fully compliant with all relevant guidance from Essex County Council and the Department for Education (DfE).

Funded Hours

- All eligible funded hours are delivered free at the point of use and without any mandatory charges.
- We do not attach monetary value to the hours that are funded by the local authority and do not charge top-up fees.
- Any additional services (e.g., meals, consumables, optional activities) are clearly itemised, optional, and agreed in writing with the parent before the start of placement.

Private Fee Structure

- The rates charged for private hours (those outside of the funded entitlement) are determined by the provider and reflect a variety of operational factors including staffing ratios, session length, resource requirements, and age of the child.
- We operate a tiered session structure, where different types of sessions/packages are available depending on attendance patterns, age group, hours attended. This ensures flexibility for families and helps maintain sustainability for the setting.

Non-Comparable Sessions

- In line with Essex County Council guidance, we understand that additional hours for funded children should not cost more than an equivalent paid-for place.
- However, where session structures differ, for example, in duration, included services, or eligibility for specific discount schemes, these sessions are not considered directly comparable. As such, rates may differ appropriately.

Fairness and Transparency

We regularly review our pricing to ensure that:

- Funded children are not charged more than the equivalent cost of a privately paid place
- Private-only paying families are not unfairly disadvantaged as a result of structural funding changes
- All parents are provided with clear and transparent information about fees before accepting a place

Should you require further clarification on our fee structure or how it relates to your entitlement, please contact the nursery manager.

Why We Offer a Different Session for Private-Paying Families (Independent Plan)

In line with government and local authority guidance, we are not permitted to charge families accessing funded hours more per hour than those who do not receive funding. To ensure compliance, we have created two distinct session types based on how a child's place is funded.

Families who do not receive any government funding are offered a 9-hour day Session at a different hourly rate. For those who require longer care, a Fixed Full Day Bolt-On is available, which includes early drop-off, late collection.

This structure allows us to offer private-paying families a fairer and more affordable rate while remaining fully compliant with funding regulations.

As the government extends the 30-hour funding entitlement to include most families across all age groups, we are required to increase our hourly rate in order to remain financially sustainable.

This is because the government's funding rate does not fully cover the true cost of delivery. For families receiving funded hours, this increase is largely offset by the entitlement itself.

However, if we continued operating under a single-session model with one standard hourly rate, this would unfairly impact families who receive no funding at all. Any necessary fee increase applied to blended families would have to be equally matched by private-only families, despite the latter receiving no financial support from the government.

By offering a separate, shorter session for private-only families with a lower hourly rate, we are able to protect those families from the full impact of the rate increase and ensure they are not disadvantaged by the introduction of additional government funding for others.

This approach allows us to maintain a balanced and sustainable model that supports all families fairly, while fully meeting our compliance responsibilities.

FREE EARLY EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT (FEEE)

Quick Guide to FEEE:

- 15 (11.2) funded hours per week for eligible 2-year-olds (FEEE2)
- 15 (11.2) funded hours per week for working parents of 2 year olds (FEEE2W) from April 2024
- 15 (11.2) funded hours per week for working parents of 9-month-olds (FEEE1W) from September 2024
- 30 (22.4) funded hours per week for working parents of 2 year olds (FEEE2W) from September 2025
- 30 (22.4) funded hours per week for working parents of 9-month-olds (FEEE1W) from September 2025
- 30 (22.4) funded hours per week for eligible 3-4-year-olds (FEEE3&4)
- All funded hours can be stretched across 52 weeks
- Funding eligibility must be reconfirmed every 3 months with HMRC

All providers are not required or obligated to offer FEEE places to parents and families.

It is important to note that parents that are entitled to a free place does not offer a guarantee of a place at any one provider or a particular pattern of provision.

Whilst we do offer FEEE spaces to our parents and families we implement a sole funding policy and therefore your full entitlement must be used with our nursery only. There may be some extenuating circumstances in which this is reviewed however this would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

FEEE is at the heart of the Government's vision for all children to have access to high quality early years education. Evidence shows that regular good quality early education has long lasting benefits for all children.

The FEEE for three- and four-year-olds (FEEE3&4) is a universal funded provision for every child from the term following their third birthday up until they reach statutory school age, or they are registered in a maintained school or academy reception class.

An additional 15 hours a week of FEEE is available for eligible working parents of three- and four-year-olds.

From April 2024 15 hours FEEE is available for eligible two-year-olds (FEEE2W) the term following their 2nd birthday of working parents and from September 2024 for eligible nine-month-olds (FEEE1W) the term after they are 9 months of working parents. This increases to 30 hours for both age cohorts from September 2025.

However, only children that are eligible under certain criteria can access the FEEE for disadvantaged two-year-olds (FEEE2)

With the introduction of 2-year-old funding for working parents (FEEE2W) it is important to remember that the existing 2-year-old funding for disadvantaged families (FEEE2) will remain unchanged. There will be occasions when a family might meet the criteria for both entitlements however, parents will still only be entitled to 15 hours funding per week. In this case, the parents should always opt for FEEE2.

Working Parents entitlement for 9-month-olds (FEEE1W)

From September 2025 a child will be entitled to up to 30 funded hours from the term after the child turns nine (9) months old and the child's Parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC i.e., a valid 11-digit eligibility code starting with 50.

You can find a straightforward explanation of all government Childcare support on the website

[Childcare Choices](#)

[You can check your eligibility using the online childcare calculator Check what help you could get with childcare costs - GOV.UK](#) and, if eligible, submit an online application. Once signed up, you will

receive an eligibility code to take give to us. We will then check the code with our local authority.

If eligible, you can book and secure your childcare placement.

There is also information for parents on the Family Information Service (FIS) webpage on the main ECC [website Essex County Council](#)

You will need to have registered for the EFE, FEEE2W or FEEE1W and have your valid eligibility code before the start of the term to access their funding in that term as follows:

If you miss this deadline, you won't be able to claim your EFE, FEEE2W or FEEE1W until the next term as the funding cannot be backdated and may have to pay childcare fees if your child starts before this. Please note the Council is unable to override the start date of any applications made after the cut-off date for the term, unless the DfE give specific consent to local authorities in Exceptional Circumstances such as a pandemic. Email earlyyearsdata@essex.gov.uk for advice.

Eligibility codes will have a validity period of 3 months. Parents will be asked to reconfirm their eligibility with HRMC every 3 months and declare any changes in circumstances.

Parents should apply for the relevant eligibility code within the term your child turns 3, 2 or 9 months old and not any earlier.

FEE GRACE PERIODS

Where parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlements upon reconfirmation, local authorities should continue to fund a place for the child for a limited 'grace period' (set out below) and ensure that providers and parents are aware of this.

During the grace period, local authorities should fund the free hours:

- until the end of the funding block (31 March, 31 August, 31 December), if a child becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block (as defined at table A below).
- until the end of the following funding block or for as long as the child remains under compulsory school age (whichever is shorter), if a child becomes ineligible in the latter half of the funding block (up to the last day of the funding block)

Local authorities will be able to access information about parents that have entered the grace period via the Eligibility Checking System, which will automatically encode the grace period end date to all eligibility codes. Local authorities should complete an audit check on eligibility codes at 6 fixed points in the year, both at the start of term and half-term across the year (in line with the dates as listed at table A below). Local authorities should communicate the grace period (through providers) to parents who are found to be ineligible for the working parent entitlements at the audit check date. Local authorities should be aware of the importance of prompting providers to notify parents in good time. Good practice is to notify parents within 5 working days.

Table A

Date parent's eligibility code becomes invalid:	LA audit date:	Grace Period end date:
1 January to 10 February	11 February	31 March
11 February to 31 March	1 April	31 August

1 April to 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May to 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September to 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October to 31 December	1 January	31 March

Local authorities should consider extending the grace period set out above for a short time in very exceptional circumstances if the parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment, for example, where the parent is a victim of domestic abuse or in other emergency situations.

Children should not start a new working parent entitlement place at a provider during the grace period. This includes:

- where a parent falls into their grace period before the child has started a place
- where a parent falls into their grace period whilst their child is in a place, and the parent seeks to move the child to a different provider.