

Parent and Carer Information Leaflet
Accessing the Free Early Education Entitlement (formally known as
Nursery Education Funding or NEF)

All parents/carers of children aged 3 and 4, can access up to 15 hours of FREE early learning and childcare each week for a maximum of 38 weeks (equating to 570 hours per year). Your child will be eligible at the start of the school term after they turn 3.

All providers offering the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) will be registered with OfSTED and will have completed the Early Learning and Childcare Service's validation process.

The types of provision available include full day care nurseries, playgroups, some children's centres and accredited childminders. Staff are trained and qualified to care for your child, helping them to learn and develop. Leicestershire County Council currently operates a system for assessing the quality of the services offered by each childcare provider. This is called our Quality Category and looks like this:

Grade Level	Quality of Service
1	Outstanding
2a 2b 2c	Good
3a 3b 3c	Satisfactory
4	Inadequate

All early years providers will receive a package of support from the Early Learning and Childcare Service based on the quality category they receive, designed to help them to improve the quality of services they offer. Please don't hesitate to enquire from your prospective provider what level of quality they are at, to aid you in choosing the right place for your child.

All childcare providers who operate within the FEEE scheme are asked, as part of their contract with Leicestershire County Council, to tell parents the level of quality they are at,

Although you have a choice of providers as detailed above, you may not always be offered the full entitlement at the times you want at the provider of your choice.

Leicestershire's 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. Please contact them on 0116 305 6545.

You can access your 15 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
- you can spread your 15 hours free early learning entitlement between a maximum of 2 providers. In cases of over claims the local authority 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
- in order to access your hours you must ensure you sign a Parental Statement of Undertaking (PSOU) for the setting each term and provide the setting with proof of your child's age with either 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 its free place:

A child born between:	Will be eligible for a free place from:
1 st April and 31 st August	The start of the autumn term following their third birthday until statutory school age
1 st September and 31 st December	The start of the spring term following their 3 rd birthday until statutory school age
1 st January and 31 st March	The start of the summer term following their 3 rd birthday until statutory school age

Headcount Dates

In order to access FEEE, your child has to be attending a provision before the dates shown in the table below. 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 from the start of the term.

Term of Funding	Headcount Date
Autumn 2012 term	13 th September 2012
Spring 2013 term	17 th January 2013
Summer 2013 term	25 th April 2013

How will your child's place be paid for?

Your 15 hours is 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 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, i.e. meals, nappies, wipes, drop off and collection charges and dance or music classes etc, prior to your child taking up their place at the provision.

The local authority is unable to dictate what a provider charges for any additional hours taken or services offered outside of the free entitlement.

Your child's learning and development

When your child attends a validated early years provider they will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is a play based curriculum. Children will learn how to develop their social, physical, speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and will learn through mathematical and creative activities.

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 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 provider 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, as stated above, the childcare provider will ask you to complete a PSOU and provide documentation to verify your child's date of birth, such as a birth certificate, passport or medical card.

The free 15 hours entitlement is purchased by the local authority on your behalf and funding is sent directly to the early year's 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 school age which is the term after the child turns 5, you may still receive the FEEE until this point.

From the Autumn Term 2012, for children born between 1st September 2007 and 31st August 2008, parents/carers can request a part time 4+ place for their child, until they reach compulsory school age. They can also defer their child's place in the knowledge that the place will be held open for them; however the child must have attended school for pre-admission visit/s (usually for two half days) before the summer break to Year 1, as the place cannot be held beyond the year it was applied for.

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

When you apply for a school place before your child has reached compulsory school age, you may be offered a part time place in a nursery or reception class at primary school, when he or she is four years old. This place will be free except for meals and trips.

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.

You should also note that if you are currently using an early learning and childcare provider within Leicestershire, but live in another local authority area such as Leicester City, and you choose to send your child to one of the Leicester City schools at the Autumn term after your child becomes 3, then you will no longer be able to claim for the FEEE.

For those children born between	Leicestershire's school admission date for children aged 4+
1 st September 2007 to 31 st August 2008	Autumn term 2012
1 st September 2008 to 31 st August 2009	Autumn term 2013 Parents must apply for a place prior to 15 th January 2013.

For more information on schools admissions please visit:
www.leics.gov.uk/admissions