

Provider Guide to Parents Self Eligibility Checking

Two Year Old Free Early Education Entitlement

Good News – families of two year old children from 1 July 2015 are able to complete an online eligibility check to see whether they are entitled to 15 hours per week of Free Early Education for their child, eligibility criteria applies*.

All that is needed is the National Insurance number / National Asylum Support Service (NASS) number, surname and the date of birth of the parent who is accessing benefits.

If eligibility is confirmed, parents will be directed to the approved childcare directory to identify an approved childcare provider.

For further information and to check eligibility parents can visit

<http://www.oldham.gov.uk/2yearolds>

***To be eligible a parent must be in receipt of one of the following:**

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support through part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit and have an annual income not over £16,190
- The Working Tax Credit 4 week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit

Children are also entitled to a place if:

- They're looked after by a local council
- They have a current statement of [special education needs \(SEN\)](#) or an education health and care plan
- They get [Disability Living Allowance](#)
- They've left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order

If a child is eligible, they can start claiming the term after they turn two. The date they can claim will depend on when their birthday is (see table below).

Child's birthday	When you can claim
1 January to 31 March	the beginning of term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	the beginning of term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	the beginning of term on or after 1 January

What does this mean for you as childcare provider?

- You will be able to directly signpost parents who enquire about a two year old funded place to the self-serve eligibility checker on the two year old web pages of Oldham Council's website.
- They will be given an instant decision and there is no need to signpost to the children's centre.
- This process can be done by the parent at home, at a local library, children's centre or with you, using the following link <http://www.oldham.gov.uk/2yearolds>

What is the process for a parent?

- Parents use the above link and log into or create an account. Some parents may be familiar with the application process as it is that used by school admissions when applying for a school place. New parents can easily create a new account.
- Parents will be asked to complete some information about themselves and their child; this information will be submitted electronically to the DWP, which will then return a instant result of 'eligible' or 'not eligible'

Parents who receive an 'eligible' result

- Parents will receive an instant decision on their online application, this application will come directly into the Early Years and Childcare Service and an email will be sent to the parent confirming their eligibility for their child to take up a two year old funded place, this email should be received by the parent within two days of completing the application.
- Contained within this email will be the parents surname and the child's date of birth, the parent must produce this email to you before you can offer/accept them for a funded place. You must retain a copy of this email for funding entitlement. You must check that this letter belongs to the parent via some identification and check that it relates to the child they are requesting a place for by checking the child's birth certificate, this is good practise and will most likely be in your admissions policy.
- The online application from the parent will match to the claim for funded hours that you submit and the claim will be paid as normal in line with the payment timetable.

Parents who receive a 'not eligible' result

- Parents will receive an instant decision on their application, this application will come directly into the Early Years and Childcare Service, these parents will not receive an email containing the 'not eligible' result, however will receive an automated generated response of what they can do next.
- The local authority will not be made aware of why the parent has returned the 'Not Eligible' result.
- Parents who believe they are eligible will be signposted to take evidence of their eligibility to their local children's centre (sometimes this extra check is required as the DWP information is constantly being updated and may be slightly delayed in some instances).

- The children's centre will then assess the evidence the parent has produced and notify the parent if they are eligible or not based on what hard evidence the parent has presented.
- If the children centre approve the child as 'eligible' then they will make direct contact with the setting of the parents' choice from the directory of approved providers and arrange for the parent to visit and access a place.
- Where the children's centre see evidence and approve the child as 'eligible' the children's centre will notify the Early Years and Childcare Service that they have approved the child as 'eligible' and the 'not eligible' result will be manually overwritten to an 'eligible' status.
- Once this overwrite has taken place, the application will then match to the claim which is submitted by the provider.
- Providers should always ask the children centre for an eStart ID for the child they are accepting via the children's centre approval method, to ensure that the child is eligible to receive funding.
- For parents who do not have evidence to produce to their local children's centre they will be encouraged to go back and re-check and re-submit their application again in three weeks' time, sometimes this is required as DWP information is constantly being updated and may be slightly delayed with regards to new benefit claimants.

Additional Information

- Providers are advised to submit claims in line with the payment timetable as and when a child starts with them, this can alleviate the pressure of having to submit all children's information ensuring the deadline is not missed and will also help support the Free Entitlement Team in matching claims to the parent's application, thus not causing any payment delays.
- Providers must always check with the Free Entitlement Team if a parent comes to them mid-term to access funding, the Free Entitlement Team will be able to confirm if this child has already been funded at another setting for that term, failure to do so will result in no payment for funded hours being paid to the provider who has taken the child mid-term, where there are no exceptional circumstances, and the parent will be liable for paying any outstanding fees. Please make parents aware of this when they are signing the parental declaration form and committing to the funding being paid to your setting.
- Settings who have an Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement' and 'Satisfactory' will not show up on the two year old directory of approved providers, and therefore will not be visible for parents to choose to contact regarding a two year old funded place. If parents are struggling to find childcare in their area with 'Good' or 'Outstanding' childcare providers they are encouraged to contact their local Children Centre who will be able to give them a choice of 'Requires Improvement' or 'Satisfactory' childcare providers who have an active focused improvement plan (FIP) and are open under sufficiency within their chosen area.