

## Early Years Funding Newsletter February 2026

### Introduction

Welcome to the February edition of the Early Years Funding Newsletter. If you have any comments or topics you would like to be included, please contact us at [eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

You can access information relating to funding on our webpage [Early years funding | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) including various Guides and other supporting information to assist you, with your funding claims. These can be found in the documents section of the webpage.

**Please scroll down** for key tasks and payment dates

### Reminders

Please be advised of the deadline for parents to apply to HMRC (Childcare Services) for working entitlement expanded/extended hours for the summer funding period is 31 March. If a parent applies after this date, they may be issued a code but will not be able to use the code in the summer funding period.

If there are exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to make a discretion. Please contact the funding team [eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk), requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please ensure that you remind parents to reconfirm their details with HMRC, when required, to keep their code valid. You can use the portal to validate codes at any time, not only when the tasks are sent to you.

Check your grace periods by reviewing your expiration dashboard found in the provider portal: [https://ems.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ProviderPortal\\_LIVE/Account/Account/Login](https://ems.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ProviderPortal_LIVE/Account/Account/Login)

## EY Funding Hourly Rates 2026-2027

The rates for the 2026/27 financial year will be:

Age group	Three- and four-year-olds	Two-year-olds	Under twos
Hourly rate for 2026/27	£6.04	£8.44	£11.42
Current hourly rate (2024/25)	£5.66	£8.15	£11.00
Change	+£0.38	+£0.29	+£0.42
National increase	+£0.25+£0.19*	+£0.29	+£0.41
Percentage of increase passed through	100%+68%	100%	103%
Early Years Pupil Premium	£1.15 per hour (increased from £1) per hour for the first 15 hours for all eligible children		
Disability Access Funding	£975 per year for each eligible child (increased from £938)		

\*In 2026/27 funding allocations for local authorities move from being based on an annual census to a termly census. The increase for three-four-year-olds includes an additional uplift to reflect this and compensate local authorities for a potential reduction in funding due to the change. The uplift for three-four-year-olds this year consists of two parts, a 25p uplift which the local authority is expected to pass on, and an additional 19p uplift to compensate the local authority for the difference in funding calculation, which it does not have to pass on.

Cambridgeshire have made the decision to pass on all the 25p uplift (100%) plus an additional 13p uplift (68%) to maximise the rate paid to providers for three-four-year-olds.

Please follow this link for further information:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/childcare-and-early-learning/information-for-parents-and-carers/early-years-funding-formula>

### Autumn 2025 Payment Schedule

Please note the EY funding team emailed the Autumn Payment Schedules to funded providers the week of November 14.

We experienced a critical system error and had to make an off-system payment and issue the payment schedules via email.

The Autumn payment schedule will not be recorded in the provider portal.

### Early Years Pupil Premium Reminder for children in care/been in the care of a Local Authority

If you have a child who is in the care of a Local Authority or who has been adopted from the care of a Local Authority, please do not add parent/carer details in the portal for an EYPP check. You should select 'decline to provide' and contact the funding team.

Children meeting these criteria are automatically eligible for EYPP, we do not want to check EYPP eligibility based on economic status so please contact

us [eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) to discuss further.

### Working Parent Entitlement

The website, formerly known as Childcare Choices, where parents can apply for Working Parent Entitlement, has been renamed [Best Start in Life](#).

Here is a link to the Frequently Asked Questions that you may find useful: [Frequently Asked Questions - Best Start in Life](#) HMRC Childcare Services Helpline: 0300 123 4097

## Making Changes to Contracts and Claims Mid Funding Period

We have reviewed and made some changes to our policy and rewritten the guidance on making changes to claims.

Please follow this link to our webpage: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Guidance-on-Changing-Contracts-Claims-Mid-Funding-Period.pdf> 242 KB

## Diary Dates for Tasks and Payments

Please find tables below showing future tasks and payment dates.

### Portal Tasks

	<b>Task Opens</b>	<b>Task Closes</b>
<b>Spring Estimate Task</b>	Monday, 10 November 2025	Monday, 17 November 2025 at midnight
<b>Spring Headcount Task</b>	Friday, 2 January 2026	Monday, 19 January 2026 at midnight
<b>Summer Estimate Task</b>	Monday, 2 March 2026	Monday, 9 March 2026 at midnight
<b>Summer Headcount Task</b>	Wednesday, 8 April 2026	Monday, 27 April 2026 at midnight

### Payments

<b>PVI Nurseries, Preschools &amp; Schools</b>	
<b>Estimate and Headcount payments</b>	<b>Payment Date (Week ending)</b>
<b>Spring Estimate Payment</b>	Friday, 19 December 2025
<b>Spring Headcount Payment</b>	Friday, 6 March 2026

### Payments

<b>PVI Nurseries, Preschools &amp; Schools</b>	
<b>Estimate and Headcount payments</b>	<b>Payment Date (Week ending)</b>
<b>Summer Estimate Payment</b>	Friday, 10 April 2026
<b>Summer Headcount Payment</b>	Friday, 12 June 2026

### Childminders

<b>Split payments</b>	<b>Payment Date (Week ending)</b>
<b>Spring Month 1</b>	Friday, 19 December 2025
<b>Spring Month 2</b>	Friday, 23 January 2026
<b>Spring Month 3</b>	Friday, 20 February 2026
<b>Spring Month 4</b>	Friday, 20 March 2026

### Childminders

<b>Split payments</b>	<b>Payment Date (Week ending)</b>
<b>Summer Month 1</b>	Friday, 24 April 2026
<b>Summer Month 2</b>	Friday, 22 May 2026
<b>Summer Month 3</b>	Friday, 19 June 2026
<b>Summer Month 4</b>	Friday, 24 July 2026