



Early Years Service

Information, Advice & Business Network (IABN)

Autumn Term 2025



Housekeeping



Schedule of the session



Toilets, Fire exits, breaks, refreshments



Mobiles on silent



Any questions?

Agenda

- Ofsted summary of changes
- Safeguarding updates
- 2yo Early Learning Funding
- Childminder business and finance toolkit
- SEND updates
- HAF updates
- Workforce recruitment & retention
- Funding entitlements including the Census and eligibility codes



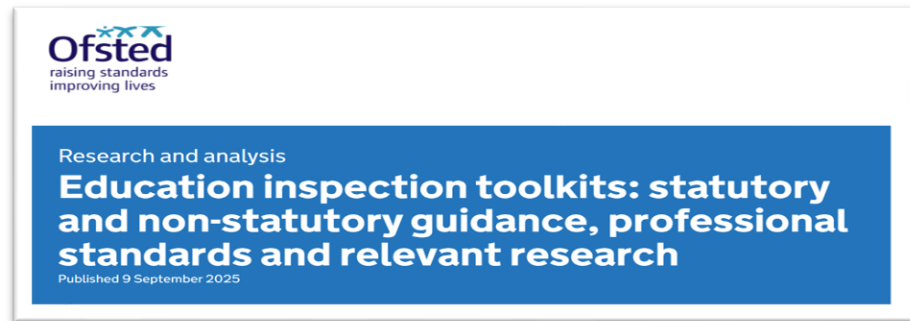
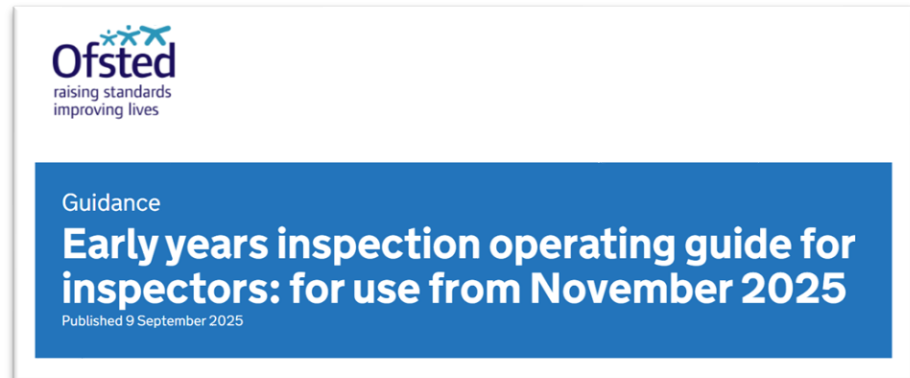
Early Years Service Updates



Ofsted summary of changes

- New report card
- A five-point grading scale
- A renewed focus on inclusion
- New toolkits
- New inspection methodology
- More closely aligned to the EYFS
- A sharper focus on regulation
- New online insights platform

Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information



Ofsted briefing

[Ofsted Framework Information Briefing Sessions](#)



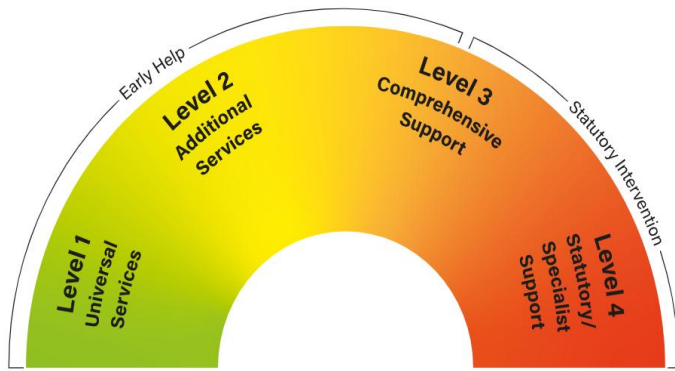


Safeguarding



Updates

- Safeguarding reforms September 2025
- [Keeping Children Safe In Education September 2025](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Council Safeguarding & Child Protection Guidance September 2025](#)
- Safeguarding training-Safeguarding for All and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sector Updates and Question of the Week



The Continuum of Need

- The Safeguarding Partnership have recently reviewed and updated the Continuum of Need. The updated version has now been published on the BSCP website.
- Please share this with your colleagues
- <https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/professionals/continuum-of-need/>

Current Trends

- Not following safer recruitment practices;
No evidence of qualifications
No references/incomplete references
References not followed up
Assuming family members who are employed are exempt from checks
- Children leaving the setting unattended /children left unattended in rooms or outdoor areas



Concerned about a child?

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, **call the Police on 999**

For any concerns about a child – including foster placements, notification of offenders in area, etc. please contact;

First Response team within Children's Social Care

01296 383962

Out-of-hours: **0800 999 7677**

or e-mail

securecypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



MASH referrals 2024

Total of 322 MASH referrals came through Early Years in 2024
of these

68 were related to Domestic Abuse

44 were related to Domestic Violence



Reminders from LADO

- Make Ofsted aware if an allegation referral is made
- Keep parents and staff aware – after speaking with the LADO
- Don't investigate until you have spoken to the LADO
- The LADO doesn't investigate



Safeguarding Children *We're in it together*

The **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** has oversight of investigations into allegations against adults who volunteer and/or work with children.

You **must** inform the LADO when an employee or volunteer has:

- harmed a child or is suspected of harming a child
- been involved in a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved in a way that may pose a risk to children
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children



Anyone can report a concern, whether you are a professional or volunteer working with children or are a member of the public.

If you think a case is urgent or complex, you can contact the LADO Duty Desk:

- Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm
- Fridays 9am to 4:30pm

✉ **secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk**
The LADO will respond within 1 working day.

☎ 01296 382 070

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership provide a free training programme which includes allegation management if you would like more information around the allegation process.

New and updated LADO poster for you to download & display, can be found on the LADO page of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website



2yr Early Learning Funding



2YO take up data



DfE Published figures are based on **census data** from the previous January. The data for 2025 was received 16 July 2025.

2 Year Old Funding Schemes – Call to action

Dual Eligibility:

If parents qualify for **both funding schemes**, they **must** apply for **both** and will receive **two separate codes**.



30 hours Funding	=	15 hours early learning funding e.g. HB5NQ6	+	15 hours working parent funding e.g. 50123456789
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What you need to do now:

- Check eligibility for 2 year old early learning funding
- Use the PPA to complete the application form

Dual applications protect your setting's funding stability



***2 year old early learning funding for those receiving additional forms of government support**



£ 24,710.40
of unclaimed funding for Summer term 2025



This means a nursery, pre-school or childminder who had not claimed for one child in a 2yr funded place* had missed out on **£1,372.80** for the Summer term 2025 and **£4,742.40** for the year.



Childminder Business and Finance Toolkit



Tools and templates include:

**Business and
Finance
Checklist**

**Business Plan
Template**

Receipt Log

**Mileage
Tracker**

**Simple Budget
Template**

**Full Budget and
Forecasting
Template**

Full Budget Forecasting Tool

This tool will support you with forward planning and management of income and expenditure, you will need to input:

- Fee information and session times
- Attendance
- Staffing (if applicable) or a monthly salary for yourself
- You will need to add any other income or expenditure



Menu



Early Years

[Home](#)[Childminders and Nannies](#)[Childminder Business and Finance Toolkit](#)

Childminder Business and Finance Toolkit

As a self-employed childminder you will be required to submit your accounts to [HMRC](#). You will need to manage your own Tax and National Insurance contributions, setting aside funds to pay the tax bill at the end of each financial year. We recommend you open a business account for your childminding business, paying yourself a salary and keeping funds in the business account for contingency, tax, NI contributions, training costs, resources etc.

Some childminders opt to employ an accountant, you can however manage the accounts yourself if you wish to, here you will find some tools and templates that will support you to do this.

If you require further support please seek advice from your Early Years Key Contact.

Useful Tools and Templates

 [Business and Finance Checklist for Childminders](#) [Childminder Business Plan](#) [Basic Budget Template for Childminders](#) [Mileage Tracker](#) [Receipt Log](#) [Business and Finance Toolkit User Guide](#)



Out of School Conference



Save the Date

Buckinghamshire OOS Conference is Coming!

- Get ready! The Buckinghamshire Early Years Service is thrilled to announce the upcoming Out of School Sector Conference—a must-attend event for all Buckinghamshire-based organisations and settings.



- **Saturday, 28th February**



- **Location: Crowne Plaza Marlow, Fieldhouse Ln, Marlow SL7 1GJ**



- **Timings: 9am to 4pm**



- **Purpose: Empower your team with expert-led workshops and networking opportunities.**

- Stay tuned—full programme details and booking info will be released soon. Mark your calendars now!



SEND



Early SEN Inclusion Fund

- Early Years added to the original funding pot for 24-25
- A total of 2,087 children were supported through the Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYSENIIF) and of these children 1,085 continue to need support.
- 158 settings indicated that children other than those targeted for Inclusion Fund support benefited from the Inclusion Fund

Last day for this term's applications
24th November



Buckinghamshire Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund (EY SENIF)

Essential guidance for applications 2025-26

All local authorities are required to have a SENIF for all children eligible for funding. Settings must have SEN, regardless of the number of hours taken to work with providers to recognise and support children with SEN who are eligible for funding.

Settings must follow the Early Years Providers Operational Guide 2025-2026:

Settings must ensure the [Early Years Ordinarily Available provision](#) and other resources [SEND Resources](#) to ensure quality teaching and an inclusive provision is at the heart of their offer to all children in their setting. A well-trained SENCO is essential to supporting your setting and is considered part of ordinarily available provision-funding.

Funding allocated is a contribution towards the cost of delivering specific, evidence-led interventions and/or provision identified to support children's emerging needs. Each decision is based on the information provided but we will also use information on training attendance and engagement with implementing any advice given as a factor in supporting these decisions.

It should enable individual children, or groups of children to achieve identified outcomes and be used in conjunction with any other funding received by the setting e.g., setting's own budgets, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF) payments etc.

EYSENIIF is not for individual children in settings who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), are under assessment or those in Reception classes.

Any training completed should have a continued impact on the setting's capacity to meet similar needs in the future. When using EYSENIIF for training there is an expectation that learning will be shared and embedded within your setting and will be a key part of the evaluation process.

Exceptional Support Request

- New form and e-mail address
- Triage group (specialist teacher and EY SEND advisors)
- Criteria and expectations still the same

Key Questions:

Describe the child or young person's needs, ensuring that you include detail on:

- why the need is immediate/why the need is unpredicted/ how the need requires special education provision that exceeds available resources?
- How any additional funding has been used (DAF/Provisional DAF/EYPP)?
- Send an up-to-date costed SEN support plan/provision map (or equivalent) detailing provision in place to meet the child/young persons needs and sent it to ehcenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

(also use this e-mail address if you need to check if you have been waiting to hear about your application)

- Provide details of any meetings and/or discussions you have had with external professionals regarding the child or young person
- Any questions please request an EY SEND consultation

Exceptional Support Request



[Exceptional
Support Request
Form](#)



Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme



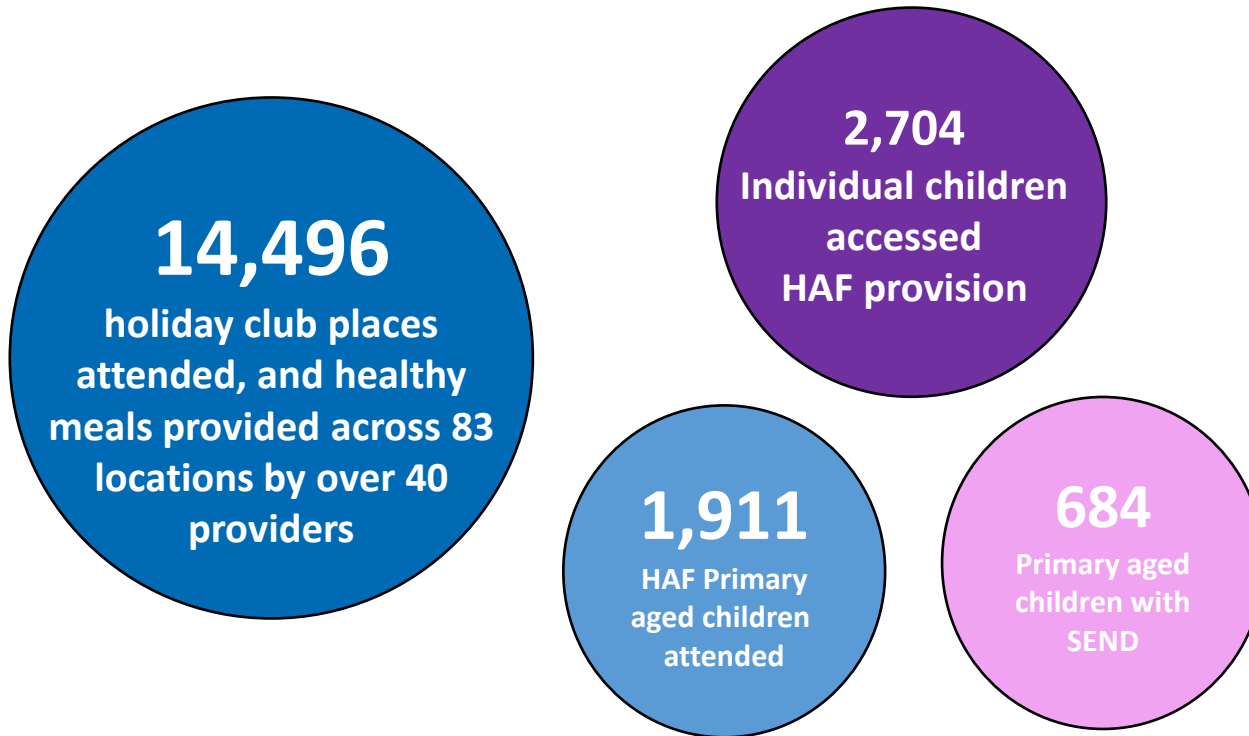
What is the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme?

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme is a DfE funded programme that provides holiday activity clubs and healthy food to children aged 4 to 16 who are in receipt of Benefits-Related Free School Meals throughout the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods. The programme has been running since 2021 and has recently received a 3-year extension until March 2029.

What are the Benefits of HAF Clubs?

- HAF clubs have the potential to be of huge benefit to the children and young people attending with outcomes including an increase in confidence, social skills, leadership skills and learning upon return to school all being showed across HAF programmes nationally.
- The clubs can also have a positive impact throughout the household, helping to support parents with childcare requirements and providing a daily nutritious meal for their children during the holiday periods.

Summer 2025 Statistics



What Does HAF Provision Look Like?

Each HAF offer runs for a minimum of 4 hours and includes:

- A healthy meal provided to each child attending through HAF
- A minimum of 1 hour of physical activity
- An enriching activity (Arts, drama, trips, STEM etc)
- An element of informal healthy lifestyle education
- Signposting for parents towards local organisations and services



How do you apply?

- Organisations can apply to become a HAF provider by completing an application form located on the Buckinghamshire [HAF webpage](#). This form is subject to updates after receipt of new DfE guidance but can be used as a basis for any interested settings.
- Once applications are completed and sent to the Early Years HAF Team, they are then reviewed with a decision passed across within 3 weeks of the application being submitted. On occasion, late applications can be accepted after the initial deadline has passed.

What can we fund?

- We fund all costs associated with offering HAF places as either part of an existing offer, or as a completely new one. This includes staffing, venue hire, food costs, admin costs etc.
- For organisations who are applying to add HAF places to an existing offer, we would fund pro rata. For example, if a provider offered 10 commercial places and 10 HAF places we would fund 50% of staff, venue etc.

Contact information and website links

Contact - HAF@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk

HAF Webpage - www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/haf



Workforce Recruitment and Retention



Early Years and Childcare Careers

The Early Years Service is responding proactively to the national and local challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled early years workforce.

With the expansion of early education and childcare entitlements, the sector is projected to require up to 50,000 additional staff nationally, underscoring the urgency for strategic local action.

Our action plan outlines a comprehensive approach to:

- Attract new and returning professionals to the early years sector.
- Promote the value and impact of early years careers.
- Support providers in creating positive, sustainable work environments.



“Making a change is scary at first, but I’ve never looked back. I’m proud to be part of children’s lives.”

— Tasha, Early Years Educator

Key Objectives

- Raise awareness of early years careers across diverse age groups.
- Improve recruitment pipelines through localised promotion of the national “Do Something Big” campaign.
- Promote staff retention through professional development, recognition, and CPD training programme.
- Providers, educators, and community partners—to work together in building a thriving early years workforce for Buckinghamshire’s children and families.



Holding onto talent: Flexible Working

Why a priority now?

Flexible working is gaining momentum across other sectors so the time for the education sector to act is now. Legislative changes that came into effect on 6 April 2024 gave employees the statutory right to request flexible working from day one.

Key Benefits

- retaining experienced staff
- recruiting from a broader pool
- promoting wellbeing
- improving work-life balance
- improving productivity and reducing absences
- promoting equality of opportunity and diversity



Options to Consider...

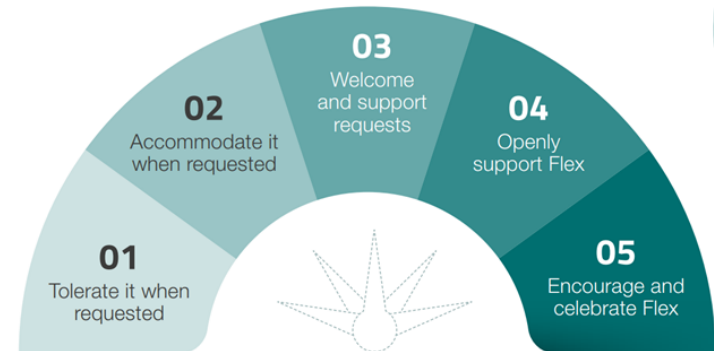
- Working patterns:
Job shares, Compressed Hours, Varied Hours, Holiday Purchase Scheme, Part-Time, staggered hours, annualised hours.
- In year informal flexibility:
Personal or family days, Lieu Time, short term adjustments.
- Well-being days
- Stay Interviews
- Gift of Time
- Time for Training
- Job advert content



Take a moment to think about flexible working in your setting...

- How many part-time staff do you have?
- Are there examples of other flexible working arrangements?
- Are there regular, fixed times to talk about individuals' needs and preferences? Or do staff make a formal request and it often comes as a surprise?
- Do people feel comfortable talking about what they might need?
- Are staff able to swap shifts?
- Would it be possible to create an earlies/lates shift pattern and give people choice?
- How much notice / choice do staff have about if/when they work overtime?
- When interviewing applicants, do you talk about flexible working?
- Do people leave to do bank or agency work so they can have more flexibility?

Have a look at the curve below and think about where you would place your nursery.



Do you think your staff would agree?

Being able to offer staff flexibility in a nursery or early years setting isn't always straightforward, but there are ways of approaching it to see what might be possible beyond what you are already doing.

Break



Discussion Feedback



We value your input.

Useful Links:

- [Building the early years and childcare workforce of the future – Timewise](#)
- [Timewise-A-Guide-for-Nursery-Managers](#)
- [Resource Library | Flexible working in Education](#)
- [Do something big - Early Years Careers](#)
- [What flexible working is - Statutory flexible working requests - Acas](#)



Funding Entitlement



Early Years Census

- After Spring 2026 the EY Census will become termly as required by the DfE
- Census Dates
 - Spring 2026 – W/C 12th January 2026
 - Summer 2026 – W/C 18th May 2026
 - Autumn 2026 – W/C 28th September 2026
 - Spring 2027 – W/C 18th January 2027
- Questions relating to staff will only be on the Spring Census

Eligibility Codes – Ensure Eligibility Before Attendance

- This autumn term we had 7691 children that claimed working parent entitlement hours
- An increase of almost 500 children from last autumn term and over double the amount 3&4 year olds claiming extended hours before the working parent entitlement came in
- We have also seen an increase of providers confirming funded places for parents before they have checked the eligibility code and then finding the code isn't valid after the child has started.

Eligibility Codes – Ensure Eligibility Before Attendance

Late discovery of ineligibility leads to:

- Parents receiving unexpected bills as they would assume they are eligible due to attending funded sessions. This could then lead to financial stress for the family involved
- Complaints to the local authority
- Reputational damage for providers
- Lack of trust between parents, providers and the local authority

Eligibility Codes – The Provider's Responsibility

Before offering a funded place, providers must:

- Check the child's eligibility code on the eligibility code portal
- Confirm the code is valid and current
- Ensure the child is eligible for the term they are attending
- Ensure *current* children's eligibility codes are still valid for the upcoming term

Non-Eligible Codes

- If a child hasn't supplied or has not got an eligible code:
 - Do not let the child attend for funded hours
 - If they attend, the parents will assume the code is valid
- Do not forward any correspondence from us direct to the parent
 - Our emails are written for the provider only and there may be other children's details on the correspondence.
- If there is an exceptional reason for a code not being valid then the provider should email earlyfunding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with the details.
 - We will review the request and get back to you with a decision

January 2026 Deadlines

Invoices:

- Invoices and receipts should be itemised and broken down into the following:
 - the funded entitlement hours
 - additional private paid hours
 - food charges
 - non-food consumables charges
 - activities charges
- The DfE states that : *"Local authorities should ensure these itemised invoices are in place by January 2026"*.

January 2026 Deadlines

Websites:

- The DfE states that :
 - *"The costs of chargeable extras should be published on provider websites or on local authority Family Information Services"*
 - *"They should set out the amounts charged for all the chargeable extras listed, as well as the pattern of hours that parents can take the entitlements"*
 - *"This should be fully implemented by January 2026 at the latest"*

NB: This is not applicable to childminders or providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time

Parent Queries

The Early Years Service/BFIS have received an increased number of parent queries since the April 2025 updated DfE guidance

More information is available online for parents eg:

[Early Years and Childcare | Family Information Service](#)

[Best Start in Life](#)

[Tax-Free Childcare | Best Start in Life](#)

More advertising regarding the funded entitlements

Parent Queries

We've noticed the following:

- that parent's understanding has improved. Parents are more aware of how funding is applied and the costs they are being asked to pay; that artificial breaks splitting up funded sessions are not allowed
- increased awareness by parents of the funding rates paid – which then generates more queries particularly around possible top-ups and private hourly rates
- that overly complex detail in policies can create further queries from parents

Provider Policies cont'd

- There still needs to be an emphasis on providing high quality care through the funded only offer; with voluntary extras applied for items which are not covered by the EYFS. Parents must not feel as though they would be accepting substandard levels of care if they do not pay for enrichment/enhanced offers.
 - Consider offering chargeable special activities such as graduation ceremonies, Father Christmas visits, Easter bunny visits, timed for when parents are not accessing funded hours. This is for the children and parents who cannot afford these additional charges
- In some cases, providers are putting a notice period to parents accessing only their funded hours.
 - You can request that parents provide you with some notice out of courtesy for the funded hours, but you cannot enforce this as there is no monetary attached to funded hours for the parent.

What happens next:

- New FE contract updated with the 30-hour working parent entitlement to be completed by funded providers over the autumn/spring terms
- Admissions & Fees policies and invoice templates to be reviewed by EYS over the autumn/spring terms

- Websites or BFIS records to be reviewed over the spring term
- The DfE states that:
 - *"Local authorities must take all steps available to ensure that the free entitlements are available free of charge"*
 - *"Local authorities should ensure that children who do not participate in optional activities continue to receive provision that complies with the EYFS"*
 - *"A local authority should intervene if a provider seeks to make additional hours, optional services, or optional consumables a mandatory condition of taking up a free place"*
 - *"Local authorities should ensure these itemised invoices are in place by January 2026".*
 - *"Local authorities should ensure that children are able to take up their free hours in continuous blocks if they wish to, and there should be no artificial breaks in the entitlement hours"*

[Early education and childcare - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/early-education-and-childcare)



Should you have any questions please contact
the Early Years Service

EarlyYears@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk

