

## THE FLEXIBLE OFFER



All eligible children are entitled to 570 hours of free early years provision per year. The free place commences in September and runs until the following July in line with the school year, often referred to as the academic year. A child therefore receives 210 free hours in the autumn school term, and 180 free hours in both the spring and summer school terms.

A child starting at the beginning of the autumn term would have 570 free hours for the current school year, a child starting at the beginning of the spring term 360 free hours and a child starting at the beginning of the summer 180 free hours. The free early years place then runs again for the following school year. If a child starts part way through a school term you will need to calculate how many hours the child is entitled to take.

The minimum offer that parents can expect to access is 3 hours a day over 5 days of the week or 5 hours a day over 3 days of the week (though not necessarily at the provider of choice).

Providers are allowed to offer a minimum of 2.5 hours and a maximum of 6 hours of free early years provision a day, between the hours of 8am and 6pm. Each provider will deliver their own model of flexibility within these parameters. Many providers offer 3 hours as a minimum.

Any free sessions covering a lunch period (e.g. 9am-3pm) will include the lunch time as part of the free place. A provider can charge for supplying a hot lunch to a child during this session; however parents will be offered the option of providing a packed lunch for their child to eliminate this cost.

### SCHOOL TERM OFFER

The minimum offer that parents can expect to access is a standard school term time offer (over 38 weeks) of 3 hours a day over 5 days and the maximum is 6 hours over 2 days and a third day of 3 hours. In addition some early years providers will offer blocks of 4 and 5 hours. Each early year's provider can set the length and times of the free early year's places between the hours of 8am and 6pm. Early years providers are encouraged to deliver the free early years places in a flexible way to better meet individual family's needs.






### THE STRETCHED OFFER

Currently a number of providers can also allow you to take your free place over more weeks of the year. This means a child could access 12 free hours for 47.5 weeks from the beginning of the autumn term, 12 free hours for 30 weeks from the beginning of the spring term or 12 free hours for 15 weeks from the beginning of the summer term. A child would attend in what normally would be school holiday periods. Each early years provider delivering the stretched offer is allowed to set their own weeks of delivery, they must include the core school term dates.

Before offering the Stretched offer, providers must complete a form requesting to deliver the stretched offer which the Birth to Five Service approves.

Early years providers will charge parents at their own rate for hours accessed outside of the free sessions.

A child can access their free place with no more than two providers registered with the Local Authority, not exceeding 15 hours per week. These include:

-  Pre-schools and Playgroups
-  Day Nurseries
-  Independent Schools
-  Nursery Schools
-  Schools with Nursery Classes

The parent/carer declaration gives the option of selecting two providers. Both early years providers and parents would need to agree attendance patterns and ensure a maximum of 15 hours on a standard school term time offer or 12 hours on the stretched offer were claimed. Both early years providers are required to work with each other in order to effectively meet the needs of the family. This includes sharing information to effectively support children's play, learning and development.