

Guidance for EY settings who wish to make additional charges for funded places

Early Years providers may charge for additional costs in relation to funded childcare places.

This is acceptable practice and may cover a contribution towards:

- additional activities such as specialist tuition e.g. French lessons, yoga, trips etc.
- consumables such as sun cream, wipes, nappies etc.
- meals and snacks

What the DfE Statutory Guidance (para A1.25) states regarding charging for consumables...

Providers can charge for meals and snacks as part of a free entitlement place and that they can also charge for consumables such as nappies or sun cream, and for services such as trips and specialist tuition. Parents can therefore be expected to pay for these, although these charges must be voluntary for the parent. Where parents are unable or unwilling to pay for meals and consumables, providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on how to respond, with options including allowing parents to supply their own meals or nappies, or waiving or reducing the cost of meals and snacks.

What the Early Years Entitlement funding includes...

The base rate funding is calculated to include the cost of all necessary resources and facilities to deliver a child's funded education place as identified within the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes basic equipment, such as stationery, paints, toiletries etc.

What providers can do...

- consider not applying refundable deposit charges to disadvantaged parents (i.e. funded 2 year olds). If you still choose to charge parents a deposit to secure their child's funded place, ensure the deposit is not an excessive amount and is refunded in full to the parents within a reasonable time scale.
- ensure you do not charge parents a non-refundable registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's funded place.
- offer parents alternative meal options where parents identify that they cannot afford to purchase meals in addition to their funded entitlement place. For example, allowing a parent to bring in their own packed lunch.
- review your charging policies to ensure it does not enforce parents to purchase additional hours as a condition to access their funded entitlement. For example, if a provision is open 51 weeks of the year and a parent wishes to only access their funded entitlement for 47.5 weeks (stretched offer), the provider cannot insist the parent purchases hours for the remaining 3.5 weeks.
- Be clear with parents what is included in a charge in advance of them accepting the place or moving onto the funding, so they have chance to seek an alternative placement before the start of a term if they are not happy with the proposed charges. This information should be available and issued to parents in written format, either in your welcome pack, fees sheet or website (also a reminder of this information on invoices is useful to the parent).
- Be prepared to resolve any queries from parents who query such charges, as the Local Authority is not in a position to serve as an arbitrator in contractual arrangements between parents and providers.

Thank you for your continued support and efforts in delivering funded childcare which, without doubt, makes a real difference to the lives of young children and families in Nottinghamshire.