

DfES publishes further detail on early years funding plans for 2024/25

The Department for Education (DfE) has published new information on how it will fund the early entitlements from April 2024, including its plans for the offers for eligible children aged two and under.

This includes an additional £67 million in funding to reflect the higher-than-expected increase in the national living and minimum wages announced in the Autumn Statement earlier this month.

Three- and four-year-old funding

The DfE has confirmed that local authorities in England will receive an average three- and four-year-old funding from April 2024, an average increase of 4.7% compared to September 2023. Individual local authority rates are different.

NB: It is important to note that these are average rates for councils only – frontline provider rates will be confirmed by individual local authorities, no later than 31 March 2024.

All local authorities will receive at least a 1% increase in three- and four-year-old funding compared to September 2023.

Two-year-old funding

The DfE has confirmed that local authorities in England will receive an average two-year-old funding from April 2024. Individual local authority rates are different. Again, these are average rates for councils only – rates for frontline providers will be confirmed by local authorities by 31 March 2024.

Local authorities will receive the same two-year-old funding rate for both disadvantaged two-year-olds and two-year-olds from eligible working families from central government. However, they will have the option of applying two different rates to these two groups within their local area, as long as the rate for disadvantaged two-year-olds is not lower than the rate for two-year-olds from eligible working families.

Under-twos funding

The DfE has confirmed that local authorities in England will receive an average under-twos funding from April 2024. Individual local authority rates are different. Again, these are average rates for councils only.

SENIF

The government will expect local authorities establish a special educational needs inclusion fund (SENIF) for children aged nine months to two-year-olds.

It will also "conduct a more detailed review of SENIF arrangements that are currently in place across local authorities nationally and to what extent they are meeting current need" and "look to draw examples of best practice together and suggest longer-term changes to improve the extent to which SENIFs can meet children's needs".

EYPP and DAF

The government is increasing the hourly rate paid for early years pupil premium (EYPP) in September 2023). Disability access funding (DAF) will also increase Both EYPP and DAF will be extended to younger children accessing early entitlements from 2024-25.