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Wednesday, 13 January 2021

## **Free Entitlement funding for 2, 3 and 4 year old children - spring term 2021**

Dear Parent

We are very aware that there is some anxiety for parents who are trying to make decisions about whether to send their child into early years and childcare provision, in light of the national lockdown, and any impact this may have on future access to their Free Entitlement (FE) place.

We are delighted to announce that we will continue to fund providers for FE places where parents have already signed a Parent Declaration (on or before 21 January) even if you are currently choosing to keep your child at home. This arrangement will be in place until the beginning of spring half-term, Friday 12 February. If you chose to move your child to another provider then funding will follow the child with no notice period. These funded hours claimed will contribute to your overall annual entitlement, which means these hours cannot be carried forward to later in the year.

We are passing on this funding to support providers with their ongoing sustainability and enable them to provide home learning experiences, whilst children are not attending, due to parental decisions to keep children at home under the current circumstances. This means that you should be able to access your child's place when you are ready to send them back to your childcare provider.

We know that the early years is a crucial phase in a child's development and the support offered by early years and childcare providers has a long-term impact on children's learning. That is why we are funding providers so they can continue to offer support to your child during this challenging time.

Should you have any queries or concerns please speak to your childcare provider in the first instance who will be able to support you.

Yours sincerely

Lucy Butler

Executive Director for Children, Young People and Learning