



Department
for Education

Coronavirus-related support for submitting an Early Years Census 2022 return

January 2022

Summary

This document is designed to supplement the Early Years Census 2022 Guide in order to support early years providers and local authorities to make their Early Years Census 2022 returns accurately and consistently.

As has been the case since June 2020, early years provision has been able to be open to all children to attend their expected hours, as agreed with parents/guardians.

Open providers must ensure that they are able to meet statutory requirements to ensure safe and high-quality early education and childcare, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The Early Years Census 2022 is intended to reflect the provision made available to parents/guardians, and a provider's usual expected attendance in the week commencing 17th January 2022. This remains the guiding principle behind all the following scenarios outlined. The intention is to ensure parity of approach to counting of funded entitlements across both the School Census and the Early Years Census.

The first section relates to open settings within which children are able to benefit from their funded entitlements in census week.

- In summary we have taken the view that where a child is reasonably expected to attend Early Years provision, and that provision is made available to them by the provider, their expected hours should be recorded in the Early Years Census. This means children who, were it not for the impact of coronavirus on either their own personal circumstances or on the operation of their Early Years setting, would be attending Early Years provision¹. This only includes children who have previously attended the provision and children who were expected to start attending the provision in January e.g. they had signed a parental declaration with the setting on planned hours. More detailed information on the specific circumstances that apply follow on page 4.

¹ See pages 4 & 5 for further detail.

The second section relates to closed providers, where children are therefore not benefiting from their funded entitlements in census week.

- Where the provider is temporarily closed due to circumstances such a high level of staff absences due to illness or self-isolation, they should return their expected levels of provision for census week.
- Where the provider chooses not to offer the entitlements – i.e. the setting has chosen to close, or only offer a limited provision to children of key workers - then they should not make a return for a child who is not being offered a place.
- More detailed information on the circumstances that apply follow on page 5.

Compliance with the full Early Years Census 2022 Guide remains statutory.

Guidance relating to recording stretched entitlements remains the same as previous years and is not impacted by the support outlined below for either universal or extended entitlements.

Early Years counting in the School Census

This supporting document is targeted at those providers returning on the Early Years Census. The same coronavirus-related eligibility criteria exist for both the School Census and Early Years Census to ensure parity of funding across all providers. Guidance for the school census is available [here](#).

Academies

Academies should follow School Census guidance for registered pupils, and Early Years Census guidance where the child is not a registered pupil.

Providers and local authorities are expected to count funded entitlements in their census return in the following scenarios only.

The provider is open in census week

The provider should make their census return as they have in previous years. The census is designed to reflect the situation as in census week, the week commencing 17th January 2022.

Where children are attending their contracted/expected hours during census week, no change is required from previous years.

Under the establishment details for any provider making a return, the expected levels of staff during census week should be recorded.

The provider is open but a child is temporarily absent in census week

The Early Years Census 2022 [guide](#) states “Please record the normal situation during the week beginning 17 January 2022. If children are temporarily absent, for example, sick or on holiday, please include them. If the provider was temporarily closed, record the situation which would have applied during the week.”

This principle remains the basis of the Early Years Census 2022.

Therefore, please record the expected weekly hours a child usually would have received in situations where the child is:

- self-isolating due to exposure to COVID-19 in census week.
- ill in census week.
- temporarily absent due to parent/guardian caution (fear of child catching COVID-19), only if the provider remains open to the child and the parent/guardian has not altered their parental declaration relating to expected hours with the provider, and expects the child to return to take up their place.
- temporarily absent due to parent/guardian choosing to care for the child at home, only if the provider remains open to the child and the parent/guardian has not altered their parental declaration relating to expected hours with the provider, and expects the child to return to take up their place.

Where the child is unable to attend their usual provider due to the setting being temporarily closed the provider should follow the support included in the section below under “The provider is closed in census week” on page 5.

The provider is open but the child's expected hours have changed

Please record the child's new expected hours accurately at the time of the census where:

- the parent/guardian has informed the provider that they are reducing their child's hours (i.e. a change in the parental declaration).

In the situation that the parent/guardian has informed the provider that they are formally withdrawing the child from the provider's register, this means that the child's expected hours would now be zero, and so a return should not be made for that child:

- this includes situations where the parent/guardian has chosen to permanently withdraw the child from the setting due to the parent/guardian shielding.

The provider is closed in census week

There are various reasons why a provider may be closed in census week (the week commencing 17th January 2022).

The Early Years Census 2022 [guide](#) states “Please record the normal situation during the week beginning 17 January 2022. If children are temporarily absent, for example, sick or on holiday, please include them. If the provider was temporarily closed for, record the situation which would have applied during the week”.

This principle remains the basis of the Early Years Census 2022.

Therefore, please make a census return for 2022, recording the contracted/expected hours provided in the situation where:

- the provider has attempted to remain open but has temporarily closed for a period of time, or has had to temporarily restrict access for some children, for reasons such as:
 - staff shortages due to illness.
 - staff shortages due to self-isolation.
 - staff shortages due to caring for their own child or other dependent who is ill or needs to self-isolate.
 - being advised to do so by local public health authorities due to an outbreak at the provider

Under the establishment details for any temporarily closed provider making a return, the expected levels of staff during census week should be recorded.

Please do not make a census return for 2022 in the situation where the setting has chosen to close and not provide the entitlements due to:

- limited anticipated attendance.
- staff caution.

These are settings which have not attempted to remain open and therefore have no expectation of attendance in the setting.

Where the setting has chosen to restrict the attendance of some children for reasons other than those outlined in this document, please do not make a return for children for whom the funded entitlements are not being offered.



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