**Case study: Delivering the new extended free entitlement (EFE) provision for children with SEND and a stretched offer**

**The new EFE for three and four year olds**

The new EFE[[1]](#footnote-1) from September 2017 will principally be available to children whose parents are working 16 hours or more per week and earn at least an average of 16 times the national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW). At the current rate, this means that parents must earn a minimum equivalent of £115.20 for over 25 year olds and around £107 for a 21 year old. The upper limit is £100,000. In two-parent households, both parents will have to be working and meet the criteria individually. For more information about the eligibility criteria please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section of the toolkit in [**Overview**](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/overview-dfes-30-hours-mixed-model-partnership-toolkit)**.**

**Children with SEND and accessing the early years entitlement (EYE)**

Currently 94% of three year olds and 99% of four year olds nationally are using some or all of the current early education offer (the universal offer)[[2]](#footnote-2), although there is some variation locally, with lower uptake in more deprived areas. National data also shows that children with special education needs and disability (SEND) are less likely to take up their offer; 25% of children with SEND do not access the offer compared to 4% of all three and four year old children with no special need or disability[[3]](#footnote-3).

In addition, parents of children with SEND are less likely to be in paid employment than their counterparts who do not have children with additional needs[[4]](#footnote-4) and, in two-parent households, there is a greater probability that only one parent is working[[5]](#footnote-5).

The stated intention of the offer is that it should be inclusive of children with SEND and the consultation document on the proposed new Early Years National Funding Formula[[6]](#footnote-6) sets out plans to pay supplements through the formula and the Disability Access Fund to ensure that entitled children’s additional needs can be met in settings.

Nevertheless, there remains a probability that fewer children with SEND will qualify for the additional hours because of the employment status of their parents.

**Maximising the opportunities for children with SEND to access the new EFE entitlement**

The 30 Hours Mixed Model Partnership project (the project) brought together one partnership that had as its main focus the delivery of the entitlement for children with SEND in environments that are appropriate, suitable to meet the varying needs of individual children and could deliver a high quality offer across inclusive and specialist provision.

The key partners included a children’s centre (CC), a specialist centre for children with SEND, the local authority and various private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers of early years education and out of school (OOS) wrap-around childcare and play services.

The aims were to:

* maximise the deployment of staff and use of available local buildings to stretch the EFE offer over the whole day (8-6) and the year (50 weeks) for children whose parents were working and required a full package of early years education and childcare to support their employment patterns
* develop a new provision that will be split between two sites but ensure that children with SEND access only one site with relevant support staff and any specialist equipment required during term-time and another throughout the holidays with the same level of support
* ensure that children who are only entitled to the universal offer could continue to do so by spreading the availability of places across settings
* inform the borough capital bid to the Department of Education (DfE) to create new spaces as necessary to meet demand in fully equipped buildings.

**The proposed offer**

**Sites and buildings**

Five sites will form the basis for the new overall Local Offer and three of these will be equipped to create an accessible offer for children with SEND:

* The centre for children with SEND that is registered with Ofsted for delivery of the early years foundation stage (EYFS)
* The CC community room that will be equipped to enable delivery of element of the offer since it is in a separate but conjoined part of the same site occupied by the centre for children with SEND
* A new modular building, funded by the DfE capital bid; a standby building is an underused play hut that belongs to the local authority and would require an investment in equipment only.

**The offer for children with SEND:**

**Term-time:** the proposed delivery model would be to deliver an extended day offer with trained staff from the centre for children with SEND until 2.30pm in their side of the building and then from the CC side until 6pm, as required. This ensures that the children will not be required to move out of one central building in the course of the day or term.

**Holiday times:** the priority option is to add space to that which available in the locality to create a new bespoke space in an environmentally friendly modular building[[7]](#footnote-7) for children with SEND during the holiday periods. The new building will be located in a park space and could provide an inclusive provision for children with SEND and other local children with no additional needs. In order to ensure that the offer could happen as envisaged, the partnership identified the underused play hut as a fall back option.

**Training:** staff professional development needs were taken into account as part of the partnership discussions and is planned to:

* Develop a programme to meet the professional development needs of the centre for children with SEND in order that the can effectively deliver the EYFS
* Assess the training needs of the voluntary sector OOS provider staff and provide appropriate sessions and courses so that they can form of the pool that can provide the out of term-time offer.

**Ongoing provision for older children**

A further consideration in discussions was the need to forward plan for specialist OOS provision for children with SEND when they reach school age in order for parents who have chosen to enter work to be able to continue. Ongoing future planning will explore how local staff, including those working for the voluntary sector OOS provider, could be upskilled to provide such a service. The partnership can benefit in this respect from the training capacity of the centre for children with SEND.

**Adding value to the offer though CC and other family support services**

The new EFE may give parents of children with SEND the opportunity to start or return to work for the first time since their child was born.

In recognition of this, part of the Local Offer to parents of children with additional needs will be the provision, through the CC, from September 2016 of the support they may require to enter a pathway to work in order to be able to seek employment opportunities by September 2017 and ensure, thereby, that their children are entitled to the new EFE offer.

1. The new entitlement will be 1,140 hours per annum of free early education for three and four year old children whose parents are working i.e. 30 hours over 38 weeks (Term-time Only – TTO) or c23 hours per week if extended over the year. The start date will be the term after the child’s third birthday [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The current entitlement (the universal offer) is 570 hours per annum of free early education for **all** children commencing the term after their third birthday. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Contact a Family et al (2014) Levelling the playing field: Equal access to childcare for disabled children, One year update [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Working Families (2012) Finding Flexibility: parents of disabled children and paid work: 27% of the parents who responded to the 2012 Working Families Survey reported that they were not in paid employment) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Contact a Family: Only 16 per cent of mothers with disabled children work, compared to 61 per cent of other mothers. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The details of the proposals can be found at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/early-years-funding/eynff> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The estimate for the cost of this once constructed and fully equipped is c£90k [↑](#footnote-ref-7)