**Early education entitlement spring 2023 update**

Please note this is estimated uptake for January 2023, data will published by the DfE in July 2023.

**Luton percentage uptake of two-year-olds based on the DWP list of eligible families**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2 YO** | **Spring 2020** | **Spring 2021** | **Spring 2022** | **Spring 2023** |
| Places | 860 | 633 | 777 | 743 |
| Uptake | 66% | 50% | 65% | 67% |
| National | 69% | 62% | 72% | TBC |

The number of children on the 2 year old DWP list has continued to fall from 1193 in November 2021 (the number used for DfE uptake calculations) to 1103 in November 2022

**Luton percentage uptake of three-and-four-year-olds (universal funding)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **3 & 4 YO Universal** | **Spring 2020** | **Spring 2021** | **Spring 2022** | **Spring 2023** |
| Places | 6235 | 6020 | 5997 | 6038 |
| Uptake | 88% | 86% | 90% | 91% |
| National | 93% | 90% | 92% | TBC |

\*Based on ONS estimate for 3 and 4 year olds 6,630 & includes estimated school reception class numbers 2000

**Three and-four-year-old 30 extended funding**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **3 & 4 YO Extended** | **Spring 2020** | **Spring 2021** | **Spring 2022** | **Spring 2023** |
| Estimated places | 1042 | 949 | 1012 | 1043 |

The number of families accessing 30 hours is similar to pre-COVID, however the number of eligible families is not known, so we are unable to calculate the actual uptake of extended hours.

**Plans for raising awareness and increasing uptake**

Team capacity for this work was limited over the last six months due to prioritising the demands of EYES and introducing the new system for early years funding. EYES is now live, so the team will be returning their focus to improving the uptake of the entitlements.

**Who is not taking the offer?**

It is difficult to identify the groups that are not taking up the offer as these are the families that probably do not engage elsewhere. DWP do not supply the ethnicity of the families potentially eligible for two year old funding.

Pre-covid BI data indicated that Polish, Romanian and Hindu speaking children were less likely to attend a preschool setting and flyers have been translated in to these languages.

January headcount data is currently being analysed to identify any ethnic groups that are underrepresented within early years settings. This will only be an indication as early entitlement uptake percentages also includes maintained settings and reception classes so a wider BI study would be needed to give a more accurate analysis.

**Action plan**

**DWP lists**

* The use of SMS messages to DWP list families – currently using the government service Notify - **May 2023**
* Development of emails to the DWP list families, vary focus of email to include language and communication, education and childcare enabling parents to work or study – **June 2023**
* Continued use of Golden Tickets – **April & June 2023**

**Partner working**

* Meeting held with Foster Team (Jan 2023) – information shared for newsletters and offer of team meeting attendance. Change of leadership – revisit **May 2023**
* Meeting with Family Partnership Service – FPS arranging a coffee morning with faith leaders with the focus of early years entitlements, information provided for service newsletter – **April 2023**
* Sessions with Flying Start being arranged to share funding information with new starters and volunteers – **summer term 2023**
* Previously part of the social care academy induction – awaiting information on revised approach

**Marketing and awareness**

* 100 childcare banners have been printed – 75 for settings and 25 for display at parks or meeting places – May/June 2023
* Flyers in Romanian, Polish and Hindu printed for use at coffee mornings and Picnic in the Park – 21 June 2023
* Social media posts promoting entitlements shared with partners
* Raising awareness of Tax free Childcare to support families – currently engaged in a DfE project - flyers and posters have been printed, E-Luton promotion and social media posts shared

**Changes to the early entitlement offer and the potential need for new spaces**

* From **April 2024**, working parents of two-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare.
* From **September 2024**, 15 hours of free childcare will be extended to all children from the age of nine months.
* From **September 2025,** working parents of children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week.

**Predicted numbers of eligible families**

Eligibility and current uptake of 30 hours for three and four year olds is currently approximately 31% of this age group. If the uptake was similar, then we could expect an additional 1,891 families to be eligible for 30 hours by September 2025. However a 31% uptake within this younger age group is probably very unlikely.

We need to understand the current number of working families in this age group and also how much of an incentive 15, and then 30 hours, will be for parents to work.

We also need to identify how many families are already accessing childcare through private hours, and therefore this will not require additional places, just a change in funding.

The graph below shows the potential number of additional places that may be required assuming uptake rates of 15, 25 and 31%.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The staggered approach should give the local authority and childcare providers time to prepare for the changes, and to assess the supply and demand of places.

**Concerns**

* Expansion of settings may be restricted by the recruitment issues in the sector
* Funding rates and support needs to be sufficient to encourage providers to expand
* Most schools unlikely to want to take two year olds, but a couple have expressed a previous interest
* Resources and training will be needed to support settings caring for under 2s

**Action required**

* to identify how many working families within the 9 month to 3 age group already access childcare in Luton and are paying privately – **Summer 2023**
* Conversations to start with providers regarding stretched offer and potential to create more space from April 2024 – network meetings and individual discussions will be offered – **May 2024**
1. Data assumes 3,200 children in each age group – less 1,100 DWP for 2 year olds [↑](#footnote-ref-1)