



Department
for Education

Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2015

Methodology document

Contents

1. Background	3
2. Methodology	5
2.1 Data cleaning	5
2.2 Production of Statistical First Release	5
2.3 Calculated data items	6
3. Process Map	9

1. Background

Overview of the data collection

The source for this publication is the early years census and school census. All schools and all private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) providers receiving government funding are required to make (through their local authority) a child-level return. These collections are on a statutory basis through legislation which helps ensure complete and accurate information being returned.

Guidance on the census is available on gov.uk. The technical specifications explain what data are collected and what validation is in place and includes the business rationale for the collection.

Entitlement to funded early education places

All 4-year-olds have been entitled to a funded early education place since 1998 and in 2004 this was extended to all 3-year-olds.

From September 2013, the entitlement to 15 hours of funded early education per week for 38 weeks of the year was extended to 2-year-olds meeting the following eligibility criteria:

1. They have a parent in receipt of:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income not exceeding £16,190 as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
 - The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the

payment someone receives for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2. Or they are looked after by a local authority

From September 2014 the entitlement to 15 hours of funded early education per week for 38 weeks of the year was extended further to 2-year-olds who met the following eligibility criteria:

1. they have a parent in receipt of Working Tax Credits and have an annual gross income not exceeding £16,190 a year as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
2. they have a current statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care plan
3. they are entitled to Disability Living Allowance
4. they are no longer looked after by the local authority as a result of an adoption order, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order which specifies with whom the child lives.

More information is included in the [statutory guidance for local authorities](#).

2. Methodology

Early years providers submit data to their local authority. Local authorities then load the data into the Department for Education's (DfE) bespoke data collection system; COLLECT (Collections On-Line for Learning, Education, Children and Teachers).

2.1 Data cleaning

COLLECT has built-in validation rules which flag up data which is invalid or the quality is questionable. This allows local authorities to identify errors and clean the data before they submit it to DfE. Validation rules can either be errors (data is invalid) or queries (data quality is questionable but could be accurate in certain circumstances).

Local authorities are encouraged to clean all errors and double-check data where queries are flagged. Notes can be added to their return if there is a genuine reason for "unusual" data.

Guidance notes and specifications (including validation rules) for each of the collections which feed this publication can be accessed [here](#)

2.2 Production of Statistical First Release

When reviewing the tables, please note the following:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
So we sometimes suppress or round numbers	We suppress cell counts and totals below 3 and sometimes use secondary suppression to preserve confidentiality. Because of this rounding, totals in text and in tables may not always equal the sum of their component parts. Similarly, differences quoted in text may not always be the same as differences shown in tables. This suppression is consistent with the Departmental statistical policy .

And adopt symbols to help identify this	Symbols are used in the tables as follows: 'x' – below 3 (i.e. 1 or 2) '0' – the original figure submitted was zero '..' – data not available '.' – data not applicable '-' – represents less than 0.5%
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2.3 Calculated data items

The SFR contains tables which cover:

1. Numbers of children benefitting from funded early education

This is a count of children in receipt of some funded early education, but where they are receiving funded early education at more than one provider, they have only been counted once; it is a unique count of children. The provider where the child has taken most of their funded hours is the provider reported in the figures. For private and voluntary and independent providers, counts are taken from the early years census data. Figures for other providers are taken from school census.

2 Funded hours taken

This is the percentage of children, grouped by the number of funded hours they receive, where the funded hours have been grouped together into bands of two hours. Children at general hospital schools have been excluded from these figures as their data is collected through the aggregate school level annual school census and individual funded hours are not reported.

3 Number of children benefitting by provider type

This is a count of providers by type of provider, and also the number of children benefitting from some funded early education at those providers. Special schools include maintained and non-maintained special schools and general hospital schools.

4 Private, Voluntary and Independent Providers: Staff qualifications

This is a count of providers (and the number of children benefiting from funded early education), with staff with QTS/EYTS/EYPS and of providers with staff with QTS/EYTS/EYPS who work directly with 2, 3- and 4-year-olds. The counts are broken down by category of provider.

Providers must have at least one staff member recorded as having QTS/EYTS or EYPS to be included in these counts.

5 OFSTED Inspection ratings

In order to report against Ofsted inspection ratings, we match the early years census data and the school census data to Ofsted inspections ratings.

Ofsted provided us with a snapshot of the outcomes of early years inspections as at the early years census (EYC) date (15 January 2015). Common variables across this dataset and the EYC are LA identifier, provider name, and Ofsted EY URN (unique reference number). There were inconsistencies in provider name between data recorded on Ofsted's database versus that returned in the EYC making it difficult to use as an identifier for matching. Therefore, the matching was carried out using LA number and Ofsted EY URN only.

Where a match was not found between the EYC and Ofsted EY inspections data, these cases were matched to the outcomes of school inspections, again using Ofsted URN. This dataset was used because some EY providers return a school's URN because they are governed by a school, therefore falling under the school's Ofsted inspection. In these cases, the Early Years Foundation Stage inspection rating was reported. If no Early Years Foundation Stage inspection rating was reported then we used the Schools Overall Effectiveness rating.

Independent schools are not required to register with Ofsted; therefore many of these providers were listed under the 'No match to Ofsted' category. However, if these types of providers had registered with Ofsted and a match was found, they were included under the relevant inspection rating category.

For maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools school census (SC) data was matched to Ofsted school inspection data using LAestab, a combination of the LA number and the establishment number. Independent schools were excluded as these are already included in the EYC return. Academy converters who were yet to be inspected under their new status were included under the 'No match to Ofsted' category. This is because the school changes its URN when it makes the change to an academy.

Inspections ratings from private, voluntary and independent providers were combined with those from maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools to produce the tables.

Last year we presented percentages based upon the total number of 2, or 3 and 4 year olds received funded early education, i.e. including where no match had been made to Ofsted data. This year we have based the percentages for those at providers rated outstanding, good, satisfactory/needs improvement or inadequate as a percentage of children where we have identified a match and identified the providers inspection rating.

6 2-year-old Basis for Funding

Local authorities reported the reason for funding under four categories, three of which are statutory criteria: 'economic', 'high level special educational needs or disability' and 'looked after or adopted from care'. Children who met any of these three criteria have been included in the figures. The fourth category reported, 'Other', is non-statutory and any children who have been reported solely as 'Other', have not been included in the figures.

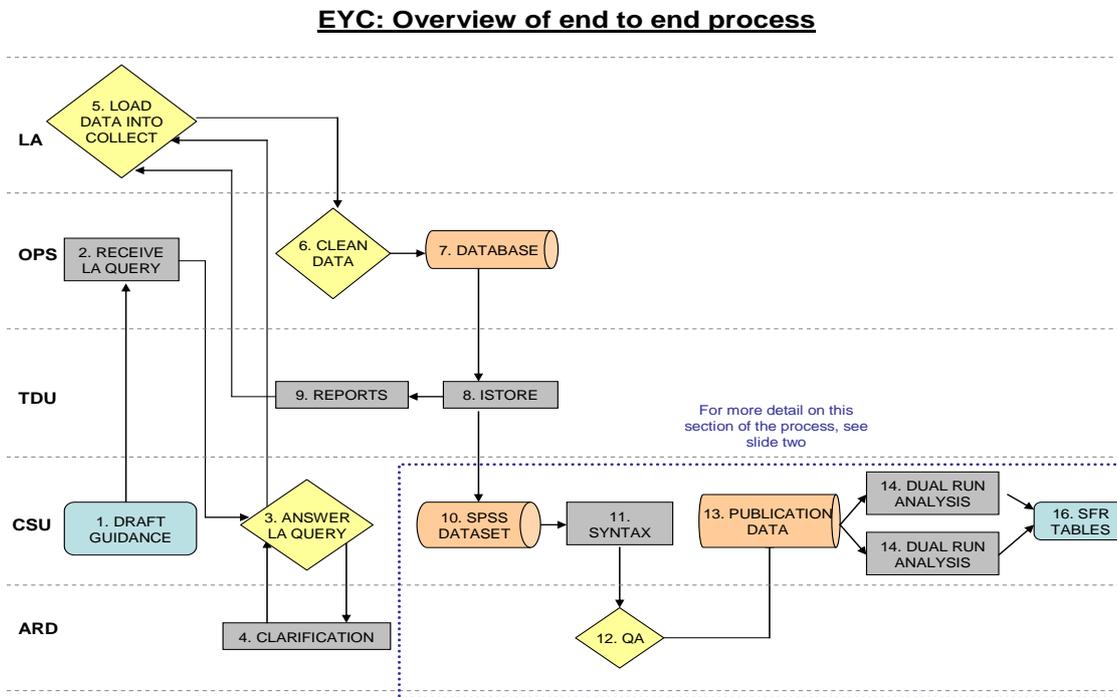
7 2-year-old eligible population estimates

The estimated number of eligible two-year-olds is based on analysis of administrative data held by the Department for Work and Pensions containing information on benefit and tax credit records relating to November 2014. This estimate is therefore based on the benefit and tax credit eligibility criteria only. The following eligibility criteria are not covered: children with a current statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care plan; children who are looked after by a local authority; children who are no longer looked after by the local authority as a result of an adoption order, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order which specifies with whom the child lives.

3. Process Map

The process map shown in Figure 1 covers the end to end process of the Early Years Census return, from data collection through to publication of the SFR.

Figure 1: Overview of end to end process of Early Years data collection and publication



Definitions:

LA: Local Authority

OPS: Education Data Division, Operations

TDU: Education Data Division, Technical Development Unit

CSU: Analysis and Research Division, Customer Services Unit

ARD: Analysis and Research Division

QA: Quality Assurance

SFR: Statistical Release



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for Education

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