



Department
for Education

Take-up of government funded childcare by two- year-olds

March 2016

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Introduction

From September 2014, the entitlement to 15 hours of funded early education per week for 38 weeks of the year was extended to two-year-olds who met the eligibility criteria¹.

The Department publishes annual estimates of the number of children benefiting from government provision as part of the *Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England* annual publication. The latest information, published in June 2015, estimated that in January 2015 157,000 children aged two benefited from government funded childcare, approximately 58% of those eligible. This official statistic will be updated in June 2016.

In order to support local authorities, the Department for Education contracted 'Achieving 2-year-olds' (A2YO) to support local authorities in expanding the early learning for two-year-olds programme. As part of this they conducted a voluntary survey of local authorities to assess the take-up of government funded childcare by eligible 2-year-olds.

This publication reports the findings from those surveys. The survey findings should not be compared to the official statistics as they are collected on a voluntary basis and using a different methodology; however, they provide an indication of the likely trend in take-up amongst eligible 2-year-olds.

Published data

Information was received from all 152 local authorities. The latest survey collected information over a seven week period in the autumn of 2015 during A2YO regional network meetings and one-to-one contact with local authorities by the A2YO regional lead team.

Based on the returned data it is estimated 182,000 children were being funded during this period, representing a take-up rate amongst eligible children of around 72%.

This is an increase in the number of funded eligible children of 15,000 since the June 2015 voluntary survey and 16,000 since the February 2015 voluntary survey, and represents an increase of 9 percentage points since the June 2015 voluntary survey.

It is important to note that for autumn 2015 the Department for Work and Pensions estimated that a smaller number of 2-year-olds would have been eligible.

¹ Eligibility criteria: two-year-olds that 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; they have a current statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care plan; they are entitled to Disability Living Allowance; 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.

Key points

The table below shows the estimated number of children funded at each voluntary survey and the estimated take-up amongst the eligible population.

Time Period	Funded	Proportion of eligible population
Feb-15	166,000	62% (at November 2014)
Jun-15	167,000	63% (at March 2015)
Autumn 2015	182,000	72% (at August 2015)

Related information

The statistical publication Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England is available on line at [Provision for children under 5 years of age in England](#).



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Reference: DFE-00063-2016



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