



### Children on reduced timetables in the Early Years

All children should be able to access their full entitlement to ‘free early education hours’ in Early Years settings and schools. It is particularly important that children with emerging and diagnosed Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) do not miss out on early learning opportunities. It is also an important time for early intervention, and engaging families with support services.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, a ‘reduced timetable’ may be put in place for children to help settings and schools meet their individual needs.

This guidance is intended to make sure that when children are placed on a ‘reduced timetable’ this is for a limited period of time, and with an agreed end date in place. This is to reduce the risk of potential discriminatory practice under the Equalities Act, 2010.

#### Entitlements to early years education/childcare

A child’s entitlement to number of hours may change during their time at nursery. If a child’s funded hours increase from 15 to 30 hours, a plan should be in place to allow them to access their full entitlement as soon as reasonably possible.

Entitlement	Child’s age	What they can receive
Working parents entitlement <a href="#">(eligibility criteria)</a>	From the term after they turn 9 months until they start school	30 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year.
For parents of 2-year-olds receiving some additional forms of support <a href="#">(eligibility criteria)</a>	From the term after they turn 2 years old	15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year. If parents are working, they may also be eligible for an additional 15 hours under the Working parents entitlement.
Universal entitlement for all 3 and 4-year-olds	From the term after they turn 3 years old through to starting school	15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year. Can be combined with the working parents entitlement to make up 30 hours.
The Camden Enhanced Offer (only for Camden residents) <a href="#">(eligibility criteria)</a>	From the term after they turn 3 years old through to starting school	3 and 4-year-olds who are not eligible for the additional 15 hours for working parents may qualify for an additional 15 hours per week.

<sup>1</sup> The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2023) outlines the following duty: ‘A1.34 Promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children, children in need and children with special educational needs and disability, by removing barriers of access to free places and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.’ (p14).



## Children on reduced timetables in the Early Years

### Starting nursery, individual needs, and reduced timetables

When children start attending nursery, it is often the first time they have experienced significant time away from their parents/caregivers away from their familiar home environment. It may also be their first experience sharing adults and resources with other children. There are many new and unfamiliar experiences and new routines/expectations. Understandably, this transition period places demands on young children's developing ability to regulate their emotions and feel safe and secure. In recognition of this, children are usually offered a settling in period while they build confidence and trust in nursery staff and the new environment.

For some children with SEND and disabilities this process may take longer due to their individual needs and differences in development. There may be specific needs – for example around emotional self-regulation, eating, drinking and toileting.

If it becomes apparent to nursery staff that a child may require more individualised support, this should be shared with the setting SENCO and discussed with parents/caregivers. Nursery staff should anticipate the need to make **reasonable adjustments** to routines/expectations and the curriculum to allow for individual differences. For example, there may need to be a clear written plan to support or encourage a child to eat/drink at nursery, or there may need to be a Care Plan describing the toileting support a child will need.<sup>2</sup> If a child's emotional wellbeing and behaviour at nursery is of concern, a wellbeing plan and risk assessment should be considered. The Early Years Inclusion Team can provide advice and guidance about reasonable adjustments.

Camden Local Inclusion Fund is available to children whose special educational needs or disabilities mean that additional adult support may be required to support their access to nursery. Camden Local Inclusion Fund can be applied for in advance of a child starting nursery in some circumstances. Nurseries can also apply to the Disability Access Fund for eligible children (DAF).

If, after all reasonable adjustments have been considered, it is still thought that a child still needs a reduced timetable, a clear action plan should be written down with clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process, and the consent of parents/carers. It is very important that parents/carers understand why a reduced timetable may be in the child's best interests.

Below you will find **Appendix 1** template for action plan for increasing hours at nursery and **Appendix 2** weekly plan to extend hours template. **Appendix 3** is an example of a completed weekly plan to extend hours.

<sup>2</sup> [The Equality Act 2010](#) states that schools and early years settings must not discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs. A delay in achieving continence - or not being toilet trained - is considered a disability. It is therefore not acceptable for a school or early years setting to refuse or delay admission to children who are not yet continent.

[The Children and Families Act 2014](#) places a statutory duty on schools to support pupils with medical conditions, including bladder and bowel problems. If a child has an identified continence issue which won't be resolved before they start school (whether related to toilet training or not), the school cannot refuse entry

## Appendix 1 - Template for action plan for increasing hours

	Initial Action Plan meeting	Mid-point review meeting	Final/end meeting
Child's name:			
Date:			
Number of hours currently accessing			
Reason for a reduced timetable being put in place			
Identified risks from risk assessment			
What professional advice has been sought to support the child to extend their full entitlement of hours			
What additional/new support and strategies will/have been be put in place?			
What change do we want to see/ have we seen?			
What will/does the change look like?			
Identified training needs for staff			
Funding			
Review dates			
Agreed end date			
Signed parent:			
Signed SENDCo:			
Signed Manager:			



### Appendix 3 – Example weekly plan to extend hours

Weekly plan to extend hours								
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Date:	2/10/23	9/10/23	16/10/23	23/10/23	30/10/23	6/11/23	13/11/23	20/11/23
Hours accessing per day:	2	2.5	3.5	4.5	5	5.5	6	6
	<p>Parent to stay for first 15 minutes to settle</p> <p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p><b>Parent collect at 11:00am</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Introduce sensory circuits</p> <p><b>Parent to collect at 11:30am</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Continue with sensory circuits</p> <p>Introduce attention autism</p> <p>X to stay for lunch and short play session after lunch</p> <p><b>Parents collect at 12:30pm</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Continue with sensory circuits</p> <p>Continue attention autism</p> <p>X to stay for lunch and play session after lunch</p> <p><b>Parents collect at 1:30pm</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Continue with sensory circuits</p> <p>Continue attention autism</p> <p>X to stay for lunch and play session after lunch</p> <p><b>Parents to collect at 2:00pm</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Continue with sensory circuits</p> <p>Continue attention autism</p> <p>X to stay for lunch</p> <p>Introduce workstation practice activities</p> <p><b>Parents to collect at 2:30pm</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Continue with sensory circuits</p> <p>Continue attention autism</p> <p>X to stay for lunch</p> <p>Continue with workstation practice activities</p> <p><b>X to stay full day</b></p>	<p>Have motivating activities out in the environment – trains/cars/vehicles</p> <p>Adults to use ShREC strategies to engage with child</p> <p>Continue with sensory circuits</p> <p>Continue attention autism</p> <p>X to stay for lunch</p> <p>Continue with workstation practice activities</p> <p><b>X to stay full day</b></p>