

Factsheet for schools - delivering the two-year-old offer

Demand for two-year-old places is growing, and the government is clear that schools are key to increasing capacity. However, for schools who have never delivered provision for under-3s before, the process of starting up can feel daunting.

This guidance should be viewed alongside the Working with Schools Toolkit on the Local Government Association Knowledge Hub

(<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/web/achievingtwoyearolds>). The toolkit includes helpful downloads for schools thinking about – or already delivering – two-year-olds’ provision. This chapter sets out several key areas below that schools should consider for developing the two-year-old offer, and provides links to further resources and case studies:

Leadership. Schools have reported that leadership is the most important factor and those successfully delivering the two-year-old offer usually have commitment from across the school and all its governors. Discussing and agreeing proposals with governors should therefore be schools’ first step towards delivering two-year-old places. Despite the challenges, schools have reported many benefits to the whole school of delivering provision for two-year-olds. These include: relationship building with the family and other professionals; earlier identification of need and potential for earlier intervention; continuity of care and learning for the child and siblings; identity as a “family school” which can be a strong marketing tool; potential for stronger parental engagement in volunteering, governance and fundraising; and opportunities for starting earlier in improving achievement and narrowing the gap. Two-year-old provision should therefore be viewed as part of a whole-school approach to supporting local families.

Ofsted registration. The government is changing the law so that schools do not have to register separately in order to take two-year-olds. Until this change comes into force, maintained schools can take two-year-olds in two different ways:

1) As registered pupils of the school: schools can currently take two-year-olds in the term in which they turn three (known as “rising threes”). Where a school is only taking two year olds who are defined as rising threes, a separate registration with Ofsted is not required, as outlined in The Childcare (Exemptions from Registration) Order 2008;<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/979/contents/made>.

Schools can also extend their age range to take younger two year olds. Schools who wish to take younger two year olds are currently required to register separately with Ofsted, and this will continue until legislative change is made. This change is anticipated to occur in 2015.

There is no longer a requirement for statutory consultation in order to lower the age range, however an expectation of consultation with partners remains.

2) As separate provision on a school site: Usually schools can take two-year-olds through the “Community use” powers (section 27 of the Education Act 2002.). In this instance, children would not be pupils of the school; and provision could be managed and delivered from within existing school governance structures, or as a commissioned service. Schools are however required to

consult with the local authority, staff, pupils and parents and separate Ofsted registration is required.

Ofsted guidance on the registration and inspection of all early years providers is available here:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare/become-childcare-provider-or-childminder>

A fact sheet produced by Ofsted specifically for Schools can be found

here: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/factsheet-childcare-registering-school-based-provision>

Developmentally appropriate provision. Provision for two-year-olds is different to that which may already be offered by some schools to three and four-year-olds. It must be developmentally appropriate and delivered in an environment that supports this stage of learning. Schools will need to assure themselves they have identified suitably qualified staff, who have a good understanding of child development and can lead and deliver play-based learning according to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Local authorities can help schools to identify training to support this. There is also information in the Working with Schools Toolkit on the Knowledge Hub – which local authorities can share with providers.

Working together. Schools who want to get involved don't have to do it all themselves! Schools that are limited in what they can offer at the current time, but want to contribute to the two-year-old agenda, should consider how else they might get involved. For example, in some areas, schools have built strong relationships with other local providers and childminders, to deliver places in partnership with them, or commission provision from them.

Key messages for schools

- Demand for two-year-old places is growing, and increasingly the government is looking to schools to help grow capacity. The government is changing the law so that schools will not have to register early years provision separately, but will still be given a separate judgement for the early years foundation stage.
- There are many benefits to schools which are part of the two-year-old offer in addition to improving educational outcomes for children, including providing continuity of care for families, and the marketing potential of being a ‘family school’
- Schools are uniquely placed to help identify families with children who may be eligible for the free offer – and support them to access it
- If you want to offer places for two-year-olds, your local authority can help you with advice and guidance, for example, start-up support and training for staff that focuses on the development of two-year-olds
- Your local authority will also be able to put you in touch with other schools in your area who are offering places for two-year-olds – so you can learn from and support each other (if you are Head of a school offering two-year-old provision, think what you can do to support others)
- You don’t have to do it all yourself – think about working with other providers, and children’s centres to form partnerships that will help develop two-year-old places

Provision in schools - where can you find out more?

Case Studies

- **HARTLEPOOL – WORKING WITH SCHOOLS** – strategy to increase places by working with schools
- **BRINGING TOGETHER LAs TO WORK WITH SCHOOLS (Various LAs)** – sharing knowledge, experiences and practice in engaging schools in delivering places for two-year-olds
- ISLINGTON – WORKING WITH SCHOOLS. See page 34
- NORFOLK - 'BEST PRACTICE ROOMS' – to demonstrate appropriate environments for two-year-olds. See page 39

Useful resources

- **WORKING WITH SCHOOLS TOOLKIT** – a comprehensive set of resources for local authorities and schools working together to develop two-year-olds' places. This toolkit contains 11 documents, accessed via <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/web/achievingtwoyearolds> (search 'Working with Schools' Toolkit), they are:
 - 1/11 Case Study on developing the Toolkit, from the LAs involved
 - 2/11 Overview of the process of working with schools
 - 3/11 Business plan template for schools
 - 4/11 Overview of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework
 - 5/11 A powerpoint presentation that sets out the policy around the two-year-old offer
 - 6/11 A brief handout on the Ofsted registration and inspection process
 - 7/11 An outline plan of a briefing session for schools, for use by LAs
 - 8/11 Procurement for schools guide, which sets out the different ways schools can deliver two-year-olds' places
 - 9/11 Two-year-olds and Schools – presentation, for LAs to present to schools
 - 10/11 Working with schools to achieve the best outcomes – fact sheet
 - 11/11 Frequently Asked Questions for schools
- **WORKING WITH SCHOOLS PRESENTATION** – a presentation by A2YO that can be adapted and used by local authorities. Also contains information for schools around the pros and cons of different models of delivering provision for two-year-olds.

Further links

- **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE GUIDANCE**
- **OFSTED GUIDANCE – REGISTERING AS AN EARLY YEARS PROVIDER**
- Keep up to date with learning from the schools demonstration project for two-year-olds:
www.foundationyears.org.uk

