



Early Years Crisis - Information

What has happened?

In the middle of February 2025, without warning or consultation, the government tightened up the rules around the Early Years Guidance regarding the funding hours, making it much harder for Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries to remain viable. This was following a high court judgement within BCP where the Courts and the Ombudsman were in favour of a parent regarding additional costs. The High Court Judge has stated that this ruling should not be used to implement changes within legislation, however this was ignored by the government and changes were made anyway. There was no consultation period for these changes and the government did not perform a 'risk assessment' to see if there would be any detrimental effect on settings.

What are we doing about it?

I am working incredibly hard, lobbying the Local Authority and central government alongside many other Early Years Providers both locally and nationally. I have also hosted a Roundtable meeting with Tom Hayes MP, where 22 local providers came to Cats Whiskers to discuss our concerns directly with him. I am continuing to work with Tom Hayes MP in order to keep challenging the government and Local Authority.

How can you help us?

We really need your support so that we can try to minimise the affect the government's changes are having on Early Years Settings. At present the funding is woefully low, in particular for 3 and 4 year olds, but also, for the younger ages. For example, the funding for 3 and 4 year olds is currently 34% BELOW our basic hourly running costs. This is NOT in any way sustainable without charging parents for funded hours.

A lot of nurseries across the country are already changing their formats for offering funding with many reducing or limiting the amount of funding families can access. We are hoping NOT to have to do this, however, we have not ruled it out.

From September 2025, we will be offering an 'All Inclusive Package' for funded hours. This charge is supposed to be voluntary, however, if more than a couple of parents 'opt out' of the 'all inclusive package' we will be forced to change our structure for all parents and limit our funded hours to 2pm - 6pm ONLY. This will unfortunately mean fees for ALL parents will go up considerably. WE DO NOT WANT TO DO THIS, BUT MAY HAVE TO IF FAMILIES CHOOSE NOT TO SUPPORT OUR 'ALL INCLUSIVE PACKAGE'.

Please remember, that in September, many of you will have more funded hours for your child than has ever been offered before, giving you a fabulous reduction in your childcare fees. Please think of the funding as SUBSIDISED not FREE.

How are we helping you?

We are trying to keep our costs to parents as low as possible without compromising on highly trained, highly experienced staff or quality provision.

First and foremostly, we are here to support your children's education and development. We are Early Years Educators, not babysitters. We want to help you to give your child the best possible start in life, alongside yourselves. We will continue to work with you as a family to make sure your child has everything they need to be able to thrive to the best of their ability, including nutritious, healthy and filling meals and snacks. Your child is an individual, with their own character, personality, needs, wants and ambitions. We want them to always keep that individuality, and have a bespoke approach to their learning.

We want them to leave us as happy, confident, curious, creative, enthusiastic, kind, sociable and as independent as a 4 year old should be, with important and crucial life skills that will enable them to have the best foundation for holistic learning and a happy and positive life.

Separately to your child's Early Years Development, we want to be able to support you as families to return to work and have the support and reassurance that we will do our best for your children.

We are extremely appreciative and grateful for your ongoing support.

Written August 2025 - FM