



**We hope you found this document useful. If you require further support regarding your business you can contact the Early Years Team on Tel: 0115 8764544 or access the Nottingham City Early Years Website:**

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/earlyyears>

## **FREE Childcare** for 2 Year Olds



### **ENGAGING FAMILIES**

#### **'Top Tips' Guide for Providers**

#### **National Picture**

In September 2014, all eligible families of a 2 year old became entitled to free early education. Research from Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) 2004, found that a quality pre-school experience can boost children's all round development and is particularly beneficial for less advantaged children.

Many of the 2 year olds from eligible groups currently use no formal childcare so there could be new business opportunities to sustain or extend your childcare setting.

#### **Local Picture**

There are a range of professionals and agencies promoting the 2 year old offer to families across Nottingham City.

Childcare providers have a responsibility to promote the 2 year old offer to local families. This will support your setting's sustainability in what is still a challenging economic climate.

A recent project delivered by the Local Authority looked at effective parental engagement with regards to funded places.

As a result, a number of good practice recommendations were made to support professionals working with potentially eligible families. This 'top tips guide' contains a number of those recommendations.



## General activities



Establish a good working relationship with local Children Centre and identify a designated person who can be contacted in relation to data referring to local eligible families



Encourage new/existing families to check their eligibility with the new Nottingham City Council Families Information Service online eligibility checker that gives an instant outcome



Explain the benefits of the 2 year old offer to families so they fully understand how the entitlement works and the positive impact it can have on a child's holistic development



Establish a good working relationship with local schools; this can be a great way of generating parental interest in your setting



Ensure the information held by Families Information Service regarding your setting is up to date



Explain to parents the importance of maintaining a good level of attendance and ensure attendance is monitored



## Useful Contacts

### Families Information Service

Tel: 0800 458 4114

Email: [fis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:fis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Website: [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/fis](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/fis)

### Children's Centres

Remember it is imperative that you maintain a good working relationship with your local Children's Centre, not only will this support participation for the 2 year old offer but also for offering on-going support to families in general.



Aspley	0115 876 3777
Basford	0115 876 1890
Bilborough	0115 915 7777
Broxtowe	0115 876 3888
Bulwell	0115 876 2220
Bulwell Forest	0115 876 5470
Clifton	0115 876 2625
Dunkirk	0115 876 1601
Hyson Green	0115 883 8202
The Meadows	0115 876 1320
Radford	0115 876 1099
Sherwood	0115 876 4888
Southglade	0115 876 1890
Sneinton	0115 876 1700
St Anns South	0115 876 4280
Top Valley	0115 876 1890
Wollaton	0115 876 2185

### Karen Smedley - Ark Angels

“Ours is a new setting that has only been operational for six weeks. We devised a leaflet to advertise our setting and canvassed outside the local shops. In addition, we have the Local Authority banner displayed and ensure Families Information Service have all our correct details.”



### Natalie Holliman - Cherubs, Executive House

“We work very closely with our local Children’s Centre and have a designated contact person. The Children’s Centre worker not only promotes our setting to families but also supports us to source materials/resources that enhance our offer to families.”

## Additional information

### Waiting Lists

We understand there may be circumstances where parents want their child to attend one particular setting, however, providers should encourage parents to consider other options. Ideally, waiting lists should not be operational in terms of 2 year old funded places as this naturally impacts on the amount of time they will benefit from the offer.



## Top Advertising Tips!

Advertise in Health Centres, GP surgeries, Libraries, Leisure Centres and Community Centres

Local papers, magazines, free papers, local notice boards - anywhere that parents/ carers might go!

Do a ‘leaflet’ drop to houses and shops within locality - make sure the most relevant information is clear

Advertise your setting on local radio stations - some offer this as a free service

Use social media sites (if you are planning to upload photos of children in your care you must have written permission from parents to use them for marketing purposes)

Ensure your website reflects your full offer and keep it up dated? Consider your ‘**Unique Selling Point**’

Good quality, prominent signage will bring your service to the attention of the local community. It should include your logo and tell the public what your service offers. Ensure contact details are clearly displayed

Information packs or a good quality prospectus can be a very valuable tool

**BE CREATIVE!**

## Marketing strategies

- Display Local Authority poster to inform parents that you offer funded places
- Visit local toddler groups
- Link with local Jobcentre
- Establish links with Health Visitors and Community Nursery Nurses - a great way of promoting your setting to local families
- Hold open day events, coffee mornings or 'Stay and Play' sessions targeting local families - invite local Children Centre and named Health Visitor
- Get involved with local community events to raise your profile
- Promote your full flexible offer to existing parents - families financial circumstances can change and they may become eligible for funding
- Follow up any families that have visited the setting either by phone or text to establish if they are taking up the offer
- Forward planning is essential; it's not always possible to foresee changes. Most of the time, however you should have prior warning that a child will be leaving. Where possible try and fill the place before the child actually leaves

## Case Studies

### Dianne Preston - Lily & Co Childcare

"We held an 'Open Day' at the beginning of the school holidays where we invited the local community and then subsequently held 'Stay & Play' sessions throughout the summer for children that are due to start in September. This has been a great way to keep families engaged as well as a perfect way to introduce the children to the staff.

During one of the 'Stay and Play' sessions we held a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' which was very successful with the children. We believe this process has enabled us to increase the take up of the 2 year old early learning programme within all of our settings. In addition we have maintained good links with the local Health Visitors, who regularly refer families to us."

### Kulsoom Chishti - The Fig Tree Day Nursery, Hyson Green

"We use various methods to advertise our 2 year old funded places to families. One effective method is to advertise on a local radio station, which we know many members of the community access.

Other successful methods include: holding an 'open day', distributing leaflets within the community, updating and developing our website and producing a newsletter which current families receive and subsequently share with other families."

