

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Organisation
Providers must maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.



8.1 Fees and Funding

Policy statement

We believe that by having a clear payment structure that is flexible and affordable our Playgroup will continue to provide the standard of care expected by our parents and children.

Our method of charging parents is in accordance with Norfolk County Council's procedures for requesting payment, in order for us to join the directory of providers.

Procedures

- All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get up to 570 free hours per year. It's often taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year that Feltwell Playgroup is open, from the term after their third birthday. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours or additional services. Norfolk County Council set the term dates each year including the maximum number of hours to be claimed through funding over that year. If this results in a child exceeding their allowance, Feltwell Playgroup will inform the parents/guardians as soon as being made aware of this.
 - *1 January – 31 March - children having their 3rd birthday between these dates can claim from the Summer term (after the Easter holiday)*
 - *1 April – 31 August - children having their 3rd birthday between these dates can claim from the Autumn term (after the Summer holiday)*
 - *1 September – 31 December - children having their 3rd birthday between these dates can claim from the Spring term (after the Christmas holiday)*
- From April 2024, the terminology will change for the different entitlements available to families. The extended offer (30 hours) will be referred to as a Working Parent Entitlement and this entitlement will widen to include families with 2-year-olds.
- The free entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the free entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours or services.

- To make a claim for Early Education Funding you will be asked to complete a funding entitlement claim form at Feltwell Playgroup for each term. Your entitlement can be split between our setting and one other setting if required. The claim form is GDPR compliant.
- Parents may opt for their child to attend more hours than their funded entitlement. Additional hours will be charged at the current hourly rate where hours are not funded as Early Education by the Local Authority.
- Once registered you will be sent a 'Confirmation of Sessions & Agreement to Policies' letter which details your child's start date and the sessions your child has been allocated.
- Parents can request to change sessions each term (Autumn, Spring and Summer).
- Fees are currently £5.00 per hour (from April 2023) and must be paid in advance of the first session your child attends each half-term. Any payment will be calculated by deducting the number of claimed funded sessions from the actual number of sessions your child is registered to attend. Parents state which funded sessions they require on the termly claim form and then all sessions are calculated to give the half-term amount payable. With a written agreement in advance, and discussion with the manager of the Playgroup, it may be possible to arrange weekly payments in extenuating circumstances (payments to be made at least weekly in advance of sessions attended).
- Fees may be paid half-termly or termly. An invoice will be issued for each term listing the amount payable and the means by which to pay. Invoices will be issued at the end of the term prior to the invoice. For instance, the invoice for Summer Term will be given out to you at the end of Spring Term. Invoices will be issued for every child that attends Feltwell Playgroup clearly stating the number of hours your child is expected to attend. Even if your child only attends funded sessions, you will still receive an invoice but no payment is required: it is for your information only.
- Early years funded places are provided free. Parents will not be charged "top-up" fees (the difference between Feltwell Playgroup's usual fee and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver free places) nor do we require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's free place.
- Should you wish to pay with cash, someone will be available to collect fees at the beginning of each session and a record will be kept in the register. Written receipts will be issued for all payments made in cash. Please note that it is also possible to pay via bank transfer.
- Fees are reviewed annually to ensure that they are in line with the running costs. Notice of fee changes will be given at least a term in advance of fees being changed.
- Hours must be paid for in advance of the first session your child attends each half-term. If payment is not made, then your child may not be able to attend any further charged hours until payment is made – they will still be able to attend funded hours.

- If anyone is having difficulty in paying their fees, they can speak confidentially to the manager, administrator or chairperson.
- If payment is recurrently late a child's charged hours may be reduced or stopped. If that child is in receipt of government funded hours, their sessions will be reduced to only what the funding will cover.
- If a child is absent for whatever reason - including illness or holiday - half fees are payable. However, at the discretion of the Feltwell Playgroup committee, if proven that a child has been admitted to hospital for a length of time or has a prolonged illness, fees may be waived. As fees are paid in advance then at the end of the half-term, if half fees have been charged, parents may opt for an immediate refund of fees or to remain in credit.
- When a child leaves a minimum of 2 weeks' notice is required and payment will be expected (except government funded sessions) whether the child attends during the notice time or not.
- Excursions and other extras will be charged separately. There is currently no charge for the cost of snacks or consumables. If a child is staying for lunch, a packed lunch and drink must be provided by the parent/guardian.
- In the event of emergency closure, such as heating breaking down/severe inclement weather etc. fees will not be charged. If any children receive government funding for the session cancelled, Feltwell Playgroup will, wherever possible, offer another session to them instead.
- If a child has not attended Playgroup for 2 weeks, without any explanation or prior notice, the manager will try to contact the child's parent (by text, phone or e-mail) to ask if everything is ok. If contact cannot be made and the child does not attend their next session, then a letter will be sent to the parent requesting that contact be made. If no contact is made after one week, it will be assumed that the child has left and a letter will be sent to the parent stating this and any fees in credit will be refunded. Children's Services and/or the police may be contacted at any time if staff have any doubts about the safety of the child.
- Our Complaints Policy is available for you to read on our website (www.feltwellPlaygroup.com) and a paper copy is available upon request. If you are not satisfied that your child is receiving the free entitlement in the correct way (as set out in this funding agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities), a complaint can be submitted directly to our Chairperson.
- All accounts are audited yearly to comply with the Charity Commission.

Additional Charges

Registration Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a registration fee of £25 which is payable when you first register your child. This is non-refundable. This is voluntary for those families whose child(ren) access the funding entitlement.
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Retainer Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should a parent wish to ensure that a child's place is secured during a long absence when the setting would usually be open – the Playgroup will secure a child's place for no less than six weeks and no more than one term. • During such an absence it is not possible to claim funding so a retainer fee will be charged to secure the child's place. • The fee will be derived from the time that the child's place is to be secured and half fees will be payable.
Late Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If payment has not been made before the first session your child attends each half-term, then a late payment fee of £10 can be charged. However, should the payment be made within a week of the parent being notified that the payment is late, then this fee will be waived. • Should a payment not be made after the parent has been informed that fees are outstanding, and the child has attended sessions, then the parent will be sent a reminder letter via email and post and the child's hours will be reduced to funded hours only. • If payment is still not received then a referral will be made for the committee to discuss and court action will be taken.
Late Collection of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We reserve the right to charge parents/carers for late collection. These charges are to cover staff overtime as two members of staff have to remain on the premises until the child is collected. • The current charge for late collection is £5.00 per child for every 5 minutes (or part thereof) after the first 5 minutes that the parent/carer is late, as shown on the Playgroup clocks. We aim to ensure that these are GMT accurate and are checked regularly against the speaking clock.
Snacks/ Consumables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently no charge for the cost of snacks or consumables.

Further guidance

Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities – April 2024.

Early years Entitlements: Operational Guidance For Local Authorities and Providers – April 2024.

This policy was adopted by	Feltwell Playgroup
On	02.04.2024
Date to be reviewed	(on or before) 02.04.2025
Signed on behalf of the provider	J.I.
Name of signatory	Jonathan Irving
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Committee Chairperson