

Case Study: Take Up of Funded Early Years Education

- Parents are often reluctant to access funded two-year-old early years education.
- Benefits for children, parents and the family are huge.

The family circumstances

The BEYA Years Hub supported parents to access funded two-year-old early years education.

V is married with two children a son (P) aged five years and a daughter (C) aged three years. She works as a care co-ordinator. During her involvement with BEYA, V accessed funded two-year-old early years education, funded three-year-old early years education and the funded extended entitlement.

When her daughter was born, V's son was already accessing early education.

“P went every afternoon. C was very little, and it really helped me, gave me a bit of time with C and gave him (P) time to socialise. He needed an outlet and the two-year-old provision really helped him socially. His teachers were fantastic and helped with things like potty training. It was really amazing. It was good for P to have time for himself to become his own little person.”

V took up a funded two-year-old place for her daughter as soon as she could, which enabled her to return to work.

“C accessing two-year-old funding benefitted her massively socially and enabled me to go back to work. After the children were born, I couldn't go back to being a co-ordinator and had to work evenings as a care worker. It was hard. When C accessed the 15 hours for 2-3 hours a day I was able to work daytime while she was at nursery, which did me the world of good. C was able to make friends and socialise with other children and I could do something for myself and earn a bit of extra money for the family.”

When P started reception, V was offered her previous role as a care work co-ordinator. V increased her working hours to take up with role. She also increased C's hours at nursery, through the 30-hours entitlement paying a fee top up for additional hours.

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“The 30 hours enabled me to take the {co-ordinator] job offer – I couldn’t have done that without it. Now I don’t have to go out every single night. Everything has fallen into place and I feel really, really lucky.”

Benefits and challenges of funded early education for children

One of the challenges in relation to the funded two-year-old early years education is parents’ reluctance to take up the entitlement.

“I didn't really want to let go but she really needed it – to be active, to be stimulated and to be around other children. As much as you want to keep them a baby you can't.”

However, the benefits for children, parents and the whole family are enormous.

For children:

- Having access to a wide range of varied activities that stimulate and engage and support learning and development
- Improved communication.
- Improved readiness for school.

For parents and the family:

- Enabling parents to return to work and increase working hours.
- Improved confidence and self-esteem.
- More stable family financial position.