

Early Years Census Establishment details

Deadline for completion of survey Friday 6 February 2026

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Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the completion of the early years establishment details survey required for the completion of the Early Years Census for submission to the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2026.

Who is in the scope of the early years census?

All English providers of free early education in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors are within the scope of the early years census.

Data to be collected in the early years census

The 2025 early years census is in two parts – establishment level and child level - with each level containing groupings of individual data items.

Data level	Description	How data is collected
Establishment level	Data relating to the PVI early education provider.	Through Capita Self Update module
Pupil / child level	Data relating to the individual child taking up free early education	Through spring headcount claim submitted by Friday 16 January 2026

Completing the annual establishment survey

- All early years education providers must complete this survey. Information will be shared with DfE for providers claiming EY funding during the spring 2026 headcount.
- Please ensure that all questions have been completed before clicking the "submit" button at the end of this survey.
- The data that you provide in this survey should reflect your position as of census day (15 January 2026) or census week (week commencing 12 January 2026).
- **School based settings do not need to complete the Establishment Information.**

Provider Availability and Opening Times

No. of Weeks Open?

Number of weeks per year that the EY provider is open for (to the nearest half week, and where the half week is represented by 0.5). This question will accept numbers between 1 and 52.

Daily opening / closing times

You should record your times during a normal week and enter the earliest opening time and your latest closing time for each day.

You must use a 24 hour time format and divide the hours and minutes with a colon “ : ” for example 09:30, 16:30

If you are not open on a particular day, please leave the opening / closing times blank.

Continuously open?

Provider should only tick this box if you are available to offer childcare 24 hours a day for 7 days a week. Ticking this box will clear out any opening times you’ve entered above.

Staffing

If you are not sure whether the level of qualification a member of your staff has obtained is relevant for early years you can check using the DFE early years qualifications guidance which can be found here :-

www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder

- Staff qualifications are only required for staff at the provider or childminder who work with children aged under 5.
- All responses must be the number of staff including independent childminder with a full and relevant early years qualification at the level indicated
- For each member of staff including an independent childminder, only their highest qualification should be recorded, hence double-counting must not occur. The sum of all questions must not exceed the total number of staff.
- **Please note:** volunteers are not included.
- **All questions must be completed** enter a “0” if you don’t have staff that meet the criteria.

Total number of staff (qualified and unqualified) who work with children under 5?

This should be a number greater than zero. The total staff at provider who work with children under 5 records the total number of staff at the provider that work with children aged under 5. This includes all the staff in the following staff questions.

For a childminder, this would include themselves, any co-childminders and any assistants. Both qualified and un-qualified staff are included within this total.

Number of staff that have a full and relevant early years level 2 qualification, who work with children aged under 5?

The ‘number of staff with a full and relevant early years level 2 qualification’ data item records the number of staff at the provider with a full and relevant early years Level 2 qualification who work with children aged under 5. Definitions of ‘full and relevant’ qualifications can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder>

Number of staff that have a full and relevant early years level 3 qualification and not in a managerial role who work with children aged under 5?

The ‘number of staff with a full and relevant early years level 3 qualification and not in a managerial role’ data item records the number of staff at the provider with a full and relevant early years Level 3 qualification who are not in a management role and work with children aged under 5. Definitions of ‘full and relevant’ qualifications can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder>

Number of staff that have a full and relevant early years level 3 qualification and in a managerial role who work with children aged under 5?

The 'number of staff with a full and relevant early years level 3 qualification and in a managerial role' data item records the number of staff at the provider with a full and relevant early years Level 3 qualification who are in a management role and work with children aged under 5. Definitions of 'full and relevant' qualifications can be found at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder>

Staff with graduate level qualifications excluding EYPS, EYTS and QTS (for example BA Early Childhood Studies, Foundation Degree) should be recorded as Level 3 as their qualifications allow them to practice at Level 3 staffing ratios.

A manager is the person undertaking the role of 'setting manager' as prescribed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. This does not, therefore, include room leaders or senior members who are not the setting manager.

Any registered childminder is considered to have a managerial role even if they are not working with any other adults. However, if they hold a higher level of qualification they should be recorded under the relevant qualification.

Number of staff with qualified teacher status who work with children aged under 5?

The 'number of staff with qualified teacher status' data item records the number of staff at the provider with qualified teacher status who work with children aged under 5.

Number of staff with early years professional status who work with children aged under 5?

The 'number of staff with early years professional status' data item records the number of staff at the provider with early years professional status who work with children aged under 5.

Number of staff with early years teacher status who work with children aged under 5?

The 'number of staff with early years teacher status' data item records the number of staff at the provider with early years teacher status who work with children aged under 5.

Number of children by age

- In this section you need to check the date of birth of each child to ensure they are counted in the correct group
- At this time you need to include numbers of children registered to be attending census week.
- For each question as appropriate you are asked to identify numbers of children who are funded, those who are not funded and for 3 and 4 year old children the number of children who are attending for universal and the number of children claiming the extended entitlement with you.
- The number of under 2's are not required for this return, they will be however included in 2026

Number of under 1 year olds?

Date of birth between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025

Number of 1 year olds?

Date of birth between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024

Number of 2 year olds?

Date of birth between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023

Number of 3 year olds?

Date of birth between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022

Number of 4 year olds?

Date of birth between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021

Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding completing the survey, please email schools.support@togetherforchildren.org.uk