Guide for Early Years Providers: Submitting Estimates and Actuals for Monthly Payments

This guide explains how Early Years Providers can submit estimates and actuals through the Synergy Provider Portal for the monthly payment process. It covers what information you need before you start, the steps to complete each submission in Synergy, key deadlines, and what happens after you submit your claim. Following these steps will help make sure payments are processed accurately and on time.

The changes to monthly payments from Termly payments

Childcare providers who are receiving monthly payments will now need to submit both Estimates and Actuals at the same time to enable the correct and accurate amount of funding to be released. This change will also help prevent any issue with checking of eligibilities codes later on in the term. Allowing providers to confirm parents entitlements without experiencing issues with overpayments via the estimates.

The submission of both Estimates and actuals remain the same as normal with the only change being the way estimated hours are submitted. Instead of submitted estimated hours per week for settings, we are now asking settings to submit estimated hours per term.

For example:

For the Autumn term if you are claiming for two children who are both attending 30 hours a week, instead of previously entering 60 hours a week. Instead, you will need to enter 900. This equals 60 hours per week x 15 EEF Entitlement weeks for Autumn Term.

You will not need to submit actuals every month.

You will have up to the 3rd Friday of each month to be able to log into the portal and update your actuals if necessary. If you have no changes required to make then you will not need to make portal changes.

Monthly payments will be spilt into the below payments:

Autumn Term

- 3 Payments based on 80% of Estimates/Actuals
- 1 Final payment for remaining 20% and EYPP funding.

Spring Term

- 2 Payments based on 80% of Estimates/Actuals
- 1 Final payment for remaining 20% and EYPP funding.

Summer Term

- 4 Payments based on 80% of Estimates/Actuals
- 1 Final payment for remaining 20% and EYPP funding

Submitting Estimates

1. Log in to the Synergy Provider Portal and select the estimate task for the relevant payment period.
2. Check that your provider details and setting information held in Synergy are correct before entering any figures.
3. Review your expected attendance and funded hours for each eligible child for the month being claimed via the eligibility checker on the provider portal.
4. Enter the estimated funded hours into Synergy, making sure they reflect the children expected to attend during that payment period. Submissions have to be entered as hours per term, **not hours per week**
5. Check that all age groups and funding types have been included where applicable.
6. Review the figures on screen before submitting to make sure there are no missing children, duplicated hours, or incorrect totals.
7. Submit the estimate on the Provider Portal by the published deadline.

Deadlines: Estimates must be submitted by the deadline set out in the Early Education Funding timetable for the relevant term or month. Providers should check the published timetable each term and ensure submissions are made on time, as late estimates may affect payment processing.

Submitting Actuals

1. Log in to the Synergy Provider Portal and select the actuals task for the relevant payment period.
2. Check the child records held in Synergy and make sure all eligible children are included.
3. Confirm the actual funded hours attended for each child during the claimed period.
4. Add any new children who started after the estimate was submitted, before the 3rd Friday of each month to update your funding claims and this will then be reflected in your next monthly payment.
5. Update any changes in attendance, hours, or eligibility in Synergy so that the actual claim reflects what has taken place.

6. Review the full submission carefully and make sure the total claimed hours are accurate before submitting.
7. Submit the actuals in Synergy by the published deadline and keep a copy or confirmation for your records.

Deadlines: Actuals must also be submitted by the deadline published in the Early Education Funding timetable. It is important to meet the deadline so that payments can be adjusted correctly and any overpayments or underpayments can be resolved as part of the monthly process. Providers should make sure all new starters and changes are included before submitting.

What Happens After Submission

Once estimates and actuals have been submitted, the information is reviewed and used to calculate your monthly payment. If actuals differ from the original estimate, adjustments will be made through the payment process. Accurate and timely submissions will help reduce delays, corrections, and follow-up queries.

Payment Dates/Amounts

Monthly payments will first start from the 1st week of September on the 2nd September.

Autumn Term 2026

- 1st Payment – 2nd September 2026
- 2nd Payment – 7th October 2026
- 3rd Payment – 4th November 2026
- Final payment – 6th December 2026

Spring Term 2027

- 1st Payment - 6th January 2027
- 2nd Payment - 3rd February 2027
- Final Payment – 3rd March 2027

Summer Term 2027

- 1st Payment – 7th April 2027
- 2nd Payment – 5th May 2027
- 3rd Payment – 6th June 2027
- 4th Payment – 7th July 2027
- Final Payment – 4th August 2027

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Missing the submission deadline.
- Entering estimated hours that do not reflect expected attendance.
- Forgetting to add new starters or update changes in attendance.

- Submitting incorrect funded hours for individual children.
- Not checking the submission before sending it.
- Failing to keep a record of the submission confirmation.

Providers should refer to the current Early Education Funding timetable for the exact submission deadlines for each period and ensure all information entered in the Synergy Provider Portal is checked before submission. If you are unsure about any part of the process, please contact the Early Years Funding Team before the deadline so that support can be provided.