

Working Together Case Study: Golden Ticket

Newham had a relatively high proportion of two year olds who were eligible for funded early education (44%) but take-up was low (43%) in 2017, well below the average take-up for London (58%), and nationally (71%). The Working Together Early Years Hub aimed to increase the proportion of two year old children accessing high quality funded early education as a key strand to addressing disadvantage in Newham by:

- reviewing local areas with the lowest take-up of funded places for two year olds, and working to develop take-up in high quality settings in those neighbourhoods
- providing training and support to expand the number of childminders offering places to funded two year olds in areas of low take-up
- working through community organisations to contact eligible parents to make sure that they have information about the free offer, with bi-lingual practitioners as needed
- helping parents to access places through local knowledge of early years settings and vacancies, collaboration with childminders, and local online access
- developing more introductory 'Stay and Play' sessions for two year olds as a first introduction for parents to the benefits of early education
- reviewing publicity and ensuring that the two year old entitlement, and its educational benefits, is publicised more effectively

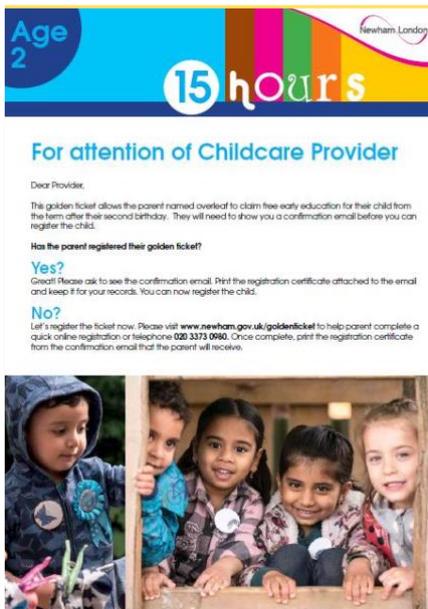
We started at the beginning, by thinking about how parents could find out about the Free Early Education for 2-year olds (FEE2) offer. The Hub reviewed the long letter that Newham sent to all parents who were eligible for a free early education place at its first Steering Group meeting, then with some parents. Together with the Newham Best Start in Life team, responsible for sufficiency, quality, and family information, we realised that the letter could be difficult to read for many parents. This was also true of the leaflet that parents could pick up from children's centres, libraries and settings. A high proportion of parents in Newham speak English as an additional language, and there is significant unemployment, so we changed the leaflet and initial letter to include more photos, clearer wording, and a greater emphasis on the benefits of early education for children, rather than childcare so that parents could work.

At the same time, the Hub contacted local authorities that had similar populations, but much higher take-up of the Free Early Education offer for two-year olds than Newham. The nearby borough of Barking and Dagenham had managed to achieve 78% take-up, the highest rate in London, and told us that take-up had risen rapidly after they introduced a 'golden ticket' that was sent to all eligible parents. Instead of a long, official letter parents were sent a golden ticket congratulating them on their child's FREE early education place.



November 2018
Golden Ticket Supplement





Working Together shared this with the Newham Best Start in Life team, who rose to the challenge and launched a new 'golden ticket' for eligible parents in November 2018, supplemented by new leaflets and information that emphasised the educational benefits for two-year olds. The golden ticket replaced the previous 'IAM2' letter and made the offer more attractive to parents and easier to understand. Working Together contacted BANGLA TV who ran interviews and information sessions about the FEE2 offer for the Bangladeshi community in Newham, which also helped to improve take-up. The local authority successfully applied for further funding from the GLA for continued support from BANGLA TV, and to translate FEE2 leaflets into key community languages.

Newham now advertises the free early education offer for two-year olds through:

- Golden Tickets to eligible families
- Golden Ticket follow up reminder letters
- Flyers in community languages
- Posters in settings
- Street banners in low take up areas
- Billboard advertising
- BANGLA TV
- Banners outside nurseries
- Website with community language materials
- Short film in English and translations in multi languages
- Info-Advert in resident email newsletters
- Newham Magazine adverts
- Social Media posts – Facebook/Twitter/Instagram
- Parent Champions including social media sharing
- Westfield shopping centre digital screen
- Library digital screens
- 2,3,4 monthly newsletter to providers – asking them to share information with parents
- Early Education Practitioners in children's centres
- Health Visitors

The Working Together Early Years Hub programme brought together the local authority, PVI settings, schools, community organisations, health, and SENCOs to co-ordinate and make more accessible information that parents needed about high quality early education.

As a result, take-up of FEE2 places rose from 43% of eligible parents in 2017 to 66% in 2019.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. Newham had one of the highest infection and death rates in the country initially, and many settings had to close for several months. Before that, we were on track to reach our Working Together target of 75% take-up of FEE2 places by the end of 2020.