



Department
for Education

Early years census 2026

**Business and technical specification,
version 1.0**

April 2025

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Summary

This specification describes the 2026 early years (EY) census of private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers and children.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- Local authorities
- suppliers of local authority management information systems

Main points

The document will enable local authorities, and those such as software suppliers working on their behalf, to prepare the necessary processes and data to ensure compliance.

Version history

The version history shows when the version was released. The “Change History” is contained within the errata at [section 7](#) at the end of the document.

Version	Author	Date
1.0	Nicola Berryman	April 2025

This specification must be read in conjunction with the Excel workbook giving the current version of the revised common basic data set ([CBDS](#)).

Assumptions for 2026 made in creating this specification

A1	The census will use COLLECT as the data collection mechanism
A2	The Department for Education (DfE) will only accept submissions in XML format, but an XML Generator will be provided on request to either convert fixed format CSV data into the required XML format or to input data before producing the required XML format for loading into COLLECT.
A3	<p>For the purposes of this collection the following ages are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A child eligible after reaching 9 months old has a date of birth between 2025-01-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive)• A 1-year-old has a date of birth between 2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive)• A 2-year-old has a date of birth between 2023-01-01 and 2023-12-31 (inclusive)• A 3-year-old has a date of birth between 2022-01-01 and 2022-12-31 (inclusive)• A 4-year-old has a date of birth between 2021-01-01 and 2021-12-31 (inclusive) <p>See scope in section 1.2 for more information.</p>

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and audience

This specification describes the 2026 early years (EY) census of private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers and children. The document will enable local authorities, and those such as software suppliers working on their behalf, to prepare the necessary processes and data to ensure compliance.

The specification covers the expected census return to the Department for Education (DfE) and the validation rules that will be applied.

The following diagram outlines the overall scope of the collection:

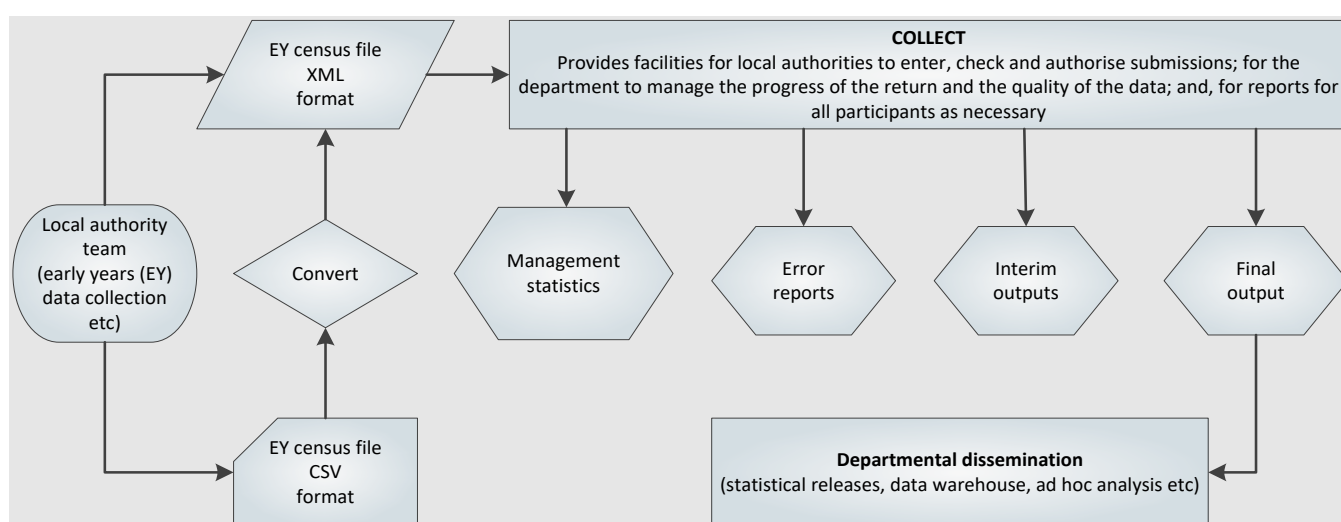


Figure 1: High level data collection process

This requirements specification consists of three documents:

This Word document containing a narrative; sample XML message structures and CSV records; and validation rules;

The common basic data set ([CBDS](#)) Excel workbook;

XML schemas that will be supplied separately.

1.2. Scope of the EY census

1.2.1. Scope

The 2026 (EY) census consists of establishment and pupil / child level data (as detailed in sections 3 and 4 respectively). Pupil / child level information is collected for 9 months to 4-year-old children.

1.2.2. Private, voluntary and independent settings (PVI)

The EY census is required from any PVI setting where one or more of their children (aged 9 months to 4 years as at 2025-12-31) are receiving early education during census week (see [1.2.4](#)) that is funded by LA.

Any setting that has no children aged 9 months to 4 years receiving funded early education during census week should not make an EY census (EYC) return.

1.2.3. Establishments not included

This census does not cover local authority maintained nursery or nursery classes in maintained schools and academies that are included as part of the school census.

1.2.4. Census date

The EY census is collected annually. The census date is the third Thursday in January. Unless otherwise stated, the terms 'census date', 'census day' in this document will refer to 2026-01-15 and 'the week of the census' refers to the week commencing 2026-01-12.

1.2.5. Which census should be used?

Schools with **funded** on-site early years funded provision make their return via **either** the school census **or** the early years census, **but not both**. This paragraph describes which census is used to return data on children receiving **funded** early education:

- Registered early years pupils of the school (aged 9 months to 4 years) are recorded via the **school census** (and **not** the early years census)
- children (aged 9 months to 4 years) attending a separate Ofsted registered PVI provider on a school site, are recorded via the **early years census** (and **not** the school census) and this should be completed by the provider not the school.
- children attending early years provision provided by a school governing body under Section 27 of the Education Act 2002 (s27 governor run) or provision which is run / managed by an academy or academy trust under charitable objectives should be either:
 - recorded via the **school census** where they **are registered pupils** of the school; **or**
 - recorded via the **early years census** where they are not registered pupils of the school

Children may, of course, appear on the two different censuses where their funded entitlement is split between two different settings. Where funded entitlement, extended or expanded entitlement hours are split between 2 different settings the number of funded entitlement hours for each child across all provision is limited to:

- 15 hours where universal free entitlement and 15 hours extended entitlement (where appropriate) is claimed (for 3- and 4-year-olds), or
- 15 hours entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds or,
- 30 hours where expanded entitlement (where appropriate) is claimed for children aged 9 months up to 3 years old.

Where schools need to complete the early years census for non-pupils, the local authority will need to issue a local authority EY number to the schools involved.

1.3. Business rationale

The business rationale behind this approach is the principle that local authorities and EY settings are expected to hold / manage data for their own purposes, or have data held on their behalf so that they can access and extract it.

1.4. Structure of the EY census

The 2026 EY census consists of two levels, namely a pupil / child level and an establishment level. Each level comprises one or more modules (the term 'module' is used to describe a subset of a data level). Both levels will be returned together as a single data return for each EY setting.

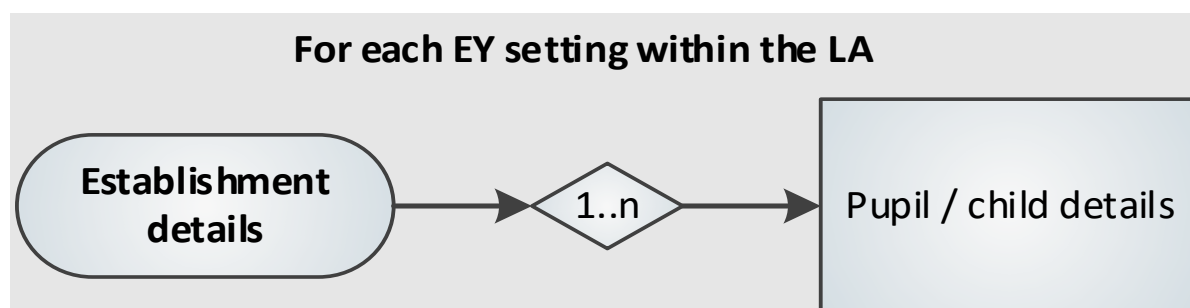


Figure 2: Overall census structure

1.5. Changes for 2026

1.5.1. New data items

<EYUnder1s> (N00816) and <EY1Years> (N00817) have been added to the Pupil / child statistics module.

1.5.2. **Existing data items**

Expanded Hours (N00787) has been amended to allow up to 30 hours to be claimed, following the policy change from September 2025.

1.5.3. **Deleted data items**

No data items have been deleted.

2. Guidance section - header details

Section 5 describes two formats for the return of the data, XML or CSV. For either format, the data items required within the header are shown below. This is a standard header and some items will not be relevant to this census.

Collection <Collection> (N00600) will be 'EYC'; Description: Name of the data collection, that is: EYC.
Survey term <Term> (N00601) will be 'SPR'; Description: SPR denotes collection is carried out in the spring term.
Survey year <Year> (N00602) will be '2026'; Description: The calendar year of the collection.
Survey reference date <ReferenceDate> (N00603) will be '2026-01-15'; Description: The reference date is normally the day of the census or collection and this is used as the baseline date from which comparisons with other dates in the return can be made.
Source level <SourceLevel> (N00604) will be 'L'; Description: The source of the data submission. Set to L for a local authority system and S for a school system.
LA number <LEA> (N00216) is the local authority number. Description: Standard departmental three-digit local authority number.
Software code <SoftwareCode> (N00605) will be a free format field that can be populated with whatever identifier the software supplier wants to use. Description: Software supplier reference
Release <Release> (N00607) which is optional on returns to DfE.
Serial No <SerialNo> (N00606) will start at '001' and then be incremented by 1 each time a new file is prepared for submission. Description: An incremented number, generated by a provider's software, enables data collection systems to identify re-submissions.
Date and time (<DateTime>) (N00609) is the date and time when the file was prepared or generated in CCYY-MM-DDThh:mm:ss format. Description: Date and time of generation of the return.

3. Guidance section - establishment level

3.1. Overall description and scope

This section describes the establishment level of the 2026 EY census.

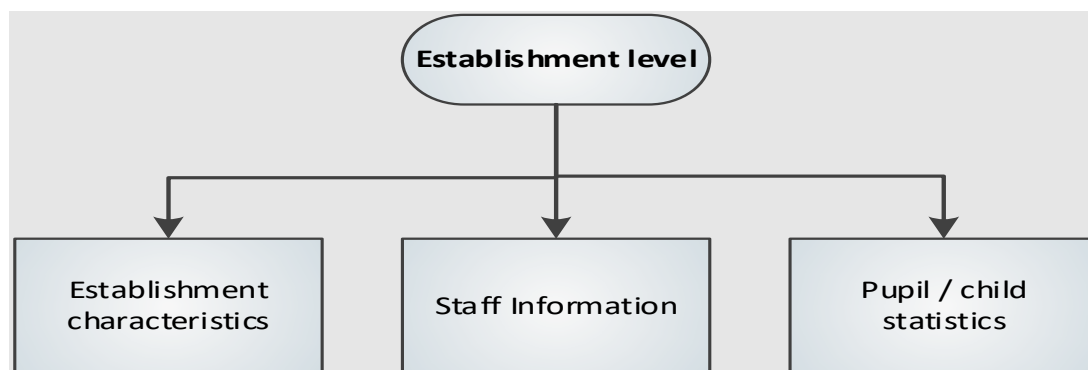


Figure 3: Establishment level modules

3.2. Outline data content

The return will contain three modules for each establishment (see Figure 3) - establishment characteristics, staff information and pupil/child statistics. The paragraphs below contain guidance. Section [5.2.3](#) contains the establishment level XML message structure that shows the modular nature of the return

3.2.1. Establishment characteristics module

This module contains information about the setting. Data items included within this module are:

3.2.1.1. Local authority number

Data item (N00216) <LEA> records the 3-digit local authority code of the authority responsible for funding children within the setting.

3.2.1.2. Establishment unique reference number

Data item (N00278) <URN> records the local authority issued unique reference number (URN) for the EY provider must be used by all PVI providers and CMs registered with Ofsted submitting a census return direct to the local authority. As CMAs are not required to give their registered CMs a reference number, local authorities must allocate a URN for each return submitted by a CMA on behalf of their CMs before submitting data to DfE.

3.2.1.3. Ofsted unique reference number

Data item (N00253) <OFSTEDURN> records the establishments Ofsted unique reference number as held by Ofsted.

Please note: Individual settings should have both a local authority EY number and an OFSTED number. However, where a setting is registered with a childminder agency (CMA) the local authority will need to issue a local authority EY number to each setting before they submit a return

3.2.1.4. Establishment name

Data item (N00217) <EstablishmentName> records the name of the establishment.

3.2.1.5. Telephone number

Data item (N00231) <PhoneNo> records the telephone number (in full, including the area code) of the establishment.

3.2.1.6. Post code

Data item (N00037) <PostCode> records the postcode (as issued by the post office) of the establishment.

3.2.1.7. Early years provider category

Data item (N00283) <EYProviderCategory> records the category of the provider, choosing from:

- Private ('PRIV')
- Voluntary ('VOLY')
- Registered independent school ('INDS')
- LA day nursery ('LADN')
- Other ('OTHR')
- Childminder ('CHMD')
- State-funded governor-run ('SFGR')

Please note: EY provider category 'other' is only required for settings whose category of EY provider is 'other' ('OTHR').

3.2.1.8. Early years provider category other

Data item (N00254) <EYProviderCategoryOther> records the category of the provider where it does not fall within the codes listed above at 3.2.1.7 Early years provider category.

3.2.1.9. Early years childminder category

Data item (N00284) <EYChildminderCategory> records the category of the childminder from:

- Registered with a childminding agency ('AGY')
- Registered with Ofsted childminder ('IND')

3.2.1.10. Early years setting type

Data item (N00255) <EYSettingType> record the type of setting from:

- Early years childcare provider ('EYP')
- Sure start children's centre ('SSC')
- Other ('OTH')

EY setting type "other" is only required for settings whose category of EY provider is private or voluntary ('PRIV' or 'VOLY') and type of EY setting is "other" ('OTH').

3.2.1.11. Early years setting type other

Data item (N00256) <EYSettingTypeOther> records the setting type where it does not fall within the codes listed above at 3.2.1.9) Early years setting type.

3.2.1.12. Early years day care

Data item (N00257) <EYDayCare> records the type of day care provided by the setting from:

- Full day ('F') (6 hours a day or more)
- Sessional day ('S') (less than 6 hours)
- Other day care ('O')

3.2.1.13. Early years day care other

Data item (N00258) records the provision of day care where it does not fall within the codes listed above at 3.2.1.12) Early years day care. EY day care "other" is only required for settings whose category of EY provider is private or voluntary ('PRIV' or 'VOLY') and EY day care is 'other' ('O').

Please note: Type of 'EY setting' and 'EY day care' are only required for settings whose category of EY provider is private or voluntary ('PRIV' or 'VOLY') and should not be provided for settings with other categories of EY provider.

3.2.1.14. Early years school relationship

Data item (N00262) <EYSchoolRelationship> records whether an EY provider is working with a state funded school (LA maintained, academy or free school) through a contract or partnership agreement. This should include all partnership working between a PVI provider and a school including situations where the PVI provider is based on a different site. This is recorded via '1', '0', 'true' or 'false' and defaults to 'false'.

3.2.1.15. Early years establishment partnership

Data item (N00263) <EYEstablishmentPartnership> records whether a PVI provider is working with another PVI provider through a contract or partnership agreement. It should include all partnership working between PVI providers and includes situations where PVI providers are based on different sites. This is recorded via '1', '0', 'true' or 'false' and defaults to 'false'.

3.2.1.16. Early years weeks open

Data item (N00265) <EYWeeksOpen> records the number of weeks per year that the EY setting is open (to the nearest half week, and where the half week is represented by '0.5' within a range of '1.0 to '52.0'.

3.2.1.17. Open 24 / 7 indicator

The 'open 24 / 7 indicator' - data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> records where a provider is open for 24 hours a day and 7 days a week – that is, where the setting does not close. Values are '1', 'true' / '0' or 'false'

3.2.1.18. General statement – opening and closing times

Paragraphs 3.2.1.20 to 3.2.1.33 relate to the general opening and closing times of the provider, not the times during which they offer funded early education. Providers who close for a lunch break should record their morning opening and afternoon / evening closing times only. Any lunch break should not be recorded.

Where the setting is not open on any particular day, this day is to be left blank.

3.2.1.19. Monday opening time

Data item (N00516) <MondayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals '1' or 'true'.

3.2.1.20. Monday closing time

Data item (N00517) <MondayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals '1' or 'true'.

3.2.1.21. Tuesday opening time

Data item (N00518) <TuesdayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals '1' or 'true'.

3.2.1.22. Tuesday closing time

Data item (N00519) <TuesdayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.23. Wednesday opening time

Data item (N00520) <WednesdayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.24. Wednesday closing time

Data item (N00521) <WednesdayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.25. Thursday opening time

Data item (N00522) <ThursdayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.26. Thursday closing time

Data item (N00523) <ThursdayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.27. Friday opening time

Data item (N00524) <FridayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.28. Friday closing time

Data item (N00525) <FridayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals ‘1’ or ‘true’.

3.2.1.29. Saturday opening time

Data item (N00526) <SaturdayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals '1' or 'true'.

3.2.1.30. Saturday closing time

Data item (N00527) <SaturdayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> = '1' or 'true'.

3.2.1.31. Sunday opening time

Data item (N00528) <SundayOpenTime> records the time at which the setting opens. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals '1' or 'true'.

3.2.1.32. Sunday closing time

Data item (N00529) <SundayCloseTime> records the time at which the setting closes. This is recorded in 24- hour format – that is: the first two digits must be within the range 00-23 with the second set within the range 00-59. The digits are separated by a colon. Must not be present where data item (N00515) <OpenIndicator> equals '1' or 'true'.

3.2.2. Staff Information module

This module contains information about the staff working at the EY setting. It is required for all settings.

Please note the following:

Data regarding the qualifications of staff is collected only for staff at the provider who work with children aged under five. For each member of staff who works with children aged under five, only the highest qualification is recorded and double counting must not occur. The items collected within this module are:

3.2.2.1. Total staff at provider who work with children aged under 5

Data item (N00508) <TotalStaff> records, by headcount, the total number of staff at the provider who work with children aged under five. This will include all the staff in the elements below.

3.2.2.2. Number of staff with a full and relevant early years Level 2 qualification

Data item (N00509) <L2Staff> records, by headcount, the number of staff at the provider with a full and relevant early years Level 2 qualification who work with children aged under five.

3.2.2.3. Number of staff with a full and relevant early years Level 3 qualification and not in a managerial role

Data item (N00510) <L3NMStaff> records, by headcount, 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 five.

3.2.2.4. Number of staff with a full and relevant early years Level 3 qualification and in a managerial role

Data item (N00511) <L3MgtStaff> records, by headcount, 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 five.

3.2.2.5. Number of staff with qualified teacher status

Data item (N00512) <QTSSStaff> records, by headcount, the number of staff at the provider with qualified teacher status who work with children aged under five.

3.2.2.6. Number of staff with early years professional status

Data item (N00513) <EYPSStaff> records, by headcount, the number of staff at the provider with early years professional status who work with children aged under five.

3.2.2.7. Number of staff with early years teacher status

Data item (N00514) <EYTSSStaff> records, by headcount, the number of staff at the provider with early years teacher status who work with children aged under five.

3.2.2.8. Staffing information

Definitions of 'full and relevant' qualifications can be found using the [early years qualifications finder](#).

Information about the staff should relate to those that have been present in the week of the census. If unusual circumstances occur, such as the premises not being available, then usual staffing levels should be provided.

Zero is to be input / provided for data items in this module that do not apply to the setting and, as such, there will be no blank items.

3.2.3. Pupil / child statistics module

Information collected as part of this module is based only on those settings that have any funded children – that is, those children taking up their funded entitlement (aged 9 months to 4 years as at 2025-12-31) at the time of the census.

In such settings, a separate count is required of under 1s, 1, 2, 3 and 4-year-old children, both funded and unfunded.

3.2.3.1. Number of under 1s

Data item (N00816) <EYUnder1s> records the total number of children aged under 1 (funded and unfunded) accommodated at the setting. Zero means none at this age.

3.2.3.2. Number of 1 year olds

Data item (N00817) <EY1Years> records the total number of 1-year-olds (funded and unfunded) accommodated at the setting. Zero means none at this age.

3.2.3.3. Number of 2 year olds

Data item (N00281) <EY2Years> records the total number of 2-year-olds (funded and unfunded) accommodated at the setting. Zero means none at this age.

3.2.3.4. Number of 3 year olds

Data item (N00275) <EY3Years> records the total number of 3-year-olds (funded and unfunded) accommodated at the setting. Zero means none at this age.

3.2.3.5. Number of 4 year olds

Data item (N00276) <EY4Years> records the total number of 4-year-olds (funded and unfunded) accommodated at the setting. Zero means none at this age.

Any setting within the authority that does not have any funded children aged 9 months to 4 years at the time of the census must NOT submit an EYC return.

3.3. Coverage and timing

The data provided must apply to the provider as of the census week (that is: week commencing Monday 2026-01-12). A return is expected for all providers who are receiving funding from the local authority to provide funded early education during census week.

4. Guidance section – pupil / child level

4.1. Overall description and scope

This section describes the pupil/child level of the 2026 EY census. Data should only be returned for those funded children aged 9 months to 4 years as at 2025-12-31.

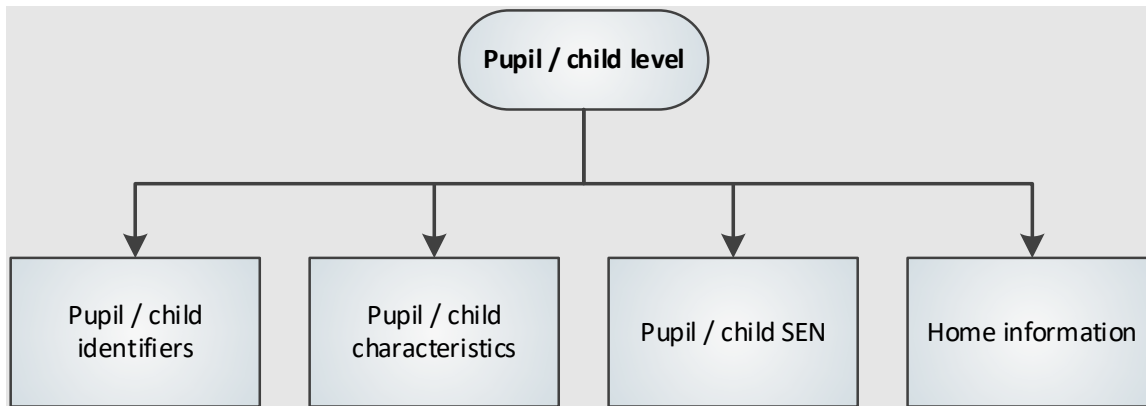


Figure 4: Pupil / child level modules

4.2. Outline data content

The return will contain four modules for each child (see figure 4) – pupil / child identifiers, pupil / child characteristics, pupil / child SEN and home information. The paragraphs below contain guidance. Section [5.2.4](#) contains the pupil level XML message structure which shows the modular nature of the return.

4.2.1. Pupil / child identifiers module

This module contains the child's name, date of birth and sex.

4.2.1.1. Pupil / child surname

Data item (N00003) <Surname> records the child's full legal surname as the provider believes it to be.

4.2.1.2. Pupil / child forename

Data item (N00004) <Forename> records the child's forename in full.

4.2.1.3. Pupil / child middle name

Data item (N00005) <Middlenames> records the child's middle name(s) in full. Where the child has no middle name, this field must be left blank.

4.2.1.4. Pupil / child preferred surname

Data item (N00010) <PreferredSurname> records the child's surname as most commonly used by the provider.

4.2.1.5. Date of birth

Data item (N00066) <PersonBirthDate> records the child's date of birth.

4.2.1.6. Sex

Data item (N00783) <Sex> records a value which identifies the sex of a person as recognised by law.

4.2.2. Pupil / child characteristics module

4.2.2.1. Ethnicity

This module contains the child's ethnicity (N00177) code and is returned for all children within the scope of the early years census.

The code set provided for the return, shown in the common basic data set ([CBDS](#)) contains the main DfE codes and extended codes, and these are the same as those specified for the school census. Local authorities that use extended codes for pupils in schools should also use them for early years. Conversely, those that use only the main codes should also use these for early years.

4.2.2.2. Funded entitlement hours

Funded hours (N00204) are recorded to two decimal places and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example: where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as (10 plus (30 divided by 60)) equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being (10 plus (45 divided by 60)) equals 10.75.

Eligible 2 year olds are entitled to 15 funded entitlement hours. All 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to the universal funded entitlement of 15 hours of funding. The maximum allowable funded hours, inclusive of universal funded entitlement hours and extended funded entitlement hours is 30 hours.

Please note: Where a child attends the establishment for extended funded entitlement hours only and therefore does not have any universal funded entitlement hours within the establishment, universal funded entitlement hours of 0.00 must be entered in the universal funded entitlement hours field. This acts as confirmation that the child took their universal funded entitlement hours in another establishment.

Please note: In some circumstances, 2-year-olds may be eligible for both the 15-hour entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and the expanded entitlement. In those

circumstances, parents must use the disadvantaged entitlement first, then the working parent entitlement up to a maximum of 30 hours in total. For example, a parent eligible for both entitlements and using 25 hours of provision would record 15 hours of disadvantaged entitlement and 10 hours of the working parent entitlement.

4.2.2.3. Extended funded entitlement hours

Extended funded entitlement hours (N00201) are collected for children aged 3 and 4, who have working parents with a valid eligibility code. As with universal funded entitlement hours, extended funded entitlement hours are recorded to two decimal places and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example: where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as (10 plus (30 divided by 60)) equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being (10 plus (45 divided by 60)) equals 10.75.

Extended funded entitlement hours is available up to a maximum of 15 hours per week.

Please note: Where a 3 or 4 year old child is in receipt of extended funded entitlement hours, the maximum universal funded entitlement hours allowable is 15 hours. The maximum allowable entitlement, inclusive of universal and extended funded hours is 30 hours.

This field must NOT include any hours funded under the universal funded entitlement for early education, which should still be recorded against universal funded entitlement hours (N00204) nor the expanded funded entitlement which should be recorded against expanded funded entitlement hours (N00787).

Where extended funded entitlement hours are taken at the establishment without the child taking up universal funded entitlement hours (N00204), funded hours must be returned as 0.00.

4.2.2.4. Expanded funded entitlement hours

Expanded funded entitlement hours (N00787) are collected for children aged 9 months up to 3 years with working parents who hold a valid eligibility code.

As with funded universal free entitlement hours and extended free entitlement hours, expanded free entitlement hours are recorded to two decimal places and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example, where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as [10 plus (30 ived

by 60]] equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being [10 plus (45 divided by 60)] equals 10.75.

Please note: Where a child is in receipt of expanded free entitlement hours, the maximum expanded entitlement hours allowable is 30 hours.

This field must NOT include any hours funded under the universal entitlement, which should still be recorded against funded hours (N00204), nor should it include any extended entitlement hours, which should still be recorded against extended hours (N00201).

Please note: In some circumstances, 2-year-olds may be eligible for both the 15-hour entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and the expanded entitlement. In those circumstances, parents must use the disadvantaged entitlement first, then the working parent entitlement up to a maximum of 30 hours in total. For example, a parent eligible for both entitlements and using 25 hours of provision would record 15 hours of disadvantaged entitlement and 10 hours of the working parent entitlement.

4.2.2.5. Funded entitlement weeks

Funded entitlement weeks (N00791) records the number of weeks the child is expected to stretch their funded hours across the child's eligibility year, in line with the parental declaration form. This should be recorded to one decimal place within a range of '0.0 to 52.0'.

Children who are taking their funded hours term-time only, 38 funded entitlement weeks should be recorded (or the number of weeks the provider is open in term-time which could be less than 38 weeks, for independent schools for example). For children who are stretching their funded entitlement over more than 38 weeks, record the number of weeks agreed between the parent and the provider.

4.2.2.6. Extended entitlement weeks

Extended entitlement weeks (N00792) records the number of weeks the child is expected to stretch their extended hours across the child's eligibility year, in line with the parental declaration form. This should be recorded to one decimal place within a range of '0.0 to 52.0'.

Children who are taking their extended hours term-time only, 38 extended entitlement weeks should be recorded-(or the number of weeks the provider is open in term-time which could be less than 38 weeks, for independent schools for example). For children who are stretching their extended entitlement over more than 38 weeks, record the number of weeks agreed between the parent and the provider.

4.2.2.7. Expanded entitlement weeks

Expanded entitlement weeks (N00793) records the number of weeks the child is expected to stretch their expanded hours across the child's eligibility year, in line with the parental

declaration form. This should be recorded to one decimal place within a range of '0.0 to 52.0'.

Children who are taking their funded hours term-time only, 38 expanded entitlement weeks should be recorded (or the number of weeks the provider is open in term-time which could be less than 38 weeks, for independent schools for example). For children who are stretching their expanded entitlement over more than 38 weeks, record the number of weeks agreed between the parent and the provider.

4.2.2.8. Eligibility Code

The eligibility code (N00202) is an 11-digit code collected for children who have extended or expanded childcare hours and confirms the eligibility of working parents to receive the extended or expanded entitlement hours. This is particularly important as parents may split this entitlement between two providers.

The code, once issued, remains fixed and refers to a single parent / child combination (that is: where a parent has two children, each child will have their own code). However, when the setting is presented with the code by the parent, the setting must confirm the code's validity with the local authority.

Where a child transfers to another establishment, the local authority must be informed of the transfer.

4.2.2.9. Disability access fund indicator

The disability access fund indicator (N00203) has been expanded to cover children aged 9 months up to and including 4 years olds and records whether a child is in receipt of disability access funding ('DAF') from the local authority. Receipt of this funding entitles the child to a fixed amount of funding per year from the disability access fund, which is paid direct to the establishment by the local authority.

Where a child moved providers between September 2025 and census week and it is known they were in receipt of 'DAF' at the original provider, the child is recorded as in receipt of 'DAF' at the provider they are attending during census week. The child must **not** be recorded as in receipt of DAF at both providers.

Please note: To be eligible for disability access funding, the child must be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) alongside any of the following entitlements:

- The universal entitlement for three and four-year-olds
- The disadvantaged entitlement for two-year-olds
- The expanded entitlement for children aged nine months up to three-years-old

Children do not have to take up the full 570 hours of early education that they are entitled to in order to receive the DAF. Children will be eligible where they take up any period of free entitlement and receive DLA.

4.2.2.10. Hours at setting

The total number of hours the child attends the setting during census week. That is:

- universal funded entitlement hours, plus
- any extended funded entitlement hours (if the child is eligible), plus
- any expanded funded entitlement hours (if the child is eligible) plus
- any unfunded hours that the child spends at the provider per week.

Hours at setting are recorded to two decimal places and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example: where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as (10 plus (30 divided by 60)) equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being (10 plus (45 divided by 60)) equals 10.75.

4.2.2.11. Basis for funding

This data item: <FundingBasis> (N00178), records the basis on which a 2-year-old receives funded hours. This data item is not required for 3 and 4-year-olds. This is not required for 2-year-olds taking up the expanded entitlement hours.

Children may meet more than one criterion given in the codeset below and each will need to be returned in the census.

Code	Description
'ECO'	Economic criteria
'HSD'	High-level SEN or disability
'LAA'	Looked after or adopted from care

4.2.2.12. Early years pupil premium [used for funding]

The early years pupil premium (EYPP) has been expanded to cover disadvantaged children aged 9 months up to and including 4 years olds and is additional funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide.

Only children in receipt of EYPP in census week should be recorded with early years pupil premium receipt equal to "true".

EYPP is paid by local authorities direct to settings. Its award is dependent on the application by parents of eligible children to their local authority, which will use the eligibility checking service to verify their application against benefits related data.

Children are eligible to receive EYPP (N00173) if they are taking any of the following:

- universal funded entitlement for three and four-year-olds
- disadvantaged entitlement for two-year-olds

- expanded entitlement for children aged nine months up to three-years-old

And meet the following eligibility criteria:

- meet the benefits related criteria equivalent to those for Free School Meals (please note: meals delivered as part of the universal entitlement are not FSM; receipt of FSM does not automatically qualify a child for EYPP¹); or
- are in the care of the local authority (in England or Wales); or
- have left care (in England or Wales) through:
 - adoption
 - special guardianship
 - a child arrangement order (formally known as a residence order)

EYPP is not payable on the extended entitlement for three and four-year-old children of working parents.

DfE also records the basis of receipt (N00174):

- 'RE' – in receipt through economic reasons
- 'RO' – in receipt through other reasons
- 'RB' – in receipt through both reasons
- 'RU' – in receipt through unknown basis

There may be circumstances where a child under 3 is taking up the working parent entitlement, is eligible for EYPP and is splitting their provision across two or more settings. For these children, local authorities and providers may wish to use the parental declaration form to enable parents to indicate at which provider they are taking their EYPP entitlement and, where appropriate, pass this information onto the provider or local authorities. This is comparable to the position that exists for 3-and-4-year-olds as this information is used to determine a 'main' provider where the child will continuously benefit from provision for their first (universal) 15-hour entitlement.

4.2.3. Pupil / child SEN module

This module contains the child's special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision. The special educational needs and disability definitions are consistent with the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#).

¹ Further guidance on EYPP eligibility is available in the [early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2025-26](#)

4.2.4. Home information module

This module contains the child's home address, which can be provided in one of two formats:

For BOTH formats:

- postcode (N00037)
- UPRN (N00185) [introduced on a voluntary basis]

BS7666 (v1.4) address:

- SAON (N00030)
- PAON (N00031)
- street (N00032)
- locality (N00033)
- town (N00034)
- administrative area (N00035)
- post town (N00036)

Or line address format items

- address line 1 (N00040)
- address line 2 (N00041)
- address line 3 (N00042)
- address line 4 (N00043)
- address line 5 (N00044)

Providers should not mix the two formats.

Please note: The unique property reference number (N00185) ['UPRN']; introduced on a voluntary basis; is defined by Ordnance Survey as: 'The unique identifier for every spatial address in Great Britain. It provides a comprehensive, complete, consistent identifier throughout a property's life cycle – from planning permission through to demolition'.

4.3. Coverage and timing

Census data must be provided for children at the setting who are taking up places and receive funding during the week of the census, provided they are aged from 9 months up to and including 4 years old. [Assumption A3](#) sets out the relevant dates of birth.

5. Data return formats

Please note that 'example data' shown in this section is for illustration only.

5.1. Available formats

The EY return is to be submitted to DfE in XML format as described in this section.

There is provision to convert fixed format CSV data into the required XML format by using a provided XML Generator, which is available from DfE on request.

The XML Generator, provided by DfE, has a data entry spreadsheet, which enables the input of file header and individual child record information.

Both of the above elements will be provided only on request and are contained within the same Excel Spreadsheet.

On completion of entry of the data, the file is then converted to XML format, via the spreadsheet, to allow for uploading to COLLECT.

The following general points should be noted for either format.

5.1.1. Data items with no values

There are scenarios when there may be no values for particular data items. These are:

Values contingent on the content of other data items. These items are:

- (EY) setting type
- (EY) provider category other
- (EY) setting type other
- (EY) day care
- (EY) day care other

Values which are described in this specification as optional are:

- pupil / child preferred surname
- pupil / child middle names
- Unique property reference number
- release

In these scenarios the XML tag is not required to be present in the EYC return.

In all other scenarios, a missing item or value will result in an error being generated. Within XML, where an optional item is omitted, the xml tag would not be shown, that is: the tag is

also omitted. Within CSV, an optional item that is omitted is recorded / shown by including a new comma separator.

5.1.2. Block entry

For suppliers creating applications for local authority or EY settings, a block entry facility for fields is highly desirable in order to save time. This should allow the user to choose a selection of children (such as: a year group) and specify a value to be applied to all. However, it should also allow data to be edited on an individual basis.

5.2. XML format

An XML submission will be a single message consisting of a:

- header
- node containing data on one establishment
- series of repeated nodes containing data on one or more funded children

5.2.1. Overall message structure

Overall message structure
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<Message>
<Header> - see 5.2.1 below for details
<Establishment> see 5.2.2 below for details
<PupilsChildren> see 5.2.3 below for details
</Message>

5.2.2.XML header

A standard XML message header is required for each census file. The data items should be populated according to the guidance in section 2. The layout is as follows:

Header structure	
-	<Header>
-	<CollectionDetails>
N00600	<Collection>EYC</Collection>
N00601	<Term>SPR</Term>
N00602	<Year>2026</Year>
N00603	<ReferenceDate>2026-01-15</ReferenceDate>
-	</CollectionDetails>
-	<Source>
N00604	<SourceLevel>L</SourceLevel>
N00216	<LEA>999</LEA>
N00605	<SoftwareCode>Software Supplier Reference</SoftwareCode>
N00607	<Release></Release>
N00606	<SerialNo>001</SerialNo>
N00609	<DateTime>2026-01-15T11:14:05</DateTime>
-	</Source>
-	</Header>

5.2.3. Establishment XML message structure

Establishment XML message structure	
-	<Establishment>
-	<EstablishmentCharacteristics>
N00278	<URN>510001</URN>
N00253	<OFSTEDURN>EY123456</OFSTEDURN>
N00217	<EstablishmentName>Early Year Nursery</EstablishmentName>
N00231	<PhoneNo>01234567890</PhoneNo>
N00037	<PostCode>ZZ99 9ZZ</PostCode>
N00283	<EYProviderCategory>OTHR</EYProviderCategory>
N00254	<EYProviderCategoryOther>Out of school club </EYProviderCategoryOther>
N00284	<EYChildminderCategory>AGY</EYChildminderCategory>
N00255	<EYSettingType>OTH</EYSettingType>
N00256	<EYSettingTypeOther>Crèche</EYSettingTypeOther>
N00257	<EYDayCare>O</EYDayCare>
N00258	<EYDayCareOther>Extended Day Care</EYDayCareOther>
N00515	<OpenIndicator>0</OpenIndicator>
N00516	<MondayOpenTime>07:00</MondayOpenTime>
N00517	<MondayCloseTime>19:00</MondayCloseTime>
N00518	<TuesdayOpenTime>07:00</TuesdayOpenTime>
N00519	<TuesdayCloseTime>19:00</TuesdayCloseTime>
N00520	<WednesdayOpenTime>07:00</WednesdayOpenTime>
N00521	<WednesdayCloseTime>19:00</WednesdayCloseTime>
N00522	<ThursdayOpenTime>07:00</ThursdayOpenTime>
N00523	<ThursdayCloseTime>19:00</ThursdayCloseTime>
N00524	<FridayOpenTime>07:00</FridayOpenTime>
N00525	<FridayCloseTime>19:00</FridayCloseTime>
N00526	<SaturdayOpenTime>07:00</SaturdayOpenTime>
N00527	<SaturdayCloseTime>19:00</SaturdayCloseTime>
N00528	<SundayOpenTime>07:00</SundayOpenTime>
N00529	<SundayCloseTime>19:00</SundayCloseTime>
N00262	<EYSchoolRelationship>True</EYSchoolRelationship>
N00263	<EYEstablishmentPartnership>False </EYEstablishmentPartnership>
N00265	<EYWeeksOpen>40.0</EYWeeksOpen>
-	</EstablishmentCharacteristics>
-	<StaffInformation>
N00508	<TotalStaff>12</TotalStaff>
N00509	<L2Staff>3</L2Staff>
N00510	<L3NMStaff>3</L3NMStaff>
N00511	<L3MgtStaff>1</L3MgtStaff>
N00512	<QTSSStaff>2</QTSSStaff>
N00513	<EYPSSStaff>1</EYPSSStaff>
N00514	<EYTSSStaff>2</EYTSSStaff>
-	</StaffInformation>
-	<PupilChildStatistics>
N00816	<EYUnder1s>5</EYUnder1s>
N00817	<EY1Years>7</EY1Years>
N00281	<EY2Years>10</EY2Years>
N00275	<EY3Years>16</EY3Years>
N00276	<EY4Years>13</EY4Years>
-	</PupilChildStatistics>
-	</Establishment>

5.2.4. Pupil / child XML message structure

Pupil/child XML message structure		Cardinality
-	<PupilsChildren>	-
-	<PupilChild>	-
-	<PupilChildIdentifiers>	-
N00003	<Surname>Lastname</Surname>	-
N00004	<Forename>Firstname</Forename>	-
N00005	<MiddleNames>Betweenname</MiddleNames>	-
N00010	<PreferredSurname>Lastname</PreferredSurname>	-
N00066	<PersonBirthDate>1900-03-24</PersonBirthDate>	-
N00783	<Sex>M</Sex>	-
-	</PupilChildIdentifiers>	-
-	<PupilChildCharacteristics>	-
N00177	<Ethnicity>WBRI</Ethnicity>	-
N00204	<FundedHours>14.75</FundedHours>	-
N00201	<ExtendedHours>12.75</ExtendedHours>	-
N00787	<ExpandedHours>15</ExpandedHours>	-
N00791	<FundedEntitlementWeeks>50</FundedEntitlementWeeks>	-
N00792	<ExtendedEntitlementWeeks>50</ExtendedEntitlementWeeks>	-
N00793	<ExpandedEntitlementWeeks>38</ExpandedEntitlementWeeks>	-
N00202	<EligibilityCode>12345678911</EligibilityCode>	-
N00203	<DAFIndicator>1</DAFIndicator>	-
N00205	<HoursAtSetting>30</HoursAtSetting>	-
N00173	<EYPPR>Y</EYPPR>	-
N00174	<EYPPBF>RE</EYPPBF>	-
-	<FundingBasisItems>	Each <PupilChildCharacteristics> group includes 0 to 1 <FundingBasisItems> group
N00178	<FundingBasis>ECO</FundingBasis>	<FundingBasisItems> group contains 1 to 3 <FundingBasis> items
-	</FundingBasisItems>	-
-	</PupilChildCharacteristics>	-
-	<SpecialEducationalNeeds>	-
N00209	<SENprovision>N</SENprovision>	-
-	</SpecialEducationalNeeds>	-
-	<HomeInformation>	-
N00037	<PostCode>ZZ99 9ZZ</PostCode>	-
N00185	<UniquePropertyReferenceNumber>123456789102</UniquePropertyReferenceNumber>	-
-	<BS7666Format>	Either
N00030	<SAON> 2 Flat</SAON>	-
N00031	<PAON> 1</PAON>	-
N00032	<Street>Lane Street</Street>	-
N00033	<Locality>Local Area</Locality>	-
N00034	<Town>Townbury</Town>	-
N00035	<AdministrativeArea></AdministrativeArea>	-
N00036	<PostTown>Postaltown</PostTown>	-
-	</BS7666Format>	-
-	<LineAddressFormat>	Or

N00040	<AddressLine1>1 Lane Street</AddressLine1>	-
N00041	<AddressLine2>Local Area</AddressLine2>	-
N00042	<AddressLine3>Townbury</AddressLine3>	-
N00043	<AddressLine4>Postaltown</AddressLine4>	-
N00044	<AddressLine5>Countyshire</AddressLine5>	-
-	</LineAddressFormat>	-
-	</HomeInformation>	-
-	</PupilChild>	-
-	</PupilsChildren>	-

The column headed cardinality is used to indicate where groups of data items are repeatable and the number of times that they may be repeated.

5.2.5. Special notes for XML returns

The standard XML entity references should be used for the following special characters:

Character	Entity reference
Ampersand (&)	&
Left angle bracket (<)	<
Right angle bracket (>)	>
Single quote / apostrophe (')	'
Double quotes (")	"

For special characters such as é use a character reference such as é. This produces a generic XML file which can be viewed as such in a suitable browser.

Details of all such characters are found within the XML standard documentation - see for example [Extensible markup language \(XML\) 1.0 \(fifth edition\)](#) Section 2.

DfE recommends that the file is given a meaningful name that includes the local authority number, the EY setting URN and the 3-digit serial number. The file extension is .xml. This will help users in selecting the correct file(s) to upload to COLLECT.

5.3. CSV format

As an alternative to XML, a local authority may produce a comma separate value (CSV) format file. Please note that the e-Government Interoperability Framework encourages the use of XML for data transfer. XML is the DfE format of choice and is preferred for future proofing. However, in order to allow local authorities the time for the development of XML facilities, a CSV file may be produced and converted using the supplied XML Generator.

A CSV format data file is an ASCII text file consisting of a number of text records. One value, or data item, is separated from the next by a comma. The item can also be enclosed in double quotes - this is optional unless the text value contains a comma in which case it must be enclosed in double quotes, that is: Address Line 1 could contain "1, Lane Street".

An empty text value is recorded as either "" or simply left blank (see examples of this below). The final item in each record does not have a comma after it.

For this census, the file must contain a number of different record types. The type of record is identified by the first text value. There should be a header record, an establishment record and a minimum of one child record.

The assumption is that data supplied by local authorities will never contain double quotes ("). If this is not the case for you, please contact DfE as special handling of such characters is required.

Be careful if using Microsoft Excel, as the format of some fields may be changed, such as dates, when converting between Excel and CSV formats.

Some local authorities may use the CSV structures given in the following sections to enable their EY settings to provide the required information which the local authority then submits to DfE via COLLECT. In such instances, local authorities will need to be aware that the EY settings are not expected to provide the basis for funding data items included in the pupil / child record. These data items must be provided by the local authority itself.

5.3.1. CSV header

The first record in any CSV file must be a header record. There can only be one header record in a file. A header record has the following structure:

Field	XML tag	Description	Used in example
Record type	<Header>	Identifies the record type, must be "H".	H
Collection (N00600)	<Collection>	Name of the data collection. Fixed value of 'EYC'.	EYC
Survey term (N00601)	<Term>	'SPR' denotes collection is carried out in the spring term.	SPR
Survey year (N00602)	<Year>	The calendar year of the collection.	2026
Survey reference date (N00603)	<ReferenceDate>	The reference date is normally the day of the census or collection and this is used as the baseline date from which comparisons with other dates in the return can be made.	2026-01-15
Source level (N00604)	<SourceLevel>	The source of the data submission. Set to L for a local authority system and S for a school system.	L
LA number (N00216)	<LEA>	Standard departmental three digit local authority number.	999

Software code (N00605)	<SoftwareCode>	Software code is available for suppliers to provide their own identifier. Description: Software supplier reference	Software supplier reference
Release (N00607)	<Release>	Optional on returns to DfE. This can be a code / date (or combination) provided by the software supplier to assist in identification.	-
Serial number (N00606)	<SerialNo>	An incremented number (starting at '001') generated by a provider's software, enables data collection systems to identify re-submissions.	001
Date and time (N00609)	<DateTime>	Date and time when the file was prepared or generated in CCYY-MM-DDThh:mm:ss format.	2026-01-15T10:36:42

Example:

H,EYC,SPR,2026,2026-01-15,L,999,Software Supplier Reference,,001,2026-01-15T10:36:42
--

If the export facility on a source system does not allow you to add a header record, you will have to add it manually. For example, use a text editor such as Windows notepad to open the export file and type in the appropriate header record at the beginning of the file. Be careful not to accidentally change anything else within the file.

5.3.2. CSV establishment record

An establishment record has the following structure:

Field/number	XML tag	Description	Used in example
Record type	<Header>	Identifies the record type, must be "E".	E
Establishment unique reference number (N00278)	<URN>	The unique reference number (URN) is a 6 digit unique reference number that is allocated to records in sequential number order.	510001

Ofsted EY URN (N00253)	<OFSTEDURN>	Ofsted unique reference number for the EY Setting or CMA. (Old format is 6 digits - new format prefixes the digits with "EY").	EY123456
Establishment name (N00217)	<EstablishmentName>	Establishment name in full.	Early Years Nursery
Telephone number (N00231)	<PhoneNo>	Main establishment telephone number that is used for official purposes.	01234567890
Post code (N00037)	<PostCode>	Code allocated by the post office to identify a group of postal delivery points.	ZZ99 9ZZ
Category of EY provider (N00283)	<EYProviderCategory>	Category of provision: 'Private' or 'Voluntary'.	PRIV
EY provider category other (N00254)	<EYProviderCategoryOther>	Category of provision where the category is not one of the named values.	Family Centre
EY Childminder Category (N00284)	<EYChildminderCategory>	Childminder category: 'Agency' or 'Independent'.	AGY
Type of EY setting (N00255)	<EYSettingType>	Type of setting: such as day nursery.	OTH
EY setting type other (N00256)	<EYSettingTypeOther>	Type of setting where the EY setting is not one of the named values.	Out of school club
EY day care (N00257)	<EYDayCare>	Whether full day or sessional care is provided.	F

EY day care other (N00258)	<EYDayCareOther>	Type of day care where the care provider is not one of the named values.	True
Open indicator (N00515)	<OpenIndicator>	Indicates whether the establishment is open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week	0
Monday opening time (N00516)	<MondayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Monday in 24 hour format	07:00
Monday closing time (N00517)	<MondayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Monday in 24 hour format	19:00
Tuesday opening time (N00518)	<TuesdayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Tuesday in 24 hour format	07:00
Tuesday closing time (N00519)	<TuesdayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Tuesday in 24 hour format	19:00
Wednesday opening time (N00520)	<WednesdayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Wednesday in 24 hour format	07:00
Wednesday closing time (N00521)	<WednesdayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Wednesday in 24 hour format	19:00
Thursday opening time (N00522)	<ThursdayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Thursday in 24 hour format	07:00

Thursday closing time (N00523)	<ThursdayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Thursday in 24 hour format	19:00
Friday opening time (N00524)	<FridayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Friday in 24 hour format	07:00
Friday closing time (N00525)	<FridayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Friday in 24 hour format	19:00
Saturday opening time (N00526)	<SaturdayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Saturday in 24 hour format	07:00
Saturday closing time (N00527)	<SaturdayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Saturday in 24 hour format	19:00
Sunday opening time (N00528)	<SundayOpenTime>	The time that the establishment opens on a Sunday in 24 hour format	07:00
Sunday closing time (N00529)	<SundayCloseTime>	The time that the establishment closes on a Sunday in 24 hour format	19:00
Maintained school relationship (N00262)	<EYSchoolRelationship>	Indicates whether an EY setting operates on the premises of a maintained school, or has a contract or partnership agreement with a maintained school.	True

Other establishment partnership (N00263)	<EyEstablishmentPartnership>	Indicates whether an EY setting works in partnership with another establishment to provide funded early education.	False
EY weeks open per year (N00265)	<EYWeeksOpen>	Number of weeks per year that the EY setting is open (to the nearest half week, and where the half week is represented by 0.5).	40
Total staff (N00508)	<TotalStaff>	The total number of staff at the provider who work with children aged under 5	12
Level 2 staff (N00509)	<L2Staff>	The number, by headcount, of staff at the provider with a full and relevant early years Level 2 qualification who work with children aged under 5	3
Level 3 non-management staff (N00510)	<L3NMStaff>	The number, by headcount, 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	3

Level 3 management staff (N00511)	L3MgtStaff>	The number, by headcount, 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	1
Qualified teacher status staff (N00512)	<QTSSStaff>	The number, by headcount, of staff at the provider with qualified teacher status who work with children aged under 5	2
Early years professional status staff (N00513)	<EYPSStaff>	The number, by headcount, of staff at the provider with early years professional status who work with children aged under 5	1
Early years teacher status staff (N00514)	<EYTSSStaff>	The number, by headcount, of staff at the provider with early years teacher status who work with children aged under 5	2
Number of children aged under 1 (N00816)	<EYUnder1s>	Total number of children aged under 1 accommodated (funded and unfunded children). Zero means none at this age.	5

Pupil / child forename (N00004)	<Forename>	Full given first name of the child (not common contractions).	Firstname
Pupil / child middle names (N00005)	<MiddleNames>	In full, not shortened or familiar versions. If pupil has no middle name(s) then this field must be left blank.	Betweenname
Pupil / child preferred surname (N00010)	<PreferredSurname>	The surname preferred by the child (as written) most commonly used in the establishment (for pupils in alternative provision, the surname most commonly used in the local authority).	Lastname
Date of birth (N00262)	<PersonBirthDate>	Date of birth of child.	1900-03-24
Pupil / child Sex (N00783)	<Sex>	Sex of child.	M
Child ethnicity (N00177)	<Ethnicity>	Child ethnic code.	WBRI
Funded hours (N00204)	<FundedHours>	Number of hours funded by a local authority for the child at the EY setting to two decimal places	14.75
Extended childcare hours (N00201)	<ExtendedHours>	Number of extended childcare hours funded by a local authority for the child at the EY setting to two decimal places. Only valid where eligibility code present.	12.75
Expanded Hours (N00787)	<ExpandedHours>	Number of expanded hours (up to 30 hours) funded by a local authority for the child at the EY setting to two decimal places for children aged 9 months up to 3 years old with working parents.	10.75
Funded Entitlement Weeks (N00791)	<FundedEntitlementWeeks>	Number of weeks the child is expected to take their funded hours	38.0
Extended Entitlement Weeks (N00792)	<ExtendedEntitlementWeeks>	Number of weeks the child is expected to take their extended hours	50.0
Expanded Entitlement Weeks (N00793)	<ExpandedEntitlementWeeks>	Number of the child is expected to take their expanded hours	52.0

Eligibility Code (N00202)	<EligibilityCode>	An 11-digit code issued to working parent by HMRC(or LA for foster parents) to confirm eligibility to receive extended or expanded childcare hours.	12345678911
Disability access fund indicator (N00203)	<DAFIndicator>	Records whether a three or four-year-old child is in receipt of disability access funding.	1
Hours at setting (N00205)	<HoursAtSetting>	Total number of local authority funded and unfunded hours that the child spends at the EY setting to two decimal places.	29.75
Early years pupil premium receipt (N00173)	<EYPPR>	In receipt of the early years pupil premium	Y
Early years pupil premium basis for funding (N00174)	<EYPPBF>	The basis on which funding is made	RE
Basis for funding (N00178) ECO	<FundingBasis>	Basis on which a two-year-old child is eligible for funding – must have value ECO or blank	-
Basis for funding (N00178) HSD	<FundingBasis>	Basis on which a two-year-old child is eligible for funding – must have value HSD or blank	HSD
Basis for funding (N00178) LAA	<FundingBasis>	Basis on which a two-year-old child is eligible for funding – must have value LAA or blank	-
SEN provision (N00209)	<SENprovision>	Provision types under the SEN Code of Practice.	N
Post code (N00037)	<PostCode>	The code allocated by the post office to identify a group of postal delivery points.	XX88 8XX
Unique property reference number (N00185)	<UniquePropertyReferenceNumber>	The unique property reference number (UPRN) for the child's home address	123456789102
SAON (N00030)	<SAON>	Flat, apartment name or number or other sub-division of a dwelling.	2 Flat
PAON (N00031)	<PAON>	Dwelling name and/or number.	1

Street (N00032)	<Street>	Street name or street description that has been allocated to a street by the street naming authority.	Street Lane
Locality (N00033)	<Locality>	The locality name refers to a neighbourhood, suburb, district, village, estate, settlement, or parish that may form part of a town, or stand in its own right within the context of an administrative area. Where an industrial estate contains streets it is defined as a locality in its own right.	Local Area
Town (N00034)	<Town>	The town name refers to a city or town that is not an administrative area, a suburb of an administrative area that does not form part of another town or a London district.	Townbury
Administrative area (N00035)	<AdministrativeArea>	The administrative area is a geographic area that may be the highest level local administrative area, which may be a county or a unitary authority, an island or island group or London.	Countyshire
Post town (N00036)	<PostTown>	Post office usually assigns these based on sorting office.	Postaltown
Address line 1 (N00040)	<AddressLine1>	First line of address.	-
Address line 2 (N00041)	<AddressLine2>	Second line of address.	-
Address line 3 (N00042)	<AddressLine3>	Third line of address.	-
Address line 4 (N00043)	<AddressLine4>	Fourth line of address.	-
Address line 5 (N00044)	<AddressLine5>	Fifth line of address.	-

Example (this example uses the BS7666 (v1.4) format and leaves the line address items blank):

C,Lastname,Firstname,Betweenname,Lastname,1900-03-24,2,WBRI, 14.75,12.75,10.75,38.0,50.0,52.0, 12345678911,1,29.75,162.50,Y,RR,,HSD,,N,XX11 1XX,123456789102," 2 Flat"," 1",Street Lane,Local Area,Townbury,CountyShire,Postaltown,,,,,

If an early years setting is using the line address structure to submit data to the local

authority, then the example would be as follows with no information included for basis for funding:

C,Lastname,Firstname,Betweenname,Lastname,190003-24,2,WBRI, 14.75,12.75,10.75,38.0,50.0,52.0,12345678911,1,29.75,162.50,Y,RR,,,,,N,XX11 1XX,123456789102,,,,,,,,,Flat 2,1 Street Lane,Townburv,CountyShire,PostalTown

5.3.4. Full CSV file example

Example of a complete CSV return with one setting and two children (All addresses are in line address format):

Example (this example uses the line address format, and leaves the BS7666 (v1.4) items blank):

H,EYC,SPR,2026,2026-01-156,L,999,Software Supplier Reference,,001,2026-01-15T10:36:42
E,510001,EY123456,Early Years Nursery,01234567890,ZZ99 9ZZ,PRIV,Family Centre,AGY,OTH,Out of School Club,F,True,Y,0,07:00,19:00,07:00,19:00,07:00,19:00,07:00,19:00,07:00,19:00,07:00,19:00,07:00,19:00,True,False,5,40,40,12,3,4,2,9,9,4 ,2,12,3,3,1,2,1,2,10,16,13
C,Lastname1,Firstname1,Betweenname1,Lastname1,1900-03- 24,2,WBRI,14.75,12.75,10.75,38.0,50.0,52.0,12345678911,1,29.75,162.50,Y,RE,ECO,,,N,ZZ99 9ZZ,123456789102,, "6",Lane Street,Local Area,Townbury,Countyshire,Postaltown,,,,,
C,Lastname2,Firstname2,,,1900-02-02,1,MWBC, 14.75,12.75,12345678912,1,29.75,162.50,Y,RE,,,LAA,N,XX88 8XX,123456789104,, "1",Road Lane,Local Area,Countyshire,Postaltown,,,,,

As can be seen, the 'Header' section ('H') and the 'Establishment' section ('E') are only required once. The 'Child' section ('C') is repeatable to the number of children at the setting within the scope of the census.

5.3.5. Special notes for CSV returns

File naming conventions

DfE recommends that the file is given a meaningful name that includes the local authority number, the Setting URN and the 3-digit serial number. The file extension is .csv. This will help users in selecting the correct file(s) to upload to COLLECT.

6. Validation checks

An Excel workbook specifies the validation rules that are applied to the data by DfE using the COLLECT system. They should also be applied, as far as possible, by local authorities prior to loading the data onto the COLLECT system and any issues resolved.

The Excel workbook is available on the DfE [website](#).

Those data items included in the Tables but not appearing in the validation rules - that is, those not shown in the validation rules as "must be present" - should be supplied where available (such as: pupil's middle name).

The table also shows which validations are 'errors' and which ones are 'queries'. An error is a failed validation check that must be corrected. A query is one that must be investigated, and potentially corrected, as it identifies data that would usually be invalid.

Where a validation rule is identical to one that is specified for the school census, the same Sequence number is used. Otherwise, new sequence numbers are used.

7. Errata

This errata lists all changes to the document from the baselined version (Version 1.0) onwards.

Version	Changes made	Author / date
1.0	Roll forward version Dates changed Links checked and updated CSV used in examples updated Addition of N00816 <EYUnder1s> and N00817 <EY1Years>	Nicky Berryman April 2025



Department
for Education

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