



Department  
for Education

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[www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)  
Date: 28 November 2014

Ms Helen Briggs  
Chief Executive, Rutland County Council

Dear Helen,

### **FUNDED EARLY LEARNING FOR TWO YEAR OLDS**

I am writing to ask you to pass on my thanks to your team for the information they recently provided in relation to the provision of funded early learning places for two-year-olds in your area. Ministers place a strong emphasis on the benefits of this programme in helping to drive improved outcomes for children and their families.

According to the take-up figures you provided in October, 64 two-year-olds in Rutland are currently accessing a place. We estimate that 79 two-year-olds were eligible for a free early education place in August 2014.

This level of take-up currently means that Rutland has one of the highest levels of children in places across the country. I would like to congratulate you on this commendable achievement. We know that all new policy initiatives pose specific delivery challenges and I would like to thank your team for the hard work they have undertaken to ensure a high proportion of two-year-olds benefit from their entitlement.

We know that children from poorer families are less likely to achieve a good level of development at age five. In 2013 the gap nationally was some 19% with 36% of children known to be eligible for free school meals achieving this level compared to 55% of their richer peers. I am sure that you agree that everything should be done to ensure that as many eligible children as possible are able to take up a two-year-old place.

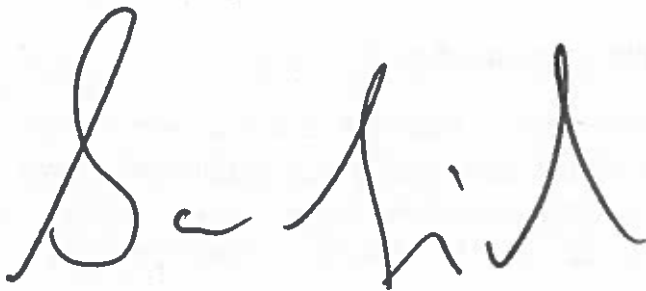
I would therefore encourage you to build on your good start to delivering the wider eligibility criteria. We estimate that there are 15 eligible children in your area who are not yet taking up a place and one-year-olds continue to turn two, I am sure that, with sustained effort and ongoing commitment, your team can continue to build on the success you have achieved so far.

We encourage the council to continue to share good practice with others through our national support contractor, Achieving Two Year Olds (A2YO). You can also contact the Department with any queries at [earlylearning.fortwos@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:earlylearning.fortwos@education.gsi.gov.uk).

I hope to be writing to you in February to congratulate you again as one of the highest performing local authorities.

I am copying this letter to Mr Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive and Cllr Roger Begy, Leader of the Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Gyimah', written in a cursive style.

**SAM GYIMAH MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education