

Early education funding for children aged 9 months to 4 years

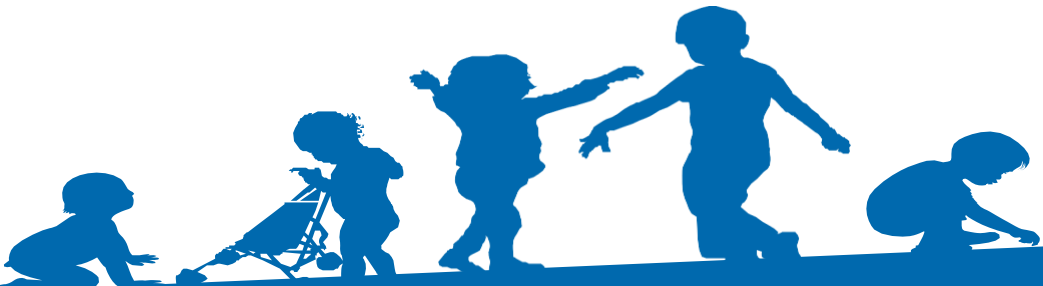
Information for Professionals



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Please note: *The term 'Parent' has been used throughout this publication to describe anyone who has parental responsibility or special guardianship of a child*



**Funding for Eligible Working Parents
of Children aged
9 months to 3 years (EXPANDED HOURS
FUNDING)**

From September 2024 working parents, may be eligible to receive up to 15 hours per week of funded childcare, up to a maximum of 570 hours per academic year, for children aged 9-months to 3-years. From September 2025, this funding increases to 30 hours per week for eligible children.

- Eligible parents can access expanded hours funding from the term after the child turns 9-months.
- Parents can apply for Working Parents Expanded Funding by accessing the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>
- Parents must complete an online application form to determine eligibility.
- Eligibility must be re-confirmed every 3 months as prompted by HMRC or the childcare provider.

Funding for Targeted 2-year-olds

Not all children are eligible to receive the Targeted 2-year-old funding entitlement. The eligibility criteria is explained on pages 4 and 5 of this booklet.

- Eligible children can get up to 15 hours, per week of funded childcare, up to a maximum of 570 hours per academic year.
- Eligible children can access a place at the beginning of the school term following their 2nd birthday
- Parents must complete an online application to determine eligibility.
- Authorised professionals may apply on behalf of a parent.
- Once a child has started a Targeted 2-year-old funded place, they will not lose eligibility, even if parents financial circumstances change. Funding will remain in place until the term after the child's 3rd birthday, when they will transition seamlessly into universal early education funding.
- Where parents require support in finding an appropriate childcare provision the Early Years Business, Sufficiency & Funding Team offer a brokerage service to assist parents. Please contact us by telephone or email if brokerage is required.

Funding for all 3- & 4-year-olds (UNIVERSAL FUNDING ENTITLEMENT)

All 3- & 4-year-olds in England are entitled to access universal funding, the term after the child's 3rd birthday. This funding entitlement continues until the child starts a Reception Class place in a maintained, free school or academy. In some circumstances where the child remains in a PVI nursery or attends an independent school, they may continue to access this funding until they reach compulsory school age, which is the term after their 5th birthday

- Universal funding provides up to 15 hours per week of funded education, over 38 weeks (up to a maximum of 570 hours per academic year)
- Parents should contact their chosen childcare provider to arrange a place.
- Parents **do not need an eligibility code** to access this type of funding as it is a universal entitlement for all 3- & 4-year-olds.
- Where parents require support in finding an appropriate childcare provision the Early Years Business, Sufficiency & Funding Team offer a brokerage service to assist parents. Please contact us by telephone or email if brokerage is required.



Funding for Eligible Working Parents of Children aged 3 to 4 years (EXTENDED HOURS FUNDING)

As highlighted in the previous section, all 3- & 4-year-olds are entitled to access up to 15 hours per week of universal funding. However, some will also be entitled to an additional 15 hours per week, bringing the total to a maximum of 30 hours per week over 38 weeks. This combined with universal funding provides a maximum of 1140 hours per academic year for eligible children.

To apply for these additional hours parents must complete an online application form to determine eligibility. The application can only be completed by the parent. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

Parents must re-confirm their eligibility every 3 months as prompted by HMRC or their childcare provider



Once a child has started a Reception Class place in a maintained, free school or academy, they are no longer entitled to receive Early Education Funding. In some circumstances where the child remains in a PVI nursery or attends an independent school they may continue to access this funding until they reach compulsory school age, which is the term after their 5th birthday

Eligibility Criteria for Targeted 2-year-old funding. Route 1 criteria

All Parents applying for Targeted funding must check to see if they meet the criteria under route 1, in the first instance. Where parents do not meet the criteria under route 1, they should continue to route 2 to make an application. This is because route 1 is the primary pathway to this funding.

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds-claim-benefits>

A parent may be eligible if they are in receipt of;

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit and the household income is £15,400.00 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit (or both) and the household income is £16,190.00 a year or less, before tax
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment made when parents stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Parents who do not meet any of the above criteria, should check route 2 criteria to see if they may be eligible via this route



Eligibility Criteria for Targeted 2-year-old funding. Route 2 criteria

- The child is in the care of the local authority (for example a Foster Carer)
- The child has a current Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- The child the parent is applying for, attracts Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- The child has left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangement order

Parents who are non-UK citizens who cannot claim benefits

If the parents' immigration status says they have 'no recourse to public funds', they may still be able to get Targeted childcare funding for their 2-year-old. Parents must live in England and the household income after tax must be no more than:

- £26,500 for families with one child
- £30,600 for families with two or more children

They cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments.

*These figure are different for parents living in London.

Parents making an application under Route 2 will be asked to provide written evidence from an appropriate body. They must also provide proof of household income.



Coventry's local criteria for Targeted 2 Year Olds (also Route 2)

In demonstrating our commitment to the children and families of Coventry, in addition to the national criteria set out in Routes 1 & 2, Coventry has developed a local criterion to ensure that every child who needs a place is supported to access one. To this end, children meeting the criteria below will also be funded to access a place.

The child is supported through an Early Help Assessment Plan

The child is accessing additional services provided by Health or Local Authority professionals

And

Parents have a total annual household income of £20,000 a year or less, after tax.

Evidence for applications made via this route will include proof of annual household income, after tax and a letter from the relevant professional supporting the application. Evidence will need to be submitted when applying.

The child is subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan.

A letter from the lead Social Worker will be required as evidence.

The child has a diagnosed syndrome, condition or disability that significantly affects the ability to access learning or has a delay of at least 12 months in 2 or more areas of development. These are;

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

Additionally

The child will be accessing additional services provided by health or local authority professionals. A letter of evidence will be required.

Eligibility Criteria for Working Parents: EXPANDED & EXTENDED HOURS FUNDING

To be eligible for the working families' entitlements, parents must have a National Insurance number and at least one of the following:

- British or Irish citizenship - settled or pre-settled status or have applied and be awaiting a decision or have permission to access public funds (this will be highlighted in the parents UK residence card).
- Each parent (or lone parent) works at least 16 hours per week and earns at least the minimum equivalent national minimum wage for those hours, or national living wage. This equates to earning at least: £120 per week (or £6000 a year) for each parent aged 25 years and over, or £112.80 per week (£5,800 a year) for each parent aged 21 - 24 years.

Some families could be eligible where;

- One or both parents are unable to work due to maternity or paternity leave, statutory sick leave, shared parental or adoption leave.
- One parent meets the earnings criteria, but the other parent is unable to work due to being disabled, having carer responsibilities or they have been assessed for having limited capacity to work.
- One parent is in the 'start up period' of a new business as a self-employed person, therefore they do not need to demonstrate they meet the income criteria for 12 months.

Foster Carers

- Foster Carers may be eligible, if they meet one of the above criteria **and** have reached an agreement with the fostering team, to support the child's plan.

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/early-years-childcare/early-years-pvi-providers-2-3-4-year-old-early-education-funding/4>

Parents will not be eligible if:

- Either parent has an expected adjusted net income of over £100,000 in the current tax year. This includes any bonuses the parent expects to receive
- The parents' adjusted net income is their total taxable income before any personal allowances and deductions
- The child is registered as a Reception Class pupil. This applies even if the child attends Reception Class on a reduced timetable

Age Eligibility Criteria for Expanded & Extended hours funding

Assuming other eligibility is met

For children born between;	A funded place can start from
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1 January and 31 March	The start of the summer term following the child turning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 months• 2 years• 3 years
1 April and 31 August	The start of the autumn term following the child turning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 months• 2 years• 3 years
1 September and 31 December	The start of the spring term following the child turning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 months• 2 years• 3 years

WHERE CAN FUNDING BE USED?

Funded places can be delivered by any childcare provider who holds a registration with Ofsted or a Childminder Agency **and** who has also been registered with the Local Authority to deliver early education funded places.

Funded places at individual settings will be subject to availability as all childcare providers must operate within strict ratio requirements.

- › Day Nurseries
- › Pre-schools
- › Childminders
- › Nursery/School classes

Parents can use the Family Information Directory website to search for childcare providers in their locality.



<https://cid.coventry.gov.uk>

Tax-Free Childcare

- This is a government scheme set up to help parents with childcare costs.
- For every £8 a parent pays in, the government will pay in an extra £2.
- Parents can receive up to £2,000 per child, per year, towards their childcare costs, or £4,000 for disabled children.
- To qualify, parents will have to be in work, and each expecting to earn at least £120 a week. Each parent must not have an income over £100,000 per year.
- Parents must re-confirm eligibility every 3 months.
- Only childcare providers registered with Ofsted, or a Childminder Agency can receive Tax-Free Childcare payments.
- Tax Free Childcare can be used alongside the Expanded and Extended funding entitlements for eligible working parents.

VISIT

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



MAKING A CLAIM FOR TARGETED 2-YEAR-OLD FUNDING

Complete an online application at...

www.coventry.gov.uk/2yearoldfunding

Family Hubs are able to complete assisted checks for Targeted 2-Year-old funding. For your nearest Family Hub visit:

www.coventry.gov.uk/familyhubs

APPLYING FOR EXPANDED or EXTENDED HOURS FUNDING

visit: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

To contact the Early Years Business, Sufficiency and Funding Team, email us at:

EYProviderfunding@coventry.gov.uk

Handbook for Professionals Early Education Funding updated
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Coventry Early Years Business, Sufficiency and Funding Team