

Early Education Funding Entitlement

Information for Parents and Carers



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk/nurseriesandchildcare

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Introduction

Research shows that when children access high quality early years provision, this significantly improves their learning and preparing them for school.

Early education funding is provided by the Government and enables children to access a funded place when they meet certain criteria.

In Coventry we have high aspirations for every young child to make good progress in their development and learning from birth in order to have the best opportunities in life.

Funding for 2 year olds

Some 2 year olds in Coventry will be eligible to access up to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks per year (570 hours) of early education funding. Children must meet the date of birth criteria and parents receive one of the following:

Eligibility Route 1

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Evidence must be provided and dated within the last 12 months of an application
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support through Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit must be higher than £535.00 per annum and household income less than £16,190.00 per annum Award Notice TC602
- Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) and have an annual income not over £16,190.00
- Working Tax Credit 4 – week run on, the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credits and you have an income of under £16,190.00 before tax
- Universal Credit – if you and your partner have a combined income from work of less than £15,400 a year after tax
- Pension Credit (Guarantee element) and proof of Child Tax Credit



Parents or Carers with legal responsibility who do not meet any of the financial criteria, may be eligible if they meet one or more of the conditions below:

Eligibility Route 2

The child you are applying for:

- Is looked after by Coventry City Council (for example by a Foster Carer)

Evidence – a letter from a relevant professional with the child's name and date of birth

- Has a current Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Evidence – a letter from a relevant professional with the child's name and date of birth regarding the EHCP awarded

- Receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for the child who you are making the application for

Evidence – award letter for DLA



- Has left care under a Special guardianship order, Child arrangements order or Adoption order

Evidence – a letter from a relevant professional with the child's name and date of birth or Special guardianship, Adoption or Residence order from the court

- Children of Zambrano Carers

Evidence of proof is required

- Children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on the grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Evidence of proof is required

- Children of a subset of failed asylum seekers (supported under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 – 'the 1999 Act') -

Evidence of proof is required

- Is being supported through an Early Help Plan

Evidence – a letter from relevant person regarding the Early Help Plan with the child's name and date of birth

- Is supported through a Child Protection plan or child in need plan

Evidence – a personalised letter from the lead Social Worker would be required as evidence

- Has a diagnosed syndrome, condition or disability that significantly affects the ability to access learning or has a delay of at least 6 months in 2 or more areas of development

Evidence – a letter from a relevant professional working with the family regarding the SEND criteria listed above

If a child's 2nd birthday is between	You can access a place from
1 January and 31 March	1 April
1 April and 31 August	1 September
1 September and 31 December	1 January



Think you and your child may be eligible? Parents and carers with legal responsibility of 2 year olds or children that are nearly 2, can apply for a two year old funding code at:

www.coventry.gov.uk/2yearoldfunding

Or, parents and carers can visit their local Family Hub or ask a childcare provider to assist with an online check.

Once eligibility is confirmed parent/carers will then need to take their code to their chosen childcare provider and agree how the funding will be accessed.

Once a child has started their 2 year old funded place, this remains until they access their 3 year old universal early education funding.



Funding for 3 and 4 year olds (Universal offer)

All 3 and 4 year olds in England can access 570 hours of early education funding per year, until they either start reception class in a maintained/free school or academy or reach compulsory school age, which is the term after their 5th birthday.

Every child is entitled to a maximum of 570 hours of funding per year, to be taken over no fewer than 38 weeks in any year. Children become eligible from the start of the term after their 3rd birthday. Every child is entitled to a maximum of 15 hours per week per term, to be taken over no fewer than 38 weeks in any year.



If a child's 3rd birthday is between	You can access a place from
1 January and 31 March	1 April
1 April and 31 August	1 September
1 September and 31 December	1 January

Funding for 3 and 4 year olds (Extended offer - 30 hour funding)

Some 3 and 4 year olds in England can access an additional 15 hours per week (570 hours per year) of early education funding per year until they either start reception class in a maintained/free school or academy or reach compulsory school age, which is the term after their 5th birthday.

Parents and carers of 3 and 4 year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for these additional 15 hours.

- Each parent (or lone parent) earns at least the minimum equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage or national living wage, this equates to earning at least:
 - £120 per week (or £6000 a year) for each parent aged 25 years and older
 - £112.80 per week (or £5800 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 leave, paternity leave, statutory sick, shared parental or adoption leave
 - Where 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
 - Where one parent is in the 'start up period' (newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate they meet the income criteria for 12 months
 - Foster Carers who meet the criteria and is consistent with the child's care plan
- www.coventry.gov.uk/fostercare30hours



You **will not** be eligible if:

- Either parent earns more than £100,000 a year
- Either parent is a non-EEA (European Economic Area) national and subject to immigration control and has no recourse to public funds

To determine eligibility for these additional hours, a parent will need to apply and receive a unique code from HMRC via the Government's Online Childcare Service at www.gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account



Re-confirmation of your 30 hour eligibility code:

Once you have been issued a valid code, this must be re-confirmed every 3 months. Failure to reconfirm, and if the grace period has ended, could mean that your access to the 30 hour entitlement will cease. This means that although your family may continue to meet the eligibility criteria, the details held by HMRC are no longer “in date.” This will mean that after the grace period date only 15 hours universal funding will be available until the start of a new claim period, which commences after the date details are reconfirmed and eligibility is established.

When a parent loses eligibility for the Extended offer:

They will enter a 'grace period' - this means they will be able to keep their extended hours for a short period of time after they have been notified they are no longer eligible. Once the 'grace period' has lapsed, the parent will be entitled to only the universal early education funding. **Please note:** a child cannot start with a new childcare provider in their grace period.

Flexibility of all funded places:

Providers may offer flexible packages for early education funded places, subject to the following standards:

- No session to be longer than 10 hours
- No minimum session length
- Not before 6am or after 8pm
- Sessions can be taken on any day of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays
- A maximum of two childcare providers in a single day
- Meet the quality requirement as set out in regulations and in the statutory guidance
- Avoid artificial breaks being created throughout the day, where it is reasonably practicable

The childcare provider should share information about the times and periods at which they are able to offer early education funded places.



Term Time or Stretch Options:

- Families can access up to 15 or 30 hours of early education funding per week. Funding means that a child is entitled to a maximum of 570 or 1140 hours per year. This can be taken over a minimum of 38 weeks and up to a maximum of 52 weeks per year, however not all providers are able to accommodate this flexibility
- Although funded provision must be available over at least 38 weeks of the year; the regulations do not prevent it being stretched over more than 38 weeks of the year to enable the place to be delivered more flexibly i.e. taking fewer hours per week over more weeks of the year. Childcare providers and parents would need to agree a set pattern of attendance over the stretch period, and record this on the Parent and Carer Agreement



Are there any additional charges?

Early education funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, (such as, nappies, suncream, nappy creams) additional hours or optional activities. Childcare providers can charge for meals, snacks, consumables and optional activities as part of the funded place, as long as parents are not required to pay as a condition of taking up their child's place. Where parents choose to purchase additional hours of provision or optional activities, this is a private matter between the childcare provider and the parent.

Childcare providers **must not**:

- Charge top up fees in respect of the funded hours (the difference between what a provider normally charges and the funding received from the local authority)
- Impose conditions that require payment for the funded hours up front and to be refunded at a later date
- Require the purchase of lunch as a condition of accessing funded hours over a lunch period. The option of a parent providing a packed lunch, must be an option
- Childcare providers must ensure that invoices are set out clearly so that families can easily recognise and understand what hours they have accessed in relation to the early education funded place and how the fees relate to any additional services or hours that are being charged for



Where can my child access their early education place?

Funded places are offered by a range of childcare providers as long as they deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and are registered as an approved childcare provider with Coventry City Council.

An approved childcare provider will have signed a Coventry City Council Funding Agreement. By signing this agreement, providers have agreed to adhere to the conditions to offer the early education funding to families in Coventry.

This could include providers such as:

- Day nurseries, pre-schools or playgroups registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- Childminders registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- Schools taking children age two and over



**Is there any
help to find
suitable
childcare?**



The Coventry Family Information Directory holds up to date information on all early years providers in the city that are registered with the local authority to offer early education places. You can access this information by visiting their website <https://cid.coventry.gov.uk>

Alternatively, if you require further support please contact Coventry Early Years Service at EYCentral@coventry.gov.uk or tel: 024 7697 5451.

Can I move my child from one provider to another provider?

If a child is moved to a different childcare provider **before** the headcount date, then **parents will have to pay** the original childcare provider for the hours the child has attended up until the day they leave. Childcare providers **cannot** claim funding from Coventry City Council for any hours attended prior to the headcount date for that period.

Please note: headcount date is the day in which childcare providers submit your child's details to Coventry City Council to access funding.

If a child moves to a different childcare provider after the headcount date for that term, the funding for that term does not transfer with the child.

A claim may be made at the new childcare provider from the start of the **following** funding period. The original provider, who made the claim, is entitled to keep the early years funding for the term in which the child was moved. They may be willing to share it with the new childcare provider, but there is **no requirement** for them to do so. If they choose not to share the early years funding, this may result in the **parent being charged** for any early years provision that they access for the remainder of the current funding period. If the child is Looked After by Coventry City Council then the provider must transfer the remaining funded weeks to the new provider.



What if I have missed the headcount day for my 3 or 4 year old child?

In exceptional circumstances Coventry City Council may provide permission for a 3 or 4 year old child to access a funded place, following headcount day.

3 and 4 year old late starters will only be approved under the following circumstances;

- The child is newly arrived to the country
- The child is newly arrived to Coventry from somewhere else in the UK and has not claimed a funded place elsewhere, during the same funding period
- Looked After Child (LAC)
- Other exceptional circumstances (agreed at Coventry City council's discretion)

Childcare providers must seek approval for a 3 and 4 year old late starter by contacting Coventry City Council, before offering and agreeing to deliver a funded place.

How is the early education place offered?

The early education place is offered to parents/carers over three funded periods. For each funded period there is a maximum number of hours available to ensure children can access their full amount of funded hours throughout the year.

These funded periods are closely in line with the school term dates but **are not exactly the same**. Childcare providers are given a maximum number of hours and weeks within each funding period and would have to agree with parents how these are offered and accessed.

- Autumn period is between **1 September and 31 December**
- Spring period is between **1 January and 31 March**
- Summer period is between **1 April and 31 August**

What is Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)?

The Early Years Pupil Premium is an additional amount of money paid directly to childcare providers for 3 or 4 year old children of families in receipt of certain benefits, or who were formally in local authority care but left this care because they were adopted, were subject to a Special guardianship or Child arrangements order.

This funding can be claimed by your childcare provider to enhance the quality of your child's experience. This will help improve the teaching and learning facilities and resources, with the aim of impacting positively on your child's progress and development. To claim this funding, the main benefit holder (parent/carer) needs to complete the EYPP section on the Parent and Carer Agreement.

What is Disability Access Funding (DAF)?

This funding is for childcare providers to support children with disabilities or special educational needs.

It is intended to aid access to childcare places by supporting childcare providers to make reasonable adjustments to their environment.

3 and 4 year old children who are in direct receipt of child Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and accessing some or all of their funding hours are eligible for DAF. DAF is paid to the child's nominated provider at a fixed annual rate of £615.00.

To claim the DAF, parents/carers are required to provide evidence that their child is in receipt of DLA to their chosen provider. This evidence must be a copy of the award letter issued to them by the Department for Work and Pensions.



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:



All childcare providers must be aware of their duties in relation to the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010. Providers have a responsibility to ensure all children have full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage. They must have arrangements in place to support children with SEND and should demonstrate clearly the approach to identifying and responding to the individual child's needs.

Where a childcare provider identifies a child as having SEND they must work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs.

All childcare providers will have access to a SEND Local Offer which sets out what provision is offered to them for children with a disability or identified special educational need. This information can be obtained directly from: www.coventry.gov.uk/localoffer



Data Protection

Providers are required to be compliant with GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 when handling/processing personal data. Where a parent withdraws consent for the provider to share funding information with the Council, the child will no longer be eligible to access their early education funding.

Help with childcare costs:

If a child is attending a childcare provider for more than 15 hours a week because the parent is at work or in training, it may be possible to claim Working Tax Credit. For more details parents should call the Working Tax Credit helpline on 0345 300 3900 or visit

www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs

Other options to help with childcare costs are available such as Tax-Free Childcare. Check

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk for more information.



What do I do if I have a concern about my Early Education Funded place?

If a parent or carer is unhappy with the way the childcare provider is delivering the Early Education Entitlement, the provider's complaint procedure should be followed in the first instance. If there is still dissatisfaction with the outcome of the complaint, parents should complete this online form:

www.coventry.gov.uk/eyconcernform

If you are unable to complete this, please call 024 7697 5451 where your concern will be logged and passed on to the relevant person.



Useful website links

Childcare Choices

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

SEND code of practice

www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

