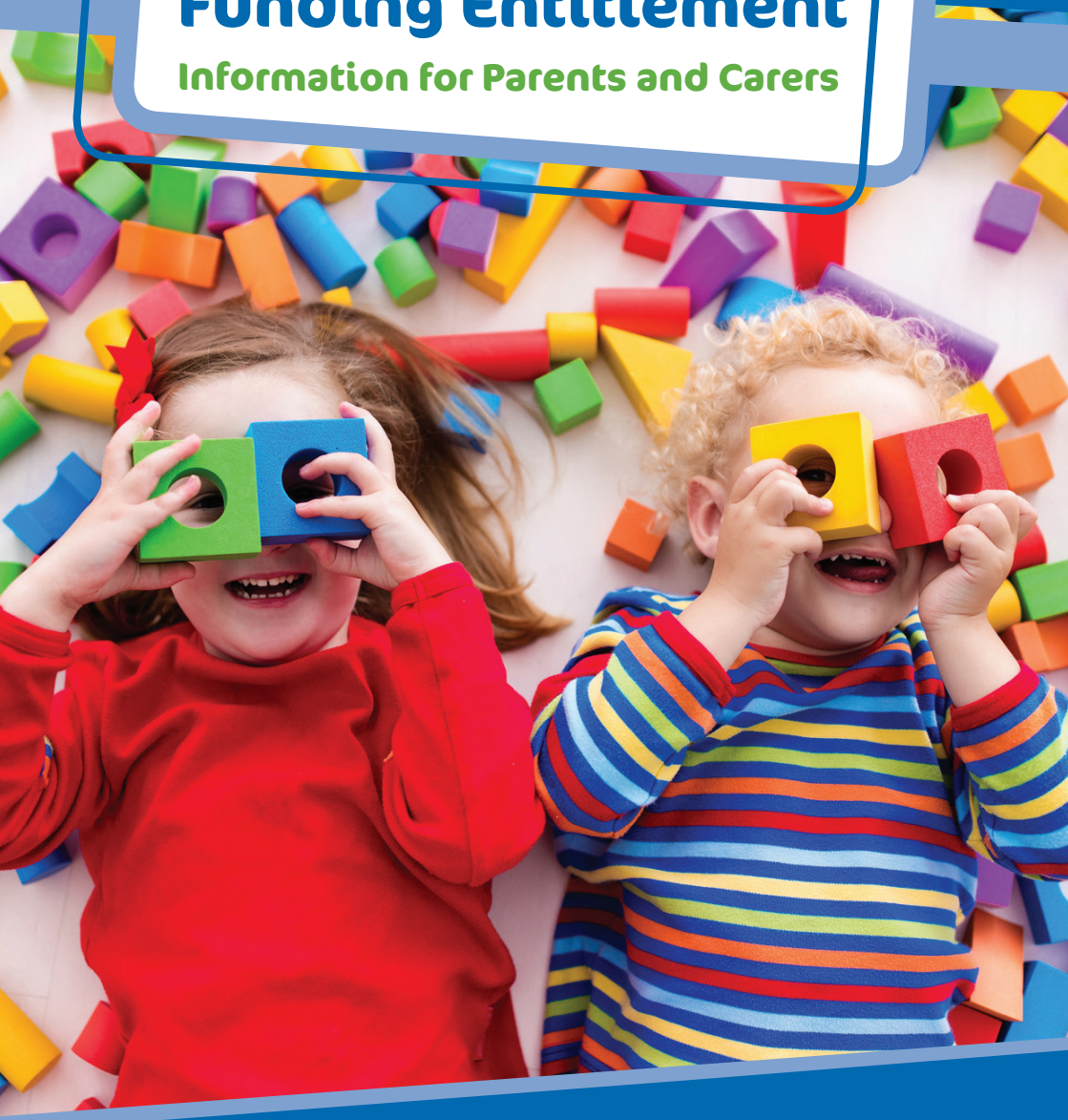
Early Education Funding Entitlement

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 prepares 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 will be eligible to receive 15 hours of funded early education and childcare per week, up to a maximum of 570 hours per academic year. Children must meet the date of birth criteria and parents must meet the eligibility criteria at either routes 1 or 2

Eligibility Route 1

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit – and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit (or both), and your household income is £16,190 a year or less, before tax
- Working Tax Credit 4 – week run on, the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

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

Eligibility Route 2

The child you are applying for:

- Is looked after by a local authority (for example a Foster Carer)

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

- Has a current Education and Health 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)

  Evidence – award letter for DLA

- Has left care under a Adoption Order, Special Guardianship or a Child arrangements 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

If you are a non-EEA Citizen who cannot claim benefits:

If your immigration status says you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still be entitled to receive free childcare for your 2-year-old.

You must live in England and your household income must be no more than: £26,500 for families outside of London with one child £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children You cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments. Proof of evidence will be required.

Eligibility Route 2 – Local criteria

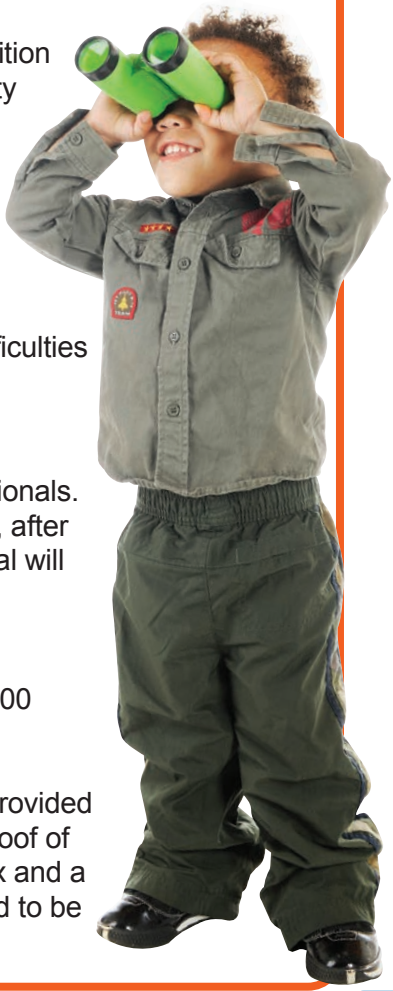
The child you are applying for may be eligible for funding if one or more of the three criteria set out below is met:

Child Protection
If your child is supported through a child protection plan or child in need plan. A letter from the lead Social Worker would be required as evidence.

Coventry SEND
You have a total household income of £20,000 or less a year, after tax and

Your child has a diagnosed syndrome, condition or disability that significantly affects the ability to access learning or has 12 months developmental delay in 2 or more out of the 4 areas of need. These are:

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



Your child is accessing additional services provided by health or local authority professionals. Proof of your total household income a year, after tax and a letter from the relevant professional will need to be submitted when applying.

Early Help support
You have a total household income of £20,000 or less a year, after tax.

Your child is accessing additional services provided by health or local authority professionals. Proof of your total household income a year, after tax and a letter from the relevant professional will need to be submitted when applying.

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, they will not lose this eligibility, even if parents/ carers financial circumstances change. The child will continue to be able to access a two-year funded place until they seamlessly transition to universal funding, which is an entitlement for all 3 year olds.

Funding for 3 and 4 year olds (Universal offer)

All 3 and 4 year olds in England can access up to 570 hours of early education funding per academic 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.

There is no requirement to apply for a unique code from HMRC or the local authority to access universal hours. To access a place, please seek advice from your chosen childcare provider.

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.

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)

In addition to the universal entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds, some children will be able to access the extended hours entitlement, which offers a further 15 hours per week of early education, on top of the universal offer, potentially increasing funded hours to 1140 hours per year. Once a child has started a Reception Class place in a maintained, free school or academy or they have reached compulsory school age*, they are no longer entitled to receive Early Education Funding.

**a child reaches compulsory school age at the start of the term following 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.

To be eligible for 30 hours funding you (or your partner) must have a National Insurance number and at least one of the following:- British or Irish citizenship - settled or pre-settled status or you have applied and you are waiting for a decision or you have permission to access public funds - your UK residence card will highlight this.

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 plus
- £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:

- You or your partner have an expected ‘adjusted net income’ over £100,000 in the current tax year. This includes any bonuses you expect to get

- Your adjusted net income is your total taxable income before any personal allowances and deductions such as Gift Aid

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**

Immigration status

To be eligible for 30 hours funding you (or your partner) must have a National Insurance number and at least one of the following:- British or Irish citizenship - settled or pre-settled status or you have applied and you are waiting for a decision - or you have permission to access public funds - your UK residence card will highlight this.

Re-confirmation of your 30 hour eligibility code:

Once you have been issued a valid code, this must be re-confirmed every 3 months to ensure your child continues to remain eligible. Failure to reconfirm, 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.” After a short period of time known as the ‘grace period’, your child will no longer be able to access the extended entitlement of 15 hours, alongside their universal entitlement, until the term after you have successfully re-confirmed your eligibility. Until such time your child would only be able to access the universal 15 hours funding with your chosen childcare provider.

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 sites in a single day (separate provision on a school site is counted as one site)
- Meet the quality requirement as set out in regulations and in the statutory guidance
- No artificial breaks

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 academic 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 Coventry Parent and Carer Agreement

Are there any additional charges?

Early education funding is intended to deliver up to 15 or 30 hours a week of high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, snacks or other consumables, (such as, nappies, suncream, nappy creams) additional hours or optional activities and trips. Childcare providers can charge for meals, snacks, consumables and optional activities as part of the funded place, although these charges must be voluntary for parents. Where a parent is unable or unwilling to pay these voluntary charges, they should speak to their childcare provider directly. The provider must not require parents to pay these charges as a condition of taking up their child's place. Where parents choose to purchase additional hours of provision, meals, snacks, consumables or optional activities this is a private matter between the childcare provider and the parent.

A childcare provider may ask a parent to pay a refundable deposit but should not request a registration fee for children who only take up 'funded' hours with the provider.

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
- 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
- Impose artificial breaks for children who access funded hours before or after lunch. Funded provision should be delivered in continuous blocks

Where can my child access their early education place?

Funded places are offered by a range variety of childcare providers. To deliver funded places the childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and with Coventry City Council.

Approved childcare providers are bound by the terms and conditions of the Coventry Provider Funding Agreement and must adhere to these at all times.

Approved childcare providers include:

- Day nurseries, pre-schools or playgroups
- Ofsted registered Childminders
- School nursery classes or early years provision

Is there any help to find suitable childcare?

The Coventry Family Information website holds up to date information on all early years providers in the city. 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 between the start of a new funding period and **before** the termly 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 between the start of the funding period and the headcount date, if the child leaves the setting before that date.

You may also lose any deposit you have paid to the provider to secure the funded place.

Please note: headcount date/s occur at fixed termly points. The childcare provider must submit details for all children claiming funding to Coventry City Council, by this deadline.

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. Where a parent chooses to move a child mid-funding period and the provider does not agree to pass on the remaining weeks funding, the parent will be liable to pay the new provider for any hours attended until the start of the next funding period.

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) For example, the family has been relocated due to domestic abuse.

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?

Early education funded hours are delivered over 3 funding periods. Each funding period has a designated maximum number of funded hours/weeks that can be accessed by a child, as set by the local authority. Childcare providers must deliver funded places in line with the termly designated hours/weeks. Hours/weeks from a previous term cannot be taken once that term has passed. E.g., a child is eligible to start a place from January but does not begin until April. Funded hours for the January to March (known as the spring term, cannot be accessed).

The 3 funding periods closely align with but are not exactly the same as the school term dates.

- 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.

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 and agree effective support to meet 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 UK 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 get help paying for childcare costs.

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

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, they should raise their concern with the childcare provider.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your concern, please complete the online form: www.coventry.gov.uk/eyconcernform

If you are unable to access the online form, please contact us on 024 7697 5451. Your concern will be logged and passed to a local authority officer for attention.

Useful website links

Childcare Choices
www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs

Raising a funding concern with Coventry City Council
www.coventry.gov.uk/eyconcernform

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