



# Funded Early Education Entitlement

June 2020

**Funded Early Education Entitlement Team**

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**St. Helens Early Years Hub**



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## **What is 2-year-old Funded Early Education?**

Some 2-year-olds are eligible for funded 15 hours childcare. The criteria for accessing this for your 2-year-old is stated below. This means your child will be eligible for up to 15 hours per week over a minimum of 38 weeks per year (570 hours in total).

Some childcare settings or childminders may be able to stretch the hours over school holidays so you may access fewer hours over more weeks. The hours can be split between two childcare settings or childminders.

In St Helens, your child can take up their funded early education entitlement (FEEE) at some local authority maintained schools, at a private nursery, playgroup or with a childminder.

### **Do I have to send my child for all the hours?**

No. You can send them for as many hours as you feel comfortable with, up to a maximum of 570 hours for the year. If you do agree to send your child to a setting, they will have to monitor your child's attendance. Regular absences of 2 weeks or more and attendance that falls under 80% could affect your child's place, as funding from the Local Authority could be at risk of being withdrawn for the setting.

### **What are the benefits for you and your 2-year-old?**

Your 2-year-old may be able to attend funded early education and childcare giving you the chance to do some training or study or take a part-time job.

For your 2-year-old, you can be confident they are receiving quality early education and childcare helping them with their early learning and giving them new experiences with other children.

Currently, all 3 and 4-year-olds are entitled to funded early education and childcare before they start school. This is now on offer to some 2-year-olds.

Research shows that children who go to high quality early education and childcare providers make good progress with their language, physical and social development. When the time comes for them to go to school they are better prepared and this advantage stays with them right through school and into adulthood.

## **Eligibility**

To be eligible to receive a funded early education place for your 2-year-old, you will need to meet one or more of the following criteria.

Your 2-year-old can get funded childcare if you live in England and get one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

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- Tax credits and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax
  - Universal Credit and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
  - The Working Tax Credit 4-week run-on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2-year-olds can also get funded childcare if they:

- Are looked after by a local authority
- Have a statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP)
- Get disability living allowance
- Have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

### **Non-EEA citizen who cannot claim benefits**

Your 2-year-old may get funded childcare if you are getting support under the Immigration and Asylum Act and have either:

- Claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
- Been refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')

A 2-year-old you care for may also get funded childcare if your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and you have either:

- Leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on family or private life grounds
- The right to live in the UK because you're the main carer of the British citizen (known as a Zambrano Carer)

## Childcare providers in St Helens

You can search for childcare providers via our online directory.

<https://familyinfoservice.sthelens.gov.uk/synergy/publicenquiry/> and can express an interest with them, regardless of the age of your child, by taking the following steps:

### Search for a childcare provider

1. Express an interest with the providers you are interested in by clicking the tick symbol on the top right-hand side of the provider information.



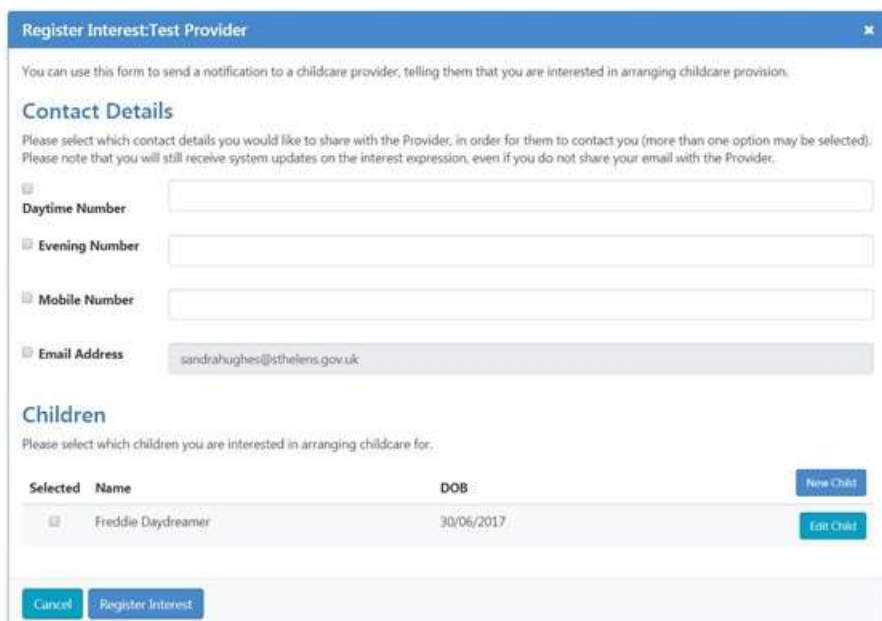
The screenshot shows a provider card for 'Test Provider', a Day Nursery. It includes a logo, a tick icon, and an 'Add to Shortlist' button. The details listed are: Locality: Town Centre, Distance From You: No information given, Telephone: 01744 546487, and Publication Url: No information given.

2. You will be invited to either create or log in to your account.



The modal dialog box is titled 'Register Interest' and contains the message: 'You must be logged in to register interest in a provider.' At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Cancel', 'Log In', and 'Create Account'.

3. You then complete your details, tick the child you are expressing an interest for and click 'Register Interest'.



The form is titled 'Register Interest: Test Provider'. It contains a heading 'Contact Details' and a sub-heading 'Children'. Under 'Contact Details', there are checkboxes for 'Daytime Number', 'Evening Number', 'Mobile Number', and 'Email Address'. The 'Email Address' field is pre-filled with 'sandrahughes@sthelens.gov.uk'. Under 'Children', there is a table with columns 'Selected', 'Name', and 'DOB'. The table has one row with 'Freddie Daydreamer' and '30/06/2017'. There are 'New Child' and 'Edit Child' buttons next to the table. At the bottom, there are 'Cancel' and 'Register Interest' buttons.

4. The provider will then get in touch via your chosen method of contact.

**When can my child start?**

<b>Your child turns 2 between:</b>	<b>You can apply for a place:</b>	<b>Your child will start their funded place:</b>
<b>1 April - 31 August</b>	<b>1 April - 31 August</b>	<b>1 September (Autumn Term)</b>
<b>1 September - 31 December</b>	<b>1 September - 31 December</b>	<b>1 January (Spring Term)</b>
<b>1 January - 31 March</b>	<b>1 January - 31 March</b>	<b>1 April (Summer Term)</b>

**When can I use the 15 hours?**

You may use the 15 hours flexibly over the week, within the following parameters:

- Sessions can be taken on any day of the week, including weekends
- Sessions can be no longer than 10 hours
- Sessions must be between 6.00am and 8.00pm
- Sessions can be used at a maximum of 2 different sites in a single day

Please remember that providers may not be able to offer exactly what you want, however, providers should listen to your needs and try to adapt the delivery of their sessions to accommodate you in a way that will allow them to continue as a viable business.

If your child attends with a childcare provider for more additional hours than what you are entitled to be funded, then you will be required to pay additional costs. For example, if your child attends a day nursery full-time for 5 days a week, then you will only receive your 15 funded hours and will have to pay the nursery for the remaining hours. Parents need to be aware that they can also expect to pay reasonable costs for any meals, consumables or additional activities offered by their childcare provider alongside their entitlement.

Some providers may charge for meals, snacks or optional extras as these may not always be included within the funded entitlement. Please check with your provider for full details of any additional charges.

**Childcare settings claim funding directly from the Local Authority in order to give your child a funded early education place. You will not receive any monies or vouchers.**

How to secure a place for your child will depend upon how you want to access the funding. Generally, to access a place with a maintained provider you will need to complete the Local Authority’s application form included in the Nursery Education Booklet.

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All St Helens private, voluntary and independent registered childcare providers are listed in our [directory of providers](#). You will need to choose a provider from the directory when you create your account with us and express an interest with them. The provider and you will liaise between yourselves via your secure council account before both accepting that your place is confirmed. Once your place is secure, the childcare provider will ask you to complete a Parental Contract and at that point you will be asked to provide a copy of your child's identification, such as birth certificate or passport to prove their eligibility.

Internet access is available at all St Helens libraries if you need it, however, if you are experiencing difficulties in applying online, then please contact the FEEE Team on 01744 676541 / 676542 / 676557 who will carry out the check for you and give you an immediate response.

### **Universal Credit**

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit and apply but are told you are not eligible, we may need to carry out a manual check. In order to do this, the FEEE team will need the last 3 online/paper statements proving what your 'take home pay' has been in those 3 periods.

Parents are now allowed to earn more than £3,850.00 over the 3 month assessment period, with a maximum annual earning per household of £15,400.00.

### **PLEASE NOTE: If you are caring for a child who:**

Is cared for by the Local Authority (CLA)

Is in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Has left care through adoption, special guardianship order or is subject to a child arrangement order

**Please DO NOT apply online as you will automatically qualify and do not require a check. Simply contact the FEEE Team on 01744 676541.**

### **What happens next?**

After you have applied you will be sent a confirmation letter with the date that your child can start their funded early education place. This date will be the start of the term after you have applied. If you only apply for the funding into the term in which your child is eligible then you will be able to take your funded place from the date you applied which will be stated on your confirmation letter.

Please keep hold of this letter as you need to take it along to your chosen childcare setting or childminder as proof that your child is eligible. You also need to take your child's birth certificate to confirm they are the right age to start and proof of your address.

**PLEASE NOTE:** only childcare settings and childminders who are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted can offer 2-year-old funded places.

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## **What if my income or circumstances change?**

Once you have received a letter or code confirming your child is eligible for funding it will not be withdrawn even if your income or circumstances change.

## **Do I need to tell anyone if I begin to receive funding?**

If you are claiming help towards childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit you need to inform HMRC by calling 0345 300 3900 as soon as possible before your child starts as you cannot claim help for funded early education and childcare.

If you delay informing HMRC you may be paid too much and will have to pay it back. You can still claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit for any additional childcare you pay for outside of funded early education and childcare.

## **What happens when my child turns 3 years old?**

Your child will be entitled to 15 hours funding for 3 and 4-year-olds from the term after their third birthday until they start school. Your child may also be entitled to the extended entitlement offering an extra 15 hours per week.

## **What do I need to consider when making my choice?**

### **Your child's needs**

You should consider your child's needs while looking for a suitable childcare provider. You may want to visit a number of childcare providers to make sure they offer the right environment for your child. This allows you to see how they can meet your child's needs and give you confidence in the decision you make. When visiting a setting these are some examples of questions you may want to ask:

- Do you have a settling in period, if so how long?
- Do I have to pay for meals/ activities/ nappies?
- How will you keep me informed about my child's progress?
- Where can my child sleep or rest?
- How will you keep me involved?
- How do you manage children's behaviour?
- How will you accommodate my child's dietary requirements?
- What happens if my child is sick?
- How would you contact me in an emergency?
- Do you have any policies or procedures I should be aware of?

### **Personal requirements**

If you have any personal requirements, such as opening hours during specific days, make sure you search for a childcare provider who offers services based on your exact needs.

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## Ofsted reports

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) are responsible for inspecting services that care for children and young people and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. An Ofsted inspection will look at how well the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend and ensure that they are meeting the requirements for safety and learning and development.

## How do I raise a concern about childcare?

If you are a parent or carer and cannot sort out your concern through discussion, you can make a formal complaint by writing to the provider. The law says that providers must have a process for handling written complaints.

If you are a parent or carer and you make a formal written complaint, your provider must carry out an investigation. They must tell you about the outcome of their investigation, and any action they take or plan to take, as an outcome of your complaint.

They must do this within:

- **28 days of receiving your complaint if they are registered on the early years register**
- **28 days of receiving your complaint if they are registered on the childcare register.**

You can ask to have the outcome of their investigation in writing.

If you are not satisfied with their response, or your concern relates to a matter you cannot discuss with your provider, you can contact Ofsted direct on 0300 123 1231.

## Where can I get further advice?

**[GOV.UK - Childcare Choices website](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/)** - **<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>**



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## **What is 3-year-old Funded Early Education?**

It is for all families in England with 3 and 4-year-old children.

15 hours of funded childcare or early education for 38 weeks.

A total of 570 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider

Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week.

## **15 hours Funded Early Education**

### **Where can I use it?**

It is available at participating:

Full day care (e.g. nurseries)

Schools

Childminders

Sessional providers (e.g. playgroups)

Sure Start Children's Centres

After school clubs

**From 1 January, 1 April or 1 September following your child's 3rd birthday.**

### **What isn't covered?**

The 15 hours funded childcare/early education offer is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables (such as nappies or sun cream), additional hours or additional activities (such as trips). Providers may charge a fee for these additions. If you choose to pay for these it is an arrangement between you and the childcare provider. However, you must not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a 15 hours place, and must be offered alternative options.

## **30 hours Funded Early Education**

For working families in England with 3 and 4-year-old children

30 hours of funded childcare or early education for 38 weeks

A total of 1,140 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider.

Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week.

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## Am I eligible?

You, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) at least £139 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage).

If you, or your partner, are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or you're unable to work because you are disabled or have caring responsibilities, you could still be eligible.

You **can't** get 30 hours funded childcare if **either** you, or your partner, each **individually** expect to earn £100,000 or more.

## When can my child start?

Your child can start in their childcare place the term after they turn 3 years old and have received a valid 30 hours code, **whichever is later**. Term start dates are 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> April.

To keep your 30 hours funded childcare place, you need to check your details are up to date every 3 months.

## Where can I use it?

It is available at participating:

Full day care (e.g. nurseries)

Schools

Childminders

Sessional providers (e.g. playgroups)

Sure Start Children's Centres

After school clubs

Please view the step by step guide on [how to use 30 hours free childcare](#):

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/how-to-apply-for-30-hours-free-childcare/>

## What isn't covered?

The 30 hours funded childcare offer is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables (such as nappies or sun cream), additional hours or additional activities (such as trips). Providers may charge a fee for these additions. If you choose to pay for these it is an arrangement between you and the childcare provider. However, you must not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a 30 hours place, and must be offered alternative options.

For further information: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

**If your working pattern and/or income has changed because of coronavirus (COVID-19); before you apply or reconfirm for 30 hours, please read how these changes may affect your eligibility:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-get-tax-free-childcare-and-30-hours-free-childcare-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

# PARENT JOURNEY



## 30 HOURS

1

Go to Childcare Choices & apply online (this is the application for both 30 Hours & Taxfree Childcare. You need to tick the appropriate boxes for one or both options)\*

2

You will be checked for eligibility and if you are eligible you will then receive your code, which will begin with either 500 or 11 (11 is an emergency code and only lasts for 1 term)

3

Now you have your code, head to the new council portal to create your online account with us (only if accessing St Helens based Childcare)

4

You will then receive an email which asks you to verify your council account

5

Once you have verified, log on to express your interest with as many St Helens childcare providers as you wish

6

All settings **MUST** respond to you via your account within 48-72 hours & if they have a place, you will be invited in to view/meet

7

Once you have decided on a childcare provider, both you and they need to accept the place via your online council account. Once both parties have accepted your place is confirmed

8

This also allows the Council to share your details with the provider to enable them to claim the funding. Your childcare provider will directly confirm your child's start date



Childcare  
**Choices**



HM Government

\*The Tax-Free Childcare Parent Journey is different from this point. Please refer to the Tax-Free Childcare Parent Journey document. You will need to follow both if choosing both.

FINAL VERSION - FEBRUARY 2019

# FOSTER CARER JOURNEY



1

Speak to your social worker, about 30 hours as soon as possible at the start of the term, that your foster child is turning 3

2

You will then complete an application form with your social worker and provide the necessary evidence that you are working outside of fostering

3

Once processed, the council will send you your code, which will begin 400

4

Take your code to your chosen provider as you can't take up your extra 15 funded hours without it. Your childcare provider will validate your code

5

You must reconfirm your eligibility every 3 months by calling the FEEE Team

6

If your foster child is already in a 30-hours place and you stop working (outside of your foster work) you will be given a short grace period during which your 30 hours childcare will continue

Contact the FEEE Team on 01744 876542 should you require further information



Childcare  
**Choices**



HM Government

\*In order for your foster child to access 30 hours funded childcare, you, as foster carers, must be in paid work outside your fostering role. The earnings criteria is the same as for non-foster carers. It must also be consistent with your child's care plan.

# TAX-FREE CHILDCARE JOURNEY



1

Go to Childcare Choices & apply online (this is the application for both 30 Hours & Taxfree Childcare. You need to tick the appropriate boxes for one or both options)\*

2

Your eligibility will be checked by HMRC. If eligible, they'll open your childcare account

3

Ensure the provider you want is already signed up and then add that provider to your account so you can pay them

4

Pay money into your account. The top up will be added automatically

5

Pay your childcare provider directly through your childcare account

Contact the **FEEE** Team on 01744 678542 should you require further information



Childcare  
**Choices**



HM Government

The 30-Hour Childcare Parent Journey is different from this point. Please refer to the 30-Hour Childcare Parent Journey document. You will need to follow both if choosing both.

FINAL VERSION - FEBRUARY 2019

