



Free Early Years Education for two year olds

What is free Early Years Education?

Good early years education from a young age can help to boost your child's development, giving him/her the opportunity to learn, thrive and play. Early years education takes place **at nurseries, pre-schools and with childminders**.

Eligible two year olds can have up to a maximum of 570 free hours in the child's birthday year. The maximum weekly amount of 15 hours per week of **free** early years education can be used over two or more days a week. You may prefer to spread the free hours throughout the year - this is called a '**stretched offer**'.

If eligible, the earliest your child will be able to attend after their second birthday is shown in the table below. He / she can stay in free early years education right up until starting school.

The table below shows the earliest start dates and when you can apply from:

Child's birthday	When funding can start	Earliest you can apply
1 January to 31 March	1 April	January
1 April to 31 August	1 September	April
1 September to 31 December	1 January	September

Is my child eligible?

You will need to be a parent / guardian that meets at least **one** of the criteria listed below to be eligible for free two year old early years education.

1. Children whose parent / guardian is in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit with an annual gross household income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Working Tax Credits with an annual gross household income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

2. **Children in Care** of the local authority or children who have left care through special guardianship, adoption or residence order.
3. **Children with a Special Educational Need (SEN)** or disability as defined by the two year old being in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or having a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan.

There are some providers who have chosen not to deliver the offer or are not quite ready to meet the required standards. If your child already attends a provider not confirmed as delivering the offer, please contact us to discuss as we can speak to your provider or can help you identify an alternative arrangement. Details of providers delivering the offer can be found on our website. <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/familyinformationdirectory>

Is there any more support available for my family?

As part of free early years education for two year olds, you may be contacted by your local children's centre to provide you with more information on the support available to you and your family. You can choose whether or not to accept this help. Support offered may include family support to share ideas and activities that will help with child development, encourage play and support learning at home and sharing information about other services available within the community such as health services and other advice that may be of help to you.

What happens if the family circumstances change?

Once a child has been accepted for two year old early years education and has started attending an approved early years provider, this will continue until the child moves into the universal free early education entitlement for all three and four year olds right up to when they start school. Should the family circumstances change, for example, if the parent / guardian stops receiving benefits, the free education will not be removed.

How do I apply for the offer?

You may have received a letter from us or you have read the criteria and think your family / child meets the eligibility criteria. If so, then you need to apply as soon as possible and complete the application process so that your eligibility can be checked. You should visit our website www.hants.gov.uk/eye/2-year-old-offer-2.htm or call the number below, or ask your childcare provider or children's centre for more details on how to apply.

If your request is approved, you will receive confirmation of your acceptance and a 'Unique Claim Number' which you can use at an approved provider to start your child's free hours. This could be with a childminder, pre-school or nursery. Please note your child cannot start free funded hours without a 'Unique Claim Number' and funding cannot be 'backdated'.

Contact information

Please call **0845 6035620** or visit www.hants.gov.uk/eye/2-year-old-offer-2.htm for more information.

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Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk