Early Years and Childcare

Stakeholders briefing sheet no. 33 (June 2026)

Hampshire Summer Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)



Summer holiday schemes with free activities and meals for thousands of school age children from families on low incomes, are available across Hampshire through the programme connect4communities | Hampshire CTSH.

Parents and carers can find out what is on offer locally here and details of how to book: Eequ · After school. In place of school. Beyond school.

Early Years Education Funding Deadline

Eligible working parents in England, can apply for up to 30 hours funded childcare for their **child aged 9 months old plus, to start in September.**

They will need to apply **before the 31 August** to use their hours from 1st September. Parents need to visit the Government's Best Start in Life site to get their code for a place in September and then share it with their childcare provider.

BEST START IN LIFE

To continue receiving the government support, parents will need to reconfirm their details every three months on their gov.uk account: Free Childcare for Working Parents: Sign in to confirm your details are up to date - GOV.UK

School-Age Childcare

With new children starting school in September parents will be looking for 'wraparound' childcare such as breakfast or after school clubs.
As well as contacting schools direct, details of services available can be found on the Hampshire Family Information and Services Hub directory.

If parents are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare, they can use this support to help pay for their wraparound childcare.



Free breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare - Best Start in Life

Free School Meals Expansion

From September 2026 all families who are in receipt of Universal Credit above the current £7,400 income cap, will be able to get free school meals (FSM) for their children.

Children need to be on the school roll and attending before and after the lunch period to receive a free school meal.

This also includes children attending school-maintained nursery schools and some school-based nurseries.

Parents need to contact their school for further details.



Expanding free school meals: what parents need to know – The Education Hub

Becoming a registered childminder in Hampshire

The next online information session is taking place on Tuesday 7 July 2026.
For further details visit: Becoming a registered childminder in Hampshire | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council

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Summer Skills Bootcamps

Among the skills 'camps' there is an Early Years and Childcare one, for people looking to start, develop or change their career.

Participants will be able to access a funded 3/4-week course that provides training and skills to prepare them for a role in an early years, wraparound care, or to start to become a childminder.



For more information or to book onto the Skills Bootcamps visit: Early Years | Prosperity Hampshire

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework outlines the standards for learning development and care for every child in England from the age of 0-5 when they attend an early education setting.

This is what all providers must do, by law, whether they are a childminder, private nursery, pre-school, or a reception class in school; but *how* a child's setting decides to deliver education and care within the framework is up to them.

Birth to 5 Matters is the non-statutory guidance to support early years providers.

BIRTH TO 5 MATTERS

The guidance is based on four core principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development.

Further details can be found here: Information for parents – Birth To 5 Matters

Birth to 5 Matters has been developed by the Early Years Coalition, comprising of early years sector organisations. A revised version will be available in July.

Summer Reading Challenge

This year's theme is *Read to the Beat* and starts from 11 July until 12 September.



Children aged 4 - 11 can read or listen to 6 books over the summer, collect stickers and receive a medal and certificate.

Families can visit their local library or the Hampshire Libraries website to sign up from 11 July.

Hampshire Happy Talkers

Hampshire Happy Talkers is a "one stop shop" where families can find out what support is available for children's speech, language and communication needs across Hampshire.

Hampshire Happy Talkers

It specifically focuses on support available for 0–5-year-olds. Information includes guidance on what is available from specialist services such as the NHS, as well as Hampshire County Council, health visitors, Barnardos, library services, etc.

Don't miss out if responsible for caring for a child

Child Benefit is available to support those who have the responsibility for bringing up a child, or a young person under 20 years if in approved education or training.

Check out the latest information Child Benefit: How it works -

Have an early years or childcare related topic that you would like further information about? Complete a Services for Young Children General Enquiry Form.

If you no longer want to receive this briefing, please email: alice.warr@hants.gov.uk

Working in childcare and early years | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)