



**Funding  
Information  
Guide  
2026**

## Funding Basics

### Working

Up to 30 hours for eligible working families in England with a child from 9 months old up to school age.

Can be used flexibly with one or more childcare providers.

If available, we allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 51 weeks, using 22.35 hours per week.

### Universal

For children aged 3-4 years.

15 hours of childcare is available for all families in England.

15 hours for 38 weeks (up to 570 hours per year), that you can use flexibly with one or more providers.

If available, we allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 51 weeks, using fewer hours per week.

## Tax Free Childcare

If you're a working parent or carer, you can get a £2 top-up for every £8 that you pay towards childcare.

You can use it to pay for childcare including:

- childminders, nurseries and nannies
- before and after school clubs
- holiday clubs
- specialist equipment for the childcare provider to use for your child, such as mobility aids



## Early Learning Funding

Your 2-year-old can get funded early learning if you live in England and get any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit

Your benefits will not be affected if you take up the 15 hours early learning offer.

## Other Eligibility Criteria

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

- are looked after by a local authority
- have an education, health and care (EHCP) plan
- get Disability Living Allowance
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order, or a child arrangements order

No income thresholds apply.

## Our Fees

You may have noticed changes in how some nurseries are advertising their fees in response to the Department of Education's updated guidance on funding rules.

We wanted to be completely transparent with you about how our fees work – and why we believe our approach offers better value, more honesty, and no surprises.

For funded days, we charge a booking pattern fee, and a meals and consumables fee.

This covers everything your child needs, including:

- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Wipes, nappy cream, suncream etc
- Enrichment activities and outings

You'll always know exactly what you're paying and what it's for. You can find more information about our meals and consumables on page 4 and 5 of this booklet.



# Our Fees

Some nurseries advertise low daily fees like £5 per day. But to offer this, they may stretch your child's funded hours unnecessarily, requiring you to use more hours than you need, locking you into patterns that suit them and not you.

This can still look like a bargain weekly until you look at the monthly/yearly costs. Here is an example of a 0-2 year old receiving 30 hours of funding doing three 10 hour sessions per week:

## Our Nursery Example

|                                  |                                                     |   |                                            |   |                                                        |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Full Day<br><b>£75</b> (x3 days) | <b>30<br/>hours<br/>funding</b><br>(term time only) | + | <b>£15.00</b><br>Meals and consumables fee | = | <b>£45.00</b><br>per week,<br><b>£180</b><br>per month |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------|

## Other Setting Example

|                                  |                                                            |   |                                                          |   |                                                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Full Day<br><b>£75</b> (x3 days) | <b>Stretched<br/>funding</b><br>(No term time only option) | + | <b>£10</b><br>extra charge for 7:30am starts, meals, etc | = | <b>£82.00</b><br>per week,<br><b>£328</b><br>per month |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------|

If you're curious, this would be roughly **£2,200** a year with us, and **£4000** with the example setting!\*

\*Approximate charges and pricing methods compared with a similar nursery



# Our Meals and Consumables

Below is a breakdown of our current meals and consumables cost per session (January 2026)

## Full Day

**£10.00 for meals and snacks**  
**£2.50 for consumables**  
**£2.50 for additional activities**

**£15.00**

## Half Day

**£5.00 for meals and snacks**  
**£1.25 for consumables**  
**£1.25 for additional activities**

**£7.50**

## School Day\* (9am-3:00pm)

**£6.00 for meals and snacks**  
**£1.50 for consumables**  
**£1.50 for additional activities**

**£9.00**

\*Only offered at some settings



## Extra Charges

**Our meals and consumables charge covers everything your child needs throughout the day – it's much more than just food.**

In addition to ensuring your child is well-fed and comfortable, the meals and consumables charge also contributes towards a wide range of exciting extra-curricular activities that are designed to enhance their learning and development.

These activities include Mini Athletics, Adventure Babies, Little Kickers, Rugby Minis and Tennis Tots – just to name a few! We like to switch up our activities termly to make sure the children receive a nice variety during their time with us.

All these activities are part of the holistic learning approach we offer to ensure your child's day is not only fun but enriching. The charge also helps to cover the cost of occasional trips and outings, which provide real-world learning experiences. Every year we go pumpkin picking and to see the panto, which is our favourite time of the year!

We truly believe that these activities are a vital part of your child's early development, and the meals and consumables charge helps us to continue to organise these exciting opportunities.



**Little Kickers**



## FAQ

### **When can I start to use my funded hours?**

Your child can access funding from the term after they turn 9 months old. Term dates are January, April and September.

### **How do I know if my child is eligible for funding?**

To check your eligibility, please go to the Childcare Choices website to apply. If successful, you will receive a code. Please remember, you will need to reapply regularly to continue to claim for funding. Please go to [www.beststartinlife.gov.uk](http://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk) where you will find eligibility criteria and other useful information.

### **Can I stretch my funding to cover school holidays?**

In most cases we can offer stretched funding, this will cover 51 weeks of the year, for example, 30 hours per week term time will reduce to 22.35 hours per week all year round.

### **How is my funding applied to my invoice?**

Your funded hours are deducted from the weekly hours your child attends - you only pay for any non-funded hours and the optional meals and consumables.

For example, if your child attends 30 hours per week and they are stretching their funding and receiving 22.25 hours per week, you will pay for the non-funded 7.75 hours per week, plus the meals and consumables.

### **Will my Tax Free Childcare account be affected?**

No, this is separate to your funding entitlement, you can still pay your setting using your TFC account for your monthly invoice.



## FAQ

### **Can I opt out of the meals and consumables charge?**

We do have an opt-out policy. If you would like more information regarding opting out, please speak to your child's nursery manager.

### **Can I opt out of some parts and not others?**

Yes, you can. We are committed to being as fair, flexible and transparent about our charges as possible. If you'd like to know more about partially opting out, please let your child's nursery manager know, and they can assist you further.

### **How do your invoices work?**

Our invoices are very clear and fully itemised. You will find your child's funded hours and non-funded hours at the top right for the month, along with the total cost of this month's invoice and any outstanding balance.

### **How do your invoices work? (continued)**

The middle section is for booking pattern costs and will clearly show where your child's funded hours are being used. Finally on the last page is any extras – which includes meals and consumables, and any additional sessions that have been booked in for the month.

### **Do you offer any discounts?**

We offer a sibling discount, a full time discount, and a discount for parents who are NHS/Police/Firefighters etc. We also run a bursary scheme, which is full nursery places funded by ourselves for families that need some additional support. You can find out more about this by speaking to your child's nursery manager.



## FAQ

**If my child attends using their funding entitlement only, are there any other costs I need to pay?**

Yes, a daily voluntary meals and consumables charge is payable. For example, if your child has 30 hours of funding per week and they do 3 full days, the weekly cost would be £45.00 a week.

**Do I receive the funding money and then pay my nursery fees?**

No, funding entitlement is paid directly to your nursery setting, you will pay for any non-funded hours and extras as per your monthly invoice.

**What does the meals and consumables fee cover?**

It covers a hot meal at lunchtime and high tea in the afternoon, snacks and refreshments (including our baby weaning menu) throughout your child's session, extra-curricular activities, outings and special events. We also provide wipes, nappy creams, emergency Calpol and Piriton.

**What sessions are available for funding?**

We offer full days, half days, and school days (at some settings). We offer term time only (38 weeks) or full time (51 weeks) booking patterns.

**What if I need to drop my child off earlier than 8.00am?**

A full day session is 7:30am-6.00pm, but as you can only use 10 hours of funding per day, we do not charge for the additional half an hour. However, our morning sessions start at 8.00am. If you would like your child in at 7.30am on a morning session, an Early Bird charge can be applied.

**Can I change from full time to term time, or term time to full time?**

Parents cannot change how they use the funding during the term as this will mean you may not have enough funding for the rest of the year.



## FAQ

### **If my child is ill or on holiday, do I still have to pay?**

Yes, this is because we have already accounted for staffing and other associated costs. However, we do not charge for Bank Holidays or the closure between Christmas and New Year.

### **Can I drop off later or pick up earlier than my booked session?**

Yes, however, funding is not transferable, nor can it be banked, therefore normal charges will apply as per your booking pattern.

## Term Dates

### **Autumn term**

Starts in September - Deadline for applications is **31st August**

### **Spring term**

Starts in January - Deadline for applications is **31st December**

### **Summer term**

Starts in April - Deadline for applications is **31st March**



# Contact Us

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