



Services for Young Children

Childcare and Early Years Education Information

Childcare Types

In the UK we have different types of services which provide childcare. Parents / carers use childcare services so that they can work, study, attend training, or perhaps care for other family members.

There are childcare services that also provide early years education and are registered with the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – *Ofsted* for short. These are:

- **Childminders** – who care for up to 6 children in their own home as a lone worker; or more children if they work with other childminders or employ assistants. They can look after children from just after birth until secondary school age. They are open for most of the year.
- **Nurseries** – who care for groups of children on private or rented premises. They care for children from just after birth until they start school. They are open for most of the year.
- **Pre-schools** – who care for groups of children on private or rented premises such as a church hall or community centre. They look after children from age 2.5 years until they start school. They are open term time only, like schools.

Once children have started school then they have the options of:

- **Before school or breakfast clubs** – school age children can attend a club before school starts if the parent is working or studying or training.
- **After school clubs** – school age children can attend a club after school starts if the parent is working or studying or training.
- **Holiday playschemes or clubs** – school age children can attend a club in the holidays when schools are closed, and parents are working.
- **Childminders** – can provide care before and after school, and in school holidays, this is called 'wrap-around' childcare.

Parents will need to pay for all wrap-around childcare provided by clubs, as a private arrangement with the service provider. There might be help with these childcare costs if parents are in receipt of **Universal Credit** or have a **Tax-Free Childcare** account. Further details are available from the Government *Childcare Choices* website: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

Children who receive benefit related free school meals and recently arrived children from Ukraine and Afghanistan are also eligible for the **Holiday Activity and Food programme** (HAF). This is where children have the chance to enjoy free holiday activities and receive a hot meal each day they attend.

The HAF programme has free places available to school-aged children for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week and for six weeks a year. This covers four weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays.

Organisations will also be able to offer additional places to fee paying families.

Activity providers are located throughout Hampshire and outdoor education, dance, sports, and computer skills are among the activities being offered to the children. Families wanting to find out what is on offer locally should search the [Family Information and Services Hub \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/family-information-and-services-hub) directory.

Early Years Education

For children aged under 5 years we also have funded early years education available. These early years education hours are available at Hampshire County Council approved nurseries, pre-schools or with childminders that are registered with Ofsted.

Children follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage** curriculum. Children learn through play activities. It is also an opportunity for your children not only to receive early years education but importantly socialise with other children and adults, to help prepare for school.

3- and 4-Year-Olds

All children aged 3 or 4 years old are entitled in a funding year to receive 570 hours of funded (free) early years education hours. These 570 hours can be taken during term time only (when schools are open), or across the whole year including school holidays.

A 3-or 4-year-old who is attending a nursery, pre-school, or childminder term time only, can access up to 15 hours a week funded (free) early years education. This is called the 'standard' offer. If the 3-or 4-year-old is attending a nursery, pre-school, or childminder throughout the year, then the number of hours that are funded (free) each week will be less than 15 hours, because the child will be accessing more weeks. This is called the 'stretched' offer.

In both cases the funded entitlement must not exceed more than 570 hours in the funded year. The funded year starts in the period (term) after the child is 3 years old. So, if the child has their third birthday in July, then they can start receiving their funded early years education from 1 September. However, if the child's third birthday is in September, then their funded early years education will start from January (the next term), and so on.

Parents will be asked to complete a **Parent Declaration Form** by the nursery, pre-school, or childminder where the child attends. They will help parents complete the details required, and then they will claim for the funded (free) hours for the child, from Hampshire County Council.

If the child needs to access more than 570 funded (free) early years education hours in a funding year, then there are two options:

Depending on the work status parents might be eligible for **30 Hours Childcare**. This means that the amount of early years education hours can be 'doubled' for a 3- or 4-year-old attending an approved nursery, pre-school or with a childminder.

To apply for *30 Hours Childcare*, parents need to do this via the Government online **Childcare Choices** website. This is an online portal which has information about the different types of support to help pay for childcare services; but it is also the place to apply for the additional 30 hours early years education hours.

If parents find that they are not eligible for the funded (free) *30 Hours Childcare*, then they can pay for extra hours at the nursery, pre-school, or with a childminder, as a private arrangement. There might be help with these childcare costs if parents are in receipt of **Universal Credit** or have a **Tax-Free Childcare** account. Further details are available from the Government *Childcare Choices* website: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/childcare-choices)

2-Year-Olds

Some 2-year-olds might also be eligible for 570 funded (free) early years education hours – the **2-Year-Old Offer**. This is available for families who need some extra support to function; knowing that their child is being cared for.

Parents need to check their eligibility and apply online using the Hampshire County Council's *Education Online* portal: [Free Early Years Education \(EYE\) funding for eligible 2 year olds | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/children-and-families/free-early-years-education)

They will need their National Insurance number or National Asylum Seekers number to apply. The child's childcare provider or *Services for Young Children* can assist parents to apply for the *2-Year-Old Offer* if there are difficulties using the online portal.

Starting at a nursery, pre-school or with a childminder

To search for early years education or childcare services there is the online Family Information and Services Hub directory: [Family Information and Services Hub \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/family-information-services)

Parents/ carers will be able to find services near to where they live or where they work. Parents will also be able to check whether a service provides 2-, 3- or 4-year-old early years education and *30 Hours Childcare*. Though many do offer these services, there are some providers who do not.

When a parent has found some services, the next step is to contact them to make arrangements to visit. If the parent is happy with the service, then they will be asked to complete an admissions form or contract. The service should also share with the parent their policies and procedures which will relate to safeguarding, behaviour, and charges. If parents are unsure of anything, they are welcome to ask any questions.

The nursery, pre-school or childminder will offer some 'settling-in' sessions for children to attend to see how they find the environment, before attending on a regular basis.

Parents should notify the service on the first day of when a child is unable to attend due to illness. Generally, this is done by telephone. Though it is not statutory for a child to attend an early years education service, the provider does have a duty of care, and will follow up with the parent if a child does not attend when they are due to.

Parents will need to either provide their child with a packed lunch/ tea or they will need to pay for lunch / tea and any other snacks and drinks in a nursery, pre-school or with a childminder.

Parents will also be asked to pay a contribution towards resources ('consumables'), such as art and craft materials, aprons, wet wipes, etc. Some nurseries and pre-schools may have a uniform, but it is not a statutory requirement for a child to wear one.

If the chosen nursery, pre-school, or childminder is near to where the family lives then the assumption would be that the parent will walk with their child to the service and collect them at the end of the session.

Once the child is attending a nursery, pre-school, or childminder, if the parent has any questions or concerns, they need to speak to that service, or contact Services for Young Children: [Services for Young Children Offices | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/services-for-young-children)

[Version 1 dated June 2022]