

Discover **if you qualify for free childcare**

New eligibility criteria from April 2014

The Free Entitlement (FE) for 2 year olds scheme is funded by the Government to offer free, quality, flexible early education and care for eligible 2 year olds in West Sussex. The current scheme has expanded to allow **40%** of all two year old children across West Sussex to take up free early education and care.

What does the funding pay for?

The funding pays for 570 hours per year of flexible early education and care. This is for a maximum of 15 hours per week over a minimum of 38 weeks per year.

Your child will be able to go to a pre-school, nursery or FE Childminder who are authorised to offer free places.

What are the benefits?

Research shows that attending good quality early education and care can make a difference for young children. It can improve a child's learning and development, help equip children with the skills needed for when they go to school, and support them to do well in the longer term.

Am I eligible?

Families need to meet certain criteria in order to apply for the Free Entitlement for 2 year olds.

You may be able to claim Free Entitlement for 2 year olds if your child is of eligible age **and** the parent/carer is also in receipt of one of the eligible benefits (please see over).

Eligibility criteria:

- Child is of eligible age

| An eligible child born on or between: | Can apply online from: | ...to access a free place at the start of the term beginning on or after: |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 April and 31 August | 1 April | September, following their second birthday |
| 1 September and 31 December | 1 September | January, following their second birthday |
| 1 January and 31 March | 1 January | April, following their second birthday |



➤ Child is of eligible age **and** you are in receipt of **one** of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit (and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)*



or

- they are a Child Looked After (where West Sussex County Council acts as the corporate parent)
- the child is adopted*
- the child has a Special Guardianship Order*
- the child has a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan
- the child has special educational needs or a disability (SEND). These children are eligible if the child:
 - receives Disability Living Allowance*
 - has a current statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHPC).*
 - is known to the Early Years PARM

*You will need to provide evidence when you apply.

How do I apply?

Apply online by visiting our website www.westsussex.gov.uk/freechildcare

Guidance notes on how to complete the online application form are also available on this web page under supporting documents.

If you need further assistance, please:

- Contact the Family Information Service on 01243 777807 or email family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk or
- Visit your local Children and Family Centre who will be able to assist you. To find out where your local Children and Family Centre is, visit <http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cfc>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Coverwell".

Julie Coverwell
Adviser
Early Childhood Service

