

Funding for early years education

Early years education (EYE) funding for two-year-old looked after children (LAC)

This national scheme allows two-year-old children in care to receive 15 hours of funded childcare from the term **after** their second birthday. This funding also applies to those children who have left care under an adoption order (AO), special guardianship order (SGO) or a child arrangement order (CAO). The funding will entitle the child to a maximum of 570 hours per year. Some childcare providers offer funded spaces for 38 weeks of the year. This means that you can use up to 15 hours of funding per week during term time, or you may wish to choose a childcare provider who can stretch the free hours across your child's funding year to cover most school holidays. The amount of funding you will use per week will be less than 15, but you are still entitled to 570 hours.

Childcare providers that offer two-year-old places will need to have an Ofsted rating of **good** or **outstanding** for an application to be made.

Since April 2024, EYPP has been paid directly to the setting for our two-year-old funded children.

Early years education (EYE) funding for three and four-year-olds

All three-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours of funded EYE the term after they turn three (new term dates: 1 January, 1 April and 1 September). All Ofsted registered school nursery classes, state or private nursery schools (including independent schools), day nurseries, playgroups or preschools and childminders can offer spaces. **They need to be approved by the local authority to deliver EYE.**



FACT

A social worker should apply for nursery and school places and make clear to the setting that the child is in care.

A place in a school nursery does not guarantee admission to school, and social workers must apply for a place at the school if they want the child to transfer to the reception class.

What other funding is there?

30 hours funding/extended hours for LAC

From September 2025, up to 30 hours of funded childcare for children aged **nine months to school age** can be applied for if certain criteria have been met:

- are all stakeholders (social worker, IRO, Virtual School, foster carer, health visitor) in agreement that attending a childminder, preschool or nursery outside of the home is in the child's best educational interest?
- Do foster carers (and partner if there is one) meet the [eligibility criteria](#) and work outside their fostering role?

The child's care plan needs to show that the child needs to access extended hours and that the foster carer (and partner, if applicable) **must** engage in paid work (minimum hours) outside of their fostering role.

Applications are made via the **Social Care team** and can be made up to 16 weeks prior to the child receiving the funding. Hours can only be taken up **the term after** the child is nine months/two and three-years-old. Further information for social workers can be found here: [C&F Policy and Resource Library \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
Search: **30 hours**

Early years pupil premium (EYPP)

EYPP funding is paid directly to the setting the term after a LAC child's second birthday. (From September 2024, EYPP will be expanded to children from nine months, provided they meet the eligibility criteria for extended hours.) The early years pupil premium funding (approx. £380 per year) ensures that inexperienced children make accelerated progress. In effect, EYPP is used to close the gap between the child's progress and their less disadvantaged peers. EYPP is paid directly to the setting. The use of EYPP is agreed upon and recorded at termly personal education plan (PEP) review meetings and must be linked with targets.

Additional information and guidance

Virtual School website:

www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school

Children and families policy & resource library (social care team link) – search **30 hours**:
<https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/Chil12220/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Hampshire County Council – EYE funding for eligible children:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/payingforchildcare/freechildcare/eyefunding>

Search for Hampshire Childcare Services:

<https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/family.page?familychannel=1>

Questions to ask ?

The questions to ask preschools, nurseries and childminders are:

- Is your setting rated **good** or **outstanding** by Ofsted?
- Do you take EYE funding?
- Have you had LAC children in this setting before?
- Do you have a designated lead (DL) for children in care in the setting? What are their contact details? When did the Virtual School train them?
- Do you offer stretched hours throughout the year, or are you term time only?
- What is your special education needs offer? How do you best support children with SEND?
- What kind of key person system do you run? Will the child have the same key adult caring for them and holding them in mind?
- Do you use electronic learning journeys or paper copies? (consider confidentiality and photographs)
- What additional fees or costs exist for a child attending this setting? (Ensure agreement is made and recorded over who will pay the additional costs, the foster carer or the social care team?)

During your visit, note the outside area and how the children can always access it. Look to see if most of the equipment is open-ended. Wooden blocks can be made into anything with some imagination. A wooden pirate ship will always be a wooden pirate ship. Do the staff make you feel welcome? Does the room display children's work from their imaginations? Are there small spaces or dens for one or two children to use so that they can have their own space if needed?

EYPP – considerations and questions to ask:

Needs, views, priorities

How is the pupil doing at school?
Where are they in terms of progress & attainment?
What are their priority needs?
What are the views of the child, parent/carer, school and social worker?

Targets, plan, spending

Ensure that:
The PEP is needs led, outcome focused with SMART targets.
EYPP is used to address, plan and action.
Actions, support and interventions are delivered successfully.

Monitor, record, celebrate

Monitor, record & celebrate progress, success & achievements

FAQs

Can a child attend preschool/nursery/childminder after they are due to start school?

Yes, a child can defer or decelerate and attend an EYE setting until the term after they turn five. The setting that the child attends will need to complete a form and submit it to [Services for Young Children](#) (SfYC).

What does deferment mean? Deferring school entry allows the child to begin school after the academic year begins but still join their peer group. This could mean anything from missing one term to missing the whole reception year and starting school in year one. Social workers should consult with the Virtual School and the child's school to ensure that the child's needs are met.

What does deceleration mean?

For summer-born children, a request can be made for them to be admitted to Year R in September after they turn five – a year later than they would usually start school. You must get approval from the admission authority for each school you wish to apply for. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another. The social worker must discuss any deceleration requests with the Virtual School team to explain further implications.

Can someone help me to choose a preschool or nursery?

Yes – before you make an application, the Virtual School is on hand to help with finding a good or outstanding setting for LAC. There is also advice on the [Hampshire County Council website](#)

Does funding entitlement for two-three- and four-year-olds change if their education setting is in another county? Universal funding remains the same, but the application process may vary. Contact the Virtual School for support to discuss education and funding for other local authorities.