

Free Childcare For Working Parents 2025/26

Your child will be able to claim from the term after they are eligible and have received a valid eligibility code, whichever is later. Term start dates are 1st September, 1st January and 1st April.

To keep your 15 or 30 hours childcare place you need to check your details are up to date every 3 months.

Eligibility criteria can be found [here](#)

The current funding rates (September 2025) we get from Ealing are as follows:

9 months - 2 years	£12.27
2-3 years	£8.50
3+ years	£5.52

Funded hours are 15/30 hours per week, 38 weeks per year. To keep invoices consistent over the whole 52 weeks we stretch the funding, so 30 hours over 38 weeks becomes 21.92 hours over 52 weeks.

You will need to be responsible for getting your codes and remembering to confirm details. One month before your child starts funded hours, you will receive an email from "Funding Loop". All you need to do is fill in the required details and your eligibility code, and upload proof of d.o.b. automatically. Funding Loop default is 15 hours, so if you are accessing 30 hours please toggle to yes where it says, "I have a valid Extended Hours Reference".

The DfE also have a blog post which covers all of the above and has an FAQ, and HMRC have a childcare service helpline - 0300 123 4097

The government requires that:

1. Funding must be delivered as free hours only
2. Funding only covers basic care - meals, consumables, and enrichment are considered optional extras.
3. Parents must be allowed to "opt out" of paying for meals and extras
4. Invoices must itemize all voluntary charges clearly.

As the funding only covers the basics, we have to charge a small meals/consumables fee for our 2-4 year old funded children. The under 2 funding rate is high enough to cover all our costs.

Opting Out Of Additional Charges (2,3,4 year olds)

By law, we must offer the option to opt out of meals and extras. However, opting out has significant practical implications:

1. **Meals & Snacks** – You would need to bring a daily cold packed lunch that meets our allergy and nutrition policy. We do not have the space to store hot or cold food, so this would need to be brought in at lunchtime and teatime to follow our food hygiene guidelines.
2. **Extracurricular Activities** – Your child would miss out on:
 - Football, Drama and Gymnastics lessons
 - Duck hatching, Caterpillar/Butterfly kits, Halloween/Christmas/Easter parties,
 - Trips and Outings
3. **Consumables** – Parents would need to provide suncream, crafting supplies, breakfast snack, lunch, tea.

As a full-year nursery, all children attend well beyond the funded hours. Opting out does not result in a free place, it only reduces what your child can access. If you are considering opting out, please speak to Management to discuss the practical implications.

We have a very easy to use fee and funding calculator on our [website](#). Any questions please let us know!