

Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE)

A guide for Parents and Carers

What is FEEE?

FEEE is a national government scheme which allows working parents / carers of children aged 9-months to 4-years-old free childcare. If your child is:

9 months to 2-years-old, you can get 15 hours per week of free childcare for a maximum of 38 term time weeks or up to 570 hours annually – please see the [funding for 9 month to 2 year old children](#) website page. (From September 2025, this will increase to 30 hours per week.)

3 to 4 years old, you can get 30 hours per week of free childcare for a maximum of 38 term time weeks or up to 1,140 hours annually – please see the [Funding for 3 and 4 year old children](#) website page.

All [3 and 4-year-olds in England](#) are entitled to 15 hours of free early education or childcare per week, known as the universal entitlement.

Parents / carers may be eligible to get 15 hours free childcare if they have a [2-year-old](#) and are in receipt of certain benefits. You can find out more about the 2 year old funding and whether you may be eligible by visiting the [funding for 9 month to 2 year old children](#) website page.

The table below confirms when a child can take up their funded place:

A child born between:	Will be eligible for a funded place from:
1 April and 31 August	The start of the autumn period (from the 1st September) following them reaching 9 months old or their 2 nd or 3 rd birthday, if eligible, until statutory school age.
1 September and 31 December	The start of the spring period (from the 1st January) following them reaching 9 months old or their 2 nd or 3 rd birthday, if eligible, until statutory school age.
1 January and 31 March	The start of the summer period (from the 1st April) following them reaching 9 months old or their 2 nd or 3 rd birthday, if eligible, until statutory school age.

Why should I use the FEEE?

When your child attends an early years provider, they will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is a play-based curriculum. Children will learn how to develop their social, physical, speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and will learn through mathematical

and creative activities. Access to high quality early education and childcare can give your child the best possible start and prepares them for starting school. Your chosen setting will create a learning journey detailing their progress and achievements, this should be shared with you throughout their time at the provision and can be used to aid transition into school or between providers.

Where can I access FEEE?

There are different types of provisions available including full day care nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups, out of school care and childminders. Staff are trained and qualified to care for your child, helping them to learn and develop.

All providers offering the FEEE will be registered with Ofsted or a Childminding Agency and be on the Local Authority's Directory of Early Years Providers.

Leicestershire's Family Information Directory is a free and impartial service that can help you choose the right kind of place for your child and provide you with the contact details of settings in your area. For more information you should access the online directory here: [find a childcare provider](#).

Are there any restrictions on accessing the funding?

Please be aware the following restrictions apply when accessing your funded hours:

- no more than 10 hours in any one day.
- no access before 6.00am or after 8.00pm.
- funded time can be accrued throughout the day and does not have to be taken in a single block of time.
- no more than 2 providers should be accessed in 1 day.
- Funding can be accessed 7 days a week.

You should also remember that whilst your early years provider will do their best to support your needs, they may not meet all the requirements above (i.e., they may not be open 6am – 8pm or at weekends) and you may not always be offered your full entitlement at the times you want or at the provider of your choice.

Although you can split your funding over more than 1 provision, please be aware that you must not claim more than your entitlement. If there is a combined claim for more than the hours you are entitled to, the local authority will decide how to pay each provider, and you may find that you are charged for any additional hours taken over and above the free entitlement at one of the provisions.

What do I need to do to get the funding?

If you are eligible for the 2-year-old funding for families who are receiving some additional form of government support, you will need to give your childcare provider a voucher code. This is a reference number you are given once you have completed an online check, via the [Leicestershire Parent Portal](#). To view more information about 2-year funding, please visit the [funding for 9 month to 2 year old children](#) website page.

If you are eligible for the Working Parent Entitlement you will need to give your childcare provider your National Insurance number and a DERN number. This is a reference number you are given once you have completed an online check via www.childcarechoices.gov.uk. For more information about the Working Parent Entitlement, please visit one of the following website pages: [Funding for 3 and 4 year old children](#) or the [funding for 9 month to 2 year old children](#).

Once you have decided which provision you would like your child to attend and have negotiated the hours, you will be asked to complete and sign a Parental Statement of Undertaking (PSOU) and provide the setting with proof of your child's age i.e. a document such as birth certificate, passport or medical card. The provider will then claim the funding on your behalf. The information you provide on the PSOU will be used by the local authority and, when relevant, its partners. Your personal information will be held securely and will be used only for local authority purposes.

Do I need to pay anything upfront?

The FEEE funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week. The 15 or 30 hours must be able to be accessed free of charge as there must not be any mandatory charges in relation to the free hours. The FEEE funding is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. Therefore, you should ensure that you talk to your provider about how you are going to access your funded hours and any extra services you will be accessing, and the costs associated with these.

Providers can charge for the following extras in connection with the free hours, but these charges must be voluntary:

- consumables, such as nappies or sun cream
- meals and snacks
- extra optional activities such as events, celebrations, specialist tuition (for example music classes or foreign languages) or other activities that are not directly related or necessary for the effective delivery of the EYFS statutory framework

Providers can also charge you for any additional, private paid hours according to their usual terms and conditions provided taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing your free place.

Providers should show you their own policies on providing you with options for alternatives to additional charges, such as a packed lunch policy. This policy must offer reasonable alternatives that allow you to access the entitlement for free, including allowing you to supply your own, or waiving the cost of these items.

You may be asked to provide a refundable deposit to secure your place. Your provider will set this cost and outline when the deposit will be reimbursed. If you decide not to take up a place at a setting after the deposit has been paid, the provider does not have to return it.

Can I access the FEEE in the holiday periods?

You may be able to access what is called a stretched offer. This is where you take less hours during term time and utilise some of your entitlement in the holiday periods. If this is something you are interested in doing you should talk to your provider about what they can offer you, as not all providers will be able or willing to support a stretched offer.

Is there any additional support for my child if they have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)?

If your child has SEND you may be able to access additional support, please visit [SEND - Extra help for preschool children](#). You should speak to your provider for further clarification, if needed.

What about starting school?

Legally, your child does not have to start school until he or she is of compulsory school age which is the term after your child turns 5. You can still receive the FEEE until this point.

Once your child is attending school (even on a part time basis), your childcare provider will no longer be eligible to claim for the FEEE on your behalf. This also applies to out of county schools who may take children at different entry points.

For more information on schools admissions, please visit the [School Admissions](#) website.