

Early Years Funding at Stepping Stones Nursery

Depending on the age of your child and if you meet the eligibility criteria, the government will fund a proportion of your childcare costs. This is known as the Early Years Funded Entitlement.

Am I eligible to receive funding?

There are 2 categories of funding - Working Families funding, and funding for families who don't meet the Working Families eligibility criteria:

Working Families	Parents who don't meet the Working Families eligibility criteria
September 2025 30 hours of funded childcare for all children aged 9 months+	Universal funding 15 hours of funded childcare for 3 & 4 year olds Early Learning funding - Parents of 2-year-olds already receiving some additional forms of Government support receive 15 hours of funded childcare from the Local Authority

Some families may be eligible for both the Early Learning funding for 2-year olds and 2 year old Working Families funding, up to a maximum of 30 hours per week.

You can stretch your funding allowance across 51 weeks of the year, which is 22 hours per week for Working Families funding, and 11 hours per week for Universal and Early Learning funding for 2-year-olds.

You can check whether you are eligible for Working Families funding online: [Am I eligible for Working Families Funding?](#)

When does my child become eligible for funding?

Children become eligible for a funded place depending on when their birthday is:

9 months to 4-year-old Working Families funding	
Child's birthday	Child becomes eligible
1 st April to 30 th June	Term starting in April after turning 9 months old
1 st July to 30 th November	Term starting in September after turning 9 months old
1 st December to 31 st March	Term starting in January after turning 9 months old
2-year-old Local Authority funding	
Child's birthday	Child becomes eligible
1 st April to 31 st August	Term starting on or after 1 st September
1 st September to 31 st December	Term starting on or after 1 st January
1 st January to 31 st March	Term starting on or after 1 st April
3- and 4-year-old Universal funding	
Child's birthday	Child becomes eligible
1 st April to 31 st August	Term starting on or after 1 st September
1 st September to 31 st December	Term starting on or after 1 st January
1 st January to 31 st March	Term starting on or after 1 st April

For 2, 3 and 4 year Universal and Working families funding, funding can only be used from the start of the term following your child reaching the specified age (this means you cannot start to claim funding part way through a term but will need to wait for the start of the next term).

When can I use my funded hours?

We are open from 7:30am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, and funding is available for a total of 5.5 hours per day, between 10am and 3.30pm. These are our session times:

Session times	Total hours	Funded hours	Paid hours *
7.30am -1pm	5.5 hours	3 hours	2.5 hours
7.30am – 3.30pm	8 hours	5.5 hours	2.5 hours
7.30am – 6pm	10.5 hours	5.5 hours	5 hours
8am – 1pm	5 hours	3 hours	2 hours
8am – 3.30pm	7.5 hours	5.5 hours	2 hours
8am – 6pm	10 hours	5.5 hours	4.5 hours
1pm – 6pm	5 hours	2.5 hours	2.5 hours

* An hourly rate of £8 will be applied to these times.

Early Years Funded Entitlement (EYFE)-only sessions

We also offer a limited number of Early Years Funded Entitlement-only sessions, as follows:

Session times	Total hours	Funded hours	Paid hours
10am – 3.30pm	FE-only x 2, 3 or 4, all-year round	Up to 22 hours	0
1pm – 6pm	FE-only x maximum 3, term-time only	Up to 15 hours	0
8am - 6pm	FE-only x maximum 3, term-time only	Up to 30 hours	0

These will be limited and reviewed on a termly basis.

For all sessions, meals will be provided by Zebedees at an additional cost of £4.90 for breakfast and lunch, and £2.10 for tea (there is an extra supplement for dietary meals). Alternatively, you have the option to provide meals for your child. These must be strictly in line with our Dietary policy.

How to claim your Early Years Funding Entitlement:

For Working Families Funding (children from 9 months to 4 years)

If you are eligible for Working Families funding, you will first need to apply for your eligibility code.

Apply online: [How to apply for Working Families Funding](#)

You **must** apply for your code by the end of the month before the new term starts, otherwise you will not be able to access your funding for that term:

Term	Term starts	When to apply
Autumn	On or after 1 st September	Before 31 st August
Spring	On or after 1 st January	Before 31 st December
Summer	On or after 1 st April	Before 31 st March

Once you have your code, please email it to us, along with your National Insurance Number so that we can check it for you. During the term before you are eligible, we will ask you to complete and sign an Early Years Funded Entitlement Parent Declaration form and include your eligibility code on the form.

For 3- and 4-year-old Universal funding:

If you do not contact us with a funding code, we will assume that you are going to use Universal funding only, and during the term before you are eligible, we will ask you to complete and sign an Early Years Funded Entitlement Parent Declaration form so that we can claim your funding.

For 2-year-old Early Learning funding:

If you are eligible for Early Learning 2-year-old funding, you must inform us as soon as possible, and show us the letter of confirmation. We will ask you to complete and sign an Early Years Funded Entitlement Parent Declaration form.

Please note that in all cases, if we do not receive a completed Parent Declaration form, signed by date specified, we will not be able to claim funding on your behalf and this will result in you paying full fees.

Please note:

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to apply for 2- and 3-4-year funding codes and to ensure the code is passed on to us so that we can claim the funding. You must obtain this code before the deadline for the term before you wish to start claiming funding. **It is also the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure the code is checked and renewed online at least every 3 months, otherwise funding will be withdrawn.**

You should receive reminders directly from HMRC to do this. If you no longer meet the eligibility criteria for Working Families or Early Learning 2-year-old funding, you must let us know as soon as possible so that we can discuss how your nursery fees will be impacted.

What if my child also attends another childcare provider?

You may split your funding between us and another provider. If you wish to do this, you must inform us and enter the details of the other provider on your Parent Declaration form. You will also need to complete a form for the other provider. The total number of hours claimed across both settings cannot exceed your maximum entitlement (570 hours per 12-month period for '15 hours' claims, or 1140 hours per 12-month period for '30 hours' claims). In the rare circumstances that this occurs, your child will either need to not attend for the additional hours that are above the maximum limit, or you would need to pay for the extra time above the maximum limit.

What if I lose eligibility for Working Families funding?

If your circumstances change and you become ineligible for Working Families funding, you will receive a "grace period" which means that you can keep your funding for a short period. Once that period has expired, the funding for 9-months+ to 2-year-olds will end, and 3- and 4-year-olds will be reduced to Universal funding.

What if I want to change the sessions my child attends?

If you would like to change the sessions your child attends, you must discuss this with the Nursery Manager, and complete one of our Permanent Change of Sessions forms, giving at least 4 weeks' notice. Please note that changes to agreed funded hours cannot be made during a term but can be changed from the start of the new term. You must complete a new Parent Declaration form detailing the new sessions and funded hours to be claimed.

What if my child is absent from Nursery?

If your child is unable to attend nursery (for example, due to short-term sickness, medical appointments or a holiday), your funded hours during these times cannot be accrued to use at another time.

What happens to our funding if we leave Stepping Stones?

If a child leaves and transfers to a different setting during a term, your funding can be transferred to the new setting. If you leave us at the end of a term and your child is starting at a new provider at the start of the next term, the new setting will simply be able to claim your funding for that new term as per their usual procedures. Please note that all leavers must be in line with our notice period of 4 weeks.

What is the Disability Access Fund (DAF)?

Children who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and are receiving EYFE are eligible for the Disability Access Fund (DAF).

DAF is a funding entitlement which can support Stepping Stones as a setting to make adjustments for children who access DLA. We can utilise this in a variety of ways including:

- Provide extra training for staff
- Buy specific resources to support individual children
- Provide opportunities for smaller group/individual time for activities

DAF is paid to the nominated provider of your choice as a fixed annual rate of £938 per eligible child. Funding is **not** transferable between settings. You must provide us with a **copy** (no originals) of your child's current DLA award letter in order for us to claim DAF. You must also complete the DAF part of the funding form.

What is the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)?

We are able to claim additional supplements up to a maximum £570 a year for children who meet Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) eligibility criteria, depending on the total number of yearly funded hours claimed. Your eligibility is checked using your National Insurance (NI) number or National Asylum Support Service (NASS) number. By providing these details you are granting WSCC permission to check your EYPP eligibility with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and award EYPP plus an additional supplement if appropriate.

Can I combine different forms of support?

- The Universal Credit and Tax-Free Childcare schemes can be combined with the Early Years Funded Entitlement. See www.beststartinlife.gov.uk for more information about this.
- If you receive Local Authority Funding, you may also be eligible for an additional 15 hours of funding under the Working Families entitlement, depending on your circumstances. See [Best Start in Life Eligibility Checker](#) for more information.

Useful Information

- Each term, WSCC set a date known as 'Headcount Day', and children must be in attendance at Stepping Stones before this date in order for us to claim your funding. Headcount Day dates will be communicated to you each academic year.
- If your address or contact details change you **must** advise us and complete a form so that we can update your Early Years Funding Entitlement record.

- The West Sussex County Council Family Information Service has a website with further information, please click here to access: [West Sussex FIS](#), and also a Facebook page: @FISWestSussex.

Related policies:

- Admissions
- Dietary including allergy protocol
- Sun Care
- Fees

Date of policy	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>July 2025</i>	<i>E Keller</i>	<i>July 2026</i>
<i>Updated Oct 2025</i>	<i>E Keller</i>	<i>July 2026</i>
<i>Updated March 2026</i>	<i>E Keller</i>	<i>July 2026</i>