

Stepping Stones Nursery Free Entitlement Policy

What Free Entitlement funding is offered at Stepping Stones Nursery?

We offer Universal '15 hour' funding for all 3 and 4 year-olds and Extended '30 hour' funding for children whose families are eligible.

We also offer '15 hour' 2-year-old funding to children whose families meet the eligibility criteria.

You can check whether you are eligible for 2 year old or 3 and 4 year-old Extended funding by going to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk where you will find information and details of how to apply.

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

2 year old funding	
Child's birthday	Child becomes eligible
1 st April to 31 st August	1 st September after their 2 nd birthday
1 st September to 31 st December	1 st January after their 2 nd birthday
1 st January to 31 st March	1 st April after their 2 nd birthday
3 and 4 year old funding	
Child's birthday	Child becomes eligible
1 st April to 31 st August	1 st September after their 3 rd birthday
1 st September to 31 st December	1 st January after their 3 rd birthday
1 st January to 31 st March	1 st April after their 3 rd birthday

How does Stepping Stones Nursery operate the Free Entitlement funding?

The Government funds children for 15 hours per week, term-time only (38 weeks per year). As we are open all-year round (except for 1 week at Christmas), we also offer this funding on a "stretched" basis, meaning that you can use 11 hours of funding per week for 51 weeks per year. Some 2 year old, and all 3 and 4 year-old children are entitled to this funding.

Depending on their eligibility, some families of 3 and 4 year-olds are eligible to receive an additional 15 hours of funding per week (a total of 30 hours per week term-time only), and in a similar way we offer this all year round, equalling 22 hours per week.

When can you use your funded hours?

We are open from 7:30am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, and funding is available for a total of 6.5 hours per day:

Morning	8.30am – 12pm	Afternoon	1pm – 4pm
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Funding is not available for the following hours:

Early Morning	7.30am – 8am	Lunch	12pm - 1pm
Morning	8am – 8.30am	Afternoon	4pm – 6pm

An hourly rate of £6.40 is applied to these times, plus the cost of a hot lunch.

There are a limited number of Free-Entitlement only sessions which are available from 1pm to 6pm, term-time only (up to a maximum of 3 sessions per week). For these sessions, tea will be provided by

Zebedees at a cost of £1.75 (or £1.86 for dietary meals). Alternatively, you have the option to provide tea for your child. This must be in line with our healthy eating and dietary policies.

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR FUNDING:

For eligible 2 year olds:

You will need to advise us that you are eligible for 2-year funding as soon as possible and give us the 2-year funding code that you have been given by WSCC. We will ask you to complete a Parent Declaration form and you will be required to bring in your child's birth certificate or passport for us record the reference number.

For 3 and 4 year-old '15 hours' funding:

During the term before you are eligible, we will ask you to complete a Parent Declaration form. You will be required to bring in your child's original birth certificate or passport for us record the reference number.

For 3 and 4 year-olds eligible for '30 hours' funding:

During the term before you are eligible, we will ask you to complete a Parent Declaration form. You will be required to bring in your child's original birth certificate or passport for us record the reference number.

You will also need to provide your 30-hour eligibility code on the form. **It is the parent/carer's responsibility to apply for the code via www.childcarechoices.gov.uk** 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 at least every 3 months, otherwise funding will be withdrawn.** If you no longer meet the eligibility criteria for 30 hours 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.

Useful Information

- A child may move to another setting during the term, and their funding can be transferred to the new setting. However please note that this must be in line with our notice period of 4 weeks.
- 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. 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.
- If your address or contact details change you must advise us so that we can update your Free Entitlement record.