



A quick guide to childcare costs

All about our fees and funding

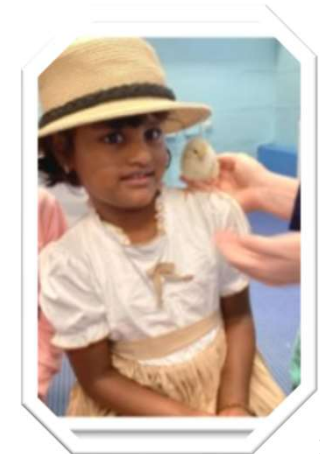


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Welcome to Hatchlings Childcare

Your child's early years are so important, we are here to give every child the best start in life, we are also here to offer support and guidance along the way for parents too. So when it comes to funding, you may find you need a little help to guide you.

Whether you are new to our nursery or already part of the Hatchlings Childcare family, there are a few ways to help fund your childcare. Sometimes it can be tricky to get to grips with all the options available, so we have put together this information pack to guide you through.

This will explain the government's 15 and 30 hours free childcare schemes and will help you work out all the fees and funding.



Government funding explained

Understanding childcare funding:-

There are two government funding programmes; you can claim 15 or 30 funded hours per week, depending on your circumstances and child's age.

Working families funded childcare for children aged 9 months to 4 years

From September 2025, 15 hours for eligible working families expanded to 30 hours, meaning eligible working parents can now apply for 30 hours of childcare from the term after their child turns 9 months until they reach school age.

Parents Criteria

- Earnings over next 3 months you and your partner (if you have one) must each expect to earn the equivalent to the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week on average.
- Must each earn less than £100,000 a year
 - If you're living with your partner you'll need to apply together
 - Can be on sick leave or parental leave
- Might still be eligible while claiming benefits

The funded hours are provided across 51 weeks (stretched) 30 hrs = 22.35 hrs, unless your child attends our term time preschool Dragons Nest – where funding will be provided up to 30 hours for 38 weeks.

Parents need to check eligibility, as your immigration status, where your child lives, and your child's exact age could affect your claim. You can read more about this on the government website: www.beststartinlife.gov.uk and check whether you're eligible.

Universal funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds

- All 3 and 4 year olds who live in England are entitled to this offer irrespective of income levels, benefit status, or family circumstances. This funding goes towards 15 hrs of childcare across 51 weeks of the term (stretched = 11.18 hrs per week) or 38 weeks (15 hrs per week) in our term time only preschool – Dragons Nest. If parents need their child to spend longer in nursery than funding allows, we offer additional, non-funded hours to fit in with your schedule — see our fees page for further details.
- You may also be eligible for 15 hrs funded childcare at the same time as other government schemes or incentives. To find out more, visit www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

2 year olds in receipt of government support (working families)

The scheme may also be offered to those 2 year olds in receipt of government support:-

- Parents are receiving certain benefits
- The child has Disability Living Allowance or Special Education Needs (SEND)
- The child has a kinship or guardianship order
- The child is being looked after by a local authority

Please speak with a member of the Nursery Management Team or the Community Office for more information.

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15 Hours Funded (Universal)

= 11.18 hrs funded childcare stretched over 51 weeks

The funding covers 11.18 hrs of childcare across 51 weeks of the year. **All** parents of 3 and 4 year olds can access the scheme:

- **All** 3 and 4 year olds qualify for the scheme.
- Working families of 9+ months are eligible.
- Stretched hours over the 51 weeks the nursery is open or 15 hrs in Dragons Nest over 38 weeks.
- Parents are offered additional non-funded hours to accommodate their work schedule – see our fees page for more details.
- You could be eligible for 15 hrs funded childcare at the same time as other government schemes or incentives. Visit the Government's website www.beststartinlife.gov.uk to find out more.
- Any food packages are not covered by government funding and parents will be invoiced for these.



We also offer the scheme to some 2 year olds, if:

- Parents are receiving certain benefits
- The child is claiming Disability Living Allowance or has Special Education Needs (SEND)
- The child is being looked after by the local authority



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30 Hours Funded (Working Families)

= 22.35 hrs funded childcare stretched over 51 weeks

This scheme is only available for working parents of children 9 months - 4 years and offers 30 hrs each week (38 weeks) which equates to 22.35 hrs across 51 weeks of the year.

- Parents should be working equivalent at least 16 hours a week.
- Must each earn less than £100,000 a year.
- Parents may still be eligible whilst claiming benefits.
- Parents are offered additional non-funded hours to accommodate their work schedule – see our fees page for more details.
- Any food packages are not covered by government funding and parents will be invoiced for these.
- More info can be found on the Government website - www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

Government funding at a glance

Take a look at the table below for a summary of each type of funding:-

Need some help?

Talk to us – we will explain how the funding can be applied for and how it works.

Check the government website:

To find out more and understand how funding works or to find out about government schemes and incentives, visit

www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

September 2025 Entitlement		9 months-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-4 yrs
	All parents			15 hrs
	Working Families	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs
	Families in receipt of government support		15 hrs	

- Some funding could be eligible alongside other Government schemes – visit www.beststartinlife.gov.uk for more information.
- You will not be charged for funded hours, but you will be charged for any additional hours and any meal packages.
- All hours will be stretched over 51 weeks which equates to 30 hrs = 22.35 hrs per week / 15 hrs = 11.18 hrs per week.
- Only our Term Time Pre School (Dragons Nest) runs for 38 weeks and offers the 30 hrs or 15 hrs per week option.

Our Fees

Government funding only pays for a limited number of hours at Nursery, it doesn't cover meals or snacks. We'll ask you to pay for these along with any non-funded hours booked.

Here is what to expect:

Funded hours



15 hours or 30 hours, which is stretched across 51 weeks

Non-funded hours



Any additional hours that cover the rest of your child's time in nursery

Combined fees



This is how much you'll pay for that session/day/weeks shown on your invoice

Meal package



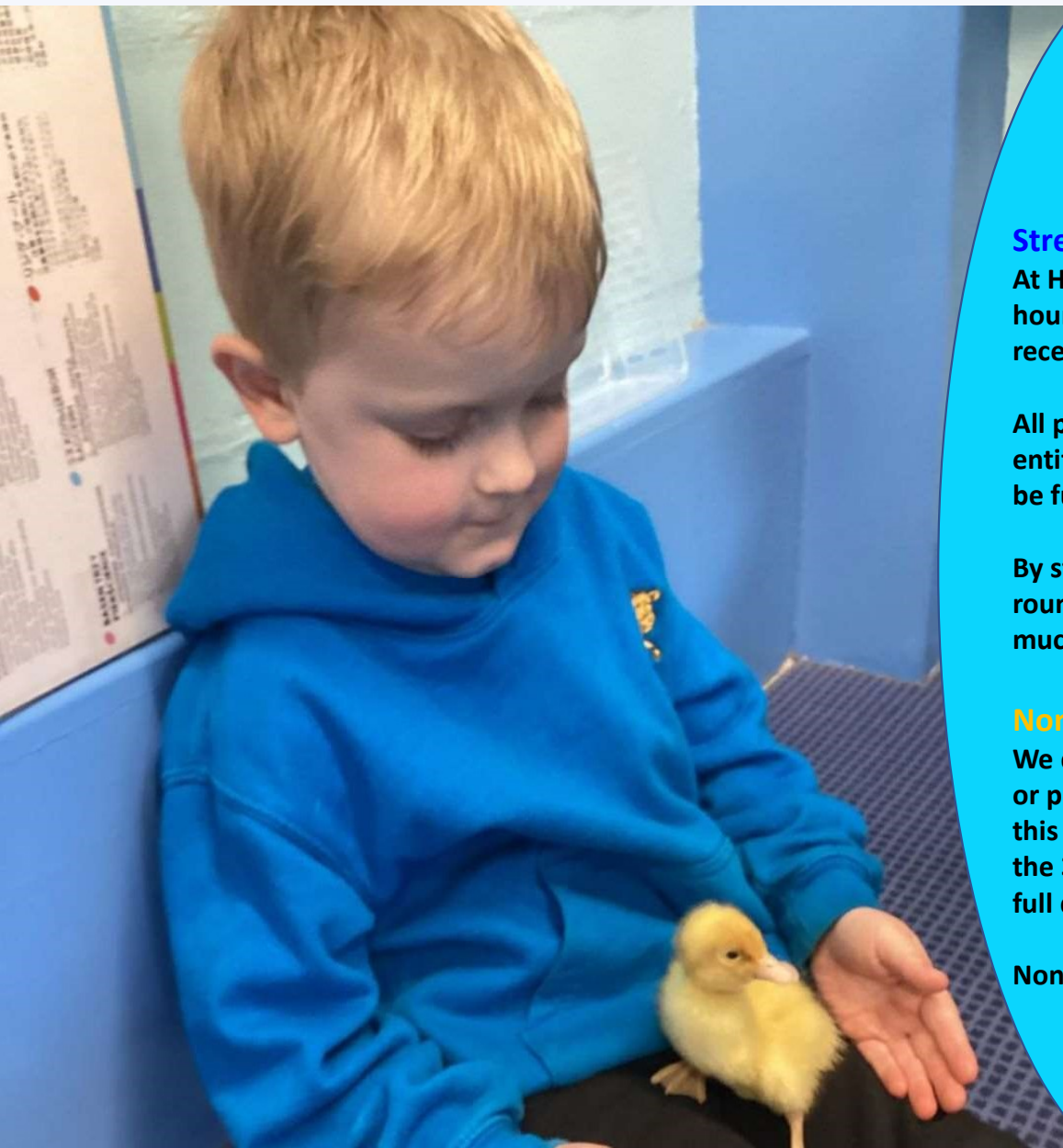
A meal package will be charged per funded day or pro rata for part of a funded day

Hourly rate for non-funded hours



The charge for additional hours which are not covered by funding





Stretched & Non Funded Hours

Stretched Hours

At Hatchlings Childcare we offer stretched funding - so your 15 hours are stretched hours across the whole year = 11.18 hrs per week, while those with 30 hrs could receive 22.35 hrs per week.

All parents eligible for the 15 or 30 hour options are entitled to their full entitlement of funded hours, e.g. attends 2 full days @ 10 hrs per day = 20 hrs will be fully funded for 20 hrs + chargeable lunch costs.

By stretched hours your child will get into a routine and will benefit from all year-round care, and your fees will stay very similar throughout the year making it much easier to manage your money.

Non-Funded Hours

We don't offer childcare by the hour, so your hours must cover a full day or an am or pm session. For an example if you received 22.35 hrs funding across the week this would give you 2 full days at 10 hrs per day leaving 2.35 hrs to be funded for the 3rd day, and the remainder of the day would be charged for as a non-funded full day pro rata (less the 2.35 hrs).

Non-funded hours are charged at our standard rate.

Whatever days you choose for your child to attend, you can expect the same pattern of hours each week, which gives your child consistency and routine.

How it will look for you

Now that you have an understanding of the government funding and fees, here's an example of how it works together. Here are a couple of the most popular scenarios to give you a clearer idea of how funding works at Hatchlings Childcare.

1 x Full Day

Entitled to 15 hours funding stretched funding x 51 weeks for a full day (10 hrs) from 8am-6pm (10 hrs)



Funded hours

1 full day @ 10 hrs
No cost to parents



Non-funded hours

No non-funded hours as all 10 hrs covered by funding entitlement



Food package (extra's)

Charged as per daily food package rate for 1 x funded day

2 x Full Days

Entitled to 30 hours funding stretched funding x 51 weeks for a full day (10 hrs) 8am-6pm (20 hrs)



Funded hours

2 full days @ 10 hrs
No cost to parents



Non-funded Hours

No non-funded hours as all 20 hrs covered by funding entitlement



Food package (extra's)

Charged as per daily food package rate for 2 x funded days

3 x Full Days

30 hours stretched funding x 51 weeks for a full day (10 hours) 8am-6pm (22.35 hrs)



Funded hours

2 days @ 10 hrs = 20 hrs
3rd day = 2.35 hrs
No cost to parents



Non-funded Hours

7.65 hrs chargeable according to the rate of the session



Food package (extra's)

Charged as per daily food package rate for 2 x funded days + 2 hrs of the part funded day

Full Time Place

Stretched funding x 51 weeks for 50 hours over 5 days from 8am-6pm(22.35 hrs)



Funded hours

22.35 hrs – No cost to parents



Non-funded hours

27.65 hrs chargeable according to the rate of the session (These hrs include the food package)



Food package (extra's)

Charged as per daily food package rate for 2 x funded days + 2 hrs of the part funded day

How to apply for funding

How and when you need to apply for your childcare funding will depend on your child's age, and when their birthday falls, so it makes sense to plan ahead. For working families funding you will need to apply online for an eligibility code.

Working families funding When your child becomes eligible		Universal funded childcare	
Recommended time to apply for your eligibility code:	Can be funded from:	A child turning 3 between:	Can be funded from:
15 th October to 30 th November	By 31 st December to be funded in Spring Term	1 st September to 31 st December	1 st January (Spring)
15 th January to 28 th February	By 31 st March to be funded in Summer Term	1 st January to 31 st March	1 st April (Summer)
15 th June to 31 st July	By 31 st August to be funded in Autumn Term	1 st April to 31 st August	1 st September (Autumn)

Universal/Extended/Expanded funded childcare

We will provide you with the relevant paperwork to claim your funding and ask to see your child's birth certificate or passport as proof of your eligibility.

For 2 year olds already in receipt of government support (Early Learning for 2 Yr Olds), you must get written confirmation from your local authority first. Then, pass this onto the Nursery management team and if eligible, your funding will start the term following application.

Working family funded childcare

The process is a little more detailed for the working family funding and takes around 20 minutes. See the guide below:

- Visit the government website: [Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk), provide your supporting documents.
- Apply for your eligibility code. You'll need your National Insurance number too, remember to reconfirm your eligibility every three months.
- Submit your code on the application form we have provided along with all the information requested and return to us by the date stated.
- We will be in touch should we need any further information from you.

Don't forget! Every three months, sign into your HMRC childcare account to reconfirm your working family funding eligibility code. If you forget, you could lose your funding for the following term, which means you'll have to pay our standard fee for any time that isn't covered by the funding scheme.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do Hatchlings Childcare offer totally free places?

Yes, we call these funded places not free. There would be an additional charge for our food package.

How many hours can my child be funded for each day?

This would depend on the number of funded hours you are entitled to and how often your child attends nursery.

We don't offer childcare by the hour, your child's funding is applied pro rata across the sessions with a full day being 10 hours.

You will receive a monthly invoice in arrears showing you the funded hours as well as the chargeable hours, non-funded hours and food package cost for the funded hours.

Am I able to carry over my 15 or 30 funded hours into the next term?

No, due to Local Authority restrictions we are not permitted to roll over your hours.

I've missed the deadline to apply for my eligible code. Can my child still be funded?

If 3+ years your child will only be eligible for 15 hours, because it's available to all children 3+ yrs, regardless of whether parents are working.

Your code will only provide funding in the term after you apply. HMRC may prompt you to reconfirm your code before the start of the new term, please remember to do this to stay eligible – set yourself a reminder each term prior to the deadline dates.

If I book a session and my child is ill can I be refunded?

No, we have to ensure we are adequately staffed to accommodate all those children booked in to ensure the high-quality care for every child attending. However, you will not be charged for your food package for any funded hours when absent.

You will be charged for your non-funded hours.

Can I provide my child with a packed lunch?

Yes, but due to other children's allergies etc we do have restrictions on what is permitted, further info will be provided by the Childcare team. We recommend children have our healthy and varied food, which we cater for special dietary requirements, allergies, cultural food etc – all cooked in the school's kitchen on site, so every child can look forward to a variety of tasty food.

I am planning to take my child on holiday. How will this affect my funded childcare?

If you're planning on being on holiday, please provide us with as much notice as possible to ensure the Nursery is staffed accordingly. You will not be charged for your food package for any funded hours.

You will be charged for your non-funded hours whilst on holiday to ensure that your place is retained.



Can I change the hours my child attends nursery?

This will be subject to availability and in accordance with our terms and conditions.

Some changes could affect your child's funding claim and will depend on the hours involved and when the changes are requested, they may not be permitted until the start of the new funding term.

Helpful Information

If you need any further guidance, support or information, please look at the links below:-

Government website:-

Provides you with information on the government funding childcare schemes and how to set up your account:-

[Sign in to your childcare account - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Best Start in Life:-

Covers funding and tax-free childcare accounts

www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

HMRC helpline:-

Call 0300 123 4097 for advice and questions you may have about funded childcare or your 30 hour code.



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