



LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT



IMPORTANCE OF EARLY YEARS PROVISIONS

A child's early years are the foundation for development, providing a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities, including cognitive and social development.

There is evidence that if a child attends a high-quality early education provider it benefits their:

- ❖ social skills
- ❖ physical skills
- ❖ thinking skills
- ❖ communication skills
- ❖ And helps them prepare for school



2 YEAR OLD FUNDING



Eligible two-year-olds are entitled to a total of 15 hours of free early education for 38 weeks a year (term time only). This adds up to 570 hours per year.

Parents can find out if they are eligible on the [Merton directory](#).

If eligible, parents will be provided with a unique reference code. This will then need to be given to the chosen childcare provider to enable them to offer the free place.

Children who are eligible can take up a free place the term after their second birthday.

Child born between	Can take up a free place from the funding period starting
1 January and 31 March	1 April
1 April and 31 August	1 September
1 September and 31 December	1 January



2 YEAR OLD FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

Parents can be signposted to 15 hours free funding for their 2 year old if they are claiming one of the following benefits:

Income Support

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Universal Credit, with a household income of £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments

The guaranteed element of Pension Credit

Tax Credits and the household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax

The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Funding is also available if:

The child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan

The child gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

The child is looked after by a local authority, for example, foster care


The child is adopted or there is a special guardianship order or a residence order in place

FAMILIES WITH NO RESOURCE TO PUBLIC FUNDS (NRPF)

Parents who are non-UK citizens whose immigration status is 'no recourse to public funds' are eligible for 2 year old funding if:

- Household income is no more than £34,500 for families within London with one child or £38,600 for families within London with two or more children.
- Have no more than £16,000 in savings or investments.

Parents who are eligible and meet the 'no recourse to public funds criteria', have to complete a 2-year-olds NRPF application form which is then uploaded to the Free early education for 2-year-olds eligibility checker . Parents will then be provided with a unique reference code, that will need to be given to the childcare provider to enable them to offer the free place.

Application form for free early education for two-year-olds from families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) 

Please complete this form if you are a family with NRPF and would like to apply for 15 hours a week of free early education for two-year-olds. Please complete all sections and sign the declaration at the end of the form.

1. Child's details

Child's Legal Family Name:			
Child's Legal Forename(s):			
Date of Birth:	Male/Female:	Nationality:	
Address:			
Post Code:			

Please upload documentary proof of the following with this application:

- Child's date of birth
- Child's nationality

2. Carer's details

Carer's Legal Family Name:		
Carer's Legal Forename(s):		
Nationality:	Relationship to child:	
Address:		
Post Code:		

Please upload documentary proof of the following with this application:

- Carer's relationship to child
- Carer's nationality

3. Status

Do you have recourse to public funds?
(if yes you are not eligible for a place via this route) Yes No

Does your partner have recourse to public funds?
(if yes you are not eligible for a place via this route) Yes No Not Applicable

Please provide evidence of your status with this application:

- Biometric Residence Permit (both sides)
- enter a share code for the Online Immigration Checking Service below

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3 & 4 YEAR OLD FUNDING



All 3 and 4-year-old children are entitled to up to 15 hours a week of free early education and childcare. This is called the Universal Entitlement.

Parents can [apply online](#) for a place at a community school. All other schools and providers must be contacted directly to get their application forms.

No code is required for the universal entitlement.

Children are eligible for the universal and extended entitlement the term after their third birthday.

Child born between	Can take up a free place from the funding period starting
1 January and 31 March	1 April
1 April and 31 August	1 September
1 September and 31 December	1 January



3 & 4 YEAR OLD FUNDING



3 and 4-year-olds whose parents are working may be able to get up to 15 additional hours a week of free early education and childcare. This is called '30 hours' of free early education and childcare (also known as the extended entitlement).

Parents will need to firstly apply via the Government online application system: **Childcare account** and then provide their unique code when they apply to the childcare provider.

Parents will need to reconfirm their eligibility every 3 months.

Parents must check their eligibility and receive their eligibility code in the funding period **before** their child becomes eligible for a place.

Recommended time to apply:	Have received your eligibility code by:	Able to start in a place from:
15 January to 28 February	31 March	1 April
15 June to 31 July	31 August	1 September
15 October to 30 November	31 December	1 January



30 HOURS (EXTENDED ENTITLEMENT) ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the 30 Hours, families must meet all the following criteria:

- ❖ The child's age means they are eligible for the first 15 hours (the universal entitlement)
- ❖ Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family)
- ❖ Both parents earn or expect to earn a minimum equivalent to 16 hours a week at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months.
- ❖ Both parents must not be earning more than £100,000 a year each

Families will also be eligible where:

- ❖ Both parents are employed but one (or both parents) is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave, adoption leave or on statutory sick pay
- ❖ One parent is employed and one parent:
 - has substantial caring responsibilities based on receipt of specific caring benefits, or
 - is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits

SUPPORT FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS

If families need more childcare than the 2, 3 or 4 year old funding free hours, there are schemes that can be used alongside to help reduce the cost of this.

Tax-Free Childcare

- For working families, this provides up to £2,000 per child per year and can be used to help pay for care for children aged 0 to 11. Families who are eligible for the Extended Entitlement, will be eligible for Tax-Free childcare

Universal Credit for childcare

- This allows some working families to claim back up to 85% of childcare costs for children aged 0 to 15

Tax Credits for childcare

- This allows some working families to claim back up to 70% of childcare costs for children aged 0 to 15

Further information on these schemes and how to apply can be found on the [Childcare Choices website](#)

2, 3 & 4 YEAR OLD FUNDING TRANSFORMATION

In the government's spring budget, the Chancellor announced transformative reforms to childcare for parents, children, the economy and women.

This new offer will empower parents, allowing them to progress their careers and support their families. The new entitlements will be introduced in phases:

- From **April 2024**, all working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week
- From **September 2024**, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 15 hours per week
- From **September 2025**, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 30 hours free childcare per week

More information about these phases will become available on the [Merton directory](#)



2, 3 & 4 YEAR OLD FUNDING SUPPORT



Childcare is an award winning online platform where families can find local childcare providers.

[Childcare](#)



Gov.uk provides further information and guidance on applying for 30 hours free childcare.

[Apply for 30 hours free childcare](#)



Gov.uk provides further information and guidance on applying for 2 year old funding for families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

[No recourse to public funds \(NRPF\)](#)



Merton council provides further information and guidance on applying for 2,3 and 4 year old funding.

[Early education for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds](#)



MERTON FAMILY HUB FACEBOOK

Merton Family Hub's Facebook page is also a great place to keep up to date with information on 2, 3 & 4 year funding and services available.

[Merton Family Hub Facebook](#)

Follow us!



FURTHER SUPPORT

Families can be signposted to the Family Information Support Hubs (FISH) for support with 2, 3 and 4 year old funding.

FISH provides parents/carers with information, support and guidance on all aspects of family life.

FISH sessions take place Monday – Friday with FREE face-to-face or telephone appointments available. Appointments can be booked via [Eventbrite](#) either by a parent/carer or a practitioner on their behalf.

Or parents/carers can come along to one of the FISH drop-in sessions (no appointment needed):

Family Hub at Church Rd Children Centre – Mondays, 1.30pm-4.30pm
Family Hub at Acacia Children Centre – Wednesdays, 9.00am-12.00pm

