

Free childcare for two year olds

Childcare Choices

Find out about the different types of funding for childcare

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Apply online for funded childcare for two year olds www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/twos

Search for local Ofsted registered childcare www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk

Need some help? Call the Family Information Service on 01273 293545

Is my two year old eligible for free childcare?

Your child will be eligible if you are in receipt of any of the following:


- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Tax Credits and have an annual income of less than £16,190 before tax
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit and have a annual household take home income of less than £15,400
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

Your child can also have a free place if:

- They have a statement of special educational needs (SEN), or an education, care and health plan
- They get Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- They have left the care of the local authority under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order
- They are looked after by the local authority (eg foster care)

When can my child start in a place?

From the term after their second birthday. The table below shows when your child can start their free childcare and when you can check if they are eligible.

Child's 2 nd birthday falls between	They can start their place from	 <p>You can check if your child is eligible from the beginning of the term when your child turns two.</p> <p>Don't miss out!</p> <p>Apply online at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/twos</p>
1 January to 31 March	The beginning of term on or after April 1st	
1 April to 31 August	The beginning of term on or after 1 st September	
1 September to 31 December	The beginning of term on or after 1 st January	

How much childcare can my child have?

Your child can have a maximum of **570** hours per year of free childcare. You can take a maximum of 15 hours per week during term time only, or if the childcare provider is open year round, you could take fewer hours every week but spread them across the year.

Your childcare provider may offer you fewer than **570** hours per year. You do not have to accept this. You could choose a different childcare provider where your child will be able to get all of their free hours.

Your childcare provider may offer you more than **570** hours per year but require you to pay for the additional hours. You do not have to accept this offer. Another childcare provider may be able to offer you just the free hours and you would not need to pay for additional hours.

Where can my child get their free place?

There are a wide range of childcare settings that offer free places. You can choose from:

- Childminders
- Childminder nurseries
- Day nurseries
- Pre-school playgroups

Most of the settings that offer funded places for two year olds have a *good* or *outstanding* Ofsted grading. There may be some settings with a *requires improvement* or *satisfactory* grading, but children can only attend these for their free sessions if Brighton & Hove City Council is confident that the childcare is good quality.

You can search for childcare providers at www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk



Two year old funding cannot be backdated, so you will lose any of the funded childcare that you do not use. If your chosen provider has a waiting list, or is unable to offer you a place, you can contact the Family Information Service who can help you to find another childcare provider.

Things to think about before you choose a childcare provider

- Give yourself plenty of time and visit several childcare providers
- Ask lots of questions and talk to other parents and staff
- Make sure you understand how the childcare provider offers the free sessions and that they offer them at the time that suits you
- If your child already attends a setting, the days and times the free sessions are offered may be different
- Make sure you ask how the setting offers free sessions for three and four year olds. They may be at different times from how they offer the sessions for two year olds.
- Think about whether you want your child to attend 15 hours a week during term time only, or whether you want to spread your hours across the year.
- Ask to see a copy of the childcare provider's terms and conditions

Can my child attend more than one childcare provider?

Yes, as long as you don't go over your 570 hours per year and you split your entitlement between a maximum of two providers.

Can my child attend a childcare setting anywhere in Sussex?

Yes, your child can attend a setting outside of Brighton & Hove. However, you must apply to Brighton & Hove first to get your eligibility code.



Make sure that you understand how the childcare provider will offer the free sessions for your two year old. Ask how they will offer them once your child is three, as the hours and days may change.

How will I know my child is safe and well cared for?

All childcare providers are registered with Ofsted which carries out inspections to make sure that the premises are safe and that staff are suitably qualified and trained to look after your child. You can ask to see the childcare provider's Ofsted report when you visit, or you can view reports online at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Although it is important to look at Ofsted reports, it is equally important that you find out as much as you can about a childcare provider before making a decision.

How can I help my child settle in?

You should think about arranging a settling in session with your childcare provider. This will give you and your child the opportunity to get to know the environment and staff. Short sessions are best to begin with, and you can stay with your child for the first few sessions until they are familiar with their surroundings.

Will I have to pay anything?

No, the childcare is free for parents and you should not be asked for any money or contributions towards costs.

Will I have to pay a deposit?

Some providers may ask for a small deposit to secure your place, but this should be refunded immediately once your child starts. If you are asked for a payment, or a deposit that seems high, contact the Family Information Service to discuss.

Notice periods

You should read your childcare provider's terms and conditions carefully, particularly about their notice period. If your child leaves a childcare provider for any reason, you must make sure that you understand how many weeks notice you may have to give them. If you do not give your provider the requested notice, you may be asked to pay for the childcare for the full notice period.

Are there any other costs or "top up" fees?

If extra hours are available at your childcare provider you can choose to take them, however you will have to pay their standard fees for these hours.

Childcare providers can charge for meals and snacks as part of your free place, and they can also charge for consumables such as nappies and sun cream and for services such as trips and yoga. These charges must be voluntary for you. If you are unable or unwilling to pay for meals and consumables, the childcare providers should offer you an alternative, for example allowing you to bring in a packed lunch.

Will I receive an invoice?

If you are paying any additional fees to the provider you should receive an invoice that clearly explains any costs and how they have been worked out. If there is anything you don't understand, ask your childcare provider to explain, and if you still aren't sure how the costs have been worked out, contact the Family Information Service.



It is essential that you discuss your requirements with the childcare provider before taking up a place. This should include clarifying what extras they may charge you for, how much they will be and what the alternatives are.

What happens when my child turns three?

There are two options when your child turns three:

15 hours free childcare

This is also known as the Universal Entitlement. All three and four year olds receive 570 hours of free childcare over the year, from the term after their third birthday, until the term in which they start school. Make sure you check how your provider offers the funded hours for three year olds, as it may be on different days or at different times from how they offer two year old funding.

30 hours free childcare

This is also known as the extended entitlement. Three and four year olds whose parents are working may be entitled to 1140 hours of free childcare spread across the year. To find out if you are eligible and to apply, visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



Would you like support to get into work and receive 30 hours free childcare?

PACE (Providing Access to Childcare and Employment) is a European funded project to support parents into work, training or volunteering. Whilst your two year old is getting free childcare, you could be using the time to think about what you would like to do in the future.

PACE will:

- Give you a PACE keyworker who will get to know you and stay in touch regularly
- Support you to find childcare and access any funding you might be entitled to
- Help you with “back to work” calculations so you will know how much your household income will increase if you get paid work
- Advise and help you to find ad-hoc childcare for interviews and training
- Work with you to develop a Personal Development Plan that is unique to you
- Help you to identify your skills and abilities and build on your confidence
- Offer you help with CV writing, interview skills and preparing for work

Want to find out more?

Contact the PACE Team at the Family Information Service.

Tel: 01273 293545

Email: familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Web: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/pace

About the Family Information Service

The Family Information Service offers a wide range of information and advice for parents and carers in Brighton & Hove including

- Support for families and where to go for help
- Information and advice about childcare options and funding

For more information

- Search online for childcare, services for families and factsheets
www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk
- Visit our website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fis

Need extra help?

- Email: familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01273 293545

Some of our factsheets to view online at www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk

Free childcare for three and four year olds	Information about 15 and 30 hours free childcare
New to Brighton & Hove	Information on services, activities and local information for families who are new to the city.
Family Breakdown	What to consider when relationships break down and where to go for help and advice.
Family Finance	Overview of the different types of financial support available to families