

## A parent guide to early years funding (2026/27)

### 1) Early Education and Childcare Providers and Offers

Early Education and Childcare (early years) funding is available for eligible children aged from 9 months to 4 years old who attend an Early Years Provider (Provider) registered with [Ofsted](#) and Havering Council.

All early years Providers follow the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) curriculum.

Provider Types delivering early years funded places	
Childminders	Out of School Care Providers
Day Nursery	Maintained Schools
Independent Schools	Academy Schools
Preschools	Free Schools

A full list of providers approved to delivery early years funding in Havering, their opening and closing times and Ofsted grades are available at [www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears).

Early Years funding is available between 6am and 8pm (no session longer than 10 hours) and can be used at a maximum of two providers in one day

#### **30 hour offer for working parents of 9 month olds\***

- 30 hours term time (38 week) or 20/22 hours a week stretched offer up to 52 weeks for working families

#### **30 hour offer for working parents of 2 year olds\***

- 30 hours term time (38 week) or 20/22 hours a week stretched offer up to 52 weeks for working families

#### **15 hour offer for early learning for 2 year olds**

- 15 hours term time (38 week) or 10/11 hours a week stretched offer up to 52 weeks for low income families

#### **Universal 15 hour funding for eligible 3 and 4 year olds**

- 15 hours term time (38 weeks) or 10/11 hours a week stretched offer up to 52 weeks

#### **Extended offer for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds**

- 30 hours term time (38 weeks) or 20/22 hours a week stretched offer up to 52 weeks

\*From September 2025 (Autumn Term) Working Families have been eligible to access 30 hours term time (38 weeks) or 20/22 hours per week stretched offer up to 52 weeks for all eligible 9 months old, two year olds and three and four year olds.

### **When can children start accessing a funded place at an early years Provider?**

Eligible children can start at an early year's Provider from the term **after** they turn nine months old, or second or third birthday depending on the offer they are accessing. All four year olds, not in a Reception class, are eligible for early years funding.

<b>A child born in the period</b>	<b>Will become eligible for a place from</b>
01 April to 31 August	September following the child's birthday (Autumn term)
01 September to 31 December	January following the child's birthday (Spring term)
01 January to 31 March	April following the child's birthday (Summer term)

## **2) Eligibility Criteria for early years funding offers**

### **9 month funding for working families**

Applications for funding must be made online at [www.beststartinlife.co.uk](http://www.beststartinlife.co.uk) If eligible, you will receive an 11 digit code, which you will need to take to your childcare provider along with your National Insurance Number and your child's date of birth to secure a place.

- Parents must each expect to earn (on average) at least £167 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage).
- If you, or your partner, are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or you're unable to work because you are disabled or have caring responsibilities, you could still be eligible.
- Parents can't get 30 hours free childcare if one, or both, each individually expect to earn £100,000 adjusted net income or more.
- Parents are automatically eligible for this offer if they are already accessing Tax Free Childcare.

## **2 year old funding for early learning for year olds**

Applications for funding must be made online at [www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears); you must show your offer email to your chosen early year's provider to secure your place.

Families are eligible for 15 hours childcare if:

- Parents are claiming Income support, Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Parents are claiming Tax Credits with an income of less than £16,190
- Parents are claiming Universal Credit with an income of less than £15,400
- Children are looked after by a Local Authority, with special guardianship, child arrangement or adoption orders in place following a period of time in Local Authority Care.
- Children are in receipt of [Disability Living Allowance](#) and have a formalised Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

A child will also qualify for an early education and childcare place, if any of the following apply:

- They are looked after by a local council
- They have a current statement of [special education needs \(SEN\)](#) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- They get [Disability Living Allowance](#)
- They have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order
- They are children of Zambrano carers
- They are children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private/family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and have a household income below £34,500 if they have one child, or £38,600 if they have two or more children.
- They are children of a subset of failed asylum seekers (supported under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 – 'the 1999 Act')

## **3 and 4 year old Universal funding**

No application for funding is required.

- All three year olds from the term after the third birthday and all four year olds (not in a school reception class) are eligible.

### **3 and 4 year old working family (30 hours childcare) funding eligibility criteria**

Applications for funding must be made online at [www.beststartinlife.co.uk](http://www.beststartinlife.co.uk)

- Parents (single or both parents in a couple), must work on average 16 hours a week and earn less than £100,000 each per year to be eligible.
- Parents will remain eligible if one parent is working and the other has a disability or substantial caring responsibilities or is away from work temporarily (sick leave or maternity/adoption leave).

Two conditions must be met before parents can access the working families or extended childcare offers.

- **Condition 1 – Code issued:** The parent must have received a valid 11-digit code from the Childcare Service by the end of the term before the code is to be used.
- **Condition 2 – Child’s age:** Children must be in the term after the 2nd or 3rd birthday, or 4 year olds and not be in a reception class, in the term in which they want to use the code.

<b>Condition 1 - Code issued Condition 2 - Child’s age</b>	<b>Term in which code can be used</b>
01 April – 31 August	September – December (Autumn Term)
01 September – 31 December	January – March (Spring Term)
01 January – 31 March	April – August (Summer Term)

- A grace period has been put in place by government to assist parents whose employment circumstances change.
- Parents must login to their childcare service account every three months to reconfirm their details for the Extended offer to be reconfirmed and remain in place.
- Parents must provide the 11-digit code, their name, date of birth and National Insurance number to validate the code and secure their place.

### **Tax Free Childcare**

Applications for funding must be made online at [www.beststartinlife.co.uk](http://www.beststartinlife.co.uk).

Tax Free Childcare supports working parents with the costs of childcare. For every £8 paid into an online account by the parent, the Government immediately tops up £2 giving the parent a total of £10 to spend on the costs of childcare. Maximum government top up per child per year:

- Birth to 12 years old: £2,000 per child per year
- Birth to 17 year olds for children with disabilities £4,000 per child per year

Parents (single or both parents in a couple), must work on average 16 hours a week and earn less than £100,000 each per year to be eligible. Parents will remain eligible if one parent is working and the other has a disability or substantial caring responsibilities or is away from work temporarily (sick leave or maternity/adoption leave). -

- Families cannot receive Tax Free Childcare if they also receive Tax Credits, Universal Credit or Childcare Vouchers.
- Parents must login to their childcare service account every three months to reconfirm their details for the Tax Free Childcare to be reconfirmed and remain in place.

### **3) Additional Funding**

With parent permissions, Early Years providers will be able to apply for additional funding to support your child to meet their potential and/or to purchase additional resources to support the child at the provider. You may be asked for supporting evidence on request from the Provider, for them to be able to submit an additional funding claim to the Local Authority.

#### **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for funded children**

Families will be eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) if; they receive certain income related benefits, have a low income, if the child has previously been in Local Authority care for 1 day or more, been adopted from care or have a special guardianship or residence order in place. Providers will confirm how they will use the EYPP payment to support educational outcomes. All funded children, from 9 months up to 4 years old, can access EYPP if they meet the above eligibility criteria.

#### **Disability Access Funding (DAF) for funded children**

The child must be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and receive free early education and childcare funding. All funded children in an early years provision, from 9 months up to 4 years old, can access DAF if in receipt of DLA. 4 year olds in Reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding. The DAF is not means tested and can only be used at one provider per year, is not transferrable and is funded at a flat one of rate of £938. If using more than one provision, parents must confirm which provider should receive the funding. If a child leaves a provider the DAF payment is not recouped.

#### **4) Registering for an Early Education and Childcare place**

You will be required to sign a New Child Registration and Parental Declaration form, which outlines the names of all providers and funded hours you are looking to claim at. Where a parent mistakenly over claims funding, the Local Authority will refer back to these forms when advising the Provider if funding is going to be withdrawn.

#### **Fees, charges and consumables**

Early Years childcare offers the provision of Early Education and Childcare only as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the national curriculum for children from birth to 5. Providers must:

- Deliver the Universal and Extended offer free at the point of delivery
- Advise parents of any fees and charges in advance of the offer of a place
- Provide clear invoices showing free hours and any additional charges, such as meals, consumables and extra curricular activities
- Allow parent to make alternative arrangements such as providing a packed lunch or confirm they do not want their child to access additional activities
- Return any deposit for a child only accessing a Universal or Extended place, within four weeks of the child's start date
- Cap the maximum notice period for children who only access a Universal or Extended offer to four weeks

Additional charges may be categorized as 'consumables' and are likely to include things such as meals, snacks, nappies and suntan lotion. Where parents are unable or unwilling to cover these costs, an alternate solution must be found between parent and provider – this could be in the form of reduced costs or parents providing their own consumables.

Any resources required to ensure the meeting of the requirements outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not chargeable.

#### **What information do I need to show the Provider when I register for a childcare place?**

You must provide evidence of:

- Your child's full name and date of birth (birth certificate or passport)
- Your full name and address (recent utility bill or council tax bill) and contact details.
- Your code and evidence of entitlement for EYPP and DAF as applicable.

### **What do I need to do if I want to change my early year's provider and transfer funding?**

Funding will be transferred to the new provider at the end of the notice period

- Ensure you have provided the correct written, emailed notice as required in your contract of admission. Provider will confirm the notice period end date to you in writing.
- Children accessing the working family entitlements cannot move to a new provider during the Grace Period.

### **5) Applying for a School Reception class for September 2026**

3 and 4 year old children born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 will start school in September 2026. Parents must apply for their child's Reception place between 1 September 2025 and 15 January 2026.

For information, advice and guidance on applying for school places, please go to [www.havering.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.havering.gov.uk/admissions), email [schooladmissions@havering.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@havering.gov.uk) or call 01708 433600 (Monday to Friday 12noon- 5pm).

### **6) Who should I contact if I have a concern?**

If you have a concern about your child's access to their early years place or funding, please speak to the Provider in the first instance; they will know you and your child, and will want to resolve any issues directly with you.

To raise any other complaints about Early Education and Childcare in Havering please contact [www.havering.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.havering.gov.uk/complaints).

### **7) Early Years Term Dates from 2026 to 2027**

The early years term dates are based on a financial calendar year and run from 01 April – 31 March with a maximum of 38 weeks of funding available in the early years calendar.

The maximum funding available in each financial year is:

- Up to 570 hours for eligible 2 year olds and universally funded 3 and 4 year olds
- Up to 1,140 hours for extended funded 3 and 4 year olds (30 hours childcare)

Funding can be taken as a term time or stretched offer – please speak to your provider about what type of offer they deliver.

School and Early Years term dates can be found at [www.havering.gov.uk/termdates](http://www.havering.gov.uk/termdates)

### Financial year 2026/27

<b>Summer Term 2026 Term Dates (13 funded weeks)</b>		<b>Maximum Funding</b>
Early Years dates	Monday 13/04/2026 – Monday 20/07/2026	15 hours x 13 weeks = 195 hours (universal funding)
Stretched delivery dates	Wednesday 01/04/2026 – Friday 28/08/2026	
School dates	Monday 13/04/2026 – Monday 20/07/2026	30 hours x 13 weeks = 390 hours (extended funding)
Half Term	Monday 25/05/2026 – Friday 29/05/2026	
<b>Autumn Term 2026 Term Dates (14 funded weeks)</b>		<b>Maximum Funding</b>
Early Years dates	Wednesday 02/09/2026 – Tuesday 15/12/2026	15 hours x 14 weeks = 210 hours (universal funding)
Stretched delivery dates	Wednesday 02/09/2026 – Thursday 31/12/2026	
School dates	Wednesday 02/09/2026 – Friday 18/12/2026	30 hours x 14 weeks = 420 hours (extended funding)
Half Term	Monday 26/10/2026 – Friday 30/10/2026	
<b>Spring Term 2027 Term Dates (11 funded weeks)</b>		<b>Maximum Funding</b>
Early Years dates	Monday 04/01/2027 – Thursday 25/03/2027	15 hours x 11 weeks = 165 hours (universal funding)
Stretched delivery dates	Monday 04/01/2027 – Wednesday 31/03/2027	
School dates	Monday 04/01/2027 – Friday 25/03/2027	30 hours x 11 weeks = 330 hours (extended funding)
Half Term	Monday 15/02/2027 – Friday 19/02/2027	