THE HOMESTEAD CHILDCARE

Sarah's home from home

Funding and Fees

A parent guide: what you need to know

Everything you need to know, without the jargon

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What You Need to Know

We know that childcare costs matter to your family, and we want to make sure you understand exactly what's available to you and what you'll pay. Here's everything you need to know, without the jargon.

Government Funding: What It Covers

If your child is eligible, government funding can significantly help with your childcare costs. The amount depends on your child's age and your circumstances.

Universal 15 Hours (For All Families)

- All parents of children aged 3 to 4 can access 15 hours of funded early education from the term after their child turns 3, regardless of how much you earn or how many hours you work.
- This is available every year, and there's no application needed. Just let us know you want to use it.

Extended 30 Hours (For Working Families)

- Working parents with children aged 9 months or older may be eligible for 30 hours of funded childcare per week if both parents (or a single parent in a lone-parent household) work at least 16 hours per week and neither parent earns more than £100,000 adjusted net income per year.
- To access this, you'll need to apply through the government's Childcare Service and get an eligibility code, which you'll share with us. We'll then validate it with the local authority to make sure everything is correct.

15 Hours for Working Parents of Younger Children

- Parents of 2-year-olds may also access 15 hours of funded early education if they receive certain government support, such as being on Universal Credit and earning less than £15,400 a year, or if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, or has been looked after by the local authority.

How Funded Hours Work at The Homestead

We operate a **stretched funding model**. This means you can use your funded hours across the whole year (51 weeks) rather than just during school term. It makes life much easier for working families who need consistent, year-round childcare.

Here's how it works:

- Your 30 funded hours per week are spread across the year, meaning you receive **22 hours per week**
- Your 15 funded hours per week are spread across the year, meaning you receive **11 hours per week**

This gives you flexibility and consistency without the worry of term-time gaps.

What Funded Hours Don't Cover

Government funding covers early education and childcare only. It does not cover:

- Meals and snacks
- Hours beyond your funded entitlement
- Optional extras or services

This means if you want meals provided by our chef, or if you need childcare beyond your funded hours, there will be additional charges. We'll always be clear about these before you sign anything.

Attendance Options and What You'll Pay

We offer structured attendance options so you know exactly what you're getting and what it will cost.

For 15-Hour Funding

Option A: Full Day Model

- Minimum two full days per week across the year
- Two morning sessions (7:30am to 1:00pm) are funded
- Any other hours you use are charged at our standard rate
- Meals and afternoon care are additional charges

Option B: School Day Model

- Minimum three days per week from 8:30am to 3:30pm
- One full school day is funded, plus additional funded hours on another day
- Any extra hours needed are charged at our standard hourly rate
- Meals are an additional charge

For 30-Hour Funding

Option C: Full Day Blend

- Two full funded days, plus funded hours on another day (totalling your 30-hour entitlement across the week)
- Any extra hours beyond your funding are charged at our standard rate
- Meals are an additional charge
- Additional days can be booked subject to availability

Option D: School Day Model

- Minimum three school days per week (8:30am to 3:30pm)
- Each day includes your funded allocation
- Any hours over your funded entitlement are charged at our standard daily rate
- Meals are an additional charge

Meals and Snacks

Our chef prepares fresh meals on-site every day, and mealtimes are an important part of your child's learning. We offer:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Tea
- Snacks

All meals follow government nutritional guidance and are carefully planned to support your child's growth and development. Mealtimes are also a chance for children to develop independence, try new tastes, and enjoy time with their friends and carers.

Meal charges are voluntary. You're not required to purchase meals to access your funded place. However, if you opt out, you'll need to provide suitable food that complies with our Packed Lunch Policy.

Other Costs

Consumables

We include nappies, wipes, and cream. Sun cream is also provided.

Everything Else

We don't have hidden fees. Your invoice will always show clearly:

- Funded hours (free)
- Any additional paid hours you've used
- Meal charges (if you've chosen them)
- Any optional extras

Checking and Confirming Your Eligibility

If you're accessing 15 or 30 hours funding, you'll need to:

- Apply through the government's Childcare Service to get your eligibility code

- Share that code with us
- Reconfirm your eligibility every three months

If you don't reconfirm, your funding may stop, and we'll charge you at our standard private rate. We'll remind you when this is coming up.

If your circumstances change (you change jobs, your income changes, your childcare needs change), let us know as soon as possible so we can adjust things correctly.

Other Ways to Pay for Childcare

Beyond government funding, you may be able to use:

Tax-Free Childcare

This scheme provides up to £2,000 per child annually, with the government adding £2 for every £8 you pay into your account. You'll set up an online account, pay money in, and use it to pay us directly.

Universal Credit Childcare Support

If you're on Universal Credit, you may be able to claim back up to 85% of actual childcare costs, up to £1,014.63 monthly for one child or £1,739.37 for two or more children.

Childcare Vouchers and Enjoy Benefits

We accept both of these schemes. Check with your employer or benefits provider about what's available to you.

Questions About Funding?

We're here to help you understand what's available and what you'll pay. Every family's situation is different, and we want to make sure you're getting the support you're entitled to.

If you have questions about funding eligibility, costs, or how to apply, please get in touch with our team using the details on our Contact page.

You can also check your own eligibility using the government's online calculator at childcarechoices.gov.uk.