**Funded Childcare**

**At Dizzy’s Day Nursery**

If your child has reached or is about to reach their 3rd birthday, they will soon be entitled to at least 15 hours per week of early education funding until they start primary school.

If you have a baby approaching 9 months or a toddler approaching 2 years old, you may be able to apply for the new funding for eligible working parents as it increases from 15 hours to 30 hours from September 2025.

Dizzy’s Day Nursery remain committed to supporting parents to access their child’s funded hours whilst remaining a high quality and sustainable business.

New rules issued by the Department for Education and subsequently Suffolk County Council mean that providers offering funded childcare have had to make changes to ensure they are compliant.

Below are some of the most common questions parents ask us about funding:

**When will my child get funding?**

A child is entitled to funding from the start of the school term which falls after their 3rd birthday. There are 3 terms in an academic/school year (Autumn, Spring & Summer).

This also applies to 2 year olds, the term following their 2nd Birthday, and for babies 9+ months.

**How much funding is my child entitled to?**

Funding is provided by the Government as follows:

* ***Universal 15 hrs funding*** : 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year – all 3 and 4 year-olds are entitled to this regardless of income or whether the parents are working
* ***Extended 30 hrs funding*** : an additional 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year for 3 and 4 year olds (and for younger children from September 2025) – both parents in the household or one parent in a lone parent household should be in work for at least 16 hpw, each earning at least National Minimum Wage up to £100k pa. You may also be eligible if one parent is working and the other is in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer’s Allowance, Employment & Support Allowance or is on Maternity/Paternity Leave.
* ***2 year old funding*** ; 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year, subject to eligibility criteria being met as above or due to other eligibility, for example, a ‘Golden Ticket’ from Suffolk County Council. The working parent element increases to 30 hrs from Sept 2025.
* ***9+month funding*** ; 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year, subject to eligibility criteria being met as above. The working parent element increases to 30 hrs from Sept 2025.

Funding is provided by the Department for Education for 38 weeks of the year, following a 3 term model, starting in Autumn term (September). This is a maximum of 570 hours for Universal and 15hrs Funding, or 1140 hours with Extended 30 hrs Funding in any full academic year. The remaining 13 weeks of the year (i.e. school holidays and Bank Holidays) are NOT funded. So, when you attend all year round (51 weeks) we ‘stretch’ your funding, so fewer hours per week, over more weeks.

**How does funding work at Dizzy’s Day Nursery?**

We offer both 15 and 30 hour funded places. Funding can be Term Time only or All Year Round (stretched offer). We prioritise places for children attending ‘All Year Round’ and taking a ‘Stretched Offer’, this is because we are open all year round. We stretch the 38 weeks of funded hours across 51 weeks. If your child’s funding starts in Spring or Summer term, the amount of funding for the remainder of that academic year will reduce accordingly and will need to stretch over more weeks. We offer funding over a number of options for full days and part days.

We also give priority on the waiting list for children who attend all year round, with no funding claimed and those with siblings already at nursery.

By DfE/Local Authority rules, we are not permitted to offer more than 10 hours of funding in any one day. You don’t have to use the full entitlement, and you can use your funding with up to two providers, subject to us claiming a minimum of 15 hours per week of funding at Dizzy’s.

**What does the funding cover?**

Funding covers only the core elements of childcare. Government guidance states:

*“Providers…can charge for meals and snacks as part of free entitlement places and they can also charge for consumables, such as nappies or sun cream, and for services such as trips and specialist tuition… Providers who choose to offer the free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on providing parents with options for alternatives to additional charges...”*

For our funded places there is a ‘Consumables Charge’. Parents who would like alternative options to paying this charge will be asked to provide all items not covered by the funding, and to collect their child at mealtimes, to provide meals offsite. Additional experiences and services are chargeable separately. Please talk to us for more detailed information.

**What are the fees for a funded place at Dizzy’s?\***

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| Funded hours Consumables Charge: | £1.50 per funded morning and/or afternoon \* please speak to us if you wish to opt out of this charge. |
| Non-funded hours on days with funding:  | Available as per our nursery fee schedule.  |
| Days with no funding: | Our normal daily rate |

* correct from April 2025

Our fees are *annualised* and divided into equal monthly payments, so you will receive a monthly invoice. Once we know how many days your child will be attending and how much funding you are claiming, we can work out your fees for you.

**Is there a discount for siblings or because of my job?**

There are no discounts available for siblings or for parents in professions such as the NHS.

If you have previously had a sibling discount, this will stop when you claim funded hours.

**What will happen to my Tax-Free Childcare account?**

Nothing, you can continue to use your Tax-Free Childcare account to pay your fees, so you will still benefit from your usual tax savings on top of the saving provided by funding.

**Can I increase my child’s days when we get funding?**

Yes. Many of our parents take advantage of funded hours to increase their child’s sessions. If you wish to increase your child’s days, please give us as much notice as possible. We’ll then send you a breakdown of your new fees if we can accommodate your request.

**How does it work if my child attends another provider as well?**

You are entitled to split your funding between two providers. Please bear in mind if your child goes to a school nursery, it is likely to be a term-time only provision and adult:child ratios could be higher (up to 1:13). At Dizzy’s we maintain our staffing above the **1:8, 1:5 and 1:3 ratio** at all times. Additionally, if your child attends a school nursery, it is not a guarantee that your child will get a place at the school. Please check these details with the school nursery. If you wish to split your child’s funding between us and another setting or childminder, our stipulation is that we do not split a 15 hour ‘block’, so we would not offer a funded place with less than 15 hours of funding per week.

**How do I apply for my child’s funding?**

* ***Universal 15 hrs funding*** : no need to apply as all 3&4 year olds are automatically entitled to this funding.
* ***Extended 30 hrs funding, (15 hours for 9+ months until Sept 2025)***: you apply online and obtain an “eligibility code” by the last day of the month before funding begins, this is the 31st August, December and March respectively.
* ***You can obtain your code*** using this link: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/)

The deadline is stated on the website.
Once your application is approved you will receive your 11-digit “eligibility code”.

If you have a Tax-Free Childcare account, you might receive your code automatically.

Please note – take care to apply for your code in advance of the termly deadline and also that you ‘reconfirm’ your eligibility as requested by the Childcare Choices system. If you miss a deadline, you will not be able to use your funding and there is nothing at all we can do as your nursery to influence that. We would then invoice you for the full cost of your sessions.

**What happens next?**

We will give you a Parental Declaration form to complete and return to us at the start of each academic term or within the term if you are new to the area and claiming part funding for the remainder of the period. If you’ve applied for Extended 30 Hours funding, or 2 year old/baby funding, you must put your eligibility code on the form. This form constitutes your permission for us as your childcare provider to claim your child’s funding from the Local Authority. It will cover your child’s funding for the term. We cannot confirm your funded place or claim your child’s funding until we have this form. And that’s it, we will do all the admin after that!

***Please note*** : The Local Authority refuses to pay funding for late applications so please be aware of this. If you miss the deadline and are refused funding, this is out of our hands, and we will be unable to offer your child a funded place. You are also responsible for obtaining and renewing the funding code that you are using to claim funding (if you are using one).

**Why is the funding system so complicated?**

We recognise that the Department for Education and County Council rules and systems are onerous and frustrating. The 38 week year and funded hours, rather than a monetary discount are not suitable for working parents. Unfortunately, we do not have the option to change or ignore them. To offer funded hours, we have to follow the rules.

Funded childcare is consistently mis-represented by the Department for Education and the media. It is not ‘free’ to parents, as the funding is insufficient to provide even the most basic level of care and education. We understand that it is frustrating for parents when they are not able to access what they thought would be available and completely free. We find it challenging too and continue to request change and share our experiences.

Children’s early years are the most important for brain development and for developing a love of learning for life. Minimal funding, for a minimal service provided by practitioners on the minimum wage is never going to be a strong and healthy start for our children. Therefore we have to charge for some aspects of our service to ensure that we are able to provide a much higher quality of care than the government provide for.

We encourage you to share your views with the Department for Education.

As a nursery business, we will continue to lobby the DfE for funding entitlements to cover 51 weeks for working parents and for the ‘funded entitlement’ to be paid directly into parent’s Tax Free Childcare accounts, to use in the best way for their family’s childcare needs. If you wish to discuss fees and funding at any time, please do not hesitate to speak to, or email Liz/Lisa for information.

We hope we have provided you with the information you need to be able to take up your child’s funding entitlement with us, but please don’t hesitate to ask if you have any further questions.