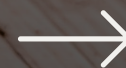




Early Years Funding Guide

To help simplify government funding
at Loughborough University Nursery.





Understanding Early Years Funding in 2026

We understand that navigating the different types of **childcare support can feel overwhelming**. But gaining a clear understanding of what's available can significantly reduce the cost of nursery and childcare.



That's why we've created our Early Years Funding Guide — to present the options clearly and help you feel confident in making informed choices for your family.



If you'd like to explore the full range of government support options, you can find more information at the official **Best Start in Life website**.

What funding is available?



If you are a working parent and your child is aged 9 months and older you will be able to access up to 30 hours of funding childcare **(from the term after they turn 9 month)**. You need to be earning more than £203.36 per week to be eligible for the funding



Who is eligible?
Designed to support working families.

You (and your partner, if you have one) must be working. That means earning at **least £203.36 per week on average.**

Neither of you can earn more than **£100,000 a year individually.** This is based on your adjusted net income.

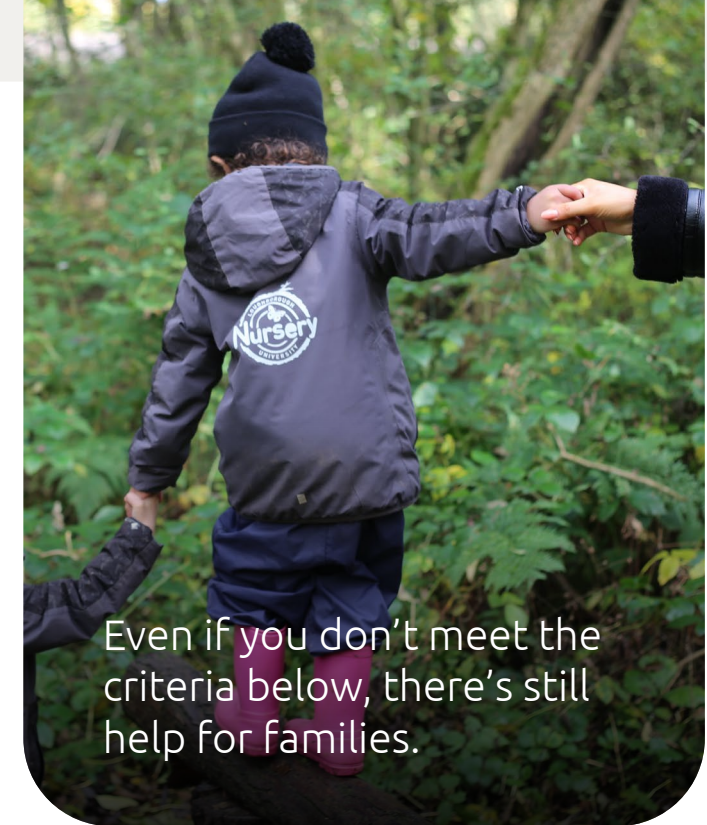
You can still qualify if you're:

- On maternity, paternity, or adoption leave
- Off work due to illness
- Receiving certain benefits like Carer's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance





Not Eligible? There's Still Support Available.



All 3 and 4-year-olds are entitled to **15 hours of free childcare per week.**

This is for **38 weeks of the year**, adding up to **570 hours annually.**

It's **available to all families**, no matter your income or employment status.

The **funding starts** from the term after **your child turns 3.**



Support for Families with 2-Year-Olds



Some families may also be eligible for funded childcare for younger children:



If you receive certain types of government support, your child may qualify for **15 hours of free childcare per week** starting from the term after they turn **2**.



This helps children from a wide range of backgrounds access early education and care at an earlier stage.





When Does Funding Start?

Here's how eligibility lines up with your child's birthday:



If your child is born between
1 January and 31 March, they
become eligible from the term
starting on or after **1 April**

If their birthday falls between
1 April and 31 August, they
become eligible from the term
starting on or after **1 September**

If they are born between
1 September and 31 December,
they become eligible from the
term starting on or after
1 January



How to Check Your Eligibility and Apply for Funded Childcare



Wondering if you qualify for funded childcare?

Here's how to find out and apply: →

1

Step 1: Check Your Eligibility

Visit the Best Starts in Life website to see what support you're entitled to. It's quick and easy to check!

2

Step 2: Apply Online

Once you've checked your eligibility, you can apply directly through the **Best Start in Life website** by clicking 'Apply'.

3

Step 3: Receive Your Code

After applying, you'll get a funding code. Once you have it, just fill out one of our nursery funding forms so we can apply the funding to your account.

4

Step 4: What Happens Next?

We'll take care of the rest by claiming the funding directly from the local authority. Your funded hours will be automatically deducted from your invoice—making childcare more affordable for you.

5

Step 5: Reconfirm Every 3 Months

To keep your funding active, you'll need to reconfirm your details every 3 months. Don't worry—you'll get a reminder when it's time to do this.





What will my savings look like?

Accessing funded childcare can make a **big difference** to your family's budget:



15 hours of funded childcare could save you around **£3,000 per year** per child.

30 hours of funded childcare could save you up to **£6,000 per year**.

Families using the **Tax-Free Childcare scheme** can save up to an extra **£2,000 per child each year**





How Else Can I Save Money?

You might also be eligible for extra support through the government's **Tax-Free Childcare scheme**: →

1

You'll get **£2** for every **£8** you pay in.

2

That's up to **20% off** your childcare costs.

3

Available to working families, helping make childcare more affordable.





Other exclusive discounts?

If you're part of the Imago or Loughborough University community, you may be eligible for exclusive savings through salary sacrifice:



Salary Sacrifice Scheme

You agree to reduce your salary by a set amount each month and, in return, pay for your gross (pre-tax) nursery costs, saving on both Income Tax and National Insurance.

You'll receive a contract amendment outlining the monthly deduction from September through August each year.



Additional £1/hour Discount

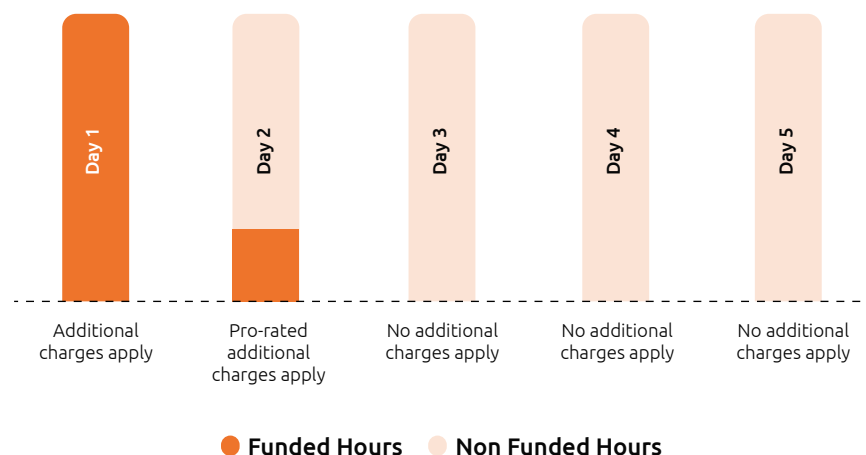
Staff on grades 1–4 get £1 off per hour, in addition to tax and NI savings.

Students also qualify for £1 off per hour during the academic year—just upload your Certificate of Registration via Student Self-Service.

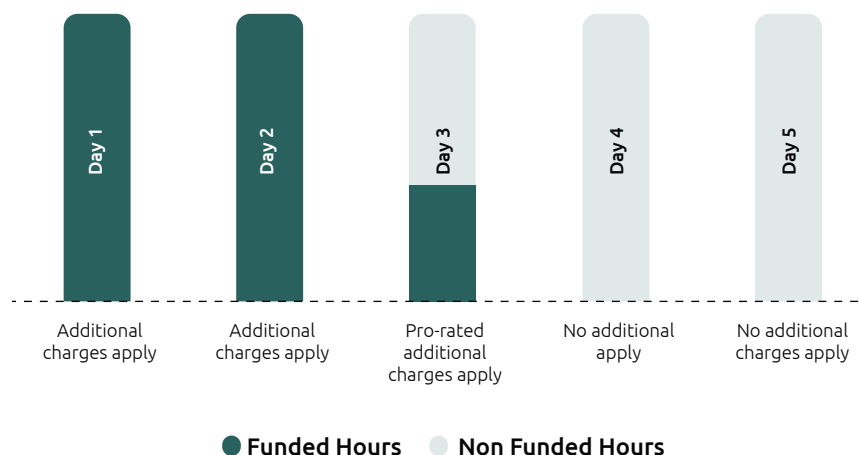


How we use the government funding?

The 15 hours nursery week:



The 30 hours nursery week:



Government-funded childcare is usually offered during 38 weeks of school term time, providing:

- 570 hours per year for the 15-hour entitlement
- 1,140 hours per year for the 30-hour entitlement

While this works well for school settings, we know that working families need consistent childcare all year round. That's why at Loughborough University Nursery, we stretch the funding across **51 weeks of the year**. This helps avoid higher costs during school holidays and gives you reliable, year-round support.

Here's what that looks like:

- 15-hour entitlement around 11.18 hours per week
- 30-hour entitlement around 22.35 hours per week

This approach ensures your funded hours are spread evenly, making childcare more manageable and predictable throughout the year.



Enriching Experiences Beyond EYFS



Investing in Your Child's **Learning and Development.**



Government funding helps us deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), but it doesn't cover everything your child needs for a full, enriching day.

Items such as meals, health and hygiene essentials, and extracurricular activities fall outside the funded hours.

At our nursery, we keep things simple with an all-inclusive service designed to support every aspect of your child's day—from learning and development to wellbeing and enjoyment.

This means you don't have to worry about managing lots of extras or hidden costs.

What's Included in Our All-Inclusive Approach?

These experiences are integrated throughout the week, giving your child continuity and variety in a safe, stimulating environment. →



1

Nutritious meals and snacks prepared fresh every day

2

Health and hygiene essentials to keep your child comfortable and cared for

3

Specialist-led extracurricular activities that enrich learning and wellbeing, complementing the EYFS curriculum





Optional Charges and Transparency

We believe in fairness and clarity.

In line with government guidance:



All extracurricular activities and consumables are optional and not a condition of accessing funded hours.



Invoices are itemised, so you can see exactly what's funded and what's charged additionally.



No hidden fees—we'll always explain any optional charges upfront.



If you have any questions about funding, fees, or what's included, our nursery team is here to help.


Ofsted
Outstanding
Provider



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