
Happy Days
Where Children Shine
Help with the Cost of Childcare
Support Available for Parents Residing in England

Welcome to Your Childcare Support Guide

Here at Happy Days Nurseries & Pre-Schools we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life and we pride ourselves on providing a service to enable parents to work and live their daily lives knowing their children are cherished and cared for to the highest standard.

We understand the cost of childcare represents a significant proportion of your outgoings and we want to ensure all our families are receiving the support they are entitled to.

Several government programmes support parents with the cost of childcare and whilst we aim to explain these in more detail in this guide, everybody's circumstances are different and we therefore encourage you to visit:

Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK

That said, this guide will provide you with an overview of the help available and how that impacts on the fees payable at your Happy Days Nursery.



Funding Available* at a Glance

Childcare Support is expanding! From September 2025 eligible working parents with children aged 9 months old to when they start school will be eligible for 30 hours childcare support.

1. Childcare Support for All 3 &4 year olds:



15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for all children aged 3-4 years

2.Childcare Support for Working Families:



15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for eligible Working Families with children aged 9months–4 years

3.Childcare Support for 2 year olds:



15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for 2 year olds receiving some form of additional support

4.Tax Free Childcare:



For working families, including the self-employed, in the UK with children aged 0-11 (or 0-16 if disabled).

*Eligibility Criteria Applies

1 Childcare Support for All 3 & 4 year olds:

15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for all children aged 3-4 years



All 3 and 4-year-olds who live in England are entitled to a total of 15 hours of early years education for 38 weeks or stretched for the equivalent number of hours across more weeks, per year, irrespective of income levels, benefit status, or family circumstances.

Children will qualify for 15 hours of early years education the term after their third birthday up until they reach compulsory school age.

Your nursery manager will support you to enable you to access this place.

2 Childcare Support for Working Families:

15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for eligible Working Families with children aged 9months–4 years



Children aged 9 months to 4 years old of eligible working families are entitled to 15 hours of early years education for 38 weeks or stretched for the equivalent number of hours across more weeks per year.

Children will qualify for an education entitlement place the term after their child turns 9 months old.

Who is eligible?
To be eligible, over the next 3 months you and your partner (if you have one) must each expect to earn at least:

- £2,539 before tax if you're aged 21 or over (equivalent to £195 per week)
- £2,080 before tax if you're aged 18 to 20 (equivalent to £160 per week)
- £1,570 before tax if you're under 18 or an apprentice (equivalent to £120 per week)

This is equivalent to the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week, on average.
If you or your partner have an expected adjusted net income over £100,000 in the current tax year, you will not be eligible.

How do I apply?

- Check you are eligible: Visit the Childcare Choices website to find out if you are eligible
- Verify the deadline date: You can apply for your code up to 16 weeks before your baby turns 9 months old. You need to apply online before the deadline to receive your code. The deadline is the day before the new term begins.
- **Apply for your childcare code: Before you apply, ensure you have the following information to hand:**

- ✓ your National Insurance number (or unique taxpayer reference if you are self-employed)
- ✓ the date you started or are due to start work
- ✓ details of any government support or benefits you receive
- ✓ the UK birth certificate reference number (if you have one) for your child

Apply online here

- **Present your code to your childcare provider:** Along with your National Insurance Number and your child's date of birth. Your childcare provider will check the code is valid.
- **Complete a parent declaration form**: At Happy Days, this will be an online form using our third part provider, Funding Loop
- **Reconfirm:** You must sign into your childcare account and confirm your details are up to date every 3 months or your code will expire. HMRC will remind you when it is time for you to reconfirm.

3 Childcare Support for 2 year olds Accessing Some Form of Support

15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for 2 year olds receiving some form of additional support



Your 2-year-old can get funded early learning if you live in England and get any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit

Your benefits will not be affected if you take up the 15 hours early learning offer.

2-year-olds can also get funded childcare if they:

- are looked after by a local authority
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- get Disability Living Allowance
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

No income thresholds apply.

How do I apply?
Contact your childcare provider or your local council to apply for this scheme.

Your Nursery Manager can assist in providing contact details for your local council.

4 Tax Free Childcare

For working families, including the self-employed, in the UK with children aged 0-11 (or 0-16 if disabled).



Who is Eligible?
To be eligible for Tax-Free Childcare, you, and your partner (if you have one), must:

- be at least 16 years old
- be in the UK, or treated as being in the UK
- be responsible for the child you are applying for
- be in qualifying paid work, which can include being:
- self-employed
- on shared parental, maternity, paternity, or adoption leave
- on sick leave or annual leave
- expect to earn on average at least a weekly amount equivalent to 16 hours a week at the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage over the next 3 months
- not be earning more than an adjusted net income of £100,000 per year

Not be in receipt of:

- Universal Credit
- Childcare Vouchers

If you're not currently working, you may still be eligible if your partner is working.

Find out more about eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare **here.**

How does it work?
If you are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare, you'll set up an online childcare account for your child. For every £8 you pay into this account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay your provider, up to £2,000 per child, per year (£500 every three months).

You will need to reconfirm your eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare every three months. You'll get a text reminder and it's easy to do through your online account.

How do I apply?
You can set up your online childcare account here.

Combining Schemes

You may be able to combine one or more of the Government Funded Schemes.

Any of the following schemes:

Tax-Free Childcare
Age 0 - 11 or 16 if disabled
Working families
Get up to **£2000** per child

Universal Credit childcare
Age 0 - 16
Working families
Claim back up to 85% of costs

Can be used with:

30 hours childcare
Age 9 months - 4 years
Working families

15 hours childcare
Age 3 - 4 years
All families in England

15 hours early learning
Age 2
Families receiving additional forms of support

Visit the Childcare Choices website for more information.

SHINE
AT HAPPY DAYS
Your Complete Nursery Package

Everything you expect – plus the little extras that matter!

The Government funding is intended to cover the Early Years Foundation Stage basic provision only and is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

SHINE at Happy Days provides everything your child needs to learn, grow and thrive – from meals to milestones – everything is covered.
Providing you with a convenient, one simple plan – no packing, no extras, no stress!

What's included?

Everything you expect:

- **Early Years Education** led by qualified practitioners
- **Happy Days Where Children Shine Curriculum** providing opportunities for children to learn, explore and discover
- **Learning Resources & Materials**
- **Parent Updates and Progress Tracking** via our secure parent app
- **Enrichment Activities** such as Sing & Sign, Boogie Mites, Let's Cook and much more



The little extras:

- Nutritious Meals & Snacks, which have been awarded the Quality Mark by the Early Years Alliance
- Nappies, wipes and suncream – no need to pack extras!

More than Mealtimes - Moments that Matter!



The Quality Mark* by the Early Years Alliance recognises our commitment to excellent nutrition practices.

Our trained Nursery cooks and chefs* use fresh ingredients daily to prepare nutritionally balanced meals and snacks. These meals operate on four-weekly, seasonal schedules to help introduce children to a wide range of tastes, textures, and healthy eating habits.

We encourage independence during meal times. Older children are supported in serving their own meals using appropriate serving utensils and pouring their drinks. Children are encouraged to wash up their plates after mealtimes. During this daily routine, staff who are sitting with the children help to support their development, encouraging the use of communication and language skills.

More than Mealtimes – fuelling learning, social growth, life skills and healthy habits for life





By choosing Happy Days SHINE, you are securing this plan for the whole term.

Any parent wishing to opt out of Happy Days SHINE should speak to their Nursery Manager who will explain the process and provide you with the necessary policies which you must agree to adhere to. You must provide at least one month's notice prior to the start of the next term if you wish to opt out. You cannot opt out mid-term.

*Some locations choose to use an external catering service.

How can I use my Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE)?

To meet the needs of working families and provide continuity of care for our children, we stretch the government funded hours over the 51 weeks of the year we are open. This means that a parent eligible for 15 hours funding per week, over 38 weeks, can access 11.18 hours per week over 51 weeks and a working parent eligible for 30 hours funding per week, over 38 weeks, can access 22.35 hours over 51 weeks.

Weekly Funded Hours - based on 51 weeks

15 hours EYEE

11.18 Hours per week

Maximum of 10 funded hours per day

30 hours EYEE

22.35 Hours per week

Maximum of 10 funded hours per day

Perfect for working parents needing year-round care!

At our Derriford Nursery, the Local Authority allows us to stretch the funding over 47.5 weeks of the year, with 3.5 weeks being charged at the full day care rate. For parents accessing 15 hours EYEE, you will receive 12 hrs per week. For parents accessing 30 hours EYEE, you will receive 24 hrs per week. Please speak to your nursery manager for more information.

Term Time Only - based on 38 weeks

For parents wishing to access their EYEE for 38 weeks of the year only, **these places are limited** and must be accessed in 10 or 5 hour sessions only.

Please speak to the Nursery Manager if you wish to access your EYEE over 38 weeks.



Understanding your funded hours and extra charges

Your Early Years Education Entitlement hours will be allocated to full day sessions first

As our sessions are either 5 or 10 hours long, you will have 2.35 residual government funded hours left to use against another 5- or 10-hour session (that is part of your permanent booking pattern)

Any hours over and above the funded hours will be charged for at the nursery standard hourly rate,

NOTE:
We do not offer hourly rates or sessions. All our nurseries offer standard morning, afternoon and full day sessions as displayed on their fee sheet. Some settings may offer early and late sessions, depending on their location – these are charged for separately. When referring to additional hours, we mean the additional hours in the session that the Early Years Education Entitlement does not cover, along with any additional standard sessions required.



Working Example:

A child accessing 22.35 hours Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE) and attending three days per week, stretching their free entitlement over 51 weeks of the year, will be invoiced each week for:

Day 1

- One day 10 x EYEE Funded Hours
- One day Meal and Snacks Charge
- One day Consumables Charge

+

Day 2

- One day 10 x EYEE Funded Hours
- One day Meal and Snacks Charge
- One day Consumables Charge

+

Day 3

- One day with 2.35 residual EYEE Funded Hours
- One day with 7.65 chargeable hours
- Pro-rated Meal and Snack Charge for part funded day
- Pro-rated Consumable Charge for part funded day

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Total Weekly Fee

The Nursery Fee Sheet will set out the fees for each session and the Meal & Snacks and Consumables charge.



Funding Loop*

To claim your Government Funding, you will be required to complete a Parent Declaration Form.

To streamline this process, we use an online system called Funding Loop which allows you to complete your Early Years Education Entitlement Parent Declaration Form online, including uploading supporting documents such as Birth Certificates, speeding up the process and removing the need for you to fill out paper forms and return them to nursery.

You can find further information on Funding Loop here:
https://www.fundingloop.info/#!/home

*Not available at all sites.



FAQ's

How do I apply for funding?
Visit the Childcare Choices website to see if you are eligible and follow the steps to apply. You must have applied and provided your funding code to your chosen nursery before the start of term but we advise you to apply as early as possible in order to secure your place at your chosen nursery.

How many funded hours can I access per day?
The government funding is restricted to a maximum of 10 hours per day. Where your nursery is open for longer than this, you are required to pay for the additional hours if you choose to attend for more than 10 hours per day

Can I use my hours term time rather than stretched over 51 weeks?
Most of our settings cannot accommodate term time only requests. You will need to speak to your nursery manager to determine whether they can accommodate this request. Our admissions policy is to give priority to those parents requiring care all year round

Do I have to pay for meals, snacks and consumables?
No, as per the government's statutory guidelines, these additional extras are optional. However, most of our parents opt to access the Happy Days SHINE, which provides nappies, wipes, sun cream, meals and snacks for a minimal charge - providing you with a convenient, one simple plan – no packing, no extras, no stress!

Parents who wish to opt out of these extras should speak to their nursery manager, who will advise them of the alternatives available and the policies and procedures they will need to adhere to.

Can I bring in a packed lunch?
Unfortunately, Happy Days do not allow cold packed lunches in nursery due to not having enough storage space at the correct temperature. Food stored out of the fridge for long periods of time increases the risk of harmful bacteria being present in the food.

A hot lunch must be provided in an insulated flask to maintain the food at a temperature of 63 degrees or above to reduce harmful bacteria.

Furthermore, the meal provided must match the meal Happy Days are offering to the rest of the nursery children that day.

This will ensure that Happy Days are also adhering to the guidance set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, complying with the Food Standards Agency, which is legislated by the Environmental Health Organisation, as well as ensuring that each child feels equal and minimises distractions that may arise from varied packed food options.