

# Free Childcare for 2 year olds - frequently asked questions, for parents

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## Do I have to claim FE for 2 Year Olds?

No – but as it gives both you and your child free time, why not? That’s up to 15 hours a week of playing, painting, reading, cooking, climbing, singing, dancing, dressing up, running around, building, gardening, whatever they like doing. But most of all, your child is learning with other children.

## Do I have to use all 15 hours per week?

No - you don't have to use the full 15 hours, you can gradually increase the hours at the beginning of each term if you choose to.

## Does it cost me anything?

No, the 15 hours are completely free to you, though you may have the option to pay for additional services such as meals, trips and extra hours that you would be required to pay for. The childcare provider should make you aware up front of any additional costs and these should not be a condition of accessing a completely free place.

## Can I take extra hours?

Yes, if your chosen setting has extra time available. This will be charged at an additional rate which should be made clear to you by the setting.

## What about a deposit?

You will not need to pay a deposit for the free time. If you are accessing additional hours or services from the setting you may be required to pay a deposit.

## Do I need to tell HMRC?

Yes, you must [inform HMRC](#) if your childcare costs stop or your average weekly costs go down by £10 or more, as soon as possible after taking up the funded place.

## If my circumstances change, will FE for 2 Year Olds stop?

No, once your child has been offered the free 15 hours, you can use them even if your circumstances change.

## What happens if the setting I choose doesn't have the times I need?

Your chosen setting should tell you when they are able to offer you the free hours. If these times do not suit you, you can either wait until a more suitable place becomes available, look at alternative settings or split the 15 hours between two settings.

## My chosen setting doesn't have a place at the moment, what happens next?

The setting you choose may not be able to take your child straight away. Your child may be put on a waiting list until a place becomes available. You could also look elsewhere for an available place.

## The term has already started, does my child need to wait until next term to start?

Your child can claim FE for 2 Year Olds at any point in the term, depending on when the setting has a place available and when your child became eligible.

## Can my child attend the setting in the holidays?

You will need to speak to your chosen setting to see if they offer this. Some settings 'stretch' the 15 hours per week so that you can use the free hours all year round. For example, you may be able to use 11 hours per week over 51 weeks per year instead of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year.

## I would like to know more - who can I contact?

Further information on FE, including how the funding can be claimed and the type of childcare provision you can access, is available on our website [www.westsussex.gov.uk/freechildcare](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/freechildcare). You can also telephone the Family Information Service on 01243 777807 between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday. Alternatively, pick up a leaflet from a childcare setting or your local [Family Hub](#).