

Early Years Free Entitlement for Children We Care For



The document provides West Sussex Social Work colleagues with knowledge and understanding about the different Early Years Funding paths for Children We Care For that are under 5 years old. It outlines the Local Authority position on the different funding streams which need to be adhered to, and next steps needed to access funding.

Children aged under 2

Local Authority Position

Children should **not** be in an Early Years setting.

Rare and Extenuating Circumstances

In extremely rare and extenuating circumstances the Virtual School may consider agreeing to funding if the Foster Carer is working outside of fostering. Contact the Virtual School to discuss further.

Children aged between 2 and 3

Local Authority Position

If children are in a caring and nurturing foster environment, they might not need to attend an Early Years setting. However, children can be in an Early Years setting for up to 15 hours per week if it is in line with their care plan.

How to apply

If the foster carer has the appropriate authority, they can make the [application for the funding code](#) through West Sussex County Council.

When are children eligible for 2 year old Free Entitlement?

A child born between **1 April and 31 August** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **September** after their second birthday.

A child born between **1 September and 31 December** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **January** after their second birthday.

A child born between **1 January and 31 March** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **April** after their second birthday.

Children aged between 3 and starting in Reception

Local Authority Position

Children can access up to 15 hours per week of Free Entitlement Universal funding.

How to apply

The foster carer completes a 'parent/carer declaration form' (if they have authority to do so) given to them by the Early Years setting.

When are children eligible for 3 and 4 year old Free Entitlement?

A child born between **1 April and 31 August** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **September** after their third birthday.

A child born between **1 September and 31 December** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **January** after their third birthday.

A child born between **1 January and 31 March** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **April** after their third birthday.

Children aged between 3 and starting in Reception with the foster carer(s) working outside of fostering and earning under £100,000 per year

Local Authority Position

Children 3 years old and over should not be accessing over the 15 hours of universal entitlement unless in rare and extenuating circumstances.

Rare and Extenuating Circumstances

Conversations with the Virtual School to discuss the rare and extenuating circumstance need to take place in the first instance.

If it is agreed by all to apply for the additional funding, the social worker needs to see the foster carers' evidence of employment outside of fostering.

How to apply

The Foster Carer and Social Worker need to complete the application returning it to the Virtual School for their consideration.

When are children eligible for 3 and 4 year old Free Entitlement?

A child born between **1 April and 31 August** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **September** after their third birthday.

A child born between **1 September and 31 December** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **January** after their third birthday.

A child born between **1 January and 31 March** will be eligible at the start of the term beginning in **April** after their third birthday

Further support

Please contact gemma.peck@westsussex.gov.uk or wsvs@westsussex.gov.uk if you have any further questions or require any further support.