

FREE Early Education FOR 2 Year Olds (known in Kent as the FF2 Scheme)

KCC will fund any **eligible** child attending a Kent provision regardless of where they live.

A child is entitled to a funded place if the family is in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and the household income is **£15,400** a year or less **after** tax, not including benefit payments
- Child tax credits, and the household income is **£16,190** a year or less **before** tax
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment when they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2-year-olds can also get a place if they:

- are looked after by a local council.
- have a current statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education health and care plan.
- get Disability Living Allowance; or
- have left care under a special guardianship order; child arrangements order or residence order.

If you are a **Non-EEA citizen** who cannot claim benefits

2-year-olds can get free childcare if you are getting support under the Immigration and Asylum Act and have either:

- claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
- been refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')

2-year-olds may get free childcare if the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and any of the following apply:

- leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on family or private life grounds
- support from your local council because you have 'a child in need', for example they have a disability or a child protection plan
- the right to live in the UK because you're the main carer of a British citizen (known as a 'Zambrano Carer')

Detailed government guidance for the extension of 2-year-old free childcare eligibility to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) groups can be found on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

Evidence of the above must be provided with a completed [application form](#) or by contacting the [Management Information Early Years Team](#)

Free For 2 (FF2) Team, Management Information Information for Parents and Carers August 2022



Eligible children can start claiming after they turn two, depending on when their birthday is.

Funding is available to eligible families for up to 570 hours per year. It can be taken as 15 hours per week over 38 weeks or for fewer hours per week up to 52 weeks (as a stretched offer, if offered by the setting), in accordance with the date of birth range chart below.

Child's 2nd birthday	When they can claim from
1 January to 31 March	the beginning of term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	the beginning of term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	the beginning of term on or after 1 January

- Visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/free-childcare> for full details
- Childcare providers must be registered with KCC to offer free early education for 2-year-olds.
- If you haven't chosen a childcare provider, Kent Children and Families Information Service (CFIS) will be able to help. Call 03000 41 23 23 or email KentCFIS@theeducationpeople.org
You can also get help and advice from a Children's Centre.
- Being eligible for a free place does not offer a guarantee of a place at any one provider or a particular pattern of delivery.
- You do not have to take the full 15 hours if you feel it is too long for your child.
- A childcare provider can deliver the offer sessionally or flexibly. There is no minimum session length but the maximum session length is 10 hours per day. Places can be taken between the hours of 6.00am and 8.00pm.
- You have the option to split your hours between multiple KCC registered childcare providers, but no more than two sites in a single day.
- You cannot be charged if you only want to take-up the free 2-year-old funding. If you want your child to attend for more than the funded hours per week than they are entitled to, charges can be made. In these cases, to avoid any misunderstanding, your childcare provider must explain their charging policy before you sign a Parental Declaration Form.
- The free hours can only be taken from the start of the week during which eligibility has been confirmed. A childcare provider cannot claim for any hours attended prior to the eligibility check being performed.
- Once a child has been confirmed as eligible and they have taken up a free place, they will remain entitled until the 3-year old funding starts, even if the family's circumstances change.

How it works

You can apply for Free for 2 when your child reaches the age of one year and ten months. (Please do not apply before this time)

You will need to create an account using an email address to make an application. You can apply by visiting: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/free-childcare>

If you have applied for Free For 2 Funding using this online service before, or you have applied for a school place for older children using the KCC online admissions form before, you may use the same login details.

Information you will need:

- Your date of birth and National Insurance number (NINO) or National Asylum Seeker Service reference number (NASS)
- Proof of Disability Living Allowance for your 2-year-old (if applicable). This should be the most recent Award Notice

Please note: Completing an online application will give an immediate online result for economic claimants only.

For applications under the Special Educational Needs/ Care & Adoption criteria / Non-EEA criteria

A 'not found' result will be emailed to you asking you to confirm which criteria you wish to apply under. Once you have responded to this email, Management Information will carry out an eligibility check and will let you know the result by email.

Eligible Results:

- If you are 'Eligible', you will receive an email containing an EY Voucher Code comprising of a mixture of 6 numbers and letters i.e., 8BSYOW, 6PFTRQ WBZK2X.
- You will need to provide the email/EY Voucher and evidence of your child's date of birth at the setting as proof of eligibility.
- The EY Voucher is only valid for Kent settings, if you move outside of Kent, you may need to apply through the new Local Authority's website.

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Not Found Results:

- If you receive a 'Not Found' result, it does not mean that you are not eligible.
- All "Not Found" results will be investigated by Kent County Council's Management Information Team, who will send you an email the next working day advising you of what to do next. You will be asked to confirm which criteria you are applying under, once confirmed Management Information can continue to investigate your eligibility for the funding.
- Once investigated, if you are eligible, Management Information will send an eligible email containing a 6-digit EY Voucher Code. You can take this email to your chosen childcare provider to secure your funded place.
- If Management Information are unable to confirm eligibility at this time, you will be advised of the reason, and you may be advised to reapply if your circumstances change.

Please Note:

- Contact CFIS if you need a list of childcare providers registered with KCC to offer Free Early Education and Childcare for 2-year-olds.
- Visit the childcare providers you are interested in to discuss their pattern of offer and availability.
- The free hours can only be taken from the start of the week during which eligibility has been confirmed. The funding cannot be back dated.
- Before your child can take up their free place, your childcare provider will ask you to sign a Parental Declaration Form. This is an important document which **must** be completed and signed at the start of each new term.
- Once you have signed a Parental Declaration Form with your chosen childcare provider the funding cannot be transferred if you want to move your child to a different setting part way through the term. You do have a right to appeal and should contact the Children and Families Information Service (CFIS) on 03000 41 23 23 or email KentCFIS@theeducationpeople.org

If you have any questions, please email: KentCFIS@theeducationpeople.org

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