

## 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.

- FF2 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 shown below.

<b>Child's 2nd birthday</b>	<b>When they can claim from</b>
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

- The offer can be delivered 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.
- Parents do not have to take the full 15 hours if they feel it is too long for their child.
- Families have the option to split their hours between multiple KCC registered childcare providers, but no more than two sites in a single day.
- Childcare providers must be registered with KCC to offer Free Early Education and Childcare for 2-year-olds
- At the beginning of each month, all children's centre FF2 Leads receive a full list of childcare providers registered with KCC to offer FF2 places.
- Families cannot be charged for accessing the FF2 Scheme. However, if a family wishes their child to attend for more than the funded hours per week, charges can be made and they will have to pay the extra cost themselves.
- 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 parent has signed a Parental Declaration Form with their chosen childcare provider the funding cannot be transferred if they want to move their child to a different setting part way through the term. Funding for the term will be based on the first claim received and will not be transferred by KCC if a child moves from one setting to another. However, providers can transfer the funding amongst themselves if they wish to do so. If the total termly hours have not been utilised, they may claim the remaining weeks/hours. Parents do have a right to appeal and should contact the Children and Families Information Service (CFIS) on 03000 412323
- Once they have taken up a place, eligible 2-year-olds remain entitled to this place until the 3-year-old funding starts, even if the family's circumstances change.

## How it works

Parents can apply when their child is 1 year 10 months and will now be required to create an account, using an email address. Once the parent/carer has created an account, there is a four-step process to complete a FF2 Application <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/free-childcare>

Children centres will no longer be able to 'apply' on behalf of a parent\carer using the Children centre email address. The parent/carer must create an account using their own email address as the portal is shared with the school admissions team. Parents/Carers will use the same account to complete their school admissions applications. Please use the guidance document when supporting parents/carers. Once the parent/carer submits the application, they will receive an immediate email informing them of the result.

Information required for application:

- Parent date of birth and National Insurance number (NINO) or National Asylum Seeker Service reference number (NASS)
- Proof of Disability Living Allowance for the 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 the parent/carer. They will then receive an email asking them to confirm which criteria they wish to apply under. Once the parent\carer has responded to this email, Management Information will carry out an eligibility check and will let them know the result by email.

### Eligible Results:

- If a parent is found to be 'eligible' the email will contain an EY Voucher Code comprising of a mixture of 6 numbers and letters i.e., 8BSVOW, 6PFTRQ, WBZK2X.
- The parent needs to provide EY Providers with the EY Voucher Code as proof of eligibility.
- For parents where eligibility is confirmed immediately upon submission, the date the immediate email was sent is the date the child was confirmed as eligible. Management Information will no longer be sending eligibility emails stating the eligibility date in the body of the email.
- If a parent cannot find their EY Voucher Code, they can log into the FF2 Parent Portal at any time and copy it into a text message/email or write it down to pass onto their chosen provider. A provider will not accept a child without confirmation. If possible, please send the email/EY Voucher direct to the chosen provider as well.
- If they need help in finding a FF2 registered childcare provider. This can be done using the FF2 Registered Provider List that we send out to all FF2 Leads at the beginning of each month.
- Please advise parents KCC EY Vouchers will only be valid for Kent settings, if moving out of Kent, they will need to apply through the relevant Local Authority's website.

# Free For 2 (FF2) Team, Management Information Information for Children's Centre Staff August 2022



## **Not Found Results:**

- If a parent's application has not been confirmed, known as 'not found', this does not mean the family are not eligible, but Management Information require more details from the parent/carer to investigate further.
- If 'not found' the immediate email response from the portal will **not** contain an EY Voucher Code and will state Management Information will email requesting further details.
- Parents/Carers will receive an email from Management Information the next working day and will need to reply to allow further investigation.
- Once investigated, if the parent/carer is confirmed as eligible, Management Information will send an eligible email containing a 6-digit EY Voucher Code. Parents/carers will need to take this email to their chosen childcare provider to secure a funded place.
- If a child is not eligible at this time, Management Information will send the parent/carer an email explaining why and they may be advised to reapply if their circumstances change in the future.

If you have any questions, please email: [miearlyyears@kent.gov.uk](mailto:miearlyyears@kent.gov.uk)