

**Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead/ Achieving for Children
Early Education Funding for Families of 2 Year Olds who meet the
Eligibility Criteria at –**
<https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/early-education-funding-for-2-3-and-4-year-olds/two-year-old-funding> **‘First Pathway’**

Information for Parents/ Carers 2025-26

Families, who meet the Eligibility Criteria at the above link (‘First Pathway’) can apply for the 2 Year Old Early Education Funding – maximum 15 hours per week term-time (maximum 38 weeks of the year).

For further information, please refer to the above link.

To apply for 2 Year Old Funding under the above criteria, please go to:-
<https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/early-education-funding-for-2-3-and-4-year-olds/two-year-old-funding/applying-for-two-year-old-funding>

Parents should apply in the school term in which their child turns 2, and no earlier: -

- 1 January - 31 March for spring born children.
- 1 April - 31 August summer born children.
- 1 September - 31 December autumn born children.

Eligibility

Children who are approved as eligible for this 2 Year Old Funding will receive a letter of confirmation from RBWM AfC (**NOT** a code), and can start accessing the entitlement from the start of the term **after** the term in which they turn 2, based on the dates below:-

Born between	Eligible
1 st January to 31 st March	Summer term after their 2 nd birthday
1 st April to 31 st August	Autumn term after their 2 nd birthday
1 st September to 31 st December	Spring term after their 2 nd birthday

The dates are set by the DfE (Department for Education) and cannot be changed by RBWM AfC or the childcare provider.

Child's Date of Birth	Summer Term 2025	Autumn Term 2025	Spring Term 2026	Summer Term 2026
01.04.22 to 31.08.22	If eligible – last term	3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement	3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement	3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement
01.09.22 to 31.12.22	If eligible – second term	If eligible – last term	3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement	3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement
01.01.23 to 31.03.23	If eligible – first term	If eligible – second term	If eligible – third and last term	3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement
01.04.23 to 31.08.23	Not eligible	If eligible – first term	If eligible – second term	If eligible – third and last term
01.09.23 to 31.12.23	Not eligible	Not eligible	If eligible – first term	If eligible – second term
01.01.24 to 31.03.24	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	If eligible – first term

Please note that from the Autumn Term 2025, some families with 2 Year Olds will be eligible for and able to access up to 30 funded hours per week term-time (maximum 38 weeks per year). The 30 hours is made up of either 15 hours 2 Year Old Funding and 15 hours Working Parents Entitlement, or 30 hours Working Parents Entitlement. Parents must have the appropriate confirmation of funding. A valid Eligibility Code is needed for the Working Parents Entitlement.

Where can a child access their place?

Children can access their funded place at a variety of childcare providers – these can include:-

- **Local Authority Maintained Nursery Schools or Nursery Class** – We have some standalone nursery schools in the borough, and a number of our first, infant and primary schools have a nursery class. Attendance at a nursery school/nursery class does not guarantee a place for your child in that school
- **Pre-School Provider** – Normally these open for part of the day, possibly mornings or afternoons and are open term time. These can be privately run or charities run by a committee
- **Day care (Nursery) provider** – A private business, usually open around 8am to 6pm, up to 52 weeks a year
- **Independent School nursery** – A nursery class in an independent school
- **Childminders** – a number of our childminders are registered to offer funded places

Not all Early Years Providers offer the 2 Year Old Entitlement. Parents can either obtain details from the providers themselves or check with the 2 Year Old Team. If parents are awarded the entitlement, and do not already have a place at a particular provider, we give a list of providers who offer the funding.

To be eligible to offer parents the funded entitlement, childcare providers must be approved by the Early Years Team. They must offer high quality care and meet the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The majority of childcare providers in RBWM have a good or outstanding Ofsted (or Independent Schools Inspectorate) rating. All childcare providers, irrespective of their Ofsted/ ISA rating, are only allowed to continue to offer funded childcare places, if the Early Years Team is satisfied they offer childcare of sufficiently high quality.

When will a child be able to access their Funded Entitlement hours?

Many providers choose to offer their funded entitlement in blocks of three hours, 5 days a week; some may offer 5 hours a day, 3 days a week. The funded entitlement hours can be taken between 6am and 8pm, and no funded entitlement session can be longer than 10 hours per day.

Providers can offer the funded entitlement hours over 38 term-time weeks (maximum 15 hours per week). Providers open all year can spread ('stretch') the funded entitlement hours over the weeks they are open, which gives parents fewer hours per week over more weeks of the year e.g. a provider open 52 weeks could offer parents approximately 11 funded entitlement hours per week.

The year is divided into 3 terms or funding periods (spring, summer and autumn). Each term/ period has a maximum number of funded hours dependent on the number of weeks in the term/ period and which method (term time or stretched) the provider has adopted.

Childcare providers can choose for themselves when/ how they offer the funded entitlement hours.

Parents may not be able to access all or any of their funded entitlement hours at their first choice of provider. Parents can access their funded entitlement hours across a maximum of two childcare providers in one day. Parents will need to speak to providers individually to find out if and when they have available sessions. Individual providers manage their own waiting lists, admissions and offers of places.

What will parents have to pay for?

The Two Year Old Early Education Funding is intended to deliver 15 hours a week term-time (570 hours over the year) of free, high-quality, flexible early learning and childcare. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. Providers can charge for meals, snacks, consumables, trips and specialist tuition as part of a funded entitlement place. Parents should speak to the childcare provider directly to find out what they offer, and parents should check with them in advance of their child starting what extras they may be required to pay for. All childcare providers should communicate any charges clearly with parents. Invoices and receipts should be clear, transparent and itemised, allowing parents to see that they have received their child's funded entitlement completely free of charge and understand fees/ charges paid for additional hours or services. Invoices and receipts should include the provider's full details so that they can be identified as coming from a specific provider.

If parents only want to take up the funded entitlement hours, and no extra hours or any of the additional optional services, they need to check with the provider beforehand. Please note that some providers may only have a limited number of places for children who just want to take up their funded entitlement hours (and nothing else), so parents should find a provider who can meet their needs.

Providers must not charge parents "top-up" fees (any difference between a provider's normal charge to parents and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver free places). Providers must not require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's free place; but, if providers charge parents a deposit to secure their child's free place, the deposit should be refunded in full to parents within a reasonable time scale.

What will parents have to sign?

The childcare provider should ask parents to sign an agreement prior to their child taking up a place, which should detail all the provider's terms and conditions and charges. Parents should check this carefully before signing, to ensure that they are clear about the sessions being offered, any extra charges/ fees and any notice period.

Parents will also be asked to complete, sign and date a parent declaration form when the provider starts claiming the Early Education Funding for a child; parents will be asked for proof of a child's date of birth. Parents must show their letter of confirmation of 2 Year Old Funding to their chosen provider, before any claim for the funding can be made.

Can Early Education Funding be claimed in another Local Authority?

Yes – the childcare provider will still claim the Early Education Funding. Parents should apply for 2 Year Old Funding to the relevant Local Authority, in which the childcare provider is registered. Parents should check with the childcare provider their Local Authority's policy for funding, as it may differ from the RBWM AfC one. Parents can also split the funded entitlement between 2 providers in different local authorities, but this must not exceed the 15 hours maximum per week (term-time), 570 hours per year (stretched), and parents must communicate to both providers how they wish to split the entitlement, and sign and date accordingly on the parent declaration form at each setting.

How / when the funding is claimed?

Childcare providers claim the funding from the local authority each term. The funding is paid directly to the childcare provider. It is used by the childcare provider to cover the cost to them of providing the funded entitlement hours in terms of staffing, resources, running costs etc. Funding does not go directly to parents.

The childcare provider submits funding claims by the agreed dates each term.

If eligible for 2 Year Old Funding, it runs until the end of the term in which your child turns three. From the start of the term after the term in which your child turns 3, he/ she will automatically become eligible for the 3 & 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement – 15 hours per week term-time (maximum 38 weeks of the year). Some 3 & 4 Year Old children may qualify for the 3 & 4 Year Old Working Parents Entitlement (an additional 15 hours per week term-time, maximum 38 weeks of the year).

Please refer to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk for information on and how to apply for the Working Parents Entitlement. There is also information at the Childcare Choices website regarding Tax-Free Childcare and other help and support with childcare costs.

If parents have any questions or need advice, in the first instance please speak to your childcare provider.

If you need further help please email the Two Year Old Funding Team:-

2yearoldfunding.rbwm@achievingforchildren.org.uk