

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

### Childcare can make life better for you and your children

#### The Facts

- KCC will fund any **eligible** child attending a Kent provision regardless of where they live.
- For a child to get free early education and childcare, you must be getting one of the following:
  - Income Support
  - Income based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
  - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
  - Support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
  - Tax credits and have an annual income of no more than £16,190 before tax.
  - Universal Credit and have an annual income of no more than £15,400 after tax.
  - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
  - The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Children are also entitled to a free place if:

- They are looked after by a local authority
- They have a current statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education Health and Care Plan
- They get Disability Living Allowance
- They have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order which specifies with whom the child lives or an adoption order

Visit [www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2](http://www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2) for full details

- 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), in accordance with the date of birth range chart below.

A child born between:	Can access a FF2 place from:
1 April - 31 August (inclusive)	The start of term 1 following their second birthday (after summer holidays)
1 September - 31st December (inclusive)	The start of term 3 following their second birthday (after Christmas / New Year holiday)
1 January - 31st March (inclusive)	The start of term 5 following their second birthday (after April holiday)

- 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@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentcfis@kent.gov.uk). 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 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.
- Funding cannot be transferred to a new childcare provider part way through a term. If you choose to move your child to another provider, you will have to pay for the sessions. You do have a right to appeal and this should be done by contacting CFIS.
- Once a child has 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

- It's quick and easy to apply online at [www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2](http://www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2)
- You can also complete an application online yourself, with your childcare provider or at a children's centre.
- Information you will need:
  - Proof of your child's date of birth (birth certificate / passport)
  - 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
- If your child is eligible, we will send you an 'Eligibility Confirmed' email. This is an important document which must be handed to your chosen childcare provider. A provider will not be able to offer you a free place without it. If you have applied on-line, you can show the provider the email on your phone rather than print it out.
- If your child is not eligible, we will let you know the reason why.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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