



## How is the 15 hours spread over the week?

You should discuss availability with the setting. Some settings offer specific packages on how your child can attend the free hours, some settings will be fully flexible to your requirements. The 15 hours can be taken in full over no less than 2 days, you can take a maximum of up to 10 hours a day and no less than 2 hours in a day. This will be depending on availability at the setting .

## Can I spread the funded hours over more weeks?

As standard the funded hours is taken at 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the school year, September to July. However, you may be able to pro rata the free hours, this means you will have less free hours per week but it would be spread over more weeks of the year (across school holidays). You should ask the setting if this kind of offer is available.

## Can I take the hours at more than one setting?

**Yes.** You can chose to split the free 15 hours at a maximum of 2 childcare settings if you wish. This can be split between any type of childcare setting such as a childminder and a maintained school nursery class. Your child still only gets 15 hours per week in total.

## What if I want to change setting?

You can choose to change setting and the funding will follow your child to the new setting, be sure you inform the setting your child is leaving and check the notice periods if you have signed a contract.

## You must sign a Privacy Notice

You must sign a privacy notice at the setting to take your free place.

For more information visit: [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eyc](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eyc)  
or contact the Family Information Service on 0300 111 8007.

# Free Nursery Education Funding for 2, 3 and 4 years olds.

Up to 570 hours a year of free education  
& childcare for your child

## Why take up free early learning for your child?

The first years of a child's life are very influential and childcare can play a huge part in their early education. Children learn best of all through play and early learning and a childcare setting can help develop language and communication, social skills and prepare them for school. It really can help to give them the best start in life.

## What's on offer for a 2 year old?

More than a third of families with a 2 year old are now eligible for 15 hours of free education & childcare per week (over 38 weeks), this is known as Think2. Families must meet a criteria and will need to apply.

**To find out more about the full criteria and how to apply visit:**  
[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/think2](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/think2)  
**or contact the Family Information Service on 0300 111 8007.**

## What's on offer for 3 & 4 year olds?

All 3 and 4 years old in Staffordshire are eligible to receive a universal entitlement of 15 hours of free education and childcare per week (over 38 weeks). Families do not need to meet any criteria or apply. You simply just inform the childcare setting you wish your child to attend.

## When can my child receive their place?

Funding for eligible 2 year olds can start the term after the child's 2nd birthday. Funding for 3 & 4 year olds will also start from the term after the child's 3rd birthday:

Children born between:	Free places start from:
1st January - 31st March	Summer term (from 1st April)
1st April - 31st August	Autumn term (from 1st September)
1st September - 31st December	Spring term (from 1st January)

## How do I claim the 15 hours?

No money is passed to you. The funding is paid directly to the setting who will claim funding for your child. The 15 hours are then automatically deducted from your childcare bill.

Your child can attend any childcare provider that is registered to provide free places, as long as they have places available. Providers include:

- **Childminders**
- **Day Nurseries (private, voluntary, independent or governor run)**
- **Preschool Playgroups**
- **Maintained School Nursery Classes (available only from the September following a child's 3rd birthday)**

## Do I have to pay anything?

**NO.** You will receive the funded 15 hours completely free. Your child does not have to attend the setting for extra childcare (more than 15 hours per week), attend during school holidays, take up food/ snacks or any other services. Your child can simply attend for the free 15 hours over 38 weeks which means you will not have anything to pay.

## What if I take up extra hours or food?

If your child does attend for extra childcare hours that are not free, which can include school holidays (if the setting is open) or you purchase a meal/snack, then you will have to pay what the setting charge on these additional items.

## Can I still claim Tax Credits?

**Yes.** However you must inform HM revenue and Customs that you now receive the free 15 hours per week, if you have been claiming childcare support on hours you were previously paying for.

