



FUNDED CHILDCARE FOR TWO YEAR OLDS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Funded Childcare for 2 year olds scheme?

From September 2009 to March 2011 Wokingham Borough participated in a government pilot project providing some 2 year olds from economically disadvantaged families access to free early learning and childcare linked with family support and outreach for their families. It has been decided that this scheme will continue in Wokingham, with some minor amendments.

The funded childcare place can be with a Network Childminder or Early Years setting. The funding is for up to 15 hours per week, 38 weeks a year, term time only and starts the term after the child's second birthday and will continue until they become eligible for the Free Entitlement. For a child who is placed with a childminder the place can be for less than 15 hours per week but for a greater number of weeks.

2. Are all Wokingham Early Years and Childcare settings part of this scheme?

No. Participating providers (Network Childminder or Setting) will have to meet the necessary quality criteria and be chosen based on their location and suitability.

3. What is a Network Childminder?

A childminder who belongs to the Wokingham Childminding Network and who is committed to offering high quality childcare. Childminders offer a flexible service and for younger children can be a gradual step into a group setting as there is a higher adult to child ratio. They offer a secure homely environment and continuity of care by one familiar adult. They are also part of the local community and can take children out and about on a regular basis.

4. What is required from the selected childcare settings/childminders?

They will be required to provide a record of the child's attendance and to provide termly evaluations. They will also be required to provide additional support work for the family.

5. How do we find out which settings/childminders are taking part in the 2 year old scheme?

Further information can be obtained from the Project Officer (details at the bottom of this leaflet). When a request has been made and approved the Project Officer will contact a Network Childminder/Setting (taking into account any preferences of the Parent/Carer) and arrange the placement.

6. Do all 2 year old children qualify for the scheme?

No. There are set eligibility criteria in order to qualify for the free place.

One parent must be in receipt of **one** of the benefits listed below:

- a. Income Support;
- b. Income based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- c. Child Tax Credit at a rate higher than the family element (ie more than £545 a year /£10.45 per week – this information will be on the top sheet of their tax credits awards letter);
- d. Extra Working Tax Credit relating to disability (this information will be on the top sheet of their tax credits award letter); or
- e. Pension Credit

AND

One or more of the following local criteria must be met:

- a. Black or Ethnic Minority Family
- b. Gypsy Roma or Traveller Family
- c. Asylum Seeking / Refugee Family
- d. Family with 3 or more children under 5 years of age
- e. Families experiencing domestic violence or substance misuse
- f. Families in temporary accommodation
- g. Families eligible for Free School Meals
- h. Lone parent
- i. Teenage parents
- j. Vulnerable parents
- k. Parents with health problems or disabilities
- l. Children with developmental delay
- m. Children with disabilities, additional, individual needs
- n. Children experiencing emotional and behavioural problems
- o. Vulnerable children

7. When will the 2 year old become eligible for funding?

The funding is for 3 terms starting the term after the child's second birthday. It continues until the term after their third birthday when they will become entitled to the 3 and 4 Year Free Entitlement for Integrated Care and Learning.

8. How do eligible children access a free place?

The places are accessed by referral only. A request for a 2 year old child, considered eligible for the scheme, can be made by anyone working with the family. All requests will be considered and assessed according to the criteria. **It is important to note that referral does not guarantee the child a place.** The family and referrer will be notified whether they have been allocated a place.

9. What do parents have to do once they have been allocated a place at a setting/with a childminder?

Parents/Carers need to ensure that the child attends on the allocated days. The Parent/Carer will be asked to complete an evaluation form each term to enable us to monitor the success of the programme.

10. Will attendance be monitored?

Providers will be asked to return a monthly attendance register and immediately report any unexplained absences.

11. Can I choose when I use the childcare?

The minimum session length is 2 hours, the maximum is 10 hours (although this is not recommended and will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances) and the child must attend on at least 2 days in every week. Subject to these conditions and availability within the chosen provision you will be able to discuss and agree suitable hours with the provider.

12. How will the fees be paid?

These will be paid directly to the provider.

13. Will additional support be available?

Once funding is approved the family will have the support of a Family Worker who will work with them and other agencies and partners to ensure they have access to other services, such as Children's Centres and to training courses and parenting support.

14. Where can I get more information?

For further information please contact either the Funded Childcare for 2 Year Olds Project Officer, Early Years and Childcare, Children's Services, Wokingham Borough Council, P.O. Box 156, Wokingham RG40 1WN

Tel: (0118) 908 8252 or email: earlyyears&childcare@wokingham.gov.uk

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-youth-education/services-children/funded-childcare-for-2-year-olds/>