

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.
 - A child is eligible for a free 2 year old place if:
 - The family meet the criteria used to determine the eligibility for Free School Meals
 - The family receive Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credits and have an annual gross income under £16,190 per year. Working Tax Credit is based on HMRC's assessment of earnings under the previous tax year
 - The child has a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan
 - The child is entitled to Disability Living Allowance
 - The child is looked-after by the local authority
 - The child is no longer looked-after by the local authority as a result of an adoption order, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order which specifies with whom the child lives
- Visit 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 12 hours per week over 48 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 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.
- A childcare provider can deliver the offer sessionally or flexibly. The minimum session length is 2½ hours and the maximum is 10 hours per day. Places can be taken between the hours of 7.00am and 7.00pm.
- You do not have to take the full 15 hours if you feel it is too long for your child.

- You have the option to split your hours between a maximum of two KCC registered childcare providers.
- 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 on-line at www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2
- You can also complete an application 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 / red book)
 - 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.
- 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.

If you have any questions, please email: kentcfis@kent.gov.uk