



TWO YEAR OLD free early learning

What is the two year old free early learning offer?

In September 2013, Southwark Council introduced an offer of free early learning for two year old children who may not otherwise benefit from early learning at this age.

Early learning benefits children's social, physical and mental development while also helping them to prepare for school. Evidence shows that regular good quality education has lasting benefits for all children.

Is the free early learning offer available to all two year olds?

No. The free early learning offer is only available to two year olds whose parents/carers meet specific eligibility criteria.

Who is eligible for the two year old free early learning offer?

The free early learning offer is available to two year old children whose parents/carers receive one or more of the following:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (with an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credits (with an annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190)

Or, children who are either:

- Looked after by the local authority
- Have a current statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
- Have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order.

How is the two year old early learning offer delivered?

Each eligible child is entitled to receive a maximum of 15 hours of free early learning per week until the term after they turn three years old. Then like all children, they will become eligible for a three and four year old free place.

The entitlement can be taken over a minimum of two and a half hours per day or no more than ten hours per day, between the hours of 7am and 7pm, over no fewer than 38 weeks per year (maximum 570 hours per year). Many providers will offer five mornings or afternoons per week, but some will be more flexible.

You should discuss with the childcare provider of your choice the hours they can offer and how you can access them.

When can my child access the two year old free early learning offer?

The table below shows when your child will become eligible.

If your child is born between:	They are eligible for a free place from:
1 April and 31 August	First September following their second birthday until the term following their third birthday
1 September and 31 December	First January following their second birthday until the term following their third birthday
1 January and 31 March	First April following their second birthday until the term following their third birthday

*Actual start date will depend on the setting's term dates, where applicable.

Where can my child access a two year old free early learning place?

The two year old free early learning offer can be provided by:

- Day nurseries
- Preschools or playgroups
- Independent schools
- Children's centres
- Maintained nursery schools and classes
- Some registered childminders.

Please note that not all Southwark settings participate in the scheme. The two year old free early learning offer does not guarantee a place at your preferred provider.

How can I be sure about the quality of an early education provider?

All providers of early education must meet the following criteria:

- Be maintained schools in the local authority or registered by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and inspected for the childcare and education they provide on a regular basis
- All staff are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Meet the learning and development and welfare requirements of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage.

You can view the Ofsted inspection report of an early education provider on Ofsted's website at www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports

Who pays for the two year old free early learning offer?

Registered providers claim the cost of the offer directly from Southwark Council. There is no money passed to the parents/carers.

Will parents be charged for the free early learning offer?

Providers cannot charge parents for any part of the 15 hours free early learning. Providers who charge for goods or services such as registration, lunch or uniform fees cannot do so as a condition of children accessing this offer.





If my circumstances change whilst my child is attending a free early learning place, will my child lose the place?

No. If your circumstances change whilst your child is attending an early learning place, your child will not lose the free place.

What if my child attends for longer than the hours of the free learning offer?

If you choose for your child to attend for longer than the length of the funded offer, you will be expected to pay for this additional time.

How could my family benefit from the two year old offer?

The free hours offered to two year olds can provide opportunities for:

- Children to play and join in with other children of the same age
- Children to become more confident and learn new things
- Parents to have childcare while they are in work or training
- Parents who are already paying for childcare to get some of these hours free of charge.



How do I apply for the offer?

Complete the application form attached to this leaflet and send it back to us using the freepost address at the end of the form. We will check if you are eligible for a free place and confirm this in writing to you.

If you are eligible, we will send you a list of participating providers. You can then contact the providers in your area and see what places they have available. Once you have found a provider that you are happy with, they will let us know that your child has taken the free place.

Contact us

If you would like a list of free early learning providers, or you have any questions about the free early learning offer you can contact us by phone on **0800 694 0171**, or by emailing **earlylearninginfo@southwark.gov.uk**

You can also contact us if you are not happy about the way your child has received their free offer. We would encourage you to raise any concerns you have with the early education provider in the first instance, however, if you are still not able to resolve your concern, or are not happy with the way it has been dealt with, please let us know.

Two year old early learning offer application form

Please complete the details below to find out if your child is eligible. Please only use full legal names, including any middle names. The applicant completing this form should be a parent/carer.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN CAPITAL LETTERS.

Applicant's details

First name

Surname

Address

.....

Post code

Contact telephone number

Email address

Date of birth.....

Relationship to child.....

National Insurance number.....

(or National Asylum Support Service (NASS) reference number)

Child's details

First name

Middle name

Surname

Address (leave blank if same as above).....

.....

Date of birth.....

Gender Male Female

I believe my child may be entitled to a free place because of (please tick):

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Income support | <input type="checkbox"/> | Job Seekers Allowance | <input type="checkbox"/> | Employment and Support Allowance | <input type="checkbox"/> | Immigration and Asylum Act Support | <input type="checkbox"/> | Child Tax Credit (income lower than £16,190) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit | <input type="checkbox"/> | Working Tax Credit* (income lower than £16,190) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Child looked after by LA or adopted* | <input type="checkbox"/> | Child receives Disability Living Allowance* | <input type="checkbox"/> | Child has Education, Health and Care Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> |

* Please provide a copy of evidence with this form. There is no need to provide evidence for other benefits listed.

I certify that the information given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. For the purpose of assessing my child’s eligibility I understand that Southwark Council will check the information provided against the Department for Education’s Eligibility Checking Service.

I understand that Southwark Council may need to use this information for any of the purposes set out in Section 29 of the Data Protection Act 1998, which relate to the prevention or detection of crime; the apprehension or prosecution of offenders, or the assessment or collection of taxes.

I also understand that the information provided may also be used for monitoring purposes.

We would also like to send you information about children’s centres and other early learning services in Southwark. If you would not like us to use your information for this purpose, please tick the box.

Signature:

Date:

Please return this completed application form to:

FREEPOST RSCE-TGHU-CUZB
 Southwark Council
 Free Early Learning Team (4/2)
 160 Tooley Street
 London
 SE1 2QH

Or email:

earlylearninginfo@southwark.gov.uk