

ADVICE ON HELP WITH CHILDCARE COSTS

For more information on any of the following, you can either visit North Northamptonshire County Council website or www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Universal Credit Help

You, and any partner, must be working, or you're due to start work, and whether you can claim will depend on where you live and your personal circumstances. You can claim back up to 85% of your eligible childcare costs for children under 17. You could get up to £646 a month for one child, or £1,108 for two or more.

UC will expect you to pay the nursery fees upfront, and then claim the money back by sending in a receipt which we issue on request once payment is made. If this is not an option, then you can request an advance payment by calling their helpline. This must all be in place before you wish your child to start.

Tax Free Childcare

- For working families, including the self-employed, in the UK
- With children under 12 (or under 17 if disabled)
- For every £8 you pay in, the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 per child per year.

you can open an online account to pay for registered childcare.

The government will top-up the money you pay into the account. For every £8 you pay in, the government will add an extra £2. You can receive up to £2,000 per child per year - that's up to £500 every three months. If you have a disabled child, you can receive up to £4,000 per child - that's up to £1,000 every three months.

You, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) at least £131 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage).

If you, or your partner, are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or you're unable to work because you are disabled or have caring responsibilities, you could still be eligible.

You can't get Tax-Free Childcare if either you, or your partner, each individually expect to earn £100,000 or more.

You are not able to use this option if you are already using childcare vouchers (now unavailable to new applications), or claiming universal credit.

Dissadvantaged Funding for 2 year olds

Families in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit with an income of no more than £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) could be eligible for a free childcare place for their 2 year old child.

To be eligible a parent/carer must be claiming the one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Guaranteed Element of the State Pension Credit; or
- Child Tax Credit, provided you have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs
- Universal credit.

If eligible, the OEC will give you a reference number which remains active for six weeks. This means it must be checked by a childcare provider within six weeks of issue and a place reserved even if your child cannot start straight away. If the reference is not checked within six weeks, it will expire and you will need to use the OEC again to obtain another valid reference number.

In addition to the financial criteria, children are also eligible if they:

- are a Looked After Child with the Local Authority
- are under a Child Protection Plan (Section 47)
- are under a Child in Need (Section 17)
- have Higher Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as evidenced by the Early Years descriptors and High Needs Block

- Are subject to a Special Guardianship Order, child arrangement or Adoption order.
- have an Early Help Assessment (EHA)

You can use any good or outstanding OFSTED registered childcare provider or childminder. Every eligible child is entitled to access a maximum of 570 hours of free childcare and education for 2 year olds across three funding blocks in a year following the child's 2nd birthday, on the following basis:

- A maximum of 15 hours per week over a minimum of 2 days per week
- A maximum of 10 hours in a single day
- A minimum of 2½ continuous hours in any one day
- Take all or part of their free childcare and education for 2 year olds at a single setting or a maximum of two settings (including maintained sector schools).

Funding for all ages from 9 months + will may be available to families from September 2024 (April 24 for all 2 year +). Please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to find out if you are entitled to funded childcare.

Early year's pupil premium (EYPP)

Children who are currently claiming the Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds in Northamptonshire, who meet certain eligibility criteria, could be eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).

The Early Years Pupil Premium is additional funding available for investment in improving outcomes for children. The premium will be used to improve the facilities, equipment, and learning experiences to benefit the growth and development of your child.

Children will be eligible if:

- They are 3 or 4 years old and receiving Government funded Free Entitlement in any OFSTED registered childcare provider and their parents are in receipt of one or more of the benefits used to access eligibility for free school meals:
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers 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 (**provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190**)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
Or if they have been:
- Looked after by Northamptonshire County Council for at least one day.
- Have been adopted from care in Northamptonshire.
- Have left care through special guardianship; and subject to a child arrangement order setting out with whom the child is to live (formerly known as residence orders) in Northamptonshire.

You can check if your child is eligible by going on to www.northamptonshire.gov.uk website and typing in EYPP eligibility checker into the search bar.

If you need any help understanding any of the above, then please feel free to ask in the office.