

Funding (F.E) Policy

Policy Statement

At Ladybird Montessori, we provide access to Free Entitlement (F.E.), enabling families to receive high-quality early years education funded by the government. This funding supports eligible working parents of children from the start of the term in which they turn two years old. Our policy ensures transparency and fairness while offering additional options to enhance your child's nursery experience.

What is Free Entitlement?

Free Entitlement (F.E.) provides **570 Universal hours** or **1140 Extended hours** of funded childcare annually for eligible children, funded by the government. The 15 hours of funded childcare can be used at a time that is convenient for parents, subject to availability at the nursery.

- For term-time-only bookings, this is typically offered as **15 Universal hours per week** or **30 Extended hours per week** for 38 weeks.

The funding is paid directly to Ladybird Montessori, and we allocate it to reduce your childcare costs.

Eligibility

Working Parent Funding (30 hours per week) for Eligible Parents:

- Available for working parents of children
- Eligibility criteria for Working Parent Funding:
 - Both parents (or one parent in a single-parent household) must earn:
 - At least 16 hours' worth of pay at the National Minimum Wage/National Living Wage.
 - Less than £100,000 per year per parent.
 - Eligibility can also include:
 - One parent with substantial caring responsibilities.
 - Parents on maternity/paternity/adoption leave.

Universal Hours (15 Hours Per Week) for All Parents

- Available for:
 - All children from the term after their **3rd birthday**.

Local Authority Two Year Funding (15 Hours Per Week) for Eligible Parents

- Available for the following economic criteria:

- Parents that receive Universal Credit, their household income must be £15,400 or less per year after tax, excluding benefit payments.
- Parents claiming Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, or both, and their household income is £16,190 or less per year before tax, they may be eligible.
- Families receiving Working Tax Credit 4-week run-on, and their household income is £16,190 or less per year before tax, they may be eligible.
- Also available for:
 - Children in care where West Sussex County Council acts as the corporate parent.
 - Adopted children and those with a Special Guardianship Order.
 - Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

When Can My Child Begin Receiving F.E.?

Funding starts from the term after you & your child meet eligibility requirements.

Eligibility Dates:

Autumn Term: Child must have turned of eligible age by 31st August

Spring Term: Child must have turned of eligible age by 31st December

Summer Term: Child must have turned of eligible age by 31st March

How to Apply

- To check eligibility and apply for funding, visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.
- If eligible for Working Parent Funding, please provide your **Eligibility Code** before the term begins. The code must be revalidated every three months to continue receiving funding.
- If you are claiming universal funding for your 3+ year old you will not need a code.

Grace Periods

If your eligibility for Extended hours lapses, you may enter a **grace period**:

- **Ineligibility in the first half of the term:** Funding continues until the end of the term.
- **Ineligibility in the latter half of the term:** Funding continues until the end of the following term.

Should eligibility not be re-established, you will no longer be eligible for the Working Parent Funding.

How We Allocate Funding at Ladybird Montessori

Funded Sessions

- You can allocate your funded hours across your weekly sessions.
- Any additional hours beyond your funded hours will be charged at our standard hourly rate.

Additional Provision & Consumables Charge (APC) & Registration Fees

The government funding is only intended to cover the standard Early Years Foundation Stage. It does not cover costs such as snacks, consumables, or enhanced activities such as cookery, yoga, visitors, and art and craft materials. Therefore, we apply an optional APC charge per funded hour for these services

Due to the administration & logistics involved with the APC offering, we operate an 'all-in' or 'all-out' policy; therefore, parents cannot choose which elements to opt-in to and which elements to opt-out of. We also require a term's notice should you wish to opt in or out.

If you would like to opt-out of this charge, please speak to your nursery manager before registering your child's space. Please note, your child will still have access to our wonderful EYFS offering during their day. However, please be aware you will be required to provide snacks and consumables, and your child will not be included in the above-mentioned additional provisions

Please note that for families taking up a funded **-only** space a registration fee will not be required at time of enrolment.

Notice Periods

Should you wish to leave nursery before your child's expected school start date, you will be required to provide us with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice.

Parental Responsibilities

1. Working parents must obtain or reconfirm their code in the term before the funding start date.

**It is the parent's responsibility to provide a valid funding code. If the supplied code is later found to be ineligible, parents will be liable for the full fees, which will be backdated to their child's start date or to the date on which the code became ineligible. Please note children can not start a funded space with us while in their 'Grace Period'*

2. Complete the Parent Declaration form to confirm your chosen sessions.
 3. Inform us of any changes, such as splitting funding between providers, changes in eligibility and any session changes.
 4. Provide your child's passport or birth certificate to verify their age.
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