

A Parent's Guide to Using Funding at Forest Rock 2026/2027

We understand that childcare funding can feel confusing. This guide explains the different types of funding available, who may be eligible, and how funding can be used at our nursery.

Our team is happy to support you with any questions and help you understand the options available for your child.

What childcare funding is available?

The government provides funded early education places to support families with the cost of childcare. Funding is designed to give children access to high-quality early learning and development opportunities.

Depending on your child's age and your family circumstances, you may be eligible for:

15 hours funded early education

Most 3 and 4-year-olds are entitled to **15 hours of funded early education per week** during term time.

Some 2-year-olds may also be eligible if they meet certain criteria.

30 hours funded childcare

Eligible working families may be entitled to **up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week term time** for children aged from 9 months to 4 years old (depending on eligibility).

You must apply through the government childcare service and receive a valid eligibility code before your child can access the funded hours.

How can funded hours be used at our nursery?

Funded hours can be used within all our nursery sessions, subject to availability and local authority funding rules.

Funding may be **stretched** across the year (this provides around 22 hours of funding per week throughout the year) or used during **term time** (use up to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks) depending on the arrangement you choose.

We can allocate a maximum of 10 hours funding a day and up to 30 hours per week. Our term time dates follow the Leicestershire Early Years calendar which is mainly in line with the school term dates.

Please speak with our team if you need more information on:

- Available sessions
- How many funded hours your child can access
- Any additional hours you may require
- Our current fees and payment arrangements

What does funding cover?

Funded hours contribute towards your child's early education and care.

Funding covers the delivery of your child's nursery place, including:

- A safe and stimulating learning environment
- Qualified and experienced staff
- Planned activities and experiences
- Support for your child's development
- Access to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum

Are there any additional charges?

Government funding is intended to provide access to free early education. However, there are charges for extras or additional services that are not covered by funding.

These include:

- Additional hours outside your funded entitlement
- Nappies, wipes and PPE
- Meals and snacks
- Special activities such as Christmas parties, leaver's celebration event and gifts for Mother's and Father's Day, Christmas, Easter etc.
- Resources (consumables) over and above providing basic activities to deliver the EYFS

Any charges will always be explained clearly before you agree to them. Each year you will be asked to complete a Clear Offer form which outlines the additional charges and you can indicate whether you wish to opt in or out of those charges.

Please speak to us if you have questions about costs.

Applying for funding

To access funded childcare, you will need to:

1. Check your eligibility through the government childcare service.
2. Apply for your funding code (if required).
3. Provide your code and details to the nursery.
4. Complete a Parental Statement of Understanding form and a Clear Offer form.

The forms will be available in reception from Monday 24th August and must be returned to the office by Friday 4th September to allow us to claim funding on your behalf for Autumn term 2026. If we do not receive your forms by this date, we will not be able to claim funding for your child for the Autumn term.

Please remember that eligibility codes must be reconfirmed regularly and it is your responsibility to ensure you do this. If you fail to reconfirm your eligibility to funding we will be unable to claim this on your behalf. If your circumstances change, please let us know as soon as possible.

To apply for funding please follow the link below

[Free Childcare for Working Parents: Apply for free childcare - GOV.UK](#)

When can my child start using funding?

Funded places usually begin from the term after your child reaches the eligible age.

The three main funding start points are:

- **1 January**
- **1 April**
- **1 September**

Please contact us to discuss your child's individual start date. You need to check your eligibility and obtain your code in advance of the funding start point, if you miss

the deadline you will need to wait until the next term to claim funding. For all new claims, for Autumn term, you must apply for your eligibility code by 31st August.

Making the most of your child's funded place

Your child's funded nursery place gives them the opportunity to:

- Build confidence and independence
- Develop communication and social skills
- Learn through play and exploration
- Prepare for school
- Form positive relationships with adults and other children

Regular attendance helps children get the greatest benefit from their early education experience.

If your circumstances change

Please tell us if:

- Your eligibility changes
- You stop receiving a funding code
- Your working arrangements change
- Your child's attendance pattern needs to change

We are here to support you and will help you understand what options are available.

For more information, please follow this link to the Best Start in Life website

[Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life](#)

Tax Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is a UK government scheme that tops up your childcare payments by 20%. For every £8 you pay into your government childcare account, the government adds £2 — up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year.

That means if you spend £10,000 on childcare annually, the government contributes £2,000. For families with disabled children, the maximum doubles to £4,000 per year.

The scheme covers children from birth up to age 11 (or 16 for disabled children).

To check your eligibility for Tax free childcare please follow the link below

[Tax-Free Childcare: What Tax-Free Childcare is - GOV.UK](#)