



Government Funding Policy

What is Free Entitlement Funding?

Universal Free Entitlement Funding is Government funding to cover the cost for up to 570 hours per year/15 hours a week of childcare during term time (38 weeks a year). This is available for all three and four year old children in England.

What is Extended Free Entitlement Funding?

Eligible parents can claim further Government funding in addition to the Universal FE Funding. Extended FE Funding covers an additional 570 hours per year/15 hours a week of childcare during term time (38 weeks a year). This equates to 1140 hours per year / 30 hours per week. Again, this is available for all three and four year old children in England. Extended Free Entitlement also offers 15 hours a week for eligible families for children aged 9 months plus.

You may be eligible to claim Extended FE Funding if:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a single-parent family)
- Each parent earns a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage, and less than £100,000 per year.
- This includes parents who are employed and self-employed.

What can you claim?

Children aged 9 months to 2 years: *(Available for eligible families only)*

- 15 hours from September 2024
- 30 hours from September 2025

Children aged 2 to 3 years old: *(Available for eligible families only)*

- 15 hours from April 2024
- 30 hours from September 2025

Children aged 3 to 4 years old: *(Available for all families)*

- 15 hours

(Available for eligible families only)

- 30 hours from September 2025



When will my child be eligible?

Children will be eligible to receive funding from the start of the next full term after turning 9 months old or following their second or third birthdays.

A child born between:

1st January and 31st March will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from the 1st April.

1st April and 31st August will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from the 1st September.

1st September and 31st December will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from the 1st January.

What does funding include?

The FE funding only covers the cost of the provision of childcare and the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The funding does not include any of the other services that our nurseries provide.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Meals and snacks
- Nappies and consumables
- Additional Hours
- Early starts or late finishes
- Uniform
- Enrichment activities
- Laundry Services
- Forest School
- Administration costs
- Access to our parent app - *As well as all those little extras that make our nurseries so special!*

Government funding does not cover the cost of food, nor the delivery of the experiences that The Acorn provide for both our children and parents. We therefore ask parents to pay for these with our consumables charge, called an 'Extras and Essentials' charge, during funded hours. This ensures that the quality of care and service we offer is protected for all our children and parents.



Whilst this charge remains voluntary, if parents refuse or are unable to pay the 'Extras and Essentials' fee, then they will need to speak with the Nursery Manager to discuss it further. There is both an operational and financial impact on the nursery when this is not paid.

The decision on the number of spaces or reduced hours will be at the discretion of the nursery on a case-by-case basis.

Consumables:

Government funding does not cover the cost of our additional services and all of those wonderful things which makes The Acorn so special. Therefore, like most nurseries, we will ask parents to pay for these so we can carry on providing the very best care and experiences.

Each funded hour used per day is subject to an optional 'Extras and Essentials' charge, shown on your monthly or termly invoice.

Funding at The Acorn:

Universal FE and Extended FE funding are both structured to cover the 38 weeks a year of term time.

The Acorn Nursery	Your 15 hours entitlement becomes:	Your 30 hours entitlement becomes:
38 weeks of the year	15 hours each week	30 hours each week

Please note, in line with our admissions policy, the minimum days per week for attendance our Little Acorns is four sessions per week and for our Mighty Oaks is 3 full days and 2 mornings, so there will be a number of hours that are not covered fully by your entitlement.

The Acorn nursery fees:

Our fees are calculated on the number of operating weeks per year, averaged into three termly payments.

The funded hours claimed will be shown on your invoice as free hours. We will then detail the 'Extras and Essentials' charge for these hours, for items not included in the FE funding, as well as any hours that are not part of your funding eligibility.



Headcount day:

Headcount day is the cut off each term where children wishing to claim funding must be in attendance in order to receive the funding for that term. This applies to all children with the exception of Local Authority funded 2 year olds (with a valid 6-digit eligibility code) who can start at any point during the term. The exact date for headcount is set by the Local Authority and dates can vary. They are however usually towards the end of January, April and September.

If you wish to join after this day and are not currently attending another nursery, we will not be able claim any funding until the following period.

All sessions will therefore be charged at their respective full rates.

If you are wishing to move to one of our settings from another provider, then we will be able to claim any unused funding from your previous provider.

Headcount is also the cut off for those wishing to increase their funded sessions. If you are an existing parent and are planning on increasing the number of sessions in your booking pattern, this needs to be in place by headcount day. Increases after headcount day will not be eligible for funding until the following term. All sessions will therefore be charged at their respective full rates.

FE Only placements:

We offer a limited number of FE Only placements, where parents can assess their FE Only hours without any additional costs. These hours are offered in a standalone pattern which will not necessarily provide the full care requirements you may be looking for. Typically, this is as follows:

At The Acorn funded hours can be claimed from 1:00pm to 4:00pm on a Monday and Wednesday, with the remaining entitlement (if any) used on an alternative day - subject to availability, or with another provider.

Whilst our additional services are not included in these offers, consideration will be made regarding the inclusion of all children.

The number of these placements available will be dependent on location and availability. Placements are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Placements which require no additional costs do have an operational and financial impact on our nurseries. Therefore, we limit the number of these placements at The Acorn. This is to ensure the care we provide for all our children isn't affected, and that The Acorn can continue to operate sustainably.



For more information about FE Only placements, please speak to the Admissions Manager.

The Little Dukes Bursary:

At each of our nurseries, we offer a select number of Bursaries. Bursary places are completely funded and will require no additional fees to be paid. These are extremely sought after and will need to be applied for well in advance. Bursaries are usually awarded termly to families who need additional support, however, are open to all families to apply for.

For more information about The Little Dukes Bursary, please email admissions@littledukesnurseries.com



The Acorn Nursery School

