

Funding Policy 2026

Early Years Entitlement: Overview

We are pleased to offer funded early education and childcare for eligible children in accordance with government and local authority guidelines. This policy outlines the funding structure for 9-month, 2-year, and 3- to 4-year-old children.

3- & 4-Year-Old Funding

Eligibility

All children become eligible for funded hours from the **term after their 3rd birthday**:

Entitlement

- **Universal 15 Hours:** Available to all 3- and 4-year-olds regardless of income or employment status (570 hours per year over 38 weeks).
 - **Extended 30 Hours (children that attend 4 or 5 full days):** Additional 15 hours for working families (total 1140 hours per year).
 - *Eligibility:* Both parents working 16+ hrs/week, earning at least National Minimum Wage and less than £100k/year.
 - *Exceptions apply* (e.g. one working parent and the other receiving qualifying benefits).
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2-Year-Old Funding (Working Parents)

Eligibility

- Term after child's 2nd birthday if both parents meet working criteria (or exceptions apply).
- Must meet the same employment/income criteria as Extended 30 Hours.
- **Extended 30 Hours (children that attend 4 or 5 full days):** Additional 15 hours for working families (total 1140 hours per year).
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Entitlement

- 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year (570 hours total).
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9-Month-Old Funding (Working Parents)

Eligibility

- Based on age at start of term:

- Turn 9 months by August → Autumn Term
- Turn 9 months by December → Spring Term
- Turn 9 months by April → Summer Term

Entitlement

- 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year (570 hours total).
- Same employment/income criteria as above.
- **Extended 30 Hours (children that attend 4 or 5 full days)**: Additional 15 hours for working families (total 1140 hours per year).

Key dates for all funding age groups

Birthday Range	Funding Starts	Declaration Form Due
1st Apr – 31st Aug	Autumn Term (Sep)	August
1st Sep – 31st Dec	Spring Term (Jan)	December
1st Jan – 31st Mar	Summer Term (Apr)	March

Funding Structure at PSA

- Maximum **10 funded hours per day** allowed by Local Authority rules.
- You may **split your funding** between two providers, but we require a **minimum claim of 15 hours per week**.
- **Non-funded months**: April, August, and December – full fees apply.
- **Funding covers childcare only**. Meals are not included.

Voluntary Consumable Charges

As funding does not cover meals or consumables, we offer the following options:

Option A/B will be for the full term, can only be changed on the following term.


Option A: In-House Meal Provision

Charged monthly:

- Breakfast – £2.00/day
- Lunch – £4.50/day
- Tea – £3.50/day

Option B: Packed Meals (Parent Provided)

- Parents provide their child’s meals/snacks. Please bring this in with your child in the morning. Breakfast, Lunch and Tea have to be individually packed and labelled.
- **Must be:**
 - Healthy & nutritious
 - NUT-FREE
 - Properly stored in an **insulated, labelled bag** with ice packs
 - No sweets, chocolates, or sugary drinks
 - Fruit must be peeled/cut (age-appropriate)

 **Note:** If meals are not provided, a cold meal will be served, and you will be charged.

Selection Deadline: One month before each funding term, inform us of your preferred Option (A or B), submitted with the Parental Declaration Form.

Holiday and Absence (Option A only)

If your child will be away for over one week due to a holiday:

- Please email us **one month in advance** to adjust invoices.
 - For any absence, you must switch to **Option B** for the period.
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Other Key Information

Tax-Free Childcare

You may continue to use your Tax-Free Childcare account to cover additional fees alongside funded hours.

Splitting Funding Between Providers

- Funding may be split between up to two providers.
- PSA requires a **full 15-hour block** if funding is split.
- Be aware: Attending a school nursery does **not guarantee** a place at that school.

Parental Declaration

Before each term, parents must:

1. Complete and return the **Parental Declaration Form** with the 11-digit funding code.
2. Confirm your **Option A or B** selection for consumables. If you do not confirm option B, we will offer Option A. It is parents responsibility to inform us to change option.

We cannot claim funding until the form is returned.

Deposit Policy

- **No deposit** required for 2-year-olds qualifying under disadvantaged criteria.
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If you have questions or need help calculating your child's funding start date, please speak to the management team. We're here to help make your childcare journey as smooth as possible.

Funded Hours at PSA

Days	Funded Hours	Non-Funded Hours
2 Days	7:30am – 3:00pm	3:00pm – 6:00pm (3 hrs)
3 Days	7:30am – 12:30pm	12:30pm – 6:00pm (5.5 hrs)
4 Days	7:30am – 11:15am	11:15am – 6:00pm (6.75 hrs)
5 Days	7:30am – 10:30am	10:30am – 6:00pm (7.5 hrs)

Extended 30 Hours (3- & 4-Year-Olds Only):

Days	Funded Hours	Non-Funded Hours
4 Days	7:30am – 3:00pm	3:00pm – 6:00pm (3 hrs)
5 Days	7:30am – 1:30pm	1:30pm – 6:00pm (4.5 hrs)

Important Notes

- Max **10 funded hours/day** permitted by LA
 - You can **split funding between two providers** (min. 15 hrs/week at PSA)
 - **Full fees apply** in non-funded months: April, August, December
 - **Parental Declaration Form** must be submitted each term with your funding code
 - Deposit may be required for 3-/4-year-olds and 9-month-olds (refunded within 4 weeks)
 - **No deposit required** for 2-year-olds qualifying under disadvantaged criteria
 - You may **continue using your Tax-Free Childcare** account alongside funding
 - Terms are; Autumn 14 weeks, Spring 11 weeks and Summer 13 weeks
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Absence and Early Years Entitlement Funding

- If your child is absent for more than two weeks within any term, we are required to inform the Family Information Service (FIS) to discuss the implications for your Early Years Entitlement funding. The FIS will determine whether we are able to claim the funding for that period.
- If the FIS advises that funding cannot be claimed, full private fees will be payable for the additional period of absence. Please note that extended absences of more than two weeks in subsequent terms may also affect your child's funding entitlement.

- You must email us at least four weeks in advance if your child will be away. This allows sufficient time for us to contact the Family Information Service (FIS) and receive their decision regarding your child's funding.
 - This requirement is set by the Family Information Service (FIS).
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Holidays (Option A Children)

- 1-month notice required for holidays over 1 week (email request)
 - Switch to Option B during absence periods to avoid charges
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Voluntary Consumable Food Policy 2025

For Parents Providing Packed Meals

At PSA, we support families who choose to provide their own meals for their children. To ensure the safety, health, and well-being of all children in our care, the following policy outlines the requirements for packed meals, aligned with government health standards and allergy management protocols.

Guidelines for Packed Meals

If you have opted out of our in-house meal provision (**Option A**) and chosen to provide your child's meals (**Option B**), you must adhere to the following rules:

1. **All food must be nutritious and well-balanced** – please refer to the *Eatwell Plate* (see below) to guide your food choices.
 2. **Meals must be 100% NUT FREE** – including spreads (e.g. Nutella, peanut butter) and hidden ingredients.
 3. **Sugary drinks are not permitted** – only water or milk.
 4. **No chocolates or sweets** – we aim to promote healthy eating habits.
 5. **All fruit must be peeled or chopped appropriately** – in line with your child's age and ability.
 6. **Food must be provided in an insulated, clearly labelled lunch bag** with appropriate ice packs for safe storage.
 7. **Exception for special occasions:** For lunch or tea parties, *nut-free* party food is allowed with prior agreement.
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Allergy & Labelling Requirements

- **Clearly label your child's lunch bag** with their full name.
- If your child's meal contains **any known allergens (e.g. dairy, gluten, eggs, sesame)**, you **must clearly indicate** this on the outside of the lunch bag.

- PSA is home to children with **severe allergies**. Compliance is critical to keeping everyone safe.
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If a Meal Is Not Provided

If your child arrives without a packed meal for the day:

- A **cold meal will be provided** by our kitchen.
 - You will be charged the **daily rate of the meal**, as the cook will not have included your child in the food allocation numbers.
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Eatwell Guide: Healthy Meal Planning

The *Eatwell Guide* recommends a balanced meal containing:

- **Fruits and Vegetables** – Aim for at least 5 portions per day
- **Wholegrains or Starchy Foods** – Wholemeal bread, rice, or pasta
- **Proteins** – Lean meat, beans, eggs, or plant-based alternatives
- **Dairy or Dairy Alternatives** – Milk, cheese, or fortified plant options
- **Healthy Fats** – Small amounts of unsaturated oils or spreads

Meals should be age-appropriate, low in sugar and salt, and promote lifelong healthy eating habits.

For more guidance, visit:

 www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/

If you require support or suggestions for healthy meal options, please speak to a member of the PSA team. We are here to work with you to ensure your child's nutritional needs are met in a safe and supportive environment.

THE 14 FOOD ALLERGENS



MOLLUSCS

Including land snails, whelks and squid.



EGGS

Can be found in cakes, sauces and pastries.



FISH

Found in pizza, dressings and Worcestershire sauce.



LUPIN

Lupin can be found in bread, pastries and pasta.



SOYA

Various beans including edamame and tofu.



MILK

Butter, cheese, cream and milk powders contain milk.



PEANUTS

Can be found in cakes, biscuits and sauces.



GLUTEN

In food made with flour such as pasta and bread.



CRUSTACEANS

Such as crab, lobster, prawns, shrimp and scallop.



MUSTARD

Can be in liquid or powder form as well as seeds.



NUTS

Including cashew, almonds and hazelnut.



SESAME

Found on burgers, bread sticks and salads.



CELERY

Including stalks, leaves, seeds and celeriac.

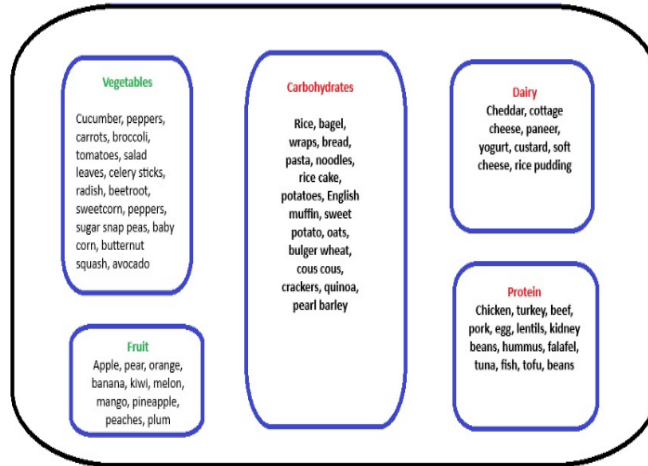


SULPHITES

Found in dried fruit like raisins and some drinks.

Lunch box ideas

Each box represents the size of each portion in a lunch box



Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1040kJ 250kcal	3.0g	1.3g	34g	0.9g
13%	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day

Fruit and vegetables



Eat less often and in small amounts

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates



Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat



Dairy and alternatives

Choose lower fat and lower sugar options



Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Source: Dublin: Health, Evolved in association with the Health Commission, Eiréil Charútaíre Sóraithe and the Eiréil Charútaíre Anair in Northern Ireland

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Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>