



**Funded  
places at a local nursery  
or childminder for  
2, 3 or 4 year olds**

**A guide for parents and carers**

**2 YEAR OLDS**  
*Play, Learn & Grow*

**3&4  
YEAR OLDS**  
*Play, Learn & Grow*

**30 HOURS  
FUNDED  
CHILDCARE**

[lancashire.gov.uk/childcare](http://lancashire.gov.uk/childcare)

**Lancashire**  
County  
Council 

**We all want our children to grow up to be healthy, happy and well-adjusted to the world around them and whatever your situation, balancing family life in this modern world can be tough! Children grow up so fast, but you can give them a great start in life by taking them to a local nursery or a childminder for a few hours a week, funded by the government.**

All 3&4 year old children in Lancashire are entitled to up to 15 hours per week (570 hours per year) funded by the government and for most working families this can rise to 30 hours per week (1140 hours per year). For more information please see our [website](#).

The government also funds up to 15 hours per week (570 hours per year) for some 2 year old children. This will help them to play, learn and grow in a fun, friendly, safe environment. For more information please see our [website](#).

**If you are not getting yours, don't miss out!**



### **Why it's good for your child to take up a place at a nursery or with a childminder**

Family are the most important people in a child's early life, but your local nursery staff or childminder can offer great support and will be happy to assist you with your child's early learning and development. They are qualified, caring professionals and their tips on the things that you can do at home can help your child come on in leaps and bounds. You can also find some useful, example activities in our learning at home section of our [website](#).

### **Helps your child learn and develop through play...**

Children love getting their hands dirty, not to mention the sofa and the walls. The good news for you is that they can save this for their 'messy play' time at nursery or with their childminder, so the kids can still have their fun and it saves you from having to clean up the mess afterwards!

Taking up your funded hours with a nursery or childminder can provide lots of opportunities for your child to be active and develop physically through fun and play both indoors and out.

Some nurseries and childminders will have great play areas with a variety of toys and equipment that you may not have at home, others may go for walks in the park, visit local play centres, go splashing in puddles or have sunny adventures at the seaside in summer. Whatever activities they choose to do together, your little one will be ready for bedtime at the end of a tiring day of fun and play!

### **Helps your child make new friends and builds their confidence...**

Making friends and playing alongside other children from a mix of different backgrounds really helps to develop your child's confidence, social skills and their awareness of the world around them. Your child will learn to choose and share the toys they wish to play with and make up ideas of games to play or things to do.



If your child is shy, nurseries and childminders all offer 'taster' sessions to help your child settle and within no time at all you will notice a big difference.

### **Helps improve your child's speaking and listening skills...**

Singing songs, rhyming, reading and being read to with their friends are just some of the fun activities used by nursery staff and childminders to develop your child's speaking and listening skills.

Children will learn to use words, objects or gestures to help them explain what they need, such as telling you when they are hungry, tired or if they need the toilet.

They will be encouraged to experiment with sounds and words when they are singing and rhyming which will help increase the amount of words, they use to express themselves.

When children enjoy singing, rhyming and reading it can lead to a love of language that will help them to be confident readers.

This will help make reading and spelling easier at school.

### **Helps prepare your child for starting school...**

Starting school can be a worrying time for both parents and children. Transferring to a local school with others who they may know from nursery or from their childminder really helps children to settle quickly. They will also have gained the skills needed to make new friends quickly too.

Understanding what is expected of them and daily routines helps children to understand how to behave which also prepares them for when they start school. This can make home life easier too!

Children will learn essential skills at nursery or with their childminder such as going to the toilet themselves, washing their hands, eating with a knife and fork, drinking from a cup, putting on their coat, fastening it, taking it off and hanging it up. This will encourage them to become more independent and will make the transition to school easier.

### **Your child will be in safe hands...**

You can be confident your child will be looked after in a safe, secure environment as every nursery and childminder looking after children under the age of eight must be registered with Ofsted. On a regular basis Ofsted carries out inspections to see that their standards are being met and children are safe.

The good news for us, is that in Lancashire almost all the childminders and nurseries are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. You can see their latest inspection grade and report on the [Ofsted website](#). You will also be able to arrange visits before you take up a place to make sure that you and your child are happy.

Although spending time at a nursery or a childminder is an exciting and fun experience for children, daily activities are not just random play. Early years professionals use an educational curriculum called the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS uses development goals that professionals will assess your child's progress against. Every child is different, they will develop at different rates and in different areas. Your nursery or childminder will provide feedback regularly about your child's progress. If your child needs any extra help, they will identify these areas early and assist in getting them the right support.

All children are unique and some with special or additional needs might need a little extra support. All our nurseries and childminders provide care that is fully inclusive and they will work with you to ensure your child's needs are met.

## Finding the right nursery or childminder

All our nurseries and childminders welcome children from a wide range of backgrounds and they will be happy to discuss how best to meet any cultural, religious and dietary needs you or your child may have.

Our Family Information Service can also help you to find the most suitable nursery or childminder and will be happy to help answer any questions you may have. Give us a call on **0300 123 6712**, email [FIS@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:FIS@lancashire.gov.uk) or complete our [brokerage request form](#).

## Your child is entitled to this!

Remember, all 3&4 year old children in Lancashire are entitled to up to 15 hours per week and for most working families this can rise to 30 hours funded by the government. The government also funds up to 15 hours per week for some 2 year old children.

The cost of childcare can be a challenge and the 15-30 hours that are funded by the government can really help. On average this saves you between £2,816 - £5,632 per year. Check what your child is eligible for by visiting: [www.Lancashire.gov.uk/childcare](http://www.Lancashire.gov.uk/childcare)

If you want to increase your child's hours or are currently paying for extra hours you may be entitled to further financial support from the government such as [Tax Free Childcare](#) or through [Universal Credit](#).

## Take the Time

When your child is using their funded hours, this is also a chance for you to take some time for yourself. You might want to start a part-time job, do some training or study, go to the gym, spend the time with your younger children or relax with family or friends. Whatever you choose to do, this is your time too!



Remember even if you have grandparents or other family members to look after your children whilst you are at work, this is more than just childcare. The early learning that your child will benefit from really will prepare them for school, help them to make new friends, increase their confidence, develop their language skills, whilst still allowing them to have fun in a safe environment.

Feel free to take your time. If you want to ease your child into early learning by taking up less than 15 hours per week to start with, you can. Most nurseries and childminders are flexible and can offer different times and hours to suit you. Doing this can also help reduce any concerns you may have as a parent.

It's quick and easy to check if you can claim funded hours for your 2 year old using our [eligibility checker](#) and remember all 3&4 year olds qualify automatically for up to 15 hours per week, even if you are not working and for most families that are working this can rise to 30 hours.

You can find a list of local nurseries and childminders that offer places in the '[search for childcare](#)' section of: [www.Lancashire.gov.uk/childcare](http://www.Lancashire.gov.uk/childcare). There are also a range of helpful guides there to help you choose which type best suits your family's needs.

## We're here to help

We are here to help support you from the very start of your child's early learning journey right up until they start school. So, no matter what questions or concerns you may have, we will be happy to help you. You can get in touch with us by calling: **0300 123 6712** or by emailing us at: [fis@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:fis@lancashire.gov.uk)

**Your child's funded place will help them to play, learn & grow at a local nursery or childminder today!**

[lancashire.gov.uk/childcare](http://lancashire.gov.uk/childcare)