



Our Guide to Funded Childcare

Heighington Preschool

Supporting families to understand funded early education

Welcome

Choosing the right preschool for your child is an important decision, and understanding childcare funding can sometimes feel confusing. At **Heighington Preschool**, we aim to make this as clear and straightforward as possible.

There is a range of government-funded childcare support available to help families access high-quality early education. Whether you are returning to work, already working, or simply preparing your child for school, this guide explains the funding options available and how they can be used at our setting.

Funded Childcare at a Glance

- Funded childcare for eligible working families from **9 months to school age**
- Universal funded childcare for **all 3 and 4-year-olds**
- Support with childcare costs through **Tax-Free Childcare**
- Clear information about **meals, consumables and enrichment charges**

Funded Childcare for Eligible Working Families

9 months – school age

If you live and work in England, you may be entitled to funded childcare for your child from the term after they turn **9 months old**, until they start school.

At Heighington Preschool, funded hours are offered across the year to provide flexibility for families. Your annual funded entitlement is stretched across the weeks your child attends, meaning funding contributes towards childcare costs throughout the year rather than only during term time.

You may be eligible if:

- Both parents (or the sole parent in a single-parent household) are working or starting a new job

- You earn at least the equivalent of the National Minimum Wage
- You are on maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave
- You are on sick leave or annual leave

If you do not meet the working family criteria, your child may still be entitled to **universal funded childcare from the term after their 3rd birthday**.

When should I apply?

You should apply the term *before* you wish to start using your funded hours.

When your child turns 9 months	Funding can start	Apply by
1 Jan – 31 Mar	From 1 April	End of February
1 Apr – 31 Aug	From 1 September	End of July
1 Sept – 31 Dec	From 1 January	End of November

Universal Funded Childcare for All Families

3 – 4 years (until school age)

All children aged **3 and 4** who live in England are entitled to universal funded childcare, regardless of family income or employment status.

This funding begins from the **term after your child turns 3** and continues until they start school.

Universal funding is applied automatically – there is **no need to apply**. Heighington Preschool will claim this funding directly once your child becomes eligible.

When does funding start?

When your child turns 3	Funding starts
1 Jan – 31 Mar	From 1 April
1 Apr – 31 Aug	From 1 September
1 Sept – 31 Dec	From 1 January

How Do I Apply for Funded Childcare?

1. Check eligibility

Visit the government childcare website to see which funding you qualify for.

2. Apply for your childcare code

If eligible, you will receive a code through your online childcare account.

3. Share your code with us

Provide Heighington Preschool with your code, National Insurance number, and your child's date of birth.

4. Complete your parent declaration

This allows us to claim funding on your behalf.

5. Reconfirm every 3 months

Eligibility codes must be reconfirmed regularly to remain valid.

Please note: steps 2 and 3 are not required if you are only accessing the universal entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Meals, Consumables and Enrichment Charges

Government funded childcare is intended to contribute towards the cost of early education and care. It does not fully cover the cost of delivering high-quality childcare, including staffing, meals, consumables and enrichment activities.

At **Heighington Pre-School**, funded hours are applied directly to your child's booked sessions and reduce your invoice accordingly. Any remaining charges reflect the difference between government funding and the true cost of providing safe, nurturing and high-quality care.

What Funded Childcare Covers

Funded childcare supports:

- Qualified staffing and statutory ratios
- Delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum
- Planned learning activities and continuous provision

Funding is claimed directly by Heighington Pre-School from the local authority and applied to your invoice.

What Is Not Included in Funding

Government funding does **not** cover additional services and consumables that form part of your child's day. These costs are reflected within our session pricing for additional hours and services.

Food & Drink

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Tea
- Morning and afternoon snacks

Care & Daily Essentials

- Nappies, wipes and nappy cream
- Sun cream
- Bed linen
- Learning journals

Enrichment & Experiences

- Celebrations and seasonal activities
- Additional resources beyond the core EYFS curriculum
- Community experiences and visiting professionals

These elements allow us to offer a nurturing, inclusive and enriching environment for every child.

Families who wish to access funded hours without additional services should speak to the Pre-School Manager to discuss available options in line with our policies.

Breakfast and Tea Sessions

Breakfast and tea sessions are optional and charged separately where taken. These sessions provide care outside core funded hours and include food, staffing and supervision.

Transparency for Families

We are committed to being open and transparent about our fees and funding. A full breakdown of session prices is provided separately, and our team is always happy to explain how funding has been applied to your invoice.

Need More Information?

If you have any questions about funded childcare or how it applies to your family, our team at **Heighington Pre-School** will be happy to help.

We are here to support you every step of the way as your child begins their early years journey with us.