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## Early Years Funding

2023/24 academic year  
(i.e. September 2023 – March 2024)

We await information from government about changes to Early Years Funding from April 2024

All children must, by law, start their education in the school term after their fifth birthday (at the latest). Before that time, the local authority offers funding to help with the cost of early years education. At present, all three and four year old children are entitled to up to fifteen hours of universal early years funding per week free of charge (for 38 weeks of the year) from the term after their third birthday (specific dates apply – see below or please check with the Nursery School).

With effect from September 2017, the government introduced an extended entitlement such that an additional fifteen hours of funding per week may be available to three and four year old children of working parents if certain criteria are met. Since the rate at which ACE Nursery School is funded to provide this extended entitlement is too low to cover our costs (£5.14 per hour at present) regrettably we are not in a position to offer this to eligible families. We constantly strive to provide all ACE children with the best possible early years pastoral and learning experience and we do not wish to compromise either the quality of our staff team or the existing staff:child ratios required to achieve this aim. We also look to pay all permanent, fully qualified teaching staff at least the real living wage rate as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation (£10.90 per hour at the time of publication of this document). With the level of government funding currently set at £5.14 per hour, we are therefore only in a position to offer the fifteen hours of universal early years funding per week. For the avoidance of doubt, any child claiming fifteen universal hours of funding per week at another provider cannot also attend ACE and claim extended entitlement here (although parents are welcome to pay for their child to attend ACE at £9.60 per hour, the current hourly rate for three year old fees, as set out in our Fee Policy).

The standard length day at ACE runs from 8.45am – 4.00pm (7.25 hours).

The universal fifteen hours of early years funding per week can be used to cover some or all of your child's nursery fees at ACE Nursery School. The first fifteen hours per week are free for eligible three and four year old children, with the hours over and above that being charged at a flat rate per hour (currently £9.60). Early Years Funding cannot be used to pay for holiday playschemes or extra days at ACE Nursery School.

### **Claiming Early Years Funding**

At the start of the term in which your child becomes eligible to receive funding, you will be asked to complete a Cambridgeshire County Council Parent/Carer Declaration Form in order to claim your child's free sessions. If it is the first time you are claiming, we need to see proof of date of birth e.g. your child's birth certificate or passport. This will enable us to claim the funding on your behalf. The money is then paid directly to ACE Nursery School and will reduce your child's fees. ACE will invoice you at the beginning of each term showing you how many hours of funding you are entitled to claim and the net fees payable for your child for that term.

At the start of each term, parents should commit to a pattern of funded hours for the whole term. Increases in hours of attendance may not be funded part way through the term. Fees will be charged for any additional hours taken. There is no requirement to transfer the funding between childcare providers once the funding declaration form has been agreed. If you know that you will be moving providers mid-term, this should be

reflected in the funding declaration forms with each provider. Extra days booked will need to be paid for on or before the day as normal.

### **Eligibility criteria for universal early years funding**

Up to fifteen hours per week of early years funding is currently available during term time to all three and four year old children at ACE from the term after the one in which the child turns three. Specific dates apply: those children born between 1 September and 31 December are eligible for funding from 1 January following the child's third birthday; those born between 1 January and 31 March are eligible from 1 April onwards; and those born between 1 April and 31 August are eligible for funding from 1 September onwards. For example, if your child was born on 15 October 2019; she/he is eligible for funding from the spring term 2023 onwards.