

## Funded places for two-year-old children

Some families may be able to claim 15 hours of free early learning or education for their two-year-old children. This funding is not available to everyone and families must meet a strict criteria to be eligible. Please contact Luton Children and Families Information Service to see if you qualify. If you do meet the first section of criteria you will be referred to the Pre School Learning Alliance for further information.



## Housing and Council Tax Benefits

Claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit include help for parents with childcare costs. The cost of childcare may be taken off your earnings and tax credits when Luton Borough Council calculates your benefit increasing the amount of benefit that you are entitled to.

The maximum costs for childcare that can be allowed are:

- £175 a week for one child
- £300 a week for 2 children or more

**If you are receiving Housing or Council tax benefit and you need further help or advice on childcare costs, contact the Benefit Section of Luton Borough Council on telephone number 0300 790 0345.**

## Children and Families Information Service (CFIS)

The CFIS team based within the Luton Borough Council offers free, impartial information and advice about registered childcare, early education, parenting and issues that affect young people up to the age of 20.

**They are open from Monday to Thursday (8.45am to 5.15pm) and Friday (8.45am to 4.30pm) with an out of hours answering machine service so you can leave a message. Call one of the Information Officers on 01582 54 88 88 or visit [www.luton.gov.uk/cfis](http://www.luton.gov.uk/cfis)**

## Luton Family Information Directory

The Family Information directory is a comprehensive online information bank of all types of children and young people's services available in the local and national area. It's easy to search and includes a broad range of preventative services from organisations in both voluntary and statutory agencies.

**Call the Children's and Families Information Service on 01582 54 88 88 for more information or visit [www.luton.gov.uk/childservicesdirectory](http://www.luton.gov.uk/childservicesdirectory)**



# Childcare costs



## A brief guide: help towards childcare costs

This leaflet outlines the financial help available to you when considering childcare.

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[www.luton.gov.uk/cfis](http://www.luton.gov.uk/cfis)

## Care to learn

If you are a teenage parent the Care to Learn scheme can help you get childcare support. It provides financial support for the costs of your childcare so that you can continue your education or training. The training you do can be in a school, college or a work-based learning provider that receives public funding, and includes young parents continuing with compulsory education.

The government can provide funding for each child to cover registered childcare costs and travel between home and the childcare provider. Funding is also available to cover childcare deposits and registration fees.

Care to learn is only available for use with registered childcare. Childcare costs are paid directly to the childcare provider and travel costs are paid directly to the learning or training provider.

For further information about the support available call the Learner Support Service on 0800 121 8989 or visit [www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn](http://www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn)

## Discretionary Learner Support Fund (including Discretionary Childcare 20+)

If you are aged 20 or over and are attending a further education college studying on a course funded by the Skills Funding Agency, the Discretionary Learner Support Fund may be able to help you with a variety of costs, including childcare.

The amount of funding available will vary as each college manages their own procedures and criteria for administration of the fund. You can apply for the Learner Support Fund at your college by speaking to the student support or welfare officer.

For further information about courses you could receive funding for contact the Careers Advice service on 0800 100 900.



## Free nursery education places for 3 and 4 year olds

In Luton, the government offers funding for a free part time nursery education place from the term after your child's third birthday until they go to school full time. The funding for Voluntary, Independent and Private providers is administered by Luton's Children and Families Partnership.

To be eligible, children need to have celebrated their third birthday before the following dates for entry (see table below).

Children also need to attend an early years setting in the Luton Borough that is registered with Luton Children and Families Partnership, to receive the free nursery education.

Your child is 3 years old by:	Will be eligible for nursery education funding
31 August	Autumn term (after the summer holiday. Starting in September)
31 December	Spring term (after the Christmas holiday. Starting in January)
31 March	Summer term (after the Easter holiday, usually starting in April)

## Salary sacrifice and salary plus

Employer supported childcare can be offered to you in addition to your normal salary, sometimes known as 'Salary Plus'. Whereas 'Salary Sacrifice' scheme involves you to give up a portion of your salary, which is paid to you in the form of Childcare vouchers or paid directly to the childcare provider. To join this scheme you have to formally (by a change to your employment contract) agree to a reduction in your salary and instead receive that amount in childcare vouchers. This sacrificed part of your salary is free of tax and national insurance contributions.

Please note that salary sacrifice scheme may affect your entitlement to state benefits and tax credits. Employer – supported childcare can be an incentive for some employees, but before you commit to join a scheme that involves salary sacrifice, it is important to be aware of how it might affect your overall financial situation.

To get in depth information about the possible effect of a salary sacrifice on benefit entitlement, please visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/childcare](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childcare)

For further information on the childcare voucher scheme, please contact either All save on 01256 339 100 or visit [www.allsaveuk.com](http://www.allsaveuk.com)

Computershare Voucher Services formerly known as Busy Bee Childcare Vouchers on 0845 002 111 or visit [www.computersharevoucherservices.com](http://www.computersharevoucherservices.com)



## Working Tax Credit

Working tax credit is an in-work benefit. The childcare element is intended to assist working parents with the cost of registered or approved childcare. To receive the childcare element of working tax credit a single parent must work at least 16 hours per week, in a two parent family both must work at least 16 hours per week.

The childcare element can currently cover up to 70 per cent of the eligible childcare cost; however this is subject to change. For more information please contact the Tax Credit Helpline on 0845 300 3900 or visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)