

# Rocking Horse Childcare Ltd Policies

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## Funding Policy

Policy adopted/updated: 10 November 2025

Date for next review: 01 April 2026

EYFS section(s):

*Effective from January 2026 [1]*

We offer full-time and/or part-time childcare. All children are welcome. We treat all children and their families with respect. We aim to meet the specific needs of each child in our care.

We deliver early education funding in line with the requirements set out in the [Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance document](#) (April 2024, updated February 2025). Our setting is all year round and only closes on bank holidays and the Christmas break. Therefore, we stretch the funding across the maximum 50 weeks, as set out by the Local Authority. Your funding does not cover the final two weeks of the year. Please see our admissions policy for more information on non-funded weeks.

### Children aged 9 to 24 months:

- From 1 September 2025 onwards parents can get an expanded funded place for up to 30 hours a week for their children aged 9 to 24 months if they are working. The parent, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage. Parents can find out more and Apply for childcare if you're working - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) to get a code for government funded childcare to give to their childcare provider.

### Children aged 2:

There are two ways parents can apply for 2-year-old funding.

- Parents can get a funded place for up to 15 hours a week for their 2-year-old if they claim certain benefits from the government and their household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax. Parents can check the eligibility criteria for government funded early education



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and childcare for 2-year-olds to see if they are eligible for a government funded place up to 15 hours.

**Parents can make an application on the Southend Citizen's Portal to confirm eligibility for 2-year-old funding for their child and get an approved application number.**

- From 1 September 2025 onwards parents can also get an expanded funded place for up to 30 hours a week for their 2-year-old if they are working. The parent, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage. Parents can find out more and Apply for childcare if you're working - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) to get a code for government funded childcare to give to their childcare provider.

**Children aged 3 and 4:**

- All 3 and 4-year-olds who live in England are entitled to up to 15 hours per week universal funded childcare, irrespective of income levels, benefit status, or family circumstances. Universal funding can be claimed from the start of the funding period following their third birthday.
- Parents can also get an expanded funded place for up to 30 hours a week for their 3- and 4-year-old if they are working. The parent, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage. Parents can find out more and Apply for childcare if you're working - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) to get a code for government funded childcare to give to their childcare provider.

Where parents are accessing the working parent entitlement for up to 30 hours, it is the parent/carers responsibility to reconfirm their eligibility every three months. Full details around how 30 hours funding is applied for, and the timescales, cut off dates that are applied to claims can be found online. [www.beststartinlife.gov.uk](http://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk)

**Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)**

If your child is accessing an early education funding place, your early years provider could be eligible for extra funding to help support your child to develop and learn. EYPP is paid directly to your provider based on the first 15 hours of funding for all age groups.

**Disability Access Funding (DAF)**

If your child is accessing an early education funding place and is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), your early years provider could be eligible for extra funding to help support your child. Disability Access Funding is paid annually directly to your chosen



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provider.

### **Parent Responsibility**

Parent/carers must complete and sign a Parent/Carer Declaration Form (Part A and Part B).

- **Part A will only need to be completed when the child first takes up a funded place.**
- **Part B is a short form that will need to be completed each funding period (so three times a year- Summer, Autumn and Spring) to:**

- confirm the agreement between the provider and the parent for the duration of the funding period.
- record the number of hours/weeks of government funded childcare for the duration of the funding period.
- record if parents are accessing funding over one or more providers to prevent double funding claims being made. We may charge for the hours your child attends more than his/her government funded early education funding entitlement if you have not declared accurately how many hours your child is attending with another provider.
- give consent that the information provided on the Parent Declaration Form (Part A and Part B) can be shared with Southend-on-Sea City Council.
- confirm that the parent/carer understands that if they wish to increase the number of funded hours their child is accessing after the headcount date, We may charge for these additional sessions.

### **Setting**

We will record the number hours/weeks of Free Childcare for the duration of the funding period. We may charge for the hours your child attends in excess of his/her Free Early Years Funding entitlement if you have not declared accurately that your child is attending another provider.

**Parents accessing Working Parent entitlement must reconfirm eligibility every three months. If you fail to do so you could lose your eligibility for a Working Parent Entitlement place at this provision.**

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In the interests of stability, Southend-on-Sea City Council does not encourage the movement of children between providers' mid-terms. Children will not be funded if they move



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providers during the funding period except for exceptional circumstances and the request to transfer must be approved by Southend-on-Sea City Council.

Parents must give at least 30 working days' notice if they intend to withdraw their child.

### **Holiday arrangements**

Parents will not be able to claim alternative free sessions if the child does not attend due to family holiday. Please see our admissions policy for private fees during the Christmas break. If your child is absent during government funded hours, we **are not** required to provide alternative government funded sessions.

### **If your child doesn't attend due to sickness, family holiday or days off.**

- Please inform us of any reason your child is unable to attend. If your child is getting government funded early education sessions, we are required to monitor your child's attendance and inform Southend-on-Sea City Council if the attendance falls below 90%. Your child's place is government funded. If your child consistently fails to attend, their place may be withdrawn.
- If your child cannot attend the provision for any reason, parents **will not** be able to claim alternative government funded sessions. Fees for any additional hours must still be paid, as a place has been kept open for your child.

### **Bank holidays**

We are not open on Bank holidays. Funding will still be claimed if your chosen sessions fall on this day.

### **Inset Days**

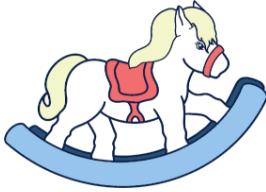
The setting reserves the right to implement three inset days per year when funding is claimed. We are not required to provide alternative free sessions for these. Where an inset day is arranged, we will provide you with a minimum of 1 months notice of this date.

### **If the setting closes due to sickness, emergencies etc.**

Funding will still be claimed if the setting needs to close for emergency unforeseen circumstances. For example: In case of emergency where the setting must close due to circumstances beyond our control, for example severe weather conditions.

We will try to make up the funded hours at another time.

Parents may lose the funded hours if closure is beyond our control.



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### **When can I use my child's funding entitlement?**

**We offer government funded early education sessions at the following times:**

	<b>9 to 24 months</b>	<b>2-year-olds</b>	<b>3 and 4-year-olds</b>
<b>Monday</b>	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00
<b>Tuesday</b>	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00
<b>Wednesday</b>	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00
<b>Thursday</b>	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00
<b>Friday</b>	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00	08:00-18:00
<b>Saturday</b>			
<b>Sunday</b>			

We **stretch the early education funding** entitlement in line with the [Southend Stretched Funding Policy](#)

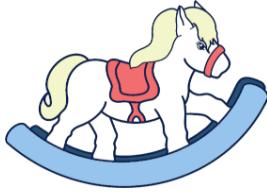
Funding Period:

Period	Term time weeks	Stretched weeks
Summer	13	21
Autumn	14	16
Spring	11	13

### **Charges for Additional Services**

Government funding is intended to deliver up to 15 or 30 hours a week of high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours, or additional services. Providers can charge parents for any additional, private paid hours: according to their usual terms and conditions provided that taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a funded childcare place.

Please see details of our additional services costs.



## Contribution Fees

We charge one weekly contribution fee and two daily contribution fees. You will be asked to opt in or out of these fees on your funding declaration form.

### ***The daily contribution fees include:***

- £2.50 Enhanced provision: Enhanced provision costs in nurseries refer to additional services, resources, or facilities that go beyond what is typically covered by government-funded childcare (such as the 15 or 30 hours of free childcare in the UK). This includes, but is not limited to: high quality educational opportunities such as the sensory room, beach schools, general outings and extended ratios on these, yoga, dancing, school readiness activities, clay activities, stay and plays, sea life passes, cooking activities, festivals and celebrational activities.
- £7.50 Meals: Meal costs refer to the daily charges for providing nutritious, balanced meals and snacks to children during their time at nursery. These meals are prepared on-site and include breakfast, lunch, and/or tea, as well as healthy snacks and drinks throughout the day. As government funding for early education does **not include the cost of meals**, these charges are separate and payable by parents or carers.  
**Please note:** We are unable to accommodate packed lunches due to limited storage and food safety considerations. All children attending during meal times must therefore be included in the nursery's meal provision. We also meet allergy and dietary needs.

### ***Weekly contribution fee:***

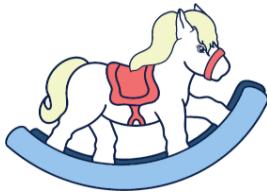
- £2 Consumables: A consumable charge is a fee requested by early years providers to help cover the cost of essential, day-to-day items that are regularly used and replenished in the course of delivering early education and care, which are not funded by government grants. This is included, but not limited to: nappies, wet-wipes, tissues, nappy sacks, nappy cream, washing bedding, face cloths, soil, sand and water play.

*\*Should you choose to opt out of contributions, your child will still be entitled to their funded hours; however, their access will be limited to the core, basic provision only. This means that they would not be included in any of the listed activities or resources beyond what is covered by the funding itself.*

## Help with childcare Costs

[Best Start in Life](http://www.gov.uk/best-start-in-life) is a government website providing:

- information about all the different types of help with childcare costs.
- a link to the Government [childcare-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator) that we recommend parents use to find out what schemes they are eligible for and how much they can get.



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You may be eligible for other help with childcare costs, including.

- **Tax Free Childcare:** We are registered to accept Tax free childcare. If you qualify you can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare. This goes up to £1,000 every 3 months if a child is disabled (up to £4,000 a year).
- Universal Credit for childcare.
- Childcare help if you are training.