

# Free childcare for two year olds



## How can Children's Centres help my family?

Sure Start Children's Centres aim to improve outcomes for families. We work across Shropshire in communities with all families in different ways. We provide advice, support, information and practical sessions including:

- home visiting offering 1:1 help, advice and support on a range of topics
- support for children and parents with additional needs and/or disabilities
- support around jobs, training and money and healthy lifestyles
- stay and play sessions and a variety of free courses

To find out more please contact:

**North: 01691 656513**

**Central: 01743 452400**

**South: 01694 723465**

For more information visit [www.shropshire.gov.uk/childrenscentres.nsf](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/childrenscentres.nsf)



## Benefits for Children

Research shows that alongside good parenting, high quality part time Early Year's Education helps give children of this age a great start, providing a solid foundation for the future.

## Will my benefits be affected?

If you receive Childcare Tax and use some or all of your free 24U childcare entitlement to reduce the overall cost of any existing childcare you need to inform the Department for Working Pensions (DWP), as this may affect your payments.

## Contacts

To find out more about quality activities for you and your child contact the **Family Information Service (FIS)** or your local **Children's Centre**.

**Family Information Service** – telephone **01743 254400** or email [www.shropshirefamilyinfo.co.uk](http://www.shropshirefamilyinfo.co.uk)

**24U Team**  
 Tel: **01743 254452**  
 Email: [24u@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:24u@shropshire.gov.uk)



## When is my child eligible?

If you meet the criteria you are entitled to the free place from the term following your child's second birthday.

- If your child was born between 1 January and 31 March you are entitled to the place from the Summer term (after Easter).
- If your child was born between 1 April and 31 August you are entitled to the place from the Autumn term (September).
- If your child was born between 1 September and 31 December you are entitled to the place from the Spring term (January).



## Where can my child attend?

The quality of childcare and nursery education for two year olds is very important. Shropshire Council works with early learning providers (pre-schools, playgroups, nurseries and childminders) who have been judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding and are committed to improving their provision. For details of these providers please contact the Family Information Service or ask your local childcare provider wherever you see the 24U logo.



## What will my child get?

A Free Early Education/Childcare place is 15 hours over 38 weeks or a total of 570 hours which can be taken flexibly/stretched over the year (where the parent requests this and the provider is able to do this).

However, this must be taken over a minimum of 2 days per week, and for more than 2.5 hours and less than 10 hours in any one day. If the offer is accessed over less than 2 days, then a portion of the offer will be lost.

Once a place has been agreed for a child, it will remain funded until the child becomes entitled to a Free Early Education Place at 3 years, even where the family circumstances change and they may no longer meet the criteria.



## How will 24U help my child?

Your child will benefit greatly by having pre-school experience with a Good or Outstanding Pre-school nursery or childminder. This period of time for your child is known as the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children who take up a 24U place will be making friends, having fun and learning all the time. The childcare provider will make sure your child's needs are met to help them feel secure and confident about starting school when the time comes. Research tells us that children who have high quality pre-school experiences are more likely to be successful adults. So don't delay, sign up today and help your child to learn through play!

## For some children eligibility for a place is based on entitlement to Free School Meals does this mean a child will receive a free school meal?

No. Parents should therefore be advised that where their child accesses their free entitlement over a lunch period, the setting can make a reasonable charge for lunch, or offer parents the opportunity to bring a healthy packed lunch. Parents should be made aware of this by the childcare provider.



## How do I apply?

You may receive a letter and application form in the post from Shropshire Council asking if you would like to apply. This is because the council receives a list from the Department for Working Pensions (DWP) of families who may be eligible.

Alternatively application forms are available from your local library, Children's Centre, your Health Visitor, childcare provider, primary school or contact the Family Information Service on **01743 254400**.

When your completed application form is received we will carry out an on-line eligibility check which is why we need your **date of birth and national insurance number**. We will confirm in writing if your child is eligible. You then need to take your confirmation letter along with you to your chosen childcare provider when you arrange their start date.