

YOUR CHILD TURNING THREE

Dear Parent/Carer,

As your child has recently or is shortly to turn three, there are some options which you may be thinking about in relation to your child's early years' care, and about funding for fees. This sheet gives you information about both.

What are the options for my child's early years' care?

Staying at Playgroup

Your child can stay at Playgroup up to any point until he/she is of compulsory school age (the start of the term after your child's 5th birthday). Playgroup follows the EYFS Every Child Matters curriculum in the same way as all other early years' providers, including state nursery schools.

After your child's 3rd birthday he/she will spend part of his/her Playgroup session(s) taking part in activities tailored to the older age group. Generally, the move will take place from the half term following your child's 3rd birthday, so he/she will normally start these with a group of his/her peers. These activities include a tailored 'circle time' designed to provide a little more structure for the older children, letters and sounds time and small trips locally which we only do with older ones. We also liaise with the Infant School to arrange transition visits to start to familiarise your child with their next setting.

Going to School Nursery

If you would like your child to attend the school Nursery you will need to apply to the School directly for a place, or to be put on their waiting list. Playgroup is completely independent of the Infant School and school Nursery and does not make any arrangements on your behalf for your child to start at School or Nursery, although we work very closely with them to ensure a smooth transition for your child from Playgroup to Nursery or School.

If your child will be dropping sessions with us to go to School or Nursery you need to give us **4 weeks' term time** notice (there is a notice form to pick up at Playgroup, or online at www.rotpreschoolplaygroup.co.uk under 'Documents').

Combining school Nursery and Playgroup

If your child attends the school Nursery you may still choose to send him/her to Playgroup for some additional sessions to extend the amount of his/her early years' care. We work closely with the Nursery and offer a take or collect service to the nursery school if you wish your child to spend lunch and either the morning or afternoon with us.

Two members of our usual staff walk the children from/to school Nursery and there is a formal handover from/to Nursery staff, with a register being completed. We will ask you to complete a Nursery Walk Consent form before your child starts walks with us.

Your child may come to us for any number of additional sessions.

Transition to other settings

If your child is intending to go to a school other than the Radcliffe Infant School please let us know as we will ensure that we use this time at Playgroup to prepare to make arrangements for a smooth transition for your child to that school.

Government Funding for over 3s

When is my child eligible?

The Government provides universal (ie available to every child) funding for 15 hours of free early years' education, starting from the beginning of:

- the Autumn term (September) for birthdays up to August 31st;
- the Spring term (January) for birthdays up to December 31st; and
- the Summer term (April) for birthdays up to March 31st.

Please note that this means that a child with a birthday just after a cut off date will not be eligible until a later term, even if he/she is 3 by the time the following term has started. For example, a child's birthday is 3rd April and Summer Term starts 17th April. He/she will not be eligible until the Autumn term.

Where eligible, you may also be entitled to an additional 15 hours (ie. a total of 30 hours) of free funding. This generally applies where both members of the household are working (or one if a single household). Some parent/carer FAQs about the 30 hour entitlement are enclosed with this leaflet. You will need to register for this at <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow> If you are eligible for the additional funding you will need to apply for and bring your eligibility code to our Business Manager IN THE TERM BEFORE YOU WISH THE FUNDING TO START.

Which sessions are funded?

Playgroup offers up to the full 15 or 30 hours of funded sessions to eligible children, but you do not have to use the full 15 or 30 hours. All our session times can be covered by funding. The time element of Breakfast Club and After School Club can be funded by your government funded hours but the meal element is charged separately (currently £2.00 per breakfast or £3.00 per hot tea). Takes to and Collects from School Nursery are not funded either and are charged at £2.00 per walk.

As funding is applied for at the beginning of each new term, you will have the chance to change the number of hours your child is funded for each term.

How can I maximise my entitlement?

We are happy to discuss with you how you can combine sessions to maximise use of your funded hours, including combining Playgroup sessions with time at another provider.

To help you plan how to use your funding these are our session durations:

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| • breakfast club 8am-9am | 1 hours |
| • morning session 9am – 12noon | 3 hours |
| • lunch club 12noon- 1pm | 1 hour |
| • afternoon session 1pm – 4pm | 3 hours |
| • after school club 4pm – 5pm | 1 hours |

Please note that if you are using Nursery Takes or Collects then these times will vary slightly. Please ask Deborah for details.

We will charge for any additional sessions at our usual session rates, and for any unfunded part of a session at the standard fee rate, £4.95 per hour. The standard session or fee rate is also payable for any additional weeks or days not covered by Government Grant funding.

Are all sessions funded?

The County Council funds 38 weeks of the school year. If Playgroup closes for fewer than 5 INSET days the additional open days can be charged for.

Can I split the entitlement with another provider?

You may split the entitlement between any number of other providers, including childminders. If your child attends another nursery/ day care facility, or in some cases goes to a child minder, you can split the entitlement between them and us if you choose. You may choose how you split your entitlement in order to maximise your cost savings.

How do I apply for Government funding?

For the universal 15 hours funding we will apply on your behalf. We just ask you to let us know how many hours you wish to claim through us and will issue you with a funding form to complete and return to us.

For the extended 30 hour entitlement, please go to <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow> to apply for your funding. Please let us know your eligibility code once you have received this. In order to have funding in place we need to have received your code from you in the term BEFORE that for which you will be claiming funding. We will also ask you to complete a form with your national insurance number, and your and your child's date of birth.

You will then receive a fees invoice from Playgroup in the normal way: it will show either a nil balance if all sessions are funded, or, if your child attends more than the funded 15/30 hours, or the sessions include meals, an amount for the unfunded sessions/meals to be paid for.

Planning ahead and further information

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's care once they will be 3 please speak to June Barnes, Supervisor. To discuss any queries about Government funding, including how to use your entitlement and to book extra sessions, please speak to Deborah Porter, Pre-School Business Manager. If you want extra sessions for the following term please let us know as soon as possible, either by emailing Deborah or completing a form available from Playgroup or online.

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