

Funded early learning sessions for 2, 3, and 4 year olds.

A guide for partners and supporters.





About funded sessions

All the small things a child learns in their earliest years can make a big difference later.

Funded early learning childcare sessions at a nursery, pre-school or childminder can help a child:

- make friends and have fun
- develop routines
- grow their language and communication skills
- get ready for school

In Staffordshire some **two year olds** and all **three and four year olds** are eligible for funded sessions at a childminder, preschool or day nursery.

Please use the resources in this toolkit to encourage parents to take up funded sessions.



In this guide you will find:

- Funding for 2 year olds - [page 3](#)
- Funding for 3 and 4 year olds – [page 6](#)
- Useful contacts - [page 11](#)
- Other funding - [page 12](#)
- Resources to help you promote the funding – [page 13](#)

page 2



Age 2

Some 2 year old children are eligible for funded early learning childcare sessions at a childminder, nursery or preschool. In Staffordshire this is called Think 2.

- 2 year olds whose families receive certain forms of financial or practical support are eligible.
- A maximum of 570 hours can be taken per year:
 - 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (term time)
 - Some providers will allow parents to 'stretch' the hours, using fewer hours per week for up to 52 weeks.
- Parents choose which childminder, preschool, day nursery, or out of school club to use - they can use more than one.
- Sessions are funded from the term after an eligible child's second birthday.



More about Think 2

- Eligibility - [page 4](#)
- How to apply - [page 5](#)



Age 2 Eligibility

Family claims:

- Income Support or Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit, and has a household income of £15,400 a year or less
- Child Tax Credit OR Working Tax Credit and a household income of £16,190 a year or less
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2 year olds who:

- Receive a Disability Living Allowance
- Are looked after by their local authority
- Have left care through special guardianship or through an adoption or residence order
- Have an Education, Health and Care plan



The list above may change, please visit www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2 to see the full criteria.



Age 2

How to apply

Parents apply to Staffordshire County Council for Think 2 funding.

Apply online

The easiest and quickest way to apply is online at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2

If a parent can't get online to apply, they can visit a Staffordshire library, children's centre, childminder, preschool, or nursery who will help them apply.



- Apply from the term the child has their 2nd birthday or at any point after.
- If a child is confirmed as eligible for Think2, the funding will stay in place until they attend school, even if the family circumstances change.



Age 3 and 4

Every 3 and 4 year old child is eligible for funded early learning childcare sessions at a childminder, nursery or preschool. In Staffordshire this is called universal funding.

- All 3 and 4 year olds in Staffordshire.
- A maximum of 570 hours can be taken per year:
 - 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (term time)
 - Some providers will allow parents to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week
- Parents choose which childminder, preschool or nursery to use - they can use more than one.
- The funded hours will start from the term after the child's 3rd birthday.



Parents go straight to a registered or approved childminder, nursery or preschool to book their child's place, there's no need to apply for the funding.



Age 3 and 4 Extra hours (30 hours)

Some 3 and 4 year olds whose families are working, are entitled to an extra 15 hours of early education, this gives them a total of up to 30 hours per week.

- For working families in Staffordshire.
- A maximum of 570 hours can be taken per year:
 - 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (term time)
 - Some providers will allow parents to 'stretch' the hours, using fewer hours per week for up to 52 weeks.
- Parents choose which childminder, preschool or nursery to use - they can use more than one.



Apply online for the extra 15 hours at:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



How you can help

Proactively promote the funding and encourage parents to take up their child's place by:

- Displaying posters or digital screens in high footfall areas.
- Sharing posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Linked In.
- Adding information to bulletins, newsletters and emails.

Resources to help you promote the funding are available on [page 13](#) of this guide.





What we're doing

Each term we send a postcard through the post to parents of two year olds who may be eligible for a place.

Parents postcard front:



Parents postcard rear:





Questions?

Find out more about the funding, including answers to frequently asked questions, on our web pages.

- Age 2 - www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2
- Age 3 and 4 - www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eef



Help finding a childcare provider

Visit Staffordshire Connects pages to search for childminders, preschools and nurseries near you.
www.staffordshireconnects.info/earlyyears



Contact us

Early Education and Childcare Team at Staffordshire County Council



eeac@staffordshire.gov.uk



01785 278 201



www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eeac



Useful contacts

- Childcare Choices
www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- Staffordshire Connects
www.staffordshireconnects.info



Other funding

Some children may be eligible for other funding, including

Tax free childcare

Government help for working families to pay for childcare.

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Early years pupil premium

Funding paid to an eligible child's nursery, preschool or childminder.

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/EYPP

Disability access fund

Funding paid to an eligible child's nursery, preschool or childminder.

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/DAF

Special educational needs inclusion funding

Funding paid to nursery, preschool or childminder to support a child with very significant difficulty.

www.staffordshireconnects.info





Promoting the funding

A digital pack of resources is available to help you promote the funding including:

- Think2 Staffordshire logo
- Suggested text and graphics to share on social media
- Prepared text to copy and paste into emails or newsletters
- Posters for you to print and display
- Digital display screen graphics
- Web banners and email signatures
- QR code linking to the web pages

!! When promoting the scheme, remember to always add the web address (or QR code) so that people can find out more:
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eeac !!





Think 2 logo

The logo can be used alongside your own logo when promoting the scheme.

The logo is available as a PNG file (transparent background) or JPG file in full colour or white. Please click on the images below to download the files. If you need the images files please email ema.roberts@staffordshire.gov.uk.





Suggested social media posts

You can just copy and paste the text below to use on social media, or feel free to amend to suit your audience.

!!Remember to include a link to the web page in every post!!

- Some 2 year olds in Staffordshire are eligible for a funded place at a preschool, nursery or childminder. Is your child eligible? Check online at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2
- All 3 and 4 year olds in Staffordshire are eligible for funded early learning sessions at a childminder, nursery or preschool. Find out more at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/fundedchildcare
- Could you get help with your childcare costs? Check online at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk





Images for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

Please click on the images below to download. If you need the images files please email ema.roberts@staffordshire.gov.uk.

THINK2 

Funded sessions for 2 year olds.

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2

THINK2 

Is your child eligible?

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2



Not sure what support **you** could get with childcare costs? Go to childcarechoices.gov.uk

Childcare
Choices

 HM Government



Posters for you to print and display

Please click on the images below to download. If you need the images files please email ema.roberts@staffordshire.gov.uk.


THINK 2  Staffordshire County Council

Funded early learning sessions for 2 year olds.

Is your child eligible?



www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Think2

 Staffordshire County Council

All 3 and 4 years are entitled to funded sessions at a preschool, childminder, or nursery.

Find out more online.

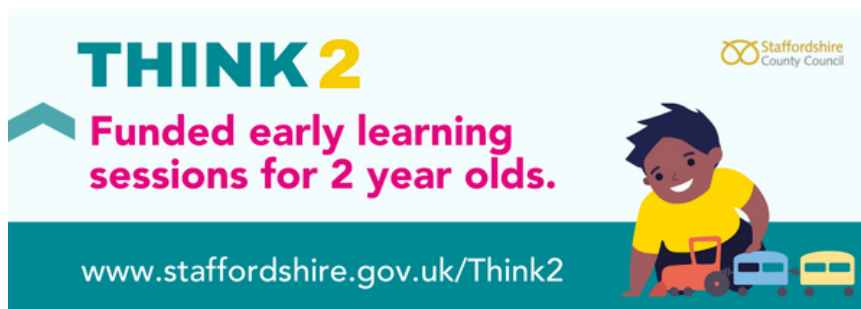


www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eeac



Digital screen and web banner

Please click on the images below to download. If you need the images files please email ema.roberts@staffordshire.gov.uk.





Pre-prepared text

Copy and paste the text below to use in emails or newsletters.

Subject: Funded early learning sessions for two, three and four year olds

Some 2 year olds and all children aged 3 and 4 years, are eligible for fully funded early learning sessions, at a childminder, preschool or nursery.

The sessions can help them:

- make friends and have fun
- grow their language and communication skills
- get ready for school

And, parents can use the time to return to training or work.

Find out who is eligible and how to apply at:

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/helpwithchildcarecosts

If you can't get online, ask at a Staffordshire Children's Centre or library.