

Early Years Families First Funding Guidance for Professionals

Early Years Families First Funding Funded childcare for vulnerable children turning 2 years old.

Please read the guidance and complete all sections of the application form.

Application Forms can be found on the Good Practice Guide [2025-06-16 Early Years Families First Funding Application form 2025.docx](#)

Return the form securely to: EYfamiliesfunding@suffolk.gov.uk

Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the referrer.

Who will be considered for the funding?

Families will only be considered if they are eligible for 2-year-old funding as per the criteria under 'Check my child's eligibility' tab www.suffolk.gov.uk/two

If the 2-year funding criteria is **met**, vulnerable families with children turning 2 years old may be funded where one of the following criteria **also** applies:

- Children are subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan due to safeguarding
- Children at risk of a placement breakdown
- Keeping families together under Kinship care
- Parent is accessing mental health support
- Parent is attending alcohol or drug treatment programme
- Sudden or unexpected changes in family circumstances (urgent medical treatment required, death of a parent/sibling)
- Ever received Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) support
- Ever received Young Person Pathway (YPP) support from 0-19 Health Visiting Team

Notes:

- The lead professional will complete the application form.
- Not all applications will be successful.
- Early Years Families First Funding must not replace other sources of funding.
- Any referral for funding must be discussed with the family.
- Financial contributions from families/carers should be encouraged.

This funding **must** be agreed by the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service prior to the childcare starting.

Who can apply for the funding?

Referrals will be considered from:

- Social Worker
- Family Support Practitioner
- Healthy Child Practitioner
- Health Visitor
- Health Professional
- Mental Health Team
- Drug or Alcohol treatment provider (ICENI)

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If the child is subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan and the application is made by someone other than a Social Worker (SW) the referrer must ensure they consult with the families Social Worker.

Application process

Email a completed application form **Encrypted Official Sensitive** to:

EYfamiliesfunding@suffolk.gov.uk with subject heading: **Early Years Families First Funding**.

Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the referrer.

Please note: For users outside of Suffolk County Council if this is your first referral via email you need to set up a **secure email** account. Please email EYfamiliesfunding@suffolk.gov.uk and we will respond with instructions. This ensures sensitive data is sent securely.

How much childcare can we apply for?

A maximum of 1 academic term before the child is eligible for 2-year funding, approximately 12-14 weeks depending on the length of the academic term.

Early Years Families First Funding is not typically available during the school holidays. There are exceptions to this, for example if an eligible child needs childcare during a holiday period that immediately precedes the term in which the child becomes eligible for 2-year funding.

How will applications be dealt with?

All applications will be considered by the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service within one week and, if one of the criteria has been met, funding may then be approved.

All successful applications will generate a unique reference which will be shared with the referrer and with the childcare provider for invoicing purposes. This reference will confirm that the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service has agreed to fund childcare under the Early Years Families First Funding scheme.

Who will provide the childcare?

The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and preferably rated Good or Outstanding. There are a range of registered childcare providers available including day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, childminders, out of school clubs and holiday clubs. To search for a childcare provider, you can go to: [Suffolk InfoLink | Family Information Service](#)

How will the childcare place be found?

The childcare provider should be chosen by the parents/carers with the help of the referrer and meet both the child's and family's needs.

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Referrer's responsibilities

Referrers must contact the chosen childcare provider to agree a placement.

Referrers must complete all sections of the application form with as much information as possible for it to be considered by the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service.

Referrers must update the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service with any significant changes that will affect attendance via EYfamiliesfunding@suffolk.gov.uk for example the child has moved to a new house or non-attendance.

Referrers will liaise with childcare providers to inform them of any Child in Need/Child Protection meeting dates.

Why access childcare for vulnerable children?

Placing vulnerable children in good quality childcare ensures that qualified Early Years professionals see them a number of times each week. This is a protective factor for the child, allows carers respite or time to attend support programmes.

As a condition of Ofsted registration all Early Years professionals have completed the Introduction to Safeguarding training.

Please note:

***** All Early Years Families First Funding applications must be sent to the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service for consideration prior to the childcare starting. Childcare must not start unless you have received a reference number as confirmation of agreement from the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service. Funding will not be paid by the Early Years and Childcare Brokerage Service without this reference number. Please complete all sections on the application form with as much information as possible, this will enable us to process your application quickly. *****