

Information for Social Workers regarding funded childcare for Foster Carers

Do you have Foster Carers who are caring for a child aged 9 months to 4 years old who could be eligible for funded childcare?

All children aged 9 months to 4 years old of **eligible working parents** can have up to 30 hours funded childcare per week from the term after they turn 9 months.

Foster Carers of eligible fostered children can apply **if they are currently employed or self-employed outside their fostering responsibilities.**

Please note: There is a different process for a 2 year old foster child. Foster carers should use the Suffolk online checker and apply under the **'all other'** option, selecting the 'child in care' criteria: www.suffolk.gov.uk/two
If the foster parents are also working, they can have an additional 15 Hours (30 hours total).

All 3 & 4 year old children can have 15 hours funded childcare per week from the term after their third birthday (universal offer) - no qualifying criteria for this.

For foster carers you believe to be eligible, please download an application form via the 'Docs for all' tile on the Corporate Parenting SharePoint site.

PLEASE NOTE: Foster carers are unable to apply using the Childcare Choices website.

How to Apply

1. **Social worker** should send the form to the foster carer.
2. **Foster carer** should complete Sections 1-6 of the application form.
3. **Foster carer** should return the application securely to the social worker.
4. **Social Worker** must see current proof that the foster carer is employed or self-employed outside their fostering responsibilities.
5. **Social worker** completes Section 7 - Social worker declaration.
6. **Head of Fostering & Adoption** completes Section 8 - Head of Fostering & Adoption declaration, to authorise the application if agreed the arrangement is in keeping with the child's care plan.
7. **Head of Fostering & Adoption** will arrange for the authorised form be sent to the Early Years and Childcare Service FosterCarer30hours@suffolk.gov.uk before the end of term (**August, December, March**).
8. **Early Years & Childcare Service** will generate an eligibility code in readiness for use for the start of following term.
9. **Early Years & Childcare Service** will send the code by secure email to the foster carer.
10. **Foster carer** will need to present this code to a childcare provider offering early education funding at the start of the new term to book their funded hours.

Reconfirmation - before the end of each term

- Use the most recent reconfirmation form (available via the 'Docs for all' tile on the Corporate Parenting SharePoint site).
- The **Social Worker** must verify the foster carers employment status every 3 months to ensure they still meet the criteria which must be before the end of the term.
- The **Head of Fostering and Adoption** must authorise the reconfirmation.
- Send the reconfirmation form to Early Years & Childcare Service so the code can be reconfirmed.

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- This must be done before the end of a term (**August, December, March**) so the code can be reconfirmed in time for use for the start the following term.

Thank you for your assistance with this.

Christina Lewis, Head of Service - Early Years and Childcare