

## ECCC Fees and Funding Policy

Key information about this policy:

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### Policy Purpose

This document gives our current information and policies around fees and funding at ECCC. If it doesn't answer your questions, please get in touch with us.

We know that nursery fees and funding can be quite difficult to understand at first. We'll always do our best to help you make sense of the costs of a nursery place for your child, and to figure out how to maximise any funding and tax-free entitlements you might have.

### Scope, Application, Access

Applies to, and made available to: all current parents/carers at ECCC.  
This policy works in conjunction with our Admissions Policy.

## Policy

### Private Fees (including Wraparound)

If you don't receive funded hours, or want to book hours beyond your funding entitlements, these will be charged at our standard rate for sessions:

Session Time	8 - 9am 'Wraparound' (breakfast included)	9am - 12.50pm	1pm - 4.50pm	4.50pm - 5.50pm 'Wraparound' (no snack included)
Private session cost	<b>£11.11</b> (If more than 5 sessions are booked at a time this reduces to £9.61 per session)	<b>£51.44</b>	<b>£51.44</b>	<b>£10.48</b> (If more than 5 sessions are booked at a time this reduces to £8.98 per session)

Any privately purchased hours include the cost of food (including snacks), activities, trips, events, etc. There are no additional charges, like those we have for funded sessions (see below), because they are already included.

### Part-sessions, holiday, sickness, and late fees

We will charge in full for any sessions you book even if your child only attends for part of the session (i.e arrives late or leaves early). Please try to let the office know if you need to drop your child off after 9 am or pick them up before 4 pm so that we can make arrangements for food and any outings.

We ask that families contact the office before collection time to advise that they will be or might be late and make arrangements for someone else to collect their child wherever possible (see our Arrivals and Departures policy for more information). If you're late in collecting your child after their session has ended (12:50, 16:50 or 17:50), we will charge you **£1 per minute** in addition to your monthly bill.

When a child is sick, on holiday, or otherwise unable to attend booked sessions as usual - we will still charge in full as usual.

### Funded hours

We are registered with Bristol City Council to accept the government funded hours on offer for working families, and the universal hours for three and four year olds (whether parents/carers are working or not), and the hours for 'eligible' two year olds from low-income families. More information about all of these types of funding is available below.

When your child is old enough to get funded hours, you'll be able to claim them **from the term after their birthday (or '9 month birthday')** in the applicable funding age bracket. New terms start in September, January and April - with the council setting the exact dates each year.

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For example, if you're an eligible working parent/carer and your child turns 9 months old in October then you'll be able to claim funding from the following January in line with the start of the next term.

Please note: if your child normally has a funded session on a Bank Holiday (mostly they are on Monday or Friday) the session will **not** be rescheduled for another day.

### Funding for eligible working families

Eligible working families can access '30 hours' of funding for childcare for children from age nine months onwards. The "30 hours" government funding is based on a Term-Time pattern of 38-weeks a year. ECCC is open 50 weeks per year and funded sessions are provided 47.5 weeks per year. **This means that the funded hours are stretched over this time, equating to 24 hours per week** (equivalent to 6x 4 hour sessions).

You must apply for funding by visiting [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) or calling 0300 1234 097 to get an eligibility code (which is 11 digits long and usually starts 500...).

You need to apply for your Eligibility Code before the term starts or no later than two weeks into the start of the term to claim funding - we advise doing this as early as possible to avoid any surprises. You then need to complete a parental declaration EYR01 form at the beginning of each term which will be sent to you by our team via the 'Funding Loop' software. This must be signed by all parents/carers within the household. This is your responsibility and we are unable to do this part for you - but if you require some support to understand the form or access to a computer to complete the forms we will be happy to help.

### Other funding

#### Universal Funding for all Three year olds

All three and four-year-old children are eligible for 15 hours per week of funding in term time only. At ECCC as we stretch that funding over 47.5 weeks per year you'll receive 12 hours per week of funding (3x half-day sessions at ECCC).

You can receive this funding the term after your child's third birthday. All families are automatically eligible for this funding, but to claim this you'll still need to complete an EYR01 form at the beginning of each term. This is instead of, not additional to, the funding for working families.

#### Eligible Two year old Funding for Low Income Families

Funded hours are available to some 2 year olds whose parents/carers are on no or low incomes. This funding is for up to 12 hours per week (3x half-day sessions at ECCC). Eligible 2 year old free hours are available to eligible children from the term after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. ECCC does not charge any additional charges (see below) for parents/carers receiving this type of funding. Parents must apply online for a place with Bristol City Council.

[www.bristol.gov.uk/freeplacefortwos](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/freeplacefortwos) and be checked for eligibility before a free place can be offered. The Council will then refer eligible families to us.

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From September 2025 some parents/carers will be able to use both Eligible 2 year old universal hours and Working Parent Entitlement hours at the same time, prioritising their Eligible 2 year old universal hours first.

### Unfunded weeks

Because we are a year-round setting (open for 50 out of 52 weeks per year) and we want to maximise the amount of funding parents can claim, we spread the funding available over 47.5 weeks of the year.

This means there are two weeks per year (in August and sometimes early September) where parents and carers will be charged at our private rates. To ensure financial sustainability of the Centre we must charge for this period. We will always remind families of the weeks at least 3 months in advance. If needed, there is an option to spread the payment of this additional cost - please contact the office as early as possible to discuss this.

#### **Exceptions:**

Children in receipt of 'Eligible Two year old funding' - see above - are exempt from the private fees for this period.

As children in Rainbow room will be transitioning to school, this is the only room where they have the option to pay the private fees or permanently leave nursery before the unfunded period.

### Additional Charges for funded hours

Our additional charges and consumables policy has been developed in collaboration with Bristol City Council.

The funding is designed to cover the cost of delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage - the national standard of care and education for children. It does **not** cover meals, snacks, drinks, Family, additional activities, external facilitators, the cost of or the resourcing requirements of trips, events and/or celebrations, other consumables like waterproofs/suncream etc, additional hours or any other additional services.

Our additional charges, broken down below, mean we can continue to sustainably provide a higher standard of care, education, and wider community support. These things are a key reason why many parents choose to come to ECCC.

### Overall additional charges

The total consumables and Enhanced Care Contribution payments we ask parents to contribute is **£14.80 per funded session**, and will be clearly itemised on your invoice.

<b>Charge for funded sessions</b>	<b>Standard Session</b> 9am - 12.50pm OR 1pm - 4.50pm	True cost to families using Tax Free Childcare*
<b>Food</b> - includes healthy cooked meal by our onsite chef, fruit and carbohydrate snacks	£5.95	£4.76

<b>Non-food consumables -</b> Access to wellies, waterproofs, sun hats, sun cream, etc.	£1.00	£0.80
<b>Activities &amp; trips -</b> including cultural calendar events, celebrations, woodwork, allotment, forest school etc	£0.85	£0.68
<b>Enhanced Care Contribution -</b> supporting staff trained above required levels, enhanced ratios for 2 year olds, fair wages for our staff, etc.	£7.00	£5.60
<b>Total per session</b>	<b>£14.80</b>	<b>£11.84</b>
Total <b>per hour</b> of care	<b>£3.70</b>	<b>£2.96</b>

\* [Tax Free Childcare](https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare) is a scheme where the government gives up to 20% support for nursery costs. We wholeheartedly suggest that families see if they are eligible and use this service: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>

Children whose parents/carers opt out of paying for chargeable items will not be given them for free and will need to provide their own resources and make arrangements for meal and snack times outside of the Centre (see [‘If you don’t wish to pay’](#) below).

We require a **termly commitment** to our additional charges. These will be shown on your termly EYR01 (Parental Declaration) form, shared via the Funding Loop platform, and signing this form creates a contract with ECCC.

#### Enhanced Care Contribution

The Early Years Entitlement Funding we receive for funded hours is based on legal staffing ratios and staff being paid minimum wage. We don’t believe it is possible, or ethical, to provide the high standards of care and education ECCC always strives to with this funding alone.

We ask families at ECCC to contribute a further £7.00 per funded session as an Enhanced Care Contribution to ensure we can continue to treat our staff properly, with a real living wage, and enhance our provision beyond the legal minimums.

**The reality is that sadly the government funding is not enough to cover the real costs of providing good quality care and education.** We hope families continue to see the value of our work, and support us to deliver our full curriculum. We don’t make any profit – our charges only reflect the real cost of high quality early childhood education, care and nutrition. All our income is put back into our charitable work: supporting the children and families of Easton.

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Who doesn't pay additional charges?

We appreciate that many, perhaps even most, families in our community are struggling with household bills and costs. We really don't want cost to be a barrier to accessing quality early years care and education, but as a small independent charity we don't have the resources to 'means test' all parents and assess their ability to pay individually. That means we need to use assessments made by government agencies of which families most need our support.

For that reason, children that receive 'eligible two's' funding or are in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) will not pay additional charges for funded hours. These are families where the City Council has identified that additional support will be beneficial. We'll let you know if this applies to you, but you can also ask us about it.

If you don't wish to pay the additional charges

As we've emphasised, our additional charges (detailed above) are necessary for us to deliver our full curriculum sustainably.

We are taking an 'all in, or all out' approach - which means that you cannot pick and choose which parts of our additional charges you wish to pay (e.g. only food, or only activities & trips). If you opt out, you'll need to collect your child for any meal/snack times, and we will be unable to offer any private sessions, including morning or evening wraparound sessions, in addition to your funded hours.

Please contact the office to discuss your options if you are unable to pay our additional charges.

How to claim government funded hours

To find out if your family meets the criteria for any funding, please check and apply through here: <https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/check-youre-eligible> or use this 'Best Start in Life' eligibility checker: <https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/eligibility-checker/>

If you're claiming funding for the first time, you **must** secure your funding code the term before your funding is due to start. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure you have your funding code in good time to allow us to claim on your behalf. If you do not get your funding code in time, you will be required to pay our standard private fees.

### **Splitting funding with another nursery provider**

You can split your funding with another nursery provider for instances where your child may be attending two settings. Please ask our office team more about this if it applies to you.

### **If you no longer qualify for funding**

If your family no longer qualifies for funding, for example, if you go over the income threshold or you're working less, there will be a change to your funded hours. If this happens during the first half of a term, your child will continue to receive funding until the end of that term. If this happens during the second half of a school term, your child will continue to have funding until

the end of the following term. If this happens, we'll talk to you about your options for changing or maintaining your booked sessions with us.

**Once you've been successful in applying for funding, we will need the following in order to verify your funding with Bristol City Council:**

- 1) Your eligibility code (11 digits, usually begins with 500/501)
- 2) Your National Insurance number(s)
- 3) Your child's date of birth
- 4) Your child's birth certificate or passport (originals)
- 5) You'll also need to complete and sign an EYR01 Form every term, which we do via the Funding Loop platform. Please contact the office for information.

Please be aware that when signing the EYR01 form you are agreeing to use your funding with us for the entire term. This is slightly different for Eligible two year olds (those applying through Bristol City Council), who only need to give one month's notice to move to another provider.

More information on Eligibility Codes (for working families)

- Eligibility codes need to be reconfirmed every 3 months. The eligibility code will remain the same after reconfirmation. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to keep their child's eligibility code valid at all times, as this is not something ECCC can do for you.
- Grace Periods - If you do not reconfirm the eligibility code and the code becomes invalid, the 'grace period' starts. The grace period is a short period of time where a child can still access their Working Parent Entitlement / free hours. Once the grace period has expired:
  - Under 2s from working families will have to pay for all childcare provision privately.
  - 2 year olds from working families will have to pay for all childcare provision privately but may be eligible to apply for an Eligible 2 year old place if they meet the criteria (see above).
  - 3 and 4 year olds from working families will only be able to access their universal free hours and must pay for any additional childcare provision.
- If this happens, we will discuss what to do about the sessions you have lost. Codes which are already in their grace period must be reconfirmed before claims can be made for Working Parent Entitlement.

Tax Free Childcare and other support

To support the payment of chargeable items and private hours, working parents can use their **Tax Free Childcare Allowance**. Tax Free Childcare **effectively gives you a 20% discount on your nursery costs**, as the government tops up every £8 you pay in with an additional £2, up to the value of £2,000 per child per year (or £4,000 for disabled children). ECCC can accept payment for any fees via your Tax Free Childcare account.

Click [here](#) for more details on how to claim Tax Free Childcare.

For families claiming **Universal Credit**, there is up to 85% government support for all childcare costs, and you can claim in advance.

## Changes to fees and charges

Fees and charges are reviewed annually by the Centre's Trustee Board and an increase is carefully considered each year to offset cost inflation and any increases to the Real Living Wage. Our aim is to ensure we can continue to provide the quality of service you expect from us, and we expect from ourselves, whilst also ensuring the Centre's financial sustainability.

**ECCC is a charity, and every penny of income we receive goes into our work to support the children and families of Easton.** Our work, including any changes to fees and charges, is guided by our Trustee board. The majority of our Trustees are parents who have, or used to have, children at the Centre.

Increases to fees and charges are normally scheduled to take effect each April and the details of any changes are published a month in advance.

## Fees and Funding Queries and support

We do understand that circumstances can change and families may find it difficult to pay their fees each month. We are happy to work with families to find a solution that works for everyone – through payment plans, session reductions or helping families facing difficulties obtain external support. We encourage families who are finding it difficult to pay their fees to speak to the office as early as possible to see what support can be offered.

As a non-profit organisation, it is vital for us that expected fees are paid on time every month. As such, accounts that fall into arrears without an agreed recovery plan in place are subject to cancellation and reallocation of private sessions.

Queries about any aspect of fees, charges, and funding at ECCC should be made to the office – 01179 392550 – [enquiries@eastonccc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@eastonccc.org.uk)