

If you are working or training and have children there may be times when you need to pay for childcare. There are several different places where you can get help to pay for your childcare, depending on your circumstances.

The first thing is to find a suitable place for your child. DISC has free and independent information on childcare including:

- childminders
- pre-schools
- nurseries
- out of school clubs
- holiday schemes.

Contact DISC on **0845 155 1013** or visit www.devon.gov.uk/disc

The childcare setting has to be registered with Ofsted to be eligible for help with childcare costs.

All parents

Parents of all three and four year old children can claim the **Early Years Entitlement**.

Child born between:	Entitled from start of:
1 April and 31 August	autumn term after their third birthday until they go to school
1 September and 31 December	spring term after their third birthday until they go to school
1 January and 31 March	summer term after their third birthday until they go to school

The cost of these hours is paid directly to the childcare provider. Ask your childcare provider how they are offering this 15 hour entitlement.

For more information on Early Years Entitlement call **0800 056 3666** or visit www.devon.gov.uk/disc-earlyyearsentitlement

Working parents

Extra help with childcare costs is available through the **childcare element of the Working Tax Credit**. It offers up to 70% of the childcare costs, up to a maximum of £175 per week for one child and £300 for two or more children.

To be eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit:

- lone parents must work 16 hours or more each week
- couples must both work 16 hours or more **or**
- one partner must work 16 hours or more each week if the other is incapacitated, in hospital, or in prison or entitled to carers allowance.

For information on the Working Tax Credit see our **Tax Credit factsheet**, call **0845 300 3900** or visit www.directgov.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits

Help from employers

Some employers offer help with costs including childcare subsidies, vouchers in addition to wages or they provide childcare in the workplace. Childcare vouchers for up to £55 each week or £243 each month are exempt from tax and national insurance.

For more information see our **Employer Childcare Vouchers factsheet**, call **0845 300 3900** or visit The Daycare Trust's Paying for Childcare website at www.payingforchildcare.org.uk

Returning to work

If you participate in a **Work Preparation Support** scheme offered by **Jobcentre Plus**, they may offer up to £175 a week for one child and up to £300 a week for two or more children to cover registered childcare costs while you attend interviews or approved training.

Jobcentre Plus help may also include:

- **Childcare Assist** childcare costs for any five day period in the week before you start work
- **Childcare Subsidy** childcare payments for up to one year, for those who are returning to work for less than 16 hours per week
- **Replacement Care Fund** covers childcare costs for disabled children that exceed other Jobcentre Plus support described above.

If you are returning to work after unemployment for a year or more you may be eligible for additional financial support to help with the transition to work, such as the **Job Grant**. Contact Jobcentre Plus for more information www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Jobseekers

Help with training and learning

Care to Learn supports teenage parents beginning or continuing their studies. Funding can pay up to £160 per child per week to cover registered childcare and associated travel costs. For more information call **0800 121 8989** or visit www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn

Discretionary Learner Support Fund

If you are aged 19 or over and attend a further education college, the Discretionary Learner Support Fund may be able to help with a variety of costs, including childcare. The funding amount available will vary, colleges manage their own procedures and criteria for administration of the fund.

Apply at your college by speaking to the student support or welfare officer.

Anyone over age 18 can apply for a **Professional and Career Development Loan**. This money can be used to pay for childcare but must be repaid. For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl

Higher Education

The Childcare Grant is available for students with children up to age 15 (17 if they have special needs) to help with childcare costs. The income assessed grant pays 85% of childcare costs up to £175 per week for one child and up to £300 for two or more children. More information at www.payingforchildcare.org.uk

Parents' Learning Allowance

Full-time students may be eligible to apply for the Parents' Learning Allowance in addition to the Childcare Grant. The grant supports course-related costs such as childcare, travel, books and equipment and worth up to £1,508 a year. The amount received will depend on your circumstances. More information call Student Finance on **0845 300 5090**.

Access to Learning Fund

This funding is available through your university or college and may provide extra financial support to enable you to stay on a course, if the Childcare Grant does not cover all the costs of your childcare. Apply through the student services or welfare officer at your university or college.

Hardship fund or bursaries

Some universities offer hardship funds or bursaries if you are facing extreme financial difficulties. These are usually one-off payments you do not have to repay. Speak to a student services or welfare officer at your university or college for more information.