



Grafton Childcare

Please Read Me! - Keeping In Touch - Parents' Newsletter - Please Read Me!

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Additional Services

Please read pages 2 - 3 for full details about Grafton Childcare's 'Additional Services' charges which came into effect on the 1st April 2017.

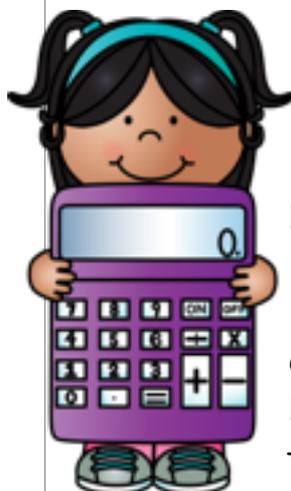


Early Years Funding

We are delighted to inform parents that the Devon Early Years Funding Team has announced that the rate of Early Years Funding for all funded 3 and 4 years olds across Devon, will increase from its current £3.98 per hour to £4.02 per hour from the 1st April 2018. However sadly the 2 Year Old Funding will be frozen at its current £4.90 per hour for another year.

30-hour Early Education and Childcare Entitlement

In September 2017, 3 and 4-year-olds of most working parents became eligible for 1140 hours of government-funded early education and childcare per year - the equivalent of just over 23 hours per week stretched over the 49 weeks, Grafton Childcare operates. Please read pages 4 - 5 about how we provide the 30 hours at Grafton Childcare.



Sadly the bad news is that these rates will probably be frozen for all Early Years Settings in Devon until April 2020. Which means that with the 4.4% annual increases

in Living Wage rates, the 1% increase in Employers Work Place Pension Contributions and rises in food and general running costs for the Early Years sector we shall be increasing our hourly fees from their current £4.55 per hour to £4.75 per hour from the 1st April 2018. For all children who attend Grafton Childcare. This is just 20p per hour, we have worked really hard to keep this increase as low as possible, please read pages 2 - 3 for full details.

Consumables

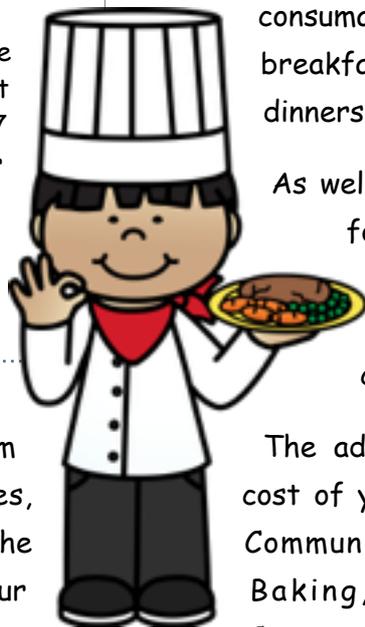
The following consumables are included in our 'Additional Services' charges:-

All craft supplies, embellishments; (but not including paint or paper) messy play resources; our washable nappies; wipes; disposable gloves; disposable nappy liners, tissues and toilet paper; hand cleaner; antibacterial gel; Suncream; Fairy Liquid; Flash; caps for our water cooler bottles; Daz; Milton Fluid, Carpet Cleaner, Nappy Bags, 1st Aid Supplies etc.

Did you know that we use over 936 rolls of toilet paper a year, around 147 boxes of tissues and over 108 boxes of gloves.

Meals, Snacks and Baking

All the drinks, breakfasts, am and pm snacks, cooked lunches, cooked dinners and all the food stuffs used in our regular cooking and baking sessions, including the bags and tubs to take cooked items home in are covered by our 'Additional Services' changes.



Additional Services

The Department of Education has issued settings the following guidance on 'Additional Services'.

"You should use government funding to provide high-quality, flexible early education and childcare. You **shouldn't** use this funding to cover the cost of consumable items, such as drinks, meals or nappies, or additional services, such as baby yoga, music lessons and school trips.

You can charge parents for additional items or services, but you mustn't make this compulsory for any parents taking up a publicly funded place for their child."

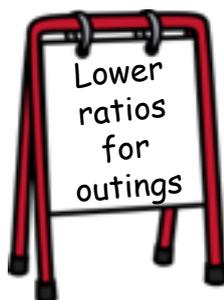
From the 1st April 2018 the additional 73p per hour which we charge will cover the costs of all consumables; washable nappies; wipes; drinks; breakfasts; snacks; cooked lunches, cooked dinners, baking sessions & weekly yoga classes.

As well as the time our Cook spends shopping for meals, preparing, cooking and cleaning down the kitchen afterwards. These tasks are NOT carried out by your child's Key Worker.

The additional 73p per hour also covers the cost of your child's Nursery Bag, Daily Diaries, Communication Booklets, Learning Journal, Baking, Craft Supplies, Personal Care Consumables & all Trips and Outings.

The Early Years Funding has been calculated on the assumption that all settings are working to their maximum ratios permitted and to the minimum numbers of qualified staff permitted. Which is only one member of staff qualified as a Level 3 Practitioner or above,

with the remaining staff being qualified at a Level 2 or unqualified. Here at Grafton Childcare **all** of our Key Workers 5 in a full and relevant Childcare of which we are very proud. These the Early Years Funding.



are qualified to at least a Level 3, 4 or and Early Years qualification something additional costs are not covered by

Grafton Childcare also employs take our children on trips and a higher adult to child ratio of minimum of 1:4 for 2 year olds and 1:8 for three and four year olds. These additional costs are not covered by the Early Years Funding.

additional bank staff so that when we visits in our locality we can do so with staff than the statutory required

The costs of paying our staff annual leave, workplace pension contributions; statutory sick pay; and the ongoing training costs for their certificates in Paediatric First Aid, Food Hygiene, Safeguarding and other relevant continuous training development courses in Early Years. None of these items are funded by the Early Years Funding yet they are a statutory requirements!

Parents who sign up to agree to pay our 'Additional Services and Consumables Charges', **are** guaranteed advanced booked days/sessions to meet parents working commitments (within our nursery registration and ratios) the days you wish your child to attend and to have the option of changing these days as and when required (spaces allowing) throughout their time at nursery.

These services, benefits and guarantees are all included within our normal hourly fees for all children under 3 years of age. Our 'Additional Services and Consumables Charges' are reviewed each March alongside our annual fee review and are subject to change. Parents will receive a minimum of 28 days notice of any increase via our newsletters, blog, or website.

30-hour Early Education and Childcare

Since September 2017, most 3 and 4-year-olds of working parents became eligible for 1140 hours of government-funded early education and childcare per year - the equivalent of just over 23 hours per week stretched over the 49 weeks, Grafton Childcare operates.

Who is eligible

The 30-hour entitlement is available to most 3 and 4-year-olds of working parents who meet the earnings criteria. To qualify, each parent (or the sole parent in a single parent family) will need to earn, on average,

at least the equivalent of 16 hours on the national minimum wage or national living wage per week which will be £125.28 per week from April 2018 for people aged 25 and over, and no more than £100,000.

Self-employed parents and parents on zero-hours contracts will be eligible if they meet the average earnings criteria. Families where one parent is not in paid employment or neither parent works will not be eligible. There are exceptions for parents who are on parental, maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave.

Parents who are studying or in training will not be eligible unless combined with paid work which meets the minimum average earnings threshold.

However, parents will be eligible where one parent is in receipt of benefits relating to caring responsibilities or has a disability and the other parent is working. Single parents who are disabled or have substantial caring responsibilities will not be eligible.

If parents are separated, eligibility requirements will apply to the parent with whom the child 'normally lives', and any partners of parents will also have to meet the eligibility requirements.

Parents must apply for both the 30-hour entitlement or the Tax-Free Childcare scheme through a joint online system administered by HMRC, as the eligibility requirements for both schemes are the same. Parents are required to reconfirm their eligibility every three months by making a declaration that they expect their earnings to fall within the required threshold. Parents who make inaccurate or

dishonest declarations could be fined between £300 and £3000.

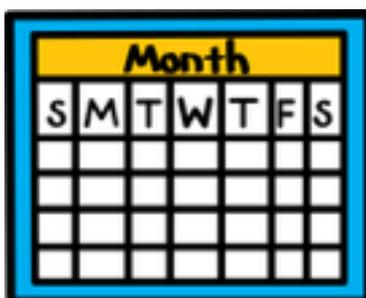
National Grace Period

When parents receive confirmation of their eligibility from HMRC, they will receive a code to give to Grafton Childcare along with the parents National Insurance numbers. Grafton Childcare will then be required to confirm the validity of this code through the 'Providers Portal' of the Devon Early Years Funding Team.

If a parent suddenly becomes ineligible - they will not lose their childcare place immediately as there will be a national grace period to enable parents to retain their childcare place for a short period of around 3 to 4 months if they become ineligible for the 30-hour entitlement.

This will work the same way in every part of the country, and local authorities and providers will be able to use an online eligibility checker to determine how long the child can continue to receive a 30-hour place.

Any child who loses their eligibility for 30 hours will still be entitled to the universal 15-hour entitlement. The Government is also proposing that local authorities have the discretion to extend the grace period in exceptional circumstances, for example if the child's parent is the victim of domestic violence and has left their job and home to escape the situation.



When will Grafton be providing the extended entitlement?

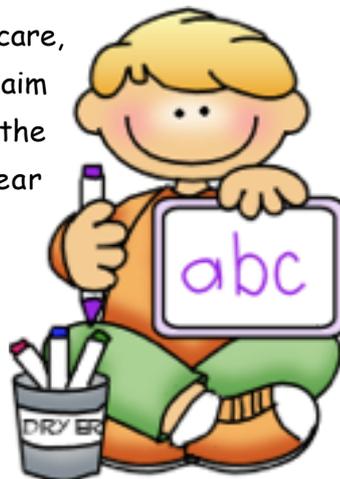
Grafton Childcare has planning permission to open between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday so this is when we offer the Early Years Funding.

The maximum funded session length is 10 hours for Early Years Funding per day. Although parents are able to pay for additional hours should they wish to do so, as they do at present.

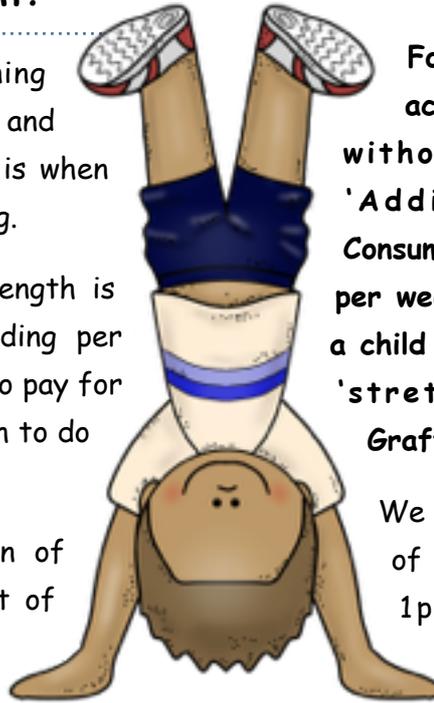
There is no mandatory pattern of delivery set by the Department of Education and it will be up to settings themselves to decide when they offer parents funded hours. Settings can also decide how many funded hours they offer per week.

Grafton Childcare has decided that we can **only** provide the Early Years and Extended Entitlement 'stretched' across the 49 weeks per year that we operate and we will no longer be able to offer places term-time only to parents who only wish to take up a funded place.

Should a child wish to use their Early Years and Extended Entitlement here at Grafton Childcare, they will be able to claim 23 hours a week for the full 49 weeks a year which we are open.



Attendance patterns similar to those below will be on offer:-



For those parents wishing to access a 100% free space without our 73p per hour 'Additional Services and Consumables' charge of £16.79 per week, (this figure equates to a child using their whole 23 hours 'stretched' entitlement at Grafton Childcare).

We shall be offering a maximum of **two** spaces a day between 1pm - 6pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (days available are subject to change and can only be booked a maximum of one term in advance).

For those parents wishing to access more flexible childcare provision suitable to most working parents we shall offer the following attendance patterns:-

A minimum of three 8 hour days bookable between 7 am and 7 pm per day. e.g. 7 am - 3pm on three days Mondays to Fridays. = 24 hours a week with an 'Additional Services and Consumables Charge' and one hours non funded Childcare charge of just £21.54 per week for 49 weeks per year. That's Flexible, Guaranteed, 'Stretched' Daily Childcare for **£7.18** a day. These 8 hour sessions are bookable between 7 am - 3 pm; 7.30 am - 3.30 pm; 8 am - 4 pm; 8.30 am - 4.30 pm; 9 am - 5 pm and 10 am - 6 pm, additional hours of non funded childcare may be booked at the rate of £4.75 per hour or part there of.

For those parents wishing to access shorter 'sessional' flexible childcare provision suitable to some working parents we can offer the following attendance patterns:-

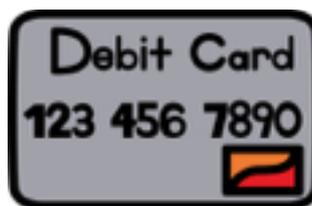
A minimum of five, five hour sessions bookable between 7 am and 7 pm per day. e.g. 7 am - 12 Midday on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. = 25 hours a week with an **'Additional Services and Consumables Charge'** and two hours non funded Childcare charge of just £26.29 per week for 49 weeks per year.

That's Flexible, Guaranteed, 'Stretched' Sessional Childcare for only **£5.25** a session..

These 5 hour sessions are bookable between 7 am - 12 noon; 8 am - 1 pm; or 12 noon - 5 pm and 1 pm - 6 pm, additional hours of non funded childcare may be booked at the rate of £4.75 per hour or part there of to **extend** a morning session to a maximum of six hours e.g. 7 am - 1 pm or to **extend** an afternoon session to a maximum of six hours e.g. 12 noon - 6 pm, 12.30 pm - 6.30 pm, or 1 pm - 7 pm.

New Contracts

We know that this probably all sounds very complicated believe me it has taken us many hours to work out exactly what will be sustainable for Grafton Childcare to provide in the long term in order that we can continue to offer Flexible Family Based Childcare as we have now been doing for over 26 years.



If you would like to discuss your child's contracted hours in more detail, or let us know if you

would like to increase your hours once your child becomes eligible for the 3 Year Old Extended Early Years Funding to reflect the additional support you may well be receiving once you become eligible for our 'Stretched' funding offer please let us know a.s.a.p so that we are able to incorporate your request into our numbers as they are filling up very fast, for April and September 2018!

Tax-Free Childcare: 10 things parents should know

Tax-Free Childcare will be available to around 2 million households to help with the cost of childcare, enabling more parents to go out to work, if they want to, to provide greater security for their families.

1. You can open an online account

You can open an online account, which you can pay into to cover the cost of childcare with Grafton Childcare. This will be done through the government website, GOV.UK.

Tax-Free Childcare was launched in April 2017. The scheme has been rolled out gradually to families, with parents of the youngest children able to apply first.

You can apply for all your children at the same time, when your youngest child becomes eligible. All eligible parents can join the scheme.

2. For every 80p you or someone else pays in, the government will top up an extra 20p

This is equivalent of the tax most people pay - 20% - which gives the scheme its name, 'tax-free'. The government will top up the account with 20% of childcare costs up to a total of £10,000 - the equivalent of up to £2,000 support per child per year (or £4,000 for disabled children).

3. To qualify, parents will have to be in work, and each earning at least £125.28 a week and not more than £100,000 each per year.

The scheme is designed to be flexible for parents if, for example, they want to get back to work after the birth of a child or work part-time.

4. Any eligible working family can use the Tax-Free Childcare scheme - it doesn't rely on employers offering it

Tax-Free Childcare doesn't rely on employers offering the scheme, unlike the current scheme Employer-Supported Childcare/Childcare Vouchers. Any working family can use Tax-Free Childcare, provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

5. The scheme is also available for parents who are self-employed

Self-employed parents are able to get support with childcare costs in Tax-Free Childcare, unlike the current scheme (Employer-Supported Childcare) which is

not available to self-employed parents. To support newly self-employed parents, the government is introducing a 'start-up' period. During this, self-employed parents won't have to earn the minimum income level.

The scheme is also available to parents on paid sick leave and paid and unpaid statutory maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

6. If you currently receive Employer-Supported Childcare/Childcare Vouchers then you can continue to do so

You do not have to switch to Tax-Free Childcare if you do not wish to. Employer-Supported Childcare/Childcare Vouchers will continue to run. The current scheme will remain open to new entrants until April 2018. Parents already registered by this date will be able to continue using it for as long as their employer offers it.

However, Tax-Free Childcare will be open to more than twice as many parents as Employer-Supported Childcare/Childcare Vouchers.

7. Parents and others can pay money into their childcare account as and when they like

This gives you the flexibility to pay in more in some months, and less at other times. This means you can build up a balance in your account to use at times when you need more childcare than usual, for example, over the summer holidays.



It's also not just the parents who can pay into the account - if grandparents, other family members or employers want to pay in, then they can.

8. The process will be as simple as possible for parents

The process will be as easy as possible for you. For example, you'll re-confirm your circumstances every 3 months using a simple online process; and there will be a simple log-in service where parents can view accounts for all of their children at once.

9. You'll be able to withdraw money from the account if you want to

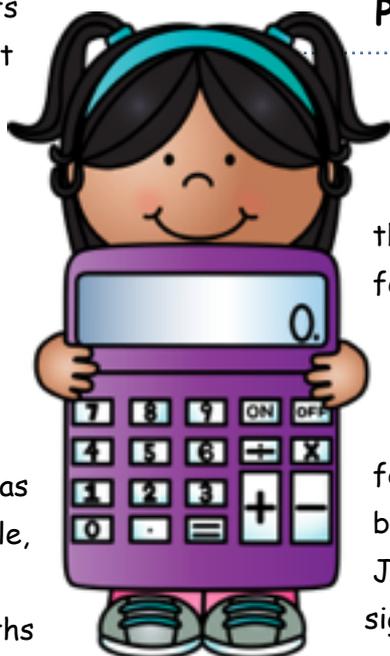
If your circumstances change or you no longer want to pay into the account, then you'll be able to withdraw the money you have built up. If you do, the government will withdraw its corresponding contribution.

More information is available online so parents making childcare decisions are able to consider all their options.

10. If you would like to be kept up to date about these Childcare Schemes follow these links.

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>



Paying Grafton Childcare

Sadly in December we had to take the decision to suspend the places of a handful of children for the non payment of their childcare fees. This was despite giving the parents ample opportunities to settle their debts some of which were over six months overdue. We found ourselves left with no choice but to proceed with County Court Judgements for the none payment of significant outstanding childcare fees.

This is the first time in over 20 years we have been forced to take this measure and the decision was not taken lightly. Sadly it has meant that the parents in question have had to find alternative childcare for their children, which is a terrible shame as they were all very well settled and extremely happy at Grafton Childcare.

The margin for profit in this industry is tiny and it is vital that all parents work with us by paying their fees on time, so that we can continue to pay our staff and ongoing business costs when they are due.



Paying Grafton Childcare

Can we draw parents attention to this clause on each of your childcare contracts.....

"Childcare will be suspended if fees are not paid **in full on or before the last day of each month** via BACS or in Cash as invoiced. If the last day falls on a weekend payment must be made in full by the previous Friday. Please remember to allow at least 4 clear weekdays for funds to arrive into our account. Late payments fees of £5 per day will be charged until the invoice has been settled in full only when all arrears have been paid will a suspension be lifted. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that funds reach our account on or before the date stated on each monthly invoice when part funded by Tax Free Childcare, Childcare Vouchers & Universal Tax Credits or Student Finance etc"

"Childcare will be suspended if fees are not paid in full on or before the last day of each month via BACS or in Cash as invoiced. If the previous months invoiced fees still remain unpaid. Late payment fees of £5 per day will be charged until the invoice has been settled in full via BACS or cash, when childcare can resume."



2018 Payment Schedule

Can we please remind parents that your childcare fees are due in full on the last day of the month and if this falls over a weekend then it will be on the Friday before. In 2018 fees will be due **ON or BEFORE** the following

dates. Sadly Childcare will be suspended until all fees including any late fees have been paid:-

- January - Wednesday 31st
- February - Wednesday 28th
- March - Thursday 29th
- April - Monday 30th
- May - Thursday 31st
- June - Friday 29th
- July - Tuesday 31st
- August - Friday 31st
- September - Friday 28th
- October - Wednesday 31st
- November - Friday 30th
- December - Friday 21st

Charges For Absence

Full Fees are payable if a child is absent because of sickness, or occasional days off & holidays, this includes dropping off later than contracted hours, coming early to collect child or cancelling hours without 28 days written notice to terminate the contract.

No Fees are payable when Grafton Childcare is closed for which a minimum of 28 days notice will be given where possible. Sign up to our weekly blog for up to date information on our planned closures.

www.graftonchildcare.wordpress.com