

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](http://www.devon.gov.uk/disc)

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

### Parents of toddlers

Parents of two year old children may be entitled to 15 hours of free early learning and childcare.

For more information about whether you qualify and how to apply, call **0845 155 1013** or visit [www.devon.gov.uk/disc-2gether](http://www.devon.gov.uk/disc-2gether)

Parents of all three and four year old children can claim the **Early Years Entitlement**. For more information on Early Years Entitlement call **0845 155 1013** or visit [www.devon.gov.uk/disc-earlyyearsentitlement](http://www.devon.gov.uk/disc-earlyyearsentitlement)

The cost of these hours is paid directly to the childcare provider.

### 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.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits)

### Help from employers

Some employers offer help with costs, such as childcare subsidies or 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 Family and Childcare Trust's website at [www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/pages/category/help-with-childcare-costs](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/pages/category/help-with-childcare-costs)

## 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 which 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.gov.uk/job-grant](http://www.gov.uk/job-grant)

## 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.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

## 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 as 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.gov.uk/career-development-loans](http://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans)

## 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.familyandchildcaretrust.org/pages/category/help-with-childcare-costs](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/pages/category/help-with-childcare-costs)

## 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.