

## Fingertips Preschool & Forest School Funding Policy – November 2025

### 1. Introduction

Fingertips Preschool & Forest School is a registered early years provider with Hertfordshire County Council. We provide government-funded early education and childcare places for eligible children aged 2–4 years. This document outlines our Funding Policy in accordance with UK statutory guidance and Hertfordshire local authority regulations.

### 2. Eligibility

#### 2-Year-Old Funding (15 Hours)

Some 2-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of funded early education during term-time (38 weeks per year). Eligibility is based on Government criteria, including low-income households and qualifying benefits. Parents should apply through the Hertfordshire 'Terrific Twos' portal or via the national childcare system.

#### 30 Hours Funding for 2-Year-Olds (Working Parents) – From September 2025

Eligible working parents of 2-year-olds may receive up to 30 hours of funded early education per week. Places are limited and subject to availability. Eligibility must be confirmed each term via the Government Childcare Choices system.

#### 3 & 4-Year-Old Universal Funding (15 Hours)

All 3- and 4-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of funded early education during term-time.

#### 3 & 4-Year-Old Extended Funding (30 Hours – Working Parents)

Eligible working parents may receive up to 30 hours per week of funded early education. Parents must reconfirm eligibility each term. Places are limited.

### 3. Funding Hours

Funded hours are available between 9:00am and 3:00pm, up to a maximum of 6 hours per day. Parents may choose to take only funded hours or combine funded and paid hours. Funded hours are free; additional charges apply only for wrap-around hours, meals, snacks or extras.

### 4. Fees & Deposits

A refundable deposit of £200 is required to secure a place. The deposit does not affect access to funded hours and is returned according to our terms and conditions. Charges for additional hours or services are detailed in our Fee Schedule and are optional.

### 5. Application & Allocation

Parents must complete the application form indicating the desired funded hours. Allocation of 30-hour funded places (for 2-year-olds and 3–4-year-olds) is on a first-come, first-served basis and subject to staffing capacity. Confirmation of eligibility and completion of all required forms is necessary before funded hours commence.

#### 5a. Hertfordshire County – Priority Protocol (Short Version)

Where demand exceeds capacity, the following priority protocol is applied:

1. Children with the highest level of need (SEND, Early Help involvement, social worker involvement, safeguarding concerns).
2. Children eligible for disadvantage-related funding (Terrific Twos, EYPP, families experiencing financial hardship).
3. Working families eligible for 30 hours (after needs-based priorities; eligibility must be validated each term).
4. All other eligible children (first-come, first-served within available capacity).

Needs-based placements take precedence over parental preference. Supporting evidence may be requested.

#### 6. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or when statutory guidance or local authority regulations change. Updates will be communicated to all parents and posted on the preschool website.