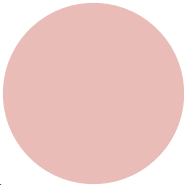




Central Bedfordshire Family and Youth Information Service



Financial support for parents
and carers



Parents and Carers



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Who we are...

The Family and Youth Information Service is part of Central Bedfordshire Council's commitment to supporting all children and young people aged from 0 to 19 and their families. The service is available 24/7 via telephone, face to face, online via the Family Information Directory www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis and www.direct.gov.uk and at information points including Sure Start Children's Centres.

We provide a one stop shop for information on childcare, financial support for parents and carers, working parent rights, activities for children and young people, careers information for young people and support groups offering help with issues such as bullying, drug misuse, parenting and bereavement. We also offer a Childcare Brokerage service, please contact us if you need our help.



Contact: Family and Youth Information Service



Telephone: 0300 300 8119
Fax: 0300 300 8208

Opening times:

Mon-Thurs 8:30am – 5:15pm
Fri 8:30am – 4:45pm - answer
phone outside these hours



Email:
fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Website:
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/
fyis](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis)

Or find us on Facebook and
Twitter

Disclaimer

While every care has been taken in the compilation of this information, Central Bedfordshire Council will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of any inaccuracy or error within our information.

The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It does not constitute legal or other professional advice and does not seek to describe your rights in full. Before any action is taken, individual advice should be sought.

Financial support

Being a parent can be expensive, and many families are not claiming the benefits and tax credits they are entitled to. This leaflet gives information about some of the different benefits that may be available to help with the cost of childcare.

Health in pregnancy grant

If you are a mum-to-be who is at least 25 weeks pregnant and provided you are receiving health advice you may be able to claim this one-off, tax-free payment to help you prepare for the birth of your baby. Ask your midwife or health visitor for details and a claim form or visit <http://campaigns2.direct.gov.uk/money4mum2be/en/> for more information.

Child benefit

This benefit is tax free and available to all parents who have a child:

- under 16 years
- aged between 16 and 19 (up to 20 in some cases) and is in education or training that qualifies for Child Benefit
- 16 or 17 years old and has recently left education or training - however, they must have registered for work or training with Integrated Youth Support (IYS)/Connexions or the Ministry of Defence.

To find out more information or to ask for a claim pack call: **Child Benefit Helpline: 0845 302 1444 or Textphone 0845 302 1474.** Lines are open from 8.00am until 8.00pm, seven days a week, except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Milk and fresh fruit vouchers

Parents on Income Support can claim free vouchers every week to swap for milk, fresh fruit, vegetables, infant formula milk and vitamins. If you are pregnant and under the age of 18, you will automatically qualify.

For more information call the **Healthy Start helpline** on **0845 607 6823** or visit www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Free school meals

Parents who are currently receiving Income Support and Income Based Job Seekers Allowance are entitled to free school meals for their children.

Contact the Free School Meals Administrator on 0300 300 4950 or apply online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

School clothing grants and vouchers

You can receive help towards school uniform expenses if you are on Income Support or on Income Based Job Seekers Allowance. **Contact Helen Barron on 0300 300 4953** or visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk for more information.

Free childcare for two year olds

Central Bedfordshire Council is involved in a pilot scheme from September 2009 which is offering free early learning childcare for targeted two year olds.

This funding is aimed at the most disadvantaged two year olds in the area. Eligibility criteria will include low income, disability and certain family/child characteristics.

The free early learning childcare for two year olds differs from the three and four year old funding, as it is not an entitlement, but only available for targeted children.

For further information please contact:
Louise Watson or Laura Hutchinson



Tel: 0300 300 6071



Email: louise.watson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
or laura.hutchinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

or

Family and Youth Information Service



Tel: 0300 300 8119



Email:
fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Free early education places for three and four year olds

Three and four year olds in England are entitled to a minimum of 15 hours of free learning per week for 38 weeks of the year, delivered flexibly over a minimum of three days.

There are a number of different types of early education settings that can offer the free entitlement:

- private day nurseries, nursery classes attached to independent schools, maintained nursery schools and nursery classes attached to lower schools
- pre-schools and playgroups

- lower school reception classes, where schools operate an early admission policy to admit four year olds
- accredited childminders who are part of networks approved to deliver early education
- Sure Start Children's Centre with onsite childcare.

Please contact Central Bedfordshire's FYIS for more information



Tel: 0300 300 8119 or



Email:
fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Child Tax Credit

Child Tax Credit is a payment to support families with children regardless of whether you work or not. It provides support for:

- A child until 1st September following his or her 16th birthday
- A young person aged 16-19 who is in full-time education

If your child receives Disability Living Allowance or is registered blind or has been so in the last 29 weeks you may receive a higher amount of Child Tax Credits.

Call HM Revenue and Customs on **0845 300 3900** for more information or visit **www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits**

Child Trust Fund

The Child Trust Fund is a new long term savings and investment account for children. If your child was born on or after 1 September 2002 then they are entitled to a voucher for £250 from the Government to start their account. This account belongs to your child and only they will be able to access it, but not until they are aged 18. If your child is eligible, a voucher and information pack will automatically be sent to the person receiving Child Benefit.

If you receive Disability Living Allowance for your child, your child will receive an annual payment of £100, with severely disabled children receiving £200 - these payments will be paid directly into the Child Trust Fund account starting from April 2010.

Call **0845 302 1470** for more information or visit **www.childtrustfund.gov.uk**

The Real Nappy Campaign

If you live in Central Bedfordshire, Central Bedfordshire Council will give you £25 back when you spend over £50 purchasing washable nappies, covers or training pants from any

company, or subscribe to a nappy laundry service. Limited to the first 100 successful applications, please ring **0300 300 8000** to check availability or for more information.

Direct Payments

If you have a child with a disability or an additional need then Central Bedfordshire Council may be able to assist you. They provide direct payments (i.e. cash payments instead of a service) to enable you to 'buy' your own support or childcare.

For more information contact the **Direct Payment Support Team, Disability Resource Centre** on **01582 470 900** or **Central Bedfordshire Council 0300 300 8000**.

New deal for lone parents

New deal for lone parents is a voluntary programme for lone parents who are interested in working. If your youngest child is under 16 years and you are not working or are working less than 16 hours a week, you can join the New deal for lone parents at any time.

Your New Deal personal adviser can:

- work out how much better off you could be in work by providing advice about financial support that is available when you work
- give you advice on help with childcare costs and travel costs to help you look for work
- help you with applying for jobs
- give you advice on training options and any financial help you might be eligible for

- give you information on other local opportunities such as volunteering
- help you apply for in-works benefits, and
- support you when you first start work.

Contact or visit your local Jobcentre Plus office for more information.



Working Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit supports either employed or self-employed people on low incomes. You can only get this if you work at least 16 hours a week. You can receive a working tax premium if you are a lone parent or you can receive a higher rate of Working Tax Credit if you or, your partner has a disability.

Working Tax Credit is paid in addition to any Child Tax Credit you may be entitled to and you may qualify for extra help towards the costs of registered or approved childcare.

This is known as the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit. The amount of tax credits you receive will depend on your annual income.

To check your eligibility visit **www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredit** or if you need further advice about the credits or to request a claim form contact the **Tax Credits Helpline** on **0845 300 3900** or **Textphone 0845 300 3909**. Lines are open from 8am - 8pm seven days a week. Alternatively you can contact your local Jobcentre.

Employers support towards childcare

Employers can help towards childcare costs in a number of ways:

- Childcare Vouchers - you will not pay tax or national insurance on the first £55 per week.
- Childcare subsidies - the employer provides financial assistance towards childcare costs in addition to your salary.
- Workplace provision - the employer is responsible for financing and managing a childcare provision on or off work premises.

Speak to your employer for more information or visit **www.hmrc.gov.uk/childcare**



Care to Learn

Care to Learn gives financial support to young parents (under 20 years old) who want to continue their education or training and need help with the cost of their childcare.

Call the **Learner Support helpline** on **0800 121 8989**; or visit **www.direct.gov.uk/Caretolearn** for more information.

Childcare Grant and parent's learning allowance

The Childcare Grant is available to students in higher education with dependent children. How much you receive depends on your household income and the actual cost of your childcare. Any help you receive is paid on top of the standard student finance package and does not have to be paid back.

The Parent's Learning Allowance supports student parents in higher

education with course related costs such as books, travel and childcare. The amount you receive will be dependent on your circumstances. You can apply whether or not you get the Childcare Grant.

For more information call Student Finance England on **0845 300 50 90** or visit **www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance**

Access to Learning Fund

This fund is available through higher education only; your college or university may provide help if you need extra financial support to stay on your course. Your college will decide whether you are eligible. Contact your college's student services department.



NHS Student Childcare and Dependants Allowance

If you are a parent and studying on a NHS funded professional training course, you might be able to claim up to 85% of your childcare fees. The amount you receive will depend on your circumstances.

Call **NHS Student Childcare Allowance** on **0845 358 6655**; email **bursary@nhspa.gov.uk** or visit **www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk**

Sure Start Maternity Grant

A Sure Start Maternity Grant is a one-off payment to help with the cost of having a new baby. To receive this you must be on Income Support or on Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.

If you qualify you will receive £500. Contact your local Jobcentre Plus for more information or to download form SF100 visit **www.dwp.gov.uk**

Housing and Council Tax Benefits

Housing and Council Tax Benefits are intended to help people on low incomes meet their housing costs. These benefits are administered by Central Bedfordshire Council. Jobcentre Plus, The Pensions Service or the Disability and Carers Service will also accept claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, and send the relevant forms to your local council.

Contact Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 8000.



Other leaflets you may want to look at:

- Services for Parents and Carers of Children with Additional Need or Disabilities
- Help with Choosing the Right Childcare
- Work and Families: Your Rights

Contact

The Family and Youth Information Service



Telephone: 0300 300 8119

Opening times:

Mon-Thurs 8:30am – 5:15pm
Fri 8:30am – 4:45pm - answer phone outside these hours



Email:

fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Website:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis

Or find us on Facebook and Twitter



Central Bedfordshire in contact



on the telephone...

0300 300 8000



by email...

customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



on the web...

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Alternatively you can write to:

Central Bedfordshire Council Priory House, Monks Walk,
Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

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