

20+ Childcare - Childcare Support for Learners aged 20+ **Student Information 2025-2026**

Overview

If your child is 2 years old and has an education, health and care plan (EHC) **or** claims Disability Living Allowance (DLA) **or** you are in receipt of Universal Credit with a household income below £15,400 after tax and excluding benefit payments, Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or Tax Credits with an income below £16,190 per annum you will qualify for 15 hours free childcare per week. All 3 and 4-year-old children are eligible for a minimum of 15 hours per week government funded childcare. To check what help you could get with childcare costs visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

If you do not qualify for any of the schemes mentioned above or require additional support over and above your government entitlement to cover study time, the College operates a childcare scheme for eligible students aged 20+. The College funds **Ofsted registered** childcare provision for **pre-school aged** children. Information on local registered childcare providers can be obtained from the Families Information Service:

Families Information Service
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UG

Tel No: 03000 26 99 95
Email: fis@durham.gov.uk

Funding is for pre-school aged children, during term time for timetabled hours plus any reasonable travelling time. For additional study time, you should make your own alternative arrangements.

Travel time of approximately 30 minutes is allowed before the start of classes to enable you to leave your children with your childcare provider. Children should be collected from the provider within 30 minutes of the completion of classes where possible.

Eligibility

To qualify for the scheme, you must be in receipt of an 'income-based' or 'out of work' benefit or have a gross household income below £30,000 per annum.

Qualifying Benefits:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit (Earning below £7,400)
- Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- Income-related Employment & Support Allowance

How the College Scheme Operates

The scheme operates using vouchers which you must complete on a weekly basis (see sample voucher and completion guidance notes). The vouchers must be signed by your lecturer for all am and pm sessions and at the end of the week by your childcare provider. Attendance is monitored and you should aim to meet the College target of 90% or above.

Payment is made direct to providers upon receipt of a fully authorised voucher. Students in receipt of childcare support will be expected to follow the college absence procedure and contact the Main Reception on 01207 585900 to report any absences, Reception staff will then inform your tutor.

If you fail to submit vouchers on a weekly basis or your attendance is below 90%, childcare funding may be withdrawn. The College will contact you regarding outstanding vouchers and/or attendance prior to taking any action. Where a decision is made to withdraw funding, you and your provider will be informed in writing. You have the right to appeal against a decision to withdraw funding and should do so in writing at financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk. An unsuccessful appeal will result in the withdrawal of funding.

If you no longer require childcare funding, you must inform the College and your childcare provider immediately. If you do not give the required notice on your childcare place, you may be liable for the outstanding fees.

Applications are limited to pre-school aged children; you will need to make your own alternative arrangements for age children of school age.

Prior to starting College you should choose a childcare provider and confirm with them if a place is available. Where a retainer fee is required to keep the place in non-term time, e.g. Christmas, Easter etc, this must be indicated on the Application Form. **The College does not pay Summer retainers**, places are cancelled at the end of the academic year and returning learners must re-apply for support the following academic year. Where a non-term time/holiday retainer is required, learners must complete a voucher showing the normal hours for which childcare is provided, indicate 'holiday retainer' in the 'verification of attendance' section and ensure the voucher is signed by the provider. **The College will only pay holiday retainer fees which equate to no more than 50% of the fees normally incurred in term time and do not pay for bank holidays.**

Upon receipt of a completed Childcare Application and Agreement, the College will:

- Confirm your eligibility and verify your chosen provider is Ofsted registered.
- Contact your chosen provider, verify the fees, confirm that the College will fund (or part fund) the place and arrange the booking.
- The College will then contact you to confirm the booking.

If you are not in receipt of an income-based benefit but your household income is below £30,000 per annum, you may still qualify for childcare support. You should complete section 3b of the application form and provide evidence of your household income e.g., 2024-2025 P60, month 12 or week 52 payslip for each earner in the household.

Students aged 16-19

If you are aged 16 to 19 you may be eligible for free childcare through a national scheme called **Care-to-Learn**. Information, advice and application forms are available upon request from the Finance Department in College or on the College website at www.derwentside.ac.uk Additional information can be found at www.gov.uk/care-to-learn

Please complete the **Application Form and Childcare Agreement** and forward them **along with evidence of your income or benefit, a copy of your child's birth certificate and a copy of your childcare providers Ofsted Registration Form, if applicable** to:

Main Reception Desk in College

Email: financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk

Post: Finance Department, Derwentside College, Front Street, Consett, DH8 5EE

Queries; via email as above or caroline.swainson@derwentside.ac.uk tel. 01207 585900 ext. 971