



Social Security Scotland  
Teairinnteachd Shòisealta Alba

Best Start Grant

# Early Learning Payment



Dignity,  
fairness,  
respect.

mygov.scot

The Early Learning Payment is part of Best Start Grant, a package of three payments. These payments give extra money to parents or carers who get certain benefits or tax credits. You can apply during the early years of a child's life. The two other payments are:

- **Pregnancy and Baby Payment** £600 for a first child and £300 for any further children to help with the costs of having a baby.

- **School Age Payment** £250 to help with the costs of preparing for school. We will be use the same eligibility criteria for each of these payments.

These payments will be available to all families who are eligible when they apply.

**This flyer can be provided in alternative languages or formats by calling 0800 182 2222.**

## Who is Social Security Scotland?

Over the next four years we will take on delivery of a number of benefits including some that will replace benefits currently delivered by UK Government and a number of entirely new benefits created by the Scottish Government.

These benefits will be for people on low incomes, disabled people, carers, young people entering the workplace and to help people heat their homes.

The Scottish Government has established Social Security Scotland to administer these benefits.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and local authorities will also continue to deliver some benefits in Scotland.

Social Security Scotland will put dignity, fairness and respect at the heart of everything we do.



### What is the Early Learning Payment?

It is a £250 payment for eligible families who have a child between the ages of two and three years and six months. This is to help with the costs of early learning.

### Who can get it?

You can apply for the Early Learning Payment if you live in Scotland, whether you are in work or not.

You may be eligible if you are the parent or carer of the child, and you get certain benefits or tax credits.\*

\*Universal Credit (UC), Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit.

If you are under 18, you are automatically eligible and don't have to be on a qualifying benefit.

If you are 18 or 19, in full time education or training and dependent on someone else like a parent or carer who is claiming child benefit, child tax credit, pension credit or universal credit for you.

If you are not sure if you are entitled to any of these benefits, call Citizens Advice Scotland on 0800 085 7145 for a free Financial Health Check.

### How many children qualify in each family?

There is no limit on the number of children who can get a payment.

### What age must my child be to qualify for the Early Learning Payment?

You can qualify from your child's second birthday. You can apply up to when your child turns three years and six months. If you apply after this time, your application will be too late.

### My child is within the qualifying age range but will not attend nursery. Can I still apply?

You don't need to have a nursery place or be planning to send your child to nursery.

### How can I apply?

We will be taking applications via our freephone helpline on 0800 182 2222, by post or online at [mygov.scot/bsgearlylearning](http://mygov.scot/bsgearlylearning)

### How long after applying will I have to wait to get my payment?

You should receive your money within 14 to 21 days. If we need any more information or supportive evidence, it could take longer.

### What evidence will be required?

Most people will be able to apply without sending any evidence. This is because we check with the DWP and HMRC that you are on a qualifying benefit. One of the ways we can check responsibility for a child is by checking if you are on Child Benefit.\*\*

In some cases we will need to ask you to send us more information to process your application.\*\*\*

\*\*Child Benefit is only checked for evidence of responsibility – you will not get a payment if you don't get one of the other qualifying benefits.

\*\*\*For example a legal order from a court or children's hearing, evidence of address i.e. utility or Council Tax bill.

### Do I need my partner's information?

Yes if you live in the same household and are:

- married to each other
- civil partners of each other
- living together as if you are married.

### How will I be paid?

You will be paid in cash in to your chosen account. You do not need to pay the money back.

### What can I use the money for?

It is up to you how you decide to use this money. You can use it for anything from children's clothes and shoes to toys, books or days out. You do not need to keep receipts.

### Does it affect other benefits?

No, the Early Learning Payment is not counted for any other benefit or tax credit assessments.