



Early Learning Payment

What is the Best Start Grant?

It is a package of three payments that will give extra money to parents and carers during the early years of a child's life.

What is the Early Learning Payment?

It is a £250 payment for eligible families on certain benefits or tax credits 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 around the time your child might start nursery.

Can I get it?

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

You may be eligible if you are the parent or full-time 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.

To check if you are entitled to any of these benefits, call 0800 085 7145 for a free and confidential chat with the Money Talk Team.

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

You would also be eligible 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.

How many children qualify for Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment in each family?

Every child in a qualifying family will get a payment.



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

You can apply from your child's second birthday and the cut off for applying for this payment is when your child turns three years and six months. If you apply after this time your application won't be eligible.

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

Yes, you can still apply if your child is between the ages of two and three years and six months even if they are not going to nursery.

How do you apply?

We take applications via our freephone helpline on 0800 182 2222, by post or online at mygov.scot/best-start-grant.

What evidence will be required?

Most people should be able to apply for the Early Learning Payment without sending us evidence. Evidence of income is not required when you apply because we check with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that you are on a qualifying benefit.

We will also check that you are responsible for the child by checking with DWP that you are on an appropriate benefit i.e. child benefit, child tax credit, pension credit or Universal Credit.

In some circumstances, we will have to ask you to send us additional information to process your application.

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

It can take between 14 to 21 days to receive a payment. If we need any more information or supportive evidence to check eligibility it could take longer.

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 use the money for?

It is up to you how you decide to use this money. It could be used for anything from kids clothes and shoes to toys, books or days out.

Does it affect other benefits?

No, the Early Learning Payment will not affect any other benefits or tax credits.