

Services for Young Children

Parents/ Carers Update November 2025

Included this month: Holiday Activities and Food Programme, Best Start in Life, Early Years Skills Bootcamps, Starting School in 2026

Connect4communities – Holiday Activities and Food Programme



Christmas holiday schemes with free activities and meals for thousands of children from families on low incomes across Hampshire are being supported from the [Connect4communities](#) programme.

Parents and carers can find out what is on offer locally through the Family Information and Services Hub directory: <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/advice.page?id=XRITDNF8hhM>

Best Start in Life... for every child

Giving every child the best start in life is the Government's strategy for improving child development and meeting the ambition that 75% of 5-year-olds in England have a good level of development by 2028.

The Government have launched a new **Best Start in Life parent hub**. The new platform covers topics from pregnancy, through their child's journey to starting school and beyond. Anyone searching for the **Childcare Choices** website will be automatically redirected to the site <https://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk/>

See also the Department for Education's film, "The Story of You: Best Start in Life"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wow0col2_Ns e *Childcare Choices* website as the main source of information for early education and childcare support



Skills Bootcamps are marching their way to you!

Join a Skills Bootcamp for Hampshire residents. Among the 'camps' there is an Early Years and Childcare one, for people looking to start or change their career. Participants will be able to access a funded course to provide training and skills to prepare them for a role in either an early years or childcare setting, or to become a childminder. The next bootcamp is happening in **Southampton** from **24**

November 2025. For more information or to book onto the Skills Bootcamps, please contact Itchen College on 02380 435636 or email courses@itchen.ac.uk. <https://www.itchen.ac.uk/adult-learning/our-courses/adult-learning-courses/skills-bootcamps-in-early-years/>

Basingstoke College of Technology are also delivering their evening Early Years Skills Bootcamp in **Basingstoke** starting from **26 November 2025**. For further details visit [Early Years Skills Bootcamp](#)

Starting School in 2026

From **1 November 2025**, applications will open for parents to apply for their child (born between 01 September 2021 – 31 August 2022) to start school in September 2026. The closing date for applications is **15 January 2026**.



Parents will be able to apply online from 1 November via the Hampshire County Council website: www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions. Paper forms will also be available from any Hampshire primary or infant school on request from the same date. On the website there is guidance on how to choose a school, what to do if they are moving house, starting school options including decelerated admission for summer born children, and other useful information: Further details: www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions/applicationprocess/yearR.

For further information or need help with your application you can contact the Admissions Team by e-mailing admissions.team@hants.gov.uk or calling 0300 555 1377 (between 8.30am and 2pm).