

Should the University of Leeds offer further support for students with childcare needs?

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Context

Current provision of childcare to students and staff members at the University of Leeds

Bright Beginnings

Nursery fees:

- £86.40 full-time day
- £60 admin fee
- £65 registration fee


These fees are too high and there is currently not enough financial aid available to support students with parental responsibilities



Postgraduate students are excluded from Early Years Education funding as they are not considered “workers”

Many PGRs are self-funded, and the lack of affordable childcare options acts as both a financial and emotional burden

According to reports, this funding barrier also disproportionately affects women and those from lower-income communities - in some cases dissuading them from pursuing further education altogether



How can we fix this?

1. Reduce Bright Beginnings Nursery costs for all students who are parents, focusing on PGRs and master's students, at the University of Leeds, to at least half the market average from the 2026-2027 academic year.
2. Create a playgroup on campus (for children older than 5 years old) for students and staff who are parents at a reasonable cost, and with a reduced fee of at least half of the market average for PGRs and master's students, from the 2026-2027 academic year.
3. Include extra funding for PGR parents in their monthly stipend on a regular basis, rather than offering emergency funds

e.g. SOAS University - grant of up to £1000 for Ofsted-registered children

4. Stop applying the 'core hours' of study to all students who are parents, recognising that this is neither realistic nor fair to them, as they often cannot comply with a 9 am to 4.30 pm schedule due to childcare responsibilities and high childcare costs.

e.g. Student-Centred Timetabling at the University of Chester

5. Allow all students who are parents to meet with their supervisors online, not as an exception, but on a regular basis, without punishment.
6. Online provision for all courses (except modules) and extraordinary sessions, in response to student demand from parents who have difficulty attending face-to-face classes.

7. Creation of Parent-Child Study Rooms

e.g. Saarland University (Germany)

8. As a short-term measure, while the previous adjustments are pursued, the University of Leeds will provide free on-campus childcare for all non-extracurricular activities (except modules and supervision meetings)

This would include Conferences on campus, for students who are parents and cannot afford professional/private childcare, or who do not have a support network.

In summary: why should you vote YES?

- Make postgraduate study more accessible
- Improve student wellbeing and reduce stress
- Help the University of Leeds become a more family-friendly and supportive institution
- Reduce financial pressure on student parents
- For fairer education for women and and international students