



Sources of Financial Support

There is no doubt having an autistic child brings with it many additional household costs, for which there is some financial assistance available.

We operate on a not for profit basis and fund raise to subsidise the costs at the centre to try and keep the fees as accessible as possible.

A place at The Ark Centre is a significant financial decision for your family and the information that follows is not advocating how you and your family should allocate the financial assistance which may be available to you, merely quantifying for those that are eligible, the sums that might be available to them. It is then up to each individual if they choose to put these towards a place at The Ark Centre.

- Disability Living Allowance

There are two components, the care component and the mobility component and they are not means tested.

Depending on the degree your child's difficulties impact on them you may be eligible for disability living allowance. Your child does not need a diagnosis to qualify.

The current (2018) care component rates are

	Per Week	Per Year
High	£85.60	£4,451.20
Medium	£57.30	£2979.60
Low	£22.65	£1,177.80

Many children have difficulties beyond their autism and social and communication difficulties with significant hypermobility and sensory issues along with some behaviours which have major implications for mobility and may be eligible for the mobility component once they reach the age of three.

The current (2018) mobility component rates are

	Per Week	Per Year
High	£59.75	£3,107.00
Low	£22.65	£1,177.80

The charity Families in Focus are extremely well practised at helping parents and carers complete these forms, so do not be deterred by their length!

<http://www.familiesinfocussessex.org.uk/our-services/>

- Carers Allowance

If you earn less than £120 per week post tax you may be eligible for carers allowance at a rate of £64.60 per week (2016), so £3,359.20 per annum. More information can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview>

- Childcare Vouchers

The childcare voucher scheme is changing. Currently The Ark Centre is registered with the following childcare voucher providers. If your employer uses an alternative supplier, please pass their details to the centre manager and The Ark centre will register with them.

Please use your child's name as a reference for all transactions

- Care 4

The Ark Centre account number is 67312409

- Kiddivouchers

Just need our postcode of CM2 5LB to register

- Sodexo

Our carer is 841026, also provide our postcode

- Computer Share Voucher Services

Our account number is: 0022733125, you can also identify us using our name and postcode

- Edenred

Our account number is P20980948

From the 5th October 2018 these schemes will close to new participants. The government will then provide a new scheme, Tax Free Childcare, the following address provides more information

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/tax-free-childcare>

For those already in an existing scheme, for some it may be advantageous to remain on the old childcare vouchers.

- Education and Healthcare Plans (EHC Plans)

Many of the children attending The Ark Centre will go onto to have an EHC plan which sets out their special educational, health and social care needs which the Local Authority will provide for and fund. One option for children with an EHC plan is to have a Personal Budget with direct payments where the parents / carers receive the funds and then source the provision themselves.

Typically children are formally assessed when approaching school age, but the legislation is clear the duty the local authority owes to children is from 0 – 25, so parents and carers can request an assessment at any age. There is not a right to receive a Personal Budget, however the local authority must consider that request and if so requested must prepare a budget, even if they do not opt to give provide one.

Disputes between parents / carers on the nature of support needed can be the subject of mediated negotiation or ultimately an appeal at tribunal, the refusal to provide a Personal Budget cannot be referred to a SENDIST tribunal, however the local authority do have to explain their reasons for the refusal in writing. The legislation in this area is very new and only now being tested so local authorities are finding their way and there is little case law to clarify the situation as yet.

Families in Focus offer excellent free support through this process if this is a course of action you want to explore.