

United Kingdom

Distinctive Features: No explicit family policy; stress on social assistance and means-tested benefits; generous universal child benefit; increasing concern about reducing child poverty and number of lone parents; exemplary home health visiting.

Maternity / Parental Leave

Benefit	Maternity: Cash benefit and job-protected leave; Parental: job-protected leave
Eligibility Criteria	Maternity: all working women; Parental: any parent. Covers adoption, too.
Duration of Leave	Maternity: 39 weeks paid, 13 weeks unpaid; Parental: 13 weeks
Compensation Rate	Maternity: 6 weeks at 90%; 33 weeks at low flat-rate. Parental: unpaid

Early Childhood Education and Care

Age Group Served	Social Welfare Child Care (SWCC): Ages 0-4; Preschool: Ages 2½ - 4.
Eligibility Criteria	SWCC: Specialized, poverty ¹ ; Preschool: Universal
Fees	SWCC: Free or income-related fees; Preschool: Free
Locus of Care	SWCC: Centers; Preschool
Funding Strategies	SWCC: Govt., income-related fees; Preschool: Govt., Free
Access/Coverage (%)	SWCC: N.A.; Preschool: 96% (age 3); 98% (age 4)

Family and Child Allowances

Benefit & Eligibility	Universal Child Benefit for children up to age 16 (19 if in school or training): all residents with one or more children.
Benefit Level	Extra benefit for first child

Child Support

Benefit	Minimum amount not guaranteed by government.
Maintenance Rate	Depends on income of non-custodial parent; capped at 25% of non-resident parent income.

Child and Family Tax Benefits

Tax Deductions/Relief	Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit as of April 2003.
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Other Child-Conditioned Income Transfers

Benefits	Survivor's Benefits for disabled children, Dependent's Benefits for children of old age pensioners and disabled workers, Social Assistance (Income Support).
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Child and Adolescent Health

Access to Coverage	Universal coverage through National Health Service.
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Housing Benefits

Benefit	Non-taxable housing benefits for rent assistance.
Eligibility Criteria	Means-tested, geared towards low-income individuals and families.

¹ Similar to U.S. Head Start and Smart Start

The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Family and Youth Policies at
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

School-Age Children Policies

Compulsory School 5 – 16

School Hours 9:00 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 15:30

Youth Policies

Distinctive Features Youth receive priority for housing benefits, are entitled to free health care, and can qualify for welfare payments at age 18.