

Parent/Carer FAQs – Extended Childcare entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds (30 hours)

What is the extended childcare entitlement?

Currently all 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours a week, the equivalent of 570 hours a year, of free childcare. From September 2017 this doubles to 30 hours a week, 1140 hours a year, for 3 and 4 year olds whose parents are working. The aim is to help families by reducing the costs of childcare, to support parents to increase the number of hours they work and/or encourage them into employment.

Will I qualify for 30 hours free childcare?

Parents of three and four year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:

- They earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months.
- This equates to £120 a week (or c.£6,000 a year) for each parent over 25 years old or £112.80 a week (or c.£5,800 a year) for each parent between 21 and 24 years old.
- This applies whether you are in paid employment, self-employed or on zero hours contract.
- The parent (and their partner where applicable) should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
- Where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or if they are on statutory sick leave.
- Where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or

have been assessed as having limited capability to work.

- Where a parent is in a 'start-up period' (i.e. they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months.
- If a non-EEA national, the parent must have recourse to public funds

A parent will not meet the criteria when:

- Either parent has an income of more than £100,000
- Either parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public funds)

Parents cannot claim their 30 hours if their child is in a full-time reception place or has reached compulsory school age.

Parents/Carers will be able to check their eligibility online and will be required to re-check their eligibility every 3 months.

Should Parents/Carers be found to be ineligible upon re-checking, the funding for the additional hours will continue for a grace period of at least half a term.

Date of ineligible decision	Grace Period end date
1st Jan - 10th Feb	31st March
11th Feb - 31st Mar	31st August
1st Apr - 26th May	31st August
27th May - 31st Aug	31st December
1st Sep - 21st Oct	31st December
22nd Oct - 31st Dec	31st March

Can I use any childcare setting that I like?

If you are entitled to the free entitlement you will be allowed to use any childcare setting – the only requirements are that the provider is Ofsted registered and approved to offer Free Early Education (FEE) places, and that they have space to take your child.

Can I split the 1140 hours over more than one setting?

Yes, parents are allowed to split the free childcare across providers. Providers can only refuse this if they have a legitimate business case for why they cannot allow split hours.

Can I use my free childcare across the whole year?

Yes, the extended childcare offer has been introduced to support parents to have better access to more flexible childcare whilst at work and to enable you to increase the number of hours worked. This means you can use your childcare to cover school holidays if needed. If you use your childcare in term time only (38 weeks per year) you will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week. If you use it over the whole year (52 weeks), you will be entitled to approximately 22.6 hours per week.

My child has special needs – will they receive sufficient care in the additional funded hours?

Every family should have access to good quality childcare that meets their needs. The Government are introducing a Disability Access Fund (DAF), this is a one off annual payment to the childcare setting (if a child takes their funding at more than one setting it will be the parent/carers choice as to which setting receives the additional funding).

How do I apply for the additional hours childcare?

Parents/carers should apply during the term that their child turns 3 so that funding can begin at the start of the following term.

Applications can be made at;
<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>

Upon successful application parent/carers will receive an eligibility code to give to their chosen childcare provider.

Parents may receive eligibility codes before their child is three but they can only start claiming their 30 hours place the term following the child's third birthday or the term following the date the eligibility code was issued **(whichever is the later)**.

Example;

Date of 3rd birthday	Date eligibility code issued	Funding available from
17th Jul 2014	1st Aug 2017	1st Sep 2017
17th Jul 2014	12 th Sep 2017	1st Jan 2018

If a child is taking up their universal 15 hours entitlement and a parent becomes eligible for 30 hours part-way through the term, the parent can start claiming their additional hours from the start of the term following the date on which they received their code.

For further information;

W: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/free-nursery-places/free-childcare-places-three-four-year-olds

E: enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk

T: 0300 500 80 80