

# 30 Hours Free Childcare for 3 and 4 year olds

## Eligibility

All 3 and 4-year-olds in England can get 570 hours of free early education or childcare over 38 weeks of the year (or fewer hours over more weeks). From September 2017 some 3 and 4-year-olds may also be entitled to an additional 570 hours of free childcare *over 38 weeks of the year, a total of 1,140 hours. Its possible to stretch your entitlement* by taking fewer hours over more weeks of the year.

## When can you apply?

The date you can apply depends on your child's birthday. Your child is eligible:

- from the term following their 3rd birthday until they reach compulsory school age
- if they usually live with you – you do not have to be their parent however foster carers are exempt

Child's Birthday	When You Can Claim
1 January to 31 March	The beginning of the summer term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	The beginning of the autumn term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	The beginning of the spring term on or after 1 January

## Eligibility

To be eligible, you (and your partner if you have one), must either:

- each expect to earn at least £115 a week or work more than 16 hours at the National Living Wage (unless you became self-employed less than 12 months ago), or each expect to earn at least £111 a week or work more than 16 hours at the National Minimum Wage (unless you became self-employed less than 12 months ago)
- each expect to earn at least £61.92 a week if you're under 18, £84.80 a week if you're aged 18-20 or £52.80 a week if you're an apprentice (either under 19 or in the first year of your apprenticeship)

You, and your partner, must also both:

- live in England
- expect to have income of less than £100,000 each a year

If you and your partner are unemployed, you and your partner must become employed within 14 days of applying. You may get different eligibility outcomes for each of your children if you apply for 30 hours free childcare for more than one child.

**Important** - if your child is in reception, you can't use your code to get free childcare. Once your child is of compulsory school age, they're no longer eligible.

You're **not eligible** if:

- you're in receipt of a childcare grant
- you're a full-time student/an intern
- you're not entitled to receive public funds

## **Circumstances where you may still be eligible**

You can use 30 hours free childcare if you're already getting Universal Credit or tax credits, and you can still apply for 30 hours free childcare if you or your partner:

- are taking paid time off work, such as maternity leave, paternity leave or sick leave
- are temporarily away from England for a period of up to 6 months, such as if you're in the military (on duty)

You can also still apply for 30 hours free childcare if either you or your partner are employed or self-employed and one of you gets one or more of the following benefits:

- contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit or long-term Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- National Insurance credits because of incapacity or limited capability for work
- you've been assessed as having limited capability for work for Universal Credit purposes

## **Applying for 30 hours free childcare**

You'll be able to apply for 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare in a single online childcare service application. If you're eligible, we'll open a childcare service account for you (you only need to complete one application for all your children).

## **Securing your 30 hours place**

If you're eligible for 30 hours free childcare, you'll receive a 30 hours eligibility code, your unique 11-digit reference number. This code is important as you'll need it to claim your free childcare. You should take the code to your childcare provider or use your local authority portal (you will need your National Insurance number and your child's date of birth to secure your free childcare place). Your childcare provider will check the code with the local authority and confirm your eligibility. You and your childcare provider will then be able to discuss when provision can begin.

## **Reconfirming your eligibility**

Every three months, you'll need to reconfirm that you're still eligible for 30 hours free childcare. You'll be reminded to reconfirm you're still eligible 4 weeks before the deadline. If you also receive Tax-Free Childcare, you'll be able to reconfirm your eligibility for both schemes at the same time. You don't need to take your code to your provider or local authority every time you reconfirm however, you should notify your provider if you fall out of eligibility. You can apply for 30 hours free childcare for another child at any time. The point at which you'll need to reconfirm will be aligned for all children. This means that you won't need to go online to reconfirm at different points in the month for each child. If you don't reconfirm, your childcare provider and local authority will be told that you no longer meet the requirements for a free childcare place.

If you become ineligible you may still be able to access your free childcare place for a short period, known as a 'start up period'. You can check what your start up period arrangements are with your childcare provider or local authority. If you're no longer eligible, you can still access the 15 hour universal early education entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds.

## **Get more information about free childcare**

You can get more information about free early education and childcare by going to the link on this record or contacting the Family Information Service on 0800 542 02 02.