

## 15 hours free childcare

### What is available?

- A total of 570 hours per year that can be used at one or more childcare provider(s).
- Commonly offered as 15 hours per week over 38 weeks (term time), or “stretched”, offering fewer hours per week over more weeks per year. These hours should be free of charge.

### Who qualifies?

Parent/s must receive some support:

- Income support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Tax Credits and you have a household income of £16,190 or less a year, before tax
- Working Tax Credit “Run-On”
- Universal Credit – if you and your partner have a combined income from work of £15,400 or less a year, after tax.

### Or if the child:

- Receives Disability Living Allowance
- Has an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Is looked after by the local authority
- Has left care through special guardianship, adoption or child arrangement order.

### How can you receive it?

- Apply to the local authority the child resides in.
- Visit your chosen Ofsted registered childcare provider to see if they have any places.

### When can eligible children receive it from?

- From 1 January, 1 April or 1 September following the child’s 2nd birthday.

## 15 hours free childcare (universal entitlement)

### What is available?

- A total of 570 hours per year that can be used at one or more childcare provider(s).
- Commonly offered as 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year (term time), or “stretched”, offering fewer hours per week over more weeks per year. These hours should be free of charge.

### Who qualifies?

- All 3 & 4 year olds can receive the Universal entitlement.
- Families do not need to apply for this entitlement.

### How can you receive it?

- Visit your chosen Ofsted registered childcare provider to see if they have any places.
- Your childcare provider will arrange the place and claim the funding from the local authority.
- Your childcare provider will explain any restrictions on the hours available and any additional services for which a charge may be payable. These charges should be optional.

### When can children receive it from?

- From 1 January, 1 April or 1 September following the child’s 3rd birthday.



## 30 hours free childcare (extended entitlement)

### What is available?

- A total of 570 hours per year that can be used at one or more childcare provider(s) **on top of the universal entitlement (1,140 hours in total)**.
- Commonly offered as 30 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year (term time), or “stretched”, offering fewer hours per week over more weeks per year. These hours should be free of charge.

15 Hours



15 Hours

Universal entitlement for all - no application required. 570 hours per year

Extended entitlement for working families - application required. 570 hours per year



“30 Hours free childcare”

1,140 hours per year

### Who qualifies?

- The parent (and partner, if applicable) must each expect to earn on average the **equivalent** of working 16 hours per week at their national minimum wage (current rates available at gov.uk).
- If the parent or their partner is on maternity, paternity or adoption leave or if they are unable to work because they are disabled or have caring responsibilities, they may still be eligible.
- This entitlement is not available to families if the parent or partner expects to earn £100,000 or more per year.
- Foster carers may qualify if they work outside of fostering – they should discuss this with the child’s social worker to determine suitability of the offer and contact their local authority.

### How can you receive it?

- The parent must apply online to HMRC – visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) to apply.
- Foster carers must apply to the local authority who is responsible for the child.
- If the application is successful, you will be issued with a code which you must take to your chosen childcare provider as soon as possible.
- Your childcare provider will explain any restrictions on the hours available and any additional services for which a charge may be payable. These charges should be optional.

### When can children receive it from?

- Your child can receive the extended entitlement the term after they turn 3 and have received a valid code – **whichever is later. Term start dates are 1 September, 1 January and 1 April. You must apply and receive your code before the application deadline:**

| Child turns 3 between:    | Code must be issued by HMRC before midnight on: | To start the extended entitlement from: |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| 1 September - 31 December | 31 December                                     | 1 January                               |
| 1 January - 31 March      | 31 March  | 1 April                                 |
| 1 April - 31 August       | 31 August                                       | 1 September                             |

All application queries must be directed to HMRC. You can telephone the Childcare Service helpline about your application on **0300 123 4097**.

Parents must log on to their childcare service account every three months to confirm their details to continue receiving 30 hours free childcare. You should receive a reminder, but it is your responsibility to make sure you do this.

### Support with childcare costs

- There are a number of options to explore which could help you with your childcare costs.

#### Support for working families:

- Tax Free Childcare for working families, which could provide up to £2,000 per child, per year (or up to £4,000 if you have a disabled child), towards childcare costs. Available for children under 12 years (or under 17 years if the child or young person is disabled);
- Tax Credits for Childcare, providing up to 70% of your childcare costs, for working families who are entitled to Working Tax Credits;
- Universal Credit for Childcare, providing up to 85% of eligible childcare costs for working families claiming Universal Credit.

#### Support during study:

- Weekly payments if the parent is at school or sixth form college (Care to learn);
- Help through college if the parent is in further education (Discretionary Learner Support);
- A weekly grant if the parent is in full-time higher education (Childcare Grant).

To find out the best options for you and your family based on your financial circumstances, visit [www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator)

For more information and how you can apply for support with your childcare costs, visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

To find a childcare provider near you, visit [www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education](http://www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education)

Childcare  
Choices



HM Government

# Childcare Choices

## Free early education entitlements and help paying for childcare costs



HM Government