

30 HOURS FUNDED CHILDCARE

You will no doubt have heard that the Government are offering 30 hours funded childcare. We are pleased to support the scheme and are here to answer any questions you may have about the best way to fund childcare for your little one.

Will I be eligible for 30 Hours of funded childcare?

You may be eligible for 30 hours funded childcare if:

Your child is 3 or 4 and not taking up a State Funded Reception place in a school. (30 hours is available in England only.)

The child you're applying for usually lives with you – you don't have to be their parent.

You live and work in the UK, unless you're a Crown servant or member of the HM Armed Forces posted overseas.

You, and any partner, are working, and each earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week – this is £120 if you're over 25 – but less than £100,000 a year each.

If you're under 25 or an apprentice, you should expect to earn the equivalent of 16 hours, at the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage which applies to you.

You can still apply for Tax-Free childcare and 30 hours funded childcare if you're:

On paid sick leave.

On paid ordinary or additional maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or getting Maternity Allowance, for another child.

On paid shared parental leave.

On paid annual leave.

You can also apply for Tax-Free Childcare and/or 30 hours funded childcare if you're not working but expect to start a new job in the next 14 days.

You can't get Tax-Free Childcare and Tax Credits, Universal Credit or Childcare Vouchers at the same time. However, you can apply for 30 hours only, and still receive Tax Credits, Universal Credit or Childcare Vouchers. The full eligibility criteria for 30 hours can be found on GOV.uk

Is there a difference between the existing 15 hours Universal Entitlement and the additional 15 hours?

Yes. 30 hours is for working parents and you need to apply through the childcare service. However, both the 15 hours and 30 hours must follow the same regulatory framework and there should be no difference between the standard of childcare provision.

I don't have access to the internet. How do I apply?

If you need assistance or do not have access to the internet, you can call the Childcare Service Helpline

on 0300 123 4097 and apply over the phone. The application process takes around 20 minutes.

What will be best for me - Childcare vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare?

You can find out which scheme best suits you by completing the Childcare Calculator on the Childcare Choices website. www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

When can I apply for 30 hours of funded childcare?

You can apply for 30 hours up to 16 weeks before your child turns three. We recommend that you apply as soon as you are able to – don't leave it to the last minute. To ensure you get a code for the term after your child turns three, you must have applied by the end of the previous term.

How do I apply for Tax-Free Childcare / 30 hours of funded childcare?

You can apply for Tax-Free Childcare and / or 30 hours via the Childcare Choices website. You, and your partner if you have one, will need:

Your National Insurance number(s)

Details of one or more of the following – your UK Passport, tax credits, P60 or a recent payslip.

Tip for Parents

It is recommended that you apply online only using a tablet, laptop or PC, please avoid using a mobile phone to make your application as we have been advised by Childcare Choices that this may cause issues with the application.

In most cases, you'll be told straight away if your application is successful. In some cases, HMRC may need to do some additional checks to confirm whether you're eligible, so it's important to apply in good time. If you're found not to be eligible HMRC will tell you why.

When can my child access a 30 hours funded place?

You can claim 30 hours from the term after:

Your child turns three, and

The date you receive your eligibility code from HMRC. Whichever date is later.

Is 30 hours only available in term time or all year round?

Like the existing 15 hours, eligible parents are entitled to 30 hours a week in each of the 38 weeks of the academic year. However, this can be stretched over up to 51 weeks, for instance, you can take 22 hours a week for 51 weeks.

Please speak to your local Nursery Manager or Administrator to find out about which 30 hour offer will best suit your circumstances.

Can I split part of my 30 hour entitlement with Fairy Tales and another childcare provider?

Yes, you can split the funded entitlement between providers. However, you cannot use more than two sites in one day as we believe continuity of care is important for a child's learning, development and wellbeing. If you are sharing funding between two providers, the offer at one setting can have implications on the other setting and vice versa and some Local Authorities do not permit parents to mix between offers, ie term time at one setting and stretched over the whole year at the other. Please ensure that you speak to us if you are considering splitting funding between multiple providers, before you make a definite arrangement. Finally remember to get your 30 hours code checked by each of the providers that you use.

Do I have to use all the 30 hours per week?

No, you don't have to use all 30 hours, just those that meet your needs.

Can I use Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as 30 hours?

Yes, if you have applied for both options, you can get Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours funded childcare at the same time.

You can't get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as tax credits, childcare vouchers or Universal Credit. You can also get 30 hours funded childcare alongside these schemes

How often do I have to reconfirm my eligibility?

You will need to reconfirm you are still eligible for 30 hours and if applicable Tax-Free Childcare every three months, using your Childcare Service Account, even if you have not yet taken up your place. It's easy to do; if your details have not changed you just go into the 'Reconfirm Tab' and tick the box to confirm your details. You should be reminded to do this 4 weeks before the reconfirmation deadline.

Tip for Parents

To avoid any technical problems, we suggest that you set up a diary reminder to reconfirm prior to the 'code end date' to ensure that this key task is not overlooked and that funding remains in place.

It is important you let Childcare Choices know if your circumstances have changed, as this will be checked against other systems.

If you miss the reconfirmation deadline, you will receive a message telling you that your eligibility has lapsed. You should go into your childcare account and reconfirm.

If you reconfirm and you're no longer eligible, or do not reconfirm, you may be able to continue your 30 hours childcare place for a short period known as the 'grace period'.

What happens if I reconfirm and am ineligible?

If you are no longer eligible for 30 hours, you will enter a 'grace period' where you may be able to retain your 30 hours funded childcare for a short period of time. You should check your grace period arrangements with your Nursery Manager or Administrator. If you are no longer eligible for Tax-Free Childcare, you can still use the money in your TaxFree Childcare Account (including the top-up you accrued while you were eligible), where you have chosen this option, to pay your childcare provider. You can also continue to use your account to pay your provider in future, but you won't get the government top-up.