

How do I apply?

Before applying, you might want to have a look at the government's childcare calculator which allows you to get an estimate of how much assistance you could get to help pay for childcare.

You will need to apply for the 30 hours scheme via the online childcare service application – see the useful websites section of this leaflet. Parents will only have to apply once for all their children.



If you are eligible, you will receive a unique 11-digit reference number that you can use to claim your free childcare.

Take your code, along with your national insurance number and child's date of birth, to your childcare provider or LA to secure your free childcare place.

Ensure you apply in good time as you can only claim your place the term following the date you receive a decision from HMRC, and this can only be done once you have given your provider your code.



What happens if I lose eligibility?

You are required to reconfirm your eligibility for the scheme every **three months** – you will be reminded to do this four weeks before the deadline via text message and/or email, and again two weeks before the deadline if you still have not reconfirmed.

If you do not reconfirm, your provider and LA will be told that you are no longer eligible for a free childcare place. If at any point you become ineligible, you should tell your provider.

Parents who become ineligible will receive a 'grace period' where they can still keep their 30 hours free childcare for a short period of time – check these arrangements with your provider or LA.

If you fall into a grace period **before** your child has started their 30 hours place, you should not take up this place.

Once the grace period has elapsed, you will still be able to access the universal 15-hour entitlement.

Useful websites:

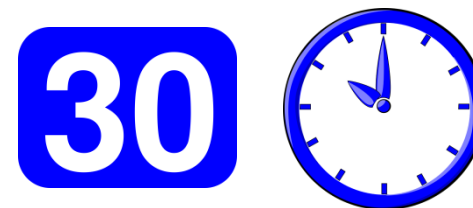
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/free-30hrs-childcare>

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>



Are you eligible for 30 hours free childcare?



What is 30 hours free childcare?

30 hours free childcare is a government scheme that aims to help working parents with the cost of childcare.

The scheme extends the universal entitlement of 15 hours of free childcare per week to 30 hours, which amounts to 1,140 hours over 38 weeks, to eligible families.

You can stretch your entitlement by claiming fewer hours of free care or early education over more weeks of the year.

Am I eligible for the scheme?



The basics

The scheme is only available for working parents with children aged 3 to 4 years old – this includes if you are in paid employment, self-employed or work on a zero-hour contract.

You will only be able to access the free care if you intend to use it so that you are able to work.

In order to qualify for the scheme, you (and your partner if you have one) will need to earn or be expected to earn:

- ✓ **For parents over 25** – at least £120 a week
- ✓ **For parents between 21 and 24** – at least £112.80 a week
- ✓ **For apprentices in their first year** – at least £56 a week

If you or your partner are newly self-employed, you do not need to meet the income criteria for 12 months.

Two other essential criteria are that you and your partner both live in England and expect to have an income of less than £100,000 each per year.

Other circumstances

You will also be eligible to claim 30 hours of free childcare or early education if you or your partner:

- ✓ Are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.
- ✓ Are on statutory sick leave.
- ✓ Are temporarily away from the UK (for up to six months).
- ✓ Are unable to work due to disability.
- ✓ Have a caring responsibility.



When can I apply?

You will be able to apply for the scheme from the term following your child's 3rd birthday.



If your child's birthday is between **1 January to 31 March**, you can claim the 30 hours at the beginning of the **Summer term** on or after **1 April**.



If your child's birthday is between **1 April to 31 August**, you can claim the 30 hours at the beginning of the **Autumn term** on or after **1 September**.



If your child's birthday is between **1 September to 31 December**, you can claim the 30 hours at the beginning of the **Spring term** on or after **1 January**.