

Childcare

Choices

Calling all parents – new childcare offers launched by the government

You can now find a straightforward explanation of all government childcare support on the new Childcare Choices website: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Childcare Choices brings all the government childcare offers together for the first time, providing a simple way of seeing which schemes are available, with easy next steps to where you can find out more.

Using the website's Childcare Calculator, you can quickly find out which of the offers are available to you and choose what works best for your family: www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator



HM Government

What is available through the childcare service?

Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is an online payment account, topped up by the Government, which parents use solely to pay their childcare costs. For every £8 that families pay in, the Government will make a top-up payment of £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year (or £4,000 for disabled children).

Tax-Free Childcare will be available for children under 12 years old (under 17 years old for disabled children) and can be used to contribute towards nursery, childminder and after-school care. To be eligible, parents must be in work (including self-employment) and each earning at least £120 per week and not more than £100,000 per year. The offer will be introduced to parents with the youngest children first and gradually rolled out so that all parents will be able to apply by the end of 2017.

Childcare providers must have signed up to be able to receive payments from Tax-Free Childcare. Parents can check which providers in their area are ready, using the childcare provider checker: www.childcare-provider-checker.tax.service.gov.uk

30 hours free childcare

30 hours childcare for three and four year olds will be available in England from September 2017. This doubles the existing 15 hours currently available and could save working families up to £5,000 a year.

Parents will be able to check their eligibility now using the online childcare calculator www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator and, if eligible, submit an online application ahead of September. Once signed up, parents will receive an eligibility code to take to their childcare provider. Childcare providers will then check the code with their local authority. If eligible, parents can book their 30 hours place.





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.

Who will not qualify?

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)

What happens if a parent loses eligibility?

- They will receive a "grace period" – this means they will be able to keep their childcare for a short period.
- Once the "grace period" has lapsed, the parent may be entitled to the universal 15 hour entitlement.