

## **Information for parents**

### **Applying for your 30 hours eligibility code**

You can check whether you could be eligible for a range of government childcare offers, including 30 hours, via Childcare Choices at: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Those who could be eligible for 30 hours and/or Tax-Free Childcare will be directed to the digital childcare service to apply.

### **Will I qualify for 30 hours childcare funding?**

Parents of three and four year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours childcare funding:

- Parents 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.
- You (and your partner where applicable) should be seeking the free childcare to enable you to work.
- Where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or 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)

### **Applying for 30 hours childcare funding**

As part of the application process, you will be asked to enter personal details including your name, address and National Insurance number and the same details for your partner (if you have one). You will also be asked whether you expect to meet the income requirements over the coming three months and whether you are in receipt of any relevant benefits. This information will help HMRC decide whether you (and your child) are eligible for 30 hours. At the start of the application process, you will create a Government Gateway account if you don't already have one. You will be able to apply for both 30 hours and Tax-Free Childcare at the same time by entering your details once. HMRC will check your eligibility for both schemes at the same time through the digital childcare service.

You will not need to apply through the digital childcare service if you only want to claim the universal 15 hours entitlement for three and four year olds.

Parents who don't want to use Tax-Free Childcare should still apply via the digital childcare service (You can choose to apply for the extended entitlement only). If you are receiving financial support through tax credits you may only want to take up 30 hours; you can choose not to apply for Tax-Free Childcare (and keep your tax credits) as part of the application.

If you encounter any problems with the application process or accessing the childcare account, you should direct your queries to the childcare service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097.

At the end of the application process, you will have a childcare service account. In the "secure messages" section of your account, you will receive messages regarding your eligibility. If you are eligible for 30 hours, you will be given an 11 digit 'eligibility code' for your child. You will be asked to take this code (along with your National Insurance number and child's date of birth) to your provider to claim your 30 hours place.

### **What happens if I am no longer eligible?**

- You will receive a "grace period" – this means you will be able to keep your childcare for a short period while you seek further employment.
- Once the "grace period" has lapsed, you will continue to be entitled to the universal 15 hours.