

Funding for 3 and 4 year old children

All 3 and 4 year olds in England are entitled to 570 hours of funded childcare. This is usually taken as a maximum of 15 hours a week over 38 weeks of the year, in line with Leicestershire's school term dates, but can be taken as fewer hours over more weeks. Some [9 month to 2 year old children are also eligible](#).

How do I claim the 15 funded hours?

The 15 funded hours are universal for all 3 and 4 year olds, so there is no application process involved.

Firstly you will just need to check that your chosen childcare offers funded hours (most will but there are some that don't).

If they are registered to offer funded places then they should ask to take a copy of your child's birth certificate and get you to complete a Parental Statement of Undertaking (PSOU) form. This short form gives consent for them to claim your child's funded hours, and allows you to specify which days/times you wish to use them on.

Please be aware that children only become eligible for the funding in the period following their 3rd birthday e.g:

- Child turns 3 between 1 April – 31 August = eligible for funding from 1 September
- Child turns 3 between 1 September – 31 December = eligible for funding from 1 January
- Child turns 3 between 1 January – 31 March = eligible for funding from the 1 April

30 hours funded childcare - check if you're eligible

The extended entitlement is intended to support working parents with the cost of childcare and enable them to return to work or to work additional hours.

Working parents who meet the criteria can get 30 hours per week (for up to 38 weeks per year, a total of 1140 hours) of funded childcare.

If you're having difficulty completing an eligibility check or have a query about the result, you should contact [0300 123 4097](tel:03001234097).

To check if you are eligible for any support with childcare costs, visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk (Link is external and opens in new window).

30 Hours funded childcare for foster parents

Tax-free childcare

If you're a working parent with children under 12 (or under 17 for disabled children), you can open an online account to pay for registered childcare. The government will top-up the money you pay into the account. For every £8 you pay in, the government will add an extra £2. You can receive up to £2,000 **per child**.

Universal Credit

If you, and any partner, are working, or you're due to start work, and you're claiming Universal Credit, you can claim back up to 85% of your eligible childcare costs for children under 16. You could get up to £646 a month for one child, or £1,108 for two or more.

Using your 30 hours

If eligible, you can:

- use up to 30 hours per week
- split your hours over more than one provider
- use a maximum of 10 hours in any one day
- only use hours between 6am and 8pm
- use the 30 hours as part of a stretched offer, banking hours to use in the holiday periods if your provider offers this

Using more than one provider

You can spread your funded hours between a maximum of 2 settings per day. The council will work out how the funding payments are split between providers based on the information submitted by the setting. Where parents are taking up a place for an eligible 2 year old, the council would suggest that only one provider is used.

Funding for 9 month to 2 year old children

Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) Funding

There are two ways that eligible parents and carers can access 2-year FEEE funding. Please see the funding streams below to determine which one will apply to you:

1. Working Parent Entitlement

From April 2024, the government will be expanding the current 'Working Parent Entitlement' childcare offer in three phases:

1. **From April 2024** - working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 FEEE hours (570 hours per year).
2. **From September 2024** - working parents of children aged 9 months old will be able to access 15 FEEE hours (570 hours per year).
3. **From September 2025** - working parents of children aged 9 months old will be able to access 30 FEEE hours (1,140 hours per year).

Parents and carers are entitled to use their 570 or 1,140 hours over 38 weeks of the year (term time) or some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over more weeks, using fewer hours claimed per week.

What is the eligibility criteria?

You, and any partner, must expect to earn (on average) at least £167 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage).

If you, or your partner, are on maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, or you're unable to work because you are disabled or have caring responsibilities, you could still be eligible.

You can't get either 15 or 30 hours childcare if you, or your partner, each individually expect to earn £100,000 adjusted net income or more.

How can parents check if they are eligible?

You can [check your eligibility and get further information on the scheme](#) (Link is external and opens in new window) online.

If you have any questions or are having difficulties in applying, please call the HMRC on [0300 123 4097](tel:03001234097).

2. Families receiving some additional forms of government support

What is the eligibility criteria?

Your 2-year-old can get free childcare if you live in England and are in receipt of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is **£15,400** a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit (or both), and your household income is **£16,190** a year or less before tax
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2-year-olds can also get free childcare if they:

- are looked after by a local authority
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- get Disability Living Allowance
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangement order

If you are a non-UK citizen who cannot claim benefits

If your immigration status says you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still get free childcare for your 2-year-old. You must live in England and your household income after tax must be no more than:

- £26,500 for families outside of London with one child
- £34,500 for families within London with one child
- £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children
- £38,600 for families within London with two or more children

You cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments.