

30 Hours Free Childcare Explained

A parents guide to the '30 hours free childcare' scheme
from Connect Childcare



What is the '30 Hours Free Childcare' scheme?

All 3 and 4 year olds in England are currently entitled to up to 15 hours a week of free childcare for 38 weeks of the year. From September 2017 this entitlement could go up to 30 hours a week for some working families.

The 30 hours each week only apply to term times, which make up 38 weeks of each year. However some nurseries may chose to spread the 1,140 hour annual entitlement across the full year.

This could take your free childcare entitlement from 570 hours a year up to 1,140 hours a year.

Am I entitled to 30 hours free childcare?

The easiest way to find out whether or not you're eligible is to use the free online calculator at www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator

In order to receive 30 hours free childcare, your child must be 3 or 4 years old, live in England and you'll need to meet the following criteria:

- Earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the next three months
- One or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or on statutory sick leave
- Where a parent is in a 'start-up period' they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months



How do I apply for 30 hours free childcare?

You can now apply for 30 hours free childcare at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
You will need to provide your email address and your child's date of birth.

If you are eligible you will then receive a code that you will need to bring into the nursery and give to your Nursery Manager, along with your National Insurance number. Your Nursery Manager will then check the code is correct, and set up your free childcare hours for you.

How does this affect my nursery?

The money that the government gives to nurseries to pay for the free childcare often doesn't cover the cost of delivering it. The funding for this scheme isn't likely to increase until 2020, even though the costs such as staff wages, rents and insurance continue to go up.

Some nurseries may need to increase the prices of things like meals and trips to make up for the money they will be losing on funded hours and ensure they can still provide a quality service.

