

General information about help that is available including 15 hours free childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year old children, 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, tax free childcare, tax credits for childcare, universal credit for childcare, childcare vouchers and support while you study information can be found at:

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

Check what help you could get with childcare costs:

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

Eligibility criteria: (1 page document attached to email)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility>.

If you don't want to use Tax-Free Childcare you should still apply via the digital childcare service as you can choose to apply for the extended entitlement only. If you are receiving financial support through tax credits and 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.

**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.**

**Applying for 30 hours:** *(This has to be done via the digital childcare service as HMRC are responsible for checking eligibility and issuing you with a code)*

You are encouraged to **apply the term *before* your child meets the age criterion** to ensure you can ***access a place at the start of the term after your child turns three.***

As part of the application process, **you will be asked to enter personal details including 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, the parent (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. 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 us at Pre-School** (your Early Years Provider) to claim your 30 hours place. THIS IS IMPORTANT AS WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO VERIFY YOUR CODE. These codes normally start with '5000'. However, there are a small number of cases where parents might have a temporary code starting with '11'.

**You will be prompted every three months to reconfirm the details you entered on your application are still accurate.** This is to check that you are still eligible. You will be prompted, via text message and/or email, four weeks before your reconfirmation deadline and again two weeks before the deadline if you still haven't reconfirmed. If your circumstances have changed, you will log into your childcare service account, amend your details and then resubmit your details. If your circumstances have not changed, you only need to reconfirm your details.

If you miss the reconfirmation deadline, you will receive a message telling you that your eligibility has lapsed. Although you are no longer eligible, you may be able to retain your childcare place for a short period; this is known as a grace period.

**If you need assistance to apply (or do not have access to the internet):** You can call the childcare service **Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097 and apply over the phone.** Parents that complete their original application over the phone will need to phone the Customer Interaction Centre to reconfirm their eligibility.

**You may receive eligibility codes before your child is three but you can only start claiming your 30 hours place the term following your child's third birthday or the term following the date the eligibility code was issued (whichever is the later).**