

30 Hours Free Childcare Entitlement

How to apply for the 30 hours

Check Eligibility

Parents can check whether they could be eligible via

- Childcare Choices at: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>
- Childcare Calculator at: <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

A parent can only claim 30 hours from the term following the child's third birthday and the term following receipt of their eligibility code from HMRC (whichever is the later). For example, if the child's third birthday is in October (Autumn term), the 30 hours can be claimed from January (Spring term). It is important that a code is applied for before the January. If the code is not applied for before January, the 30 hours will not be able to be claimed until the Summer term.

Application Process

Those who could be eligible for 30 hours will be directed from the above websites to the digital childcare service to apply. Parents who need assistance to apply (or who do not have access to the internet) can call the childcare service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097 and apply over the phone.

Parents will be asked to enter personal details including their name, address and National Insurance number and the same details for their partner (if they have one). They will also be asked whether they expect to meet the income requirements over the coming three months and whether they are in receipt of any relevant benefits. This information will help HMRC decide whether the parent (and their child) are eligible for 30 hours.

At the start of the application process, parents will create a Government Gateway account if they don't already have one. If parents encounter any problems with the application process or accessing the childcare account, they should direct their queries to the childcare service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097.

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

Reconfirm Eligibility

Parents will be prompted every three months to reconfirm the details they entered on their application are still accurate. This is to check that they are still

eligible. They will be prompted, via text message and/or email, four weeks before their reconfirmation deadline and again two weeks before the deadline if they still haven't reconfirmed. If their circumstances have changed, they will log into their childcare service account, amend their details and then resubmit their details. If their circumstances have not changed, they only need to reconfirm their details. Parents that complete their original application over the phone will need to phone the Customer Interaction Centre to reconfirm their eligibility.

Missed Deadlines

If parents miss the reconfirmation deadline, they will receive a message telling them that their eligibility has lapsed. Although they are no longer eligible, they may be able to retain their childcare place for a short period; this is known as a grace period. Please note that end dates for all grace periods are given to the provider by the Local Authority.