

# 30 Hours Free Childcare

## You may be able to get 30 hours free childcare if:

- you live in England
- your child is 3 to 4 years old

There are different schemes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The childcare:

- must be with an approved childcare provider
- stops when your child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school age, if later)

You may have to pay for extra costs like meals, nappies or trips.

If you've already registered, you can sign in to your childcare account.

You can apply online for a childcare account to get a code for 30 hours to give to your provider.

## How you can use 30 hours free childcare

You can get 30 hours of free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year (during school term time).

You may be able to get free childcare for 52 weeks if you use fewer than 30 hours per week. Check with your childcare provider to find out if this is something they offer.

## Eligibility

Your eligibility depends on:

- if you are working
- your income (and your partner's income, if you have one)
- your child's age and circumstances
- your immigration status

You can get 30 hours free childcare at the same time as claiming Universal Credit, tax credits, childcare vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare.

### If you are working

You can usually get 30 hours free childcare if you (and your partner, if you have one) are:

- in work
- on sick leave or annual leave
- on shared parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave

If you're on adoption leave for a child aged 3 to 4 years old, you must return to work within 31 days of the date you first apply for 30 hours free childcare.

If your working pattern has changed because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you may still be able to get 30 hours free childcare.

## **If you are not currently working**

You may still be eligible if your partner is working, and you get Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.

You can apply if you're starting or re-starting work within the next 31 days.

## **Your income**

You'll need to expect to earn a certain amount over the next 3 months. This is at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week on average. For example, over the next 3 months you expect to earn at least £1,813.76 - the National Living Wage for people over 25.

If you have a partner, they'll need to expect to earn at least this much too.

- If you're self-employed and do not expect to make enough profit in the next 3 months, you can use an average of how much you expect to make over the current tax year.
- This earnings limit does not apply if you're self-employed and started your business less than 12 months ago.
- If you or your partner have an expected 'adjusted net income' over £100,000 in the current tax year you will not be eligible. This includes any bonuses you expect to get.
- Your adjusted net income is your total taxable income before any personal allowances and minus things like Gift Aid.

## **Your child**

You will not be eligible if your child does not usually live with you.

If you foster your child, you cannot use the online application to get 30 hours free childcare. Speak to your social worker and your local authority if you want to apply.

## **Your immigration status**

You will not be eligible if you're from outside the EEA and your UK residence card says you cannot access public funds.

Your partner can apply instead if they're from:

- the UK or EEA
- outside the EEA and their UK residence card says they can access public funds

## **When to apply**

You can apply from when your child is 2 years and 36 weeks old.

<b>When your child turns 3</b>	<b>When they can get 30 hours from</b>	<b>Recommended time to apply</b>
1 September to 31 December	Term starting on or after 1 January	15 October to 30 November
1 January to 31 March	Term starting on or after 1 April	15 January to 28 February
1 April to 31 August	Term starting on or after 1 September	15 June to 31 July

You can apply outside of these recommended dates but you might not receive your code in time. You must have a valid code by the end of the month before a new term starts.

Check with your childcare provider to find out the exact date your 30 hours free childcare starts.

You have to reconfirm your eligibility every 3 months. If you apply more than 3 months before the term starts, you'll have to reconfirm your eligibility in your account in order to keep your code valid.

## Apply

Apply online for 30 hours free childcare.

If you are applying for 30 hours and someone else already claims Tax-Free Childcare for that child, your application will be unsuccessful.

### If you have a partner

You must include your partner in your application if you are:

- married or in a civil partnership and live together
- not married or in a civil partnership, but living together as though you are

Their employment and income will not affect your eligibility if they:

- are or will be absent from your household for more than 6 months
- are a prisoner

You and your partner cannot both have accounts for the same child.

### If you are separated

You and your ex-partner need to decide who should apply if you are jointly responsible for your child.

If you cannot decide, both of you must apply separately and HMRC will decide who gets a childcare account.

## After you've applied

Once your application has been approved, you'll get a code for 30 hours free childcare to give to your childcare provider.