

# Early Years Working Family Entitlement Funding

## Advice for Parents/Carers

Children aged **9 months to 4 years** - 15 & 30 hours childcare for eligible working families in England.

- Up to 15 hours of early education over 38 weeks of the year for children aged from 9 months up to 2 years old (from September 2025 this will increase to 30 hours)
- Up to 30 hours of early education over 38 weeks of the year for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Can be used flexibly with one or more childcare providers.
- Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week.

**Important:** Both providers and parents need to make themselves aware of the key deadline dates that apply when claiming expanded/extended entitlement hours. Anyone who misses these deadline dates may not be eligible for a funded place for their child for that particular funding period/term. Therefore, it is advisable for parents to register with Childcare Choices (HMRC) as early as possible.

### When to apply...

You can apply as early as the term before your child turns 9 months old, but the funding will not start until the term after your child has turned 9 months old.

When your child turns 9 months old	When they can access 15 & 30 hours from	Application deadline
1 January to 31 March	Term starting on or after 1 April	31 March
1 April to 31 August	Term starting on or after 1 September	31 August
1 September to 31 December	Term starting on or after 1 January	31 December

Before you apply, you'll need to make sure you have the following information to hand:

- your National Insurance number (or unique taxpayer reference if you are self-employed);
- the date you started or are due to start work;
- details of any government support or benefits you receive;
- the UK birth certificate reference number (if you have one) for your child.

If you are a foster carer, there is a separate application process. Speak to your social worker to find out more.

Once you have applied, if eligible, you will receive an 11-digit code to give to your childcare provider to access the entitlements.

You'll need to take the code to your chosen childcare provider, along with your National Insurance number and your child's date of birth. Your childcare provider will check the code and then allocate your child a place if they have one available.

If you have applied and are waiting for a code, we still recommend you speak to your provider to let them know you intend to take up a place.

## How to apply...

You can apply online at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>.

When applying online you will be required to set up a childcare account. You will need your details (and your partner's, if you have one), including your:

- National Insurance number;
- Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR), if you're self-employed.

If you pay for childcare and want to use Tax-Free Childcare to get help with costs, you can also apply using this service.

It usually takes 20 minutes to apply. You may find out if you're eligible straight away, but it can take up to 7 days.

## Eligibility...

Your eligibility depends on:

- if you are working;
- how much you earn;
- your child's circumstances;
- your nationality.

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

For more information on the eligibility criteria please visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>, or contact Childcare Choices on 0300 1234097.

## Reconfirmation...

Parents of children already on the scheme should receive up to three reminder emails from HMRC, advising them that they must reconfirm their eligibility every three months from the date of receiving their code. If they don't do this, they will automatically be put into their 'grace period' (the duration of the following half term) before losing their funding. If a child is new to a setting or has already attended the current setting but is making a claim for extended hours for the first time, then unfortunately the grace period won't apply. The grace period only applies when settings have previously claimed for extended hours for a particular child.

The earliest you can renew your code is 4 weeks before the code validity end date (not the grace period end date).

You must have a valid eligibility code by the end of the month before a new term starts.

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