

Additional free nursery entitlement – 30 hours

30 hours criteria and eligibility checking process

The current universal entitlement for all 3 and 4 year olds will continue to be 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (570 hours per academic year).

The new entitlement is an extension of the current entitlement and provides an additional 15 hours of free early education for children where parents are eligible.

30 hours for working families eligibility criteria

- each parent or the single parent in a lone parent household will need to expect to earn the **equivalent** of 16 hours at the national living wage or their national minimum wage rate over the forthcoming quarter;

(Parents do not actually need to work 16 hours a week, but rather their earnings must reflect at least 16 hours of work at NMW or NLW, for example, for the 2019/20 tax year, the NMW is £8.21 per hour for 25 year olds and over, therefore the minimum income would be £131 a week.)

- where one or both parents are in receipt of benefits in connection with sickness or parenting, they are treated as though they are in paid work;
- where one parent (in a couple household) is in receipt or could be entitled to be in receipt of specific benefits related to caring, incapacity for work or limited capability for work that they are treated as though they are in paid work;
- where a parent is in a 'start-up period' (i.e. they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months in order to qualify for the extended entitlement;
- where either or both parents' income exceeds £100,000, they will not be eligible for the extended entitlement.

Eligibility checking process

1. Parents can check if they are eligible by going to the Childcare Choices website. If parents are eligible, an ELIGIBILITY CODE will be issued. Parents should pass on the eligibility code to the provider of their choice.
2. The provider will carry out a verification check to confirm the family's eligibility. If eligibility is confirmed, the provider can consider the application for the nursery place for the additional hours.

Parents must ensure that they reconfirm their eligibility codes every three months. HMRC will either e-mail or text a reminder 4 and 2 weeks prior to the eligibility date.