

Up to **30 Hours** Free Childcare – Provider Guide to the Extended Free Childcare Entitlement

There are lots of eligible families who are already benefitting from the **Free Entitlement** of 15 hours per week free early education for all 3 & 4 year olds and the **Early Learning for 2 Year Olds** entitlement for the most disadvantaged 2 year olds.

From September 2017 the government are increasing the number of hours of free childcare available to eligible working parents of 3 & 4 year olds. This means that parents could benefit from having up to 30 hours of childcare.

As a childcare provider this guide contains the key information you need to know about the **Extended Free Childcare Entitlement**.

KEY MESSAGES

- ⇒ Parents need to talk to a childcare provider to find out how they can access the 30 hours (not all providers will be able to offer this).
- ⇒ They can use no more than two providers in one day.
- ⇒ Childminders, pre-schools, day nurseries and out of school providers will be offering the 30 hours.
- ⇒ Parents can use a maximum of 10 hours in a day.
- ⇒ Up to 30 hours can be taken over 38 weeks or 1,140 hours in a year.
- ⇒ Some providers will allow parents to stretch their entitlement so that it supports holiday periods e.g. 24 hours a week for 47.5 weeks.
- ⇒ Parents need to check to see if they are eligible the term before the funding starts for the additional hours.
- ⇒ Parents need to ask providers about any charges for additional hours their child uses over and above the free hours or services.
- ⇒ Providers who have an Ofsted judgement of 'requires improvement', 'good' or 'outstanding' will be able to offer the 30 hours to parents.
- ⇒ If a provider receives an inadequate Ofsted judgement the funding for the free entitlement could be removed from the setting.
- ⇒ 30 hours free childcare means the same as the extended entitlement for working parents

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Families are eligible if:

- **Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average:**
 - a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW)
 - less than £100,000 per year
- **A parent who is on a zero-hours contract will get work some weeks, but not others, and may not know in advance if they will have work in any given week. If, on average they work two weeks out of every three, and when they are working they get 25 hours of work at the minimum wage, their child will qualify for 30 hours of free childcare.**
- **Families where one parent does not work (or neither parent works) will not usually be eligible for the extended entitlement except where:**
 - Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity, adoption leave, or on statutory sick pay
 - One parent is employed and one parent either has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring, or is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits
- **The person applying for the childcare (usually the parent but could be their partner) is 'resident in the UK'**
- **Parent means a person who has parental responsibility for the child or care of the child. In cases where a parent has remarried or is living with a partner, the step-parent or partner must also meet the earnings threshold.**
- **Foster carers are eligible for the extended entitlement for their own children if they meet the criteria, however they are not eligible for the extended entitlement for the children that they foster.**

Childcare Provider Guide to Checking Validity of Extended Free Childcare Entitlement Eligibility Codes

STEP 1

Parents will apply for an additional 15 hours of free childcare through **Childcare Choices** www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

Parents will give their **Eligibility Code** (5000XXXXXXX) to you as the childcare provider in order to access their additional 15 hours.



STEP 2

You will need to **validate the Eligibility Code** with the Integrated Early Years Service using the DfE Eligibility Checking System (ECS). In order to do this you need:

- ⇒ **Parents' Eligibility Code (5000XXXXXXX)**
- ⇒ **Parents' National Insurance Number**
- ⇒ **Child's Date of Birth**



STEP 4

Contact the **Integrated Early Years Service** to **validate the Eligibility Code**

(Note – we are still finalising our process for validating Eligibility Codes)



STEP 5

Inform the parent their code is valid and secure their additional hours.



STEP 6

The **Integrated Early Years Service** will let you know when a parent is no longer **eligible for the extended entitlement** and tell you when their grace period ends. A parent may also let you know when they are no longer eligible. You only need to take action when **IEYS** tells you which parents are no longer eligible.