

Will I qualify for 30 hours free childcare?

Parents of three and four year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:

- They earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months.

- This equates to £120 a week (or c.£6,000 a year) for each parent over 25 years old or £12.80 a week (or c.£5,800 a year) for each parent between 21 and 24 years old and £56 a week for apprentices in their first year.

- This applies whether you are in paid employment, self-employed or on zero hours contract. The parent (and their partner where applicable) should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.

- Where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or if they are on statutory sick leave.

- Where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to 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.
- If one or both parents is a non-EEA national, the parent applying must have recourse to public funds

A parent will not meet the criteria when:

- Either parent has an income of more than £100,000
- If one or both parents is a non-EEA national and the parent applying does not have recourse to public funds

What happens if a parent loses eligibility?

- They will receive a 'grace period' – this means they will be able to keep their childcare for a short period.
- Once the 'grace period' has lapsed, the parent should be entitled to the universal 15-hour entitlement.