Top of Form

**Help paying for childcare**

**15 and 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds**

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get free early education or childcare.

The free early education and childcare:

* must be with an [approved childcare provider](https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/what-counts-approved-childcare)
* stops when your child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school age, if later)

There are different schemes in [Scotland](http://www.earlylearningandchildcare.scot/600-hours-free-early-learning-and-childcare/), [Wales](http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/childcare/?lang=en) and [Northern Ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/childcare).

**15 hours free childcare**

All children in England get 570 free hours per year. It’s usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but you can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example.

You can get it from the term after your child’s 3rd birthday.

Contact your childcare provider or [local council](https://www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education) to find out more.

**30 hours free childcare**

You may be able to get up to 30 hours free childcare (1,140 hours per year, which you can choose how you take).

If you’re eligible for the extra hours, you sign up online to get a code to give to your childcare provider to reserve your place. You’ll get the extra hours once the next term starts.

If you’ve already registered, you can [sign in to your childcare account](https://www.gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account).

**Eligibility**

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

* in work - or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave
* each earning at least the [National Minimum Wage or Living Wage](https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates) for 16 hours a week - this is £125.28 if you’re over 25

This earnings limit does not apply if you’re self-employed and started your business less than 12 months ago.

You’re not eligible if:

* your child does not usually live with you
* the child is your foster child
* either you or your partner has a [taxable income](https://www.gov.uk/income-tax) over £100,000
* you’re from [outside the EEA](https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea) and your UK residence card says you cannot access public funds

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 cannot work**

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

**Apply for 30 hours free childcare**

You’ll 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

You’ll get a childcare account if your application is successful. You can use it to get your code for 30 hours free childcare.

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.