

30 hours free childcare: Extended entitlement for working parents

From September 2017 some working parents will be entitled to an extra 15 hours early education or childcare for their 3 and 4 year old child. If eligible you can have 30 hours instead of the usual 15 hours over 38 weeks per year. This can be stretched over more than 38 weeks. Eligibility starts the term after your child's third birthday as with the universal entitlement.

1. Am I eligible? Families will be eligible where:

- 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), and each parent earns less than £100,000 per year.
- Parents' earnings must reflect the equivalent value of at least 16 hours of work at NMW or NLW, which is £107 a week at the current NMW rate. This includes those parents on zero-hour contracts who meet the criteria.
- The minimum amount will always be judged against the lowest hourly rate that a person of the parent's age could legally be paid as minimum wage rates vary by age.
- Working will include the employed and self-employed and those on zero-hour contracts, and also those away from work due to statutory sick pay, maternity, paternity or adoption leave and where one parent is working and the other is in receipt of benefits due to caring responsibility or disability.

2. How can I sign up for this?

Visit a childcare provider/s that you would like to use and they will help you fill in an application and provide evidence. There will soon be an online application for parents to check eligibility for September 2017. To find childcare in your area or more information visit:

www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk

3. How can I use my extended hours?

- You can use your 30 hours over 38 weeks of the year or stretched over more weeks i.e. 22.8 hours over 50 weeks of the year, though some providers will have fixed session times.
- You may be able to use your hours from 6am or until 8pm and at the weekend - for instance childminders can sometimes provide earlier or later hours than a day nursery or playgroup.
- You can use up to 3 different providers for instance a school playgroup a childminder and a day nursery (see examples). But you need to let each provider know you are using other provision.
- Any additional hours used will be paid for by you at the rate for this provider - which will vary.

www.newcastle.gov.uk/free-childcare

Am I eligible for 30 hours free childcare?

The extra 15 hours are available from September 2017 to parents* of 3 and 4 year olds where:

- 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), and
 - ✓ less than £100,000 per year.

At present, the living wage is £7.20 an hour. Therefore, the minimum income requirement for a parent (over 25) is £115.20 a week. The minimum wage for 21 to 24 year olds is £6.70 an hour – therefore, the minimum income requirement for this group is £107.20 a week***.

- A parent expects (on average) to earn this amount over the coming three months. The eligibility criteria have been designed to accommodate parents with fluctuating incomes and those who are about to start working or increase their hours.
 - ✓ For example, 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) is 'resident in the UK'.

Notes

*A '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 if they meet the criteria set out above for their own children. Foster carers are not eligible for the extended entitlement for the children that they foster.

**Working includes employed persons, self-employed persons and parents on zero hours contracts who meet the criteria.

***Note that these rates reduce to £5.30 for 18-21 year olds, £3.87 for under 18s and £3.30 for apprentices.

What kinds of childcare can I choose?

All funded early education and childcare provision is registered and inspected by Ofsted* providing a range of activities based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, which supports children enjoy learning through play. To find childcare visit: www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk

Registered Childminders

A childminder offers flexible, part-time or full-time care and early education in their home, usually for children from birth upwards. Childminders are self-employed, set their own working hours often between 8am to 6pm, but most are flexible to start earlier and work later including weekends, and some offer overnight care. Childminders often care for a number of children at once and as well as activities in the home will attend groups and other activities with children.

Day nurseries

Day nurseries provide care and early education for children from birth to school age. They usually operate from purpose built or customised premises. They tend to be open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and open between 48 and 52 weeks of the year. Nursery places are often booked in morning or afternoon sessions (8am – 1pm, 1pm - 6pm).

Pre-school playgroups

Pre-school playgroups provide care and early education for children from two to five years old. They are often run in community centres, schools, or church halls and are open weekdays during term time for up to 39 weeks per year. Some operate mornings or afternoons only, others offer mornings and afternoons. Places are often booked in 3 hour sessions (9am – 12, 12 – 3pm).

Nursery classes in schools and nursery schools

Nursery schools / classes provide early learning and childcare for children between three and five years old (some will take children from two). Nurseries are usually open from 9am to 3.30pm in term time for full or half-day sessions. Some also offer care out of school hours and in the holidays

Out of School and Holiday Clubs

Out of School Clubs provide care for school age children and offer a combination of before and after school as well as school holidays. Some Out of School Clubs take children from three years if they are attending a school nursery class or Preschool Playgroup on a school site. Sessions are usually one hour before school and up to three hours after school, holiday clubs operate full days.

* **Ofsted** is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people. Ofsted's aim is to achieve excellence in education and care of children. They grade childcare providers and childminders as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, Inadequate, Met or Not Met. Childcare providers must register with Ofsted if they want to be paid to look after children under 8years for more than 2 hours a day.

How can I use my extended hours?

You can use your 30 hours in a variety of ways. During the school year (between September and July) parents are entitled to 570 normal entitlement or 1140 hours extended entitlement. Both can be used in a variety of ways but the following are examples for parents entitled to the extended 1140 hours entitlement. The free entitlement can be used between 6am and 8pm and any day of the week. You can use your 30 hours:

- During school term time only – meaning over 38 weeks of the year, or
- Stretched over more weeks – which could mean all year round, for instance if your day nursery or childminder is open 50 weeks a year this could be 22.8 hours per week
- You can use up to 3 different providers at once (i.e. school provision, day nursery and childminder) and negotiate to share these hours over these providers.
- You can use just your free entitlement or pay for additional hours as well (at the rate agreed with your provider)
- You can use a different number of hours during term time and during the holidays but this would need to be negotiated

To find childcare in Newcastle including opening hours and fees see:

www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk

Multi setting scenarios: Many parents use just one type of provision for the full 30 hours, but for some parents a combination of two or more providers suits better. Here are some examples.

I. Parent works three weekdays 9am – 5pm term time only

- i. Parent could use a day nursery or a childminder that is open 8am to 6pm on Monday - Wednesday this would be their full entitlement (30 hours), or
- ii. Parent could use a combination of pre-school playgroup or nursery class and a childminder providing wrap around care for the child for the remainder of the day, or
- iii. Parent could use a full day nursery class 9am – 3pm and an out of school club or childminder for the additional hours

II. Parent works Monday – Friday all year round

- i. Parent could access 22.8 hours per week (50 weeks of the year) with a day nursery or childminder and pay for any additional hours they needed, or
- ii. Parent could use a preschool playgroup or nursery class with out of school club or childminder offering wrap around and paying for any additional hours, or
- iii. Parent could access Monday, Tuesday and half day Wednesday in a nursery class and use a childminder or day nursery for the remaining hours paying for any additional hours

III. Parent works evenings and / or weekends (Funded hours can be used between 6am - 8pm and at weekends)

- i. Parent could use a childminder to care for children between 6am - 8pm at weekends, any hours outside these times would need to be negotiated and paid for at the rate agreed with the provider, or
- ii. Parent could use a combination of out of school club and childminder up to 8pm weekdays with any hours after this time being paid for at the rate agreed with the provider