

## **30-hour funded nursery provision: a guide for parents**

### **Am I eligible for the 30 hours childcare offer?**

You will be eligible for the 30-hour offer if:

- **You earn more than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week:** for example, £120 per week if you are 25 or older. There is no requirement to work a certain amount of hours per week – it is all about **how much you earn**.

AND

- **You earn less than £100,000 per year.**

**If you are self-employed or on a zero-hours contract:** You are still eligible as long as you expect to meet the earning criteria *on average* over the three months after you have applied for the 30-hours.

**If you are an apprentice:** You are eligible as long as they earn the equivalent to 16 hours at the apprentice minimum wage.

**If you are starting up your own business:** You will not be expected to meet the minimum earning criteria in your first year of trading.

**If you are not working but you expect to take up paid work within 14 days:** You can still apply for 30 hours, as long as you expect to meet the income criteria over the coming three months.

**If you are a single parent:** If you meet the above criteria, you will be eligible for the 30 hours.

**If you live with a partner:** You must both must meet the above criteria. This still applies if one of you is not the child's parent – for example, if you have remarried or have started living with a new partner.

**If you are separated/divorced from your child's parent:** The eligibility rules will only apply to the parent the child normally lives with (and their new partner if they are part of the same household).

### **Exceptions**

You will NOT have to meet the minimum earnings criteria if:

- You and your partner are employed but one or both of you temporarily on parental, maternity or paternity, adoption leave, or on statutory sick pay
- You are employed but your partner either has **substantial caring responsibilities**, or **is disabled or incapacitated**, or vice versa. This is dependent on you or your partner being entitled to specific benefits.

### **My child is going to turn three next year. How soon can I access the 30 hours?**

Your child will be eligible for the 30 hours offer from the term after they turn three, or the term after you receive your eligibility code – **whichever is later**. For example, if your child turns three on 25 March, and you apply for the 30-hours on 27 March, your child will be eligible for a place from the start of the spring term in April. However, if your child turns three on 25 March but you

don't apply for the 30 hours until 5 April, your child won't be eligible for a place until the autumn term in September.

### **How do I apply for the 30 hours offer?**

You will be able to apply for both the 30-hour offer and tax-free childcare using a single application available online via [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk). To complete the application, you will need your address, national insurance number and to show whether you will meet the income requirements over the next three months and whether you receive any benefits.

**If you live with a partner, you will need to provide the same information for them as well.**

If you are eligible, you will be given an **11-digit code that you will need to take to your childcare provider along with your national insurance number and your child's birth certificate.**

Your childcare provider will then use the government's eligibility checking system to check the code is valid. If it is, they will be able to book your child's place – but bear in mind that **providers don't have to take part in the 30-hour offer**, so be sure to speak to your childcare provider about what they are able to offer for your family.

**You will need to reconfirm your eligibility every three months** and will receive a reminder text message or email from the government before the deadline. If you give false information about your eligibility, you could be fined up to £3000.

### **If I'm not eligible for the 30-hour offer, can I still get my 15 hours?**

Yes. The 15-hour offer is still universal so if you're not eligible for a 30-hour place, you will still be eligible for the 15-hour offer.

### **What happens if I become ineligible for the offer e.g. because I lose my job?**

If you no longer meet the eligibility criteria, your child's 30-hour place will continue to be funded for a 'grace period'. You should discuss this with your provider if and when you lose eligibility.

Once the grace period has expired, you will still be eligible for the 15-hour funded childcare offer.