

# Information for Schools on 30 hours

To be read in conjunction with relevant Statutory and Operational Guidance

## What is the 30 hour offer?

On top of the universal 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year, funded provision for all 3 and 4 year olds, the Government has doubled this offer for working parents. Working parents of 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to up to 30 hours a week, or 1,140 hours a year, of funded childcare, with the aim of helping families by reducing the costs of childcare and supporting parents to work.

## Who is eligible for the 30 hours?

In order to access the 30 hours funded childcare offer, both the parent and child must be eligible to apply.

### Child Eligibility

- The child is entitled to free early years provision if:
  - They are over 3 years old
  - They are under compulsory school age
  - Their parent(s) meet the necessary eligibility criteria

<b>If the child's birthday falls between</b>	<b>They will be entitled to their free place from</b>
1 January to 31 March	1 April following the child's third birthday
1 April to 31 August	1 September following the child's third birthday
1 September to 31 December	1 January following the child's third birthday

### Parent Eligibility

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

- They earn, or expect to earn, the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months.
- This applies whether they 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 they are 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 a non-EEA national, they must have recourse to public funds.

**They will not meet the criteria when:**

- Either parent has an income of more than £100,000
- Either parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public funds)

Parents cannot claim the 30 hours funding if their child is in a full-time reception place or has reached compulsory school age.

## **How do parents apply for the 30 hours?**

The flow chart below was designed for parents to take them through the process of how to apply for the 30 hours. All applications should be made by parents online at [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk). If the parent is eligible they will receive an 11 digit code to confirm this and will bring this to you to be validated.

If the parent has any problem with the application process, accessing their childcare account, if they need to apply over the phone, or disagree with the decision given, please advise them to contact the Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097, this whole process is managed by HMRC.

### **Are you eligible for 30 Hours Free Childcare?**

Visit the Government's Childcare Choices website – [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) where you will be taken through step-by-step instructions to check eligibility for 30 hours childcare.



If you are eligible, you will be provided with a code which you must take to your chosen early years setting.

Before the setting can offer your child a place, they will need to validate your eligibility code. When you visit the setting please take with you:

- ✓ Eligibility Code
- ✓ National Insurance Number
- ✓ Your Child's Date Of Birth

The setting will also ask you to complete a Parent Declaration Form as part of this initial visit.



Once your eligibility code has been verified and all the required paperwork is complete, the setting can now arrange a convenient start date with you.

Every three months you will need to reconfirm your eligibility via the Childcare Choices website in order to continue with the funding. **As a parent this is your responsibility – if eligibility is not reconfirmed you will lose the additional free hours for your child.**



### **When should parents apply for the 30 hours?**

Parents should apply during the term that their child turns three so that **funding can begin at the start of the following term**. Parents can get an eligibility code before their child turns three but they can only start claiming their 30 hour place the term following their child's third birthday or the term following the date the eligibility code was issued (whichever is the later).

If the child is taking up their universal 15 hour entitlement and the parent becomes eligible for the 30 hour offer part way through the term, the parent can start claiming their additional hours the term following the date on which they received their code and had it validated.

**As per the Statutory Guidance, funding for the 30 hours will not start half way through a term, nor will it be backdated. 30 hour places will start the term after the child turns 3 if their parents meet the eligibility criteria and their code has been validated. Therefore, children wanting to access a 30 hour place in September need to have their eligibility code validated before the end of August, if they wait until September to do this they won't be able to access their place until January.**

### **What happens when a parent brings an eligibility code to be checked?**

The Statutory Guidance makes it clear that all providers must check a parent's eligibility code is valid before offering them a place and that they must have written consent from the parent to check this code. A sample **Parent Declaration Form** accompanies this information sheet which schools are welcome to use or adapt as a tool for gaining parents written consent.

Eligibility checks are all undertaken using the '30 Hours' icon on the Provider Portal. To check the 11 digit eligibility code the parent has given you, please follow the steps below:

- Select '*Run a New Check*'
- Always search for a child first by typing part of their name into '*Find a Child*'
- If a child has already been on the headcount, it will populate the forename, surname and date of birth in the '*Run a New Check*' fields
- If the child is not found, the portal will inform you that '*0 matches have been found*'
- If no matches have been found, enter the child's forename, surname, date of birth, parent's national insurance number and eligibility code in the fields requested and click '*run check*'
- You will receive an instant response from HMRC and will be informed of the validity period and grace period

Once you have had eligibility confirmed you will be able to offer that parent a place in line with your admissions criteria for funded places. The guidance states providers must publish their admissions criteria so parents can understand which hours/sessions can be taken as free provision.

### **What happens if a parents circumstances change? What is the grace period?**

Parents are required to re-confirm their eligibility every 3 months by HMRC. Parents will be reminded weekly via email and text from a month before their 'end date'. End dates and grace period dates will automatically be recalculated when a parent re-confirms their eligibility. If they have not re-confirmed their eligibility by the end date or their circumstances have changed and they are no longer eligible for the 30 hours, they will fall into what is known as the 'grace period'. This is a set amount of time from the date of the parent's ineligible decision, as detailed in the table below, for their additional hours to continue. These dates are set in Statutory Guidance and ensure continuity of a place for the child, parent and provider. It also gives the parent time to find alternative employment and re-confirm their eligibility before the grace period is over.

<b>Date of ineligible decision</b>	<b>Grace Period end date</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> January – 10 <sup>th</sup> February	31 <sup>st</sup> March
11 <sup>th</sup> February – 31 <sup>st</sup> March	31 <sup>st</sup> August
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 26 <sup>th</sup> May	31 <sup>st</sup> August
27 <sup>th</sup> May – 31 <sup>st</sup> August	31 <sup>st</sup> December
1 <sup>st</sup> September – 21 <sup>st</sup> October	31 <sup>st</sup> December
22 <sup>nd</sup> October – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	31 <sup>st</sup> March



The grace period starts the day after the validity end date and continues to the grace period end date as stated in the table. If the parent doesn't reconfirm their eligibility by the end of the grace period, their 30 hour place and funding will cease and the child will be able to access their universal 15 hour entitlement only. **Please note that funding is paid on a participation basis.** You can check which parents are due to re-confirm their eligibility or are operating in their grace period via the Provider Portal.

### **How can parents access their 30 hour place?**

Parents can access their 30 hour offer at any Ofsted registered provider, approved to offer the free early education places with the capacity to offer a place. This could be a school or a Day Nursery, Pre-School Playgroup or a childminder. The 30 hour offer equates to 30 hours a week over 38 weeks of the school year, but parents can stretch their entitlement to take fewer hours each week over more weeks a year to meet their working needs. Parents also don't have to take up the full 30 hour offer if they don't want to but it's important you know how many hours they will be doing with you so appropriate funding claims can be made.

Parents can choose to split their entitlement between multiple providers as long as this is across no more than 2 sites per day. For this reason, when offering a place for 30 hours it will be **useful for you to know who the parent wants their universal 15 hours with should they fall out of eligibility for the 30 hours.** This will give you an indication as to whether the child would reduce to 15 hours with you or leave your setting completely should they fall out of eligibility.

You don't have to offer a 30 hour place in school, you may opt to continue to deliver 15 hours a week and signpost parents to other providers in the area for them to access their other 15 hours. Eligibility codes can be used at more than 1 setting and you should still get a parent accessing any hours with you as part of their 30 hour offer to complete a Parent Declaration Form, stating how many funded hours they will be taking with you.

The Statutory Guidance states that all places must be no longer than 10 hours a day, offered between 6am and 8pm and across no more than 2 sites per day. The guidance also states that children should be able to take up their free hours as part of continuous provision and providers should avoid artificial breaks in the day wherever possible. For example, the lunch time should form part of the free provision where a child is attending a morning and an afternoon session.

### **Can we charge parents?**

The funding provided by the LA isn't intended to cover costs of meals, snacks, other consumables, additional hours or services. Any charges applied must be voluntary for the parent and not a condition of them accessing their place. Where parents are unwilling or unable to pay, providers offering free entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on how to respond, with options including waiving or reducing costs or enabling parents to provide their own provisions, such as a packed lunch. Access to a free place must be delivered completely free of charge to the parent.

### **How does school claim funding for a 30 hour place?**

By entering eligible children in the relevant areas on SIMS and the termly census data collections, you will be paid appropriately for the hours you are offering.

### **Questions?**

For further information, please contact [earlyyears@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

