

## All about 30 hours free childcare

Known as the extended entitlement for three and four year olds

Updated December 2017

This update contains the latest information available about **30 hours of free childcare (the extended entitlement)** for three and four year olds of working parents, introduced in September 2017.

You can visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) to find out about all the different types of help available towards childcare costs.

### The Family Information Service offers

- Support and advice for families and where to go for help when you need it
- Information and advice about childcare and funding

### For more information

- Search online for childcare, services for families and factsheets: [www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk](http://www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk)
- Visit our website: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fis](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fis)

### Need extra help?

- Email: [familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Telephone: 01273 293545
- Follow us on Twitter @bhccfamilyinfo

Our range of factsheets to view online at <a href="http://www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk">www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk</a>	
Tax Free Childcare	The new scheme for working parents to help them save money on their childcare costs
Family Finance	Outlines the main sources of financial help available for families
Free childcare for two year olds	Some two year olds are entitled to 570 hours of free childcare over the year

Free Early Learning	<b>All</b> three and four year olds are entitled to 570 hours of free childcare over the year
New to Brighton & Hove	Information on services for families who are new to the city.
Family Breakdown	What to consider when relationships break down and where to go for help and advice.

### **WHAT is the extended entitlement?**

From September 2017, **working\*** parents of three and four year olds will be entitled to up to 1,140 hours of childcare a year which is free of charge. This equates to 30 hours per week if the childcare is taken during term time only, and around 23 hours per week if spread across the year. This is double the universal entitlement of 570 hours a year that **all** three and four year old children currently receive.

**\*If you aren't working and would like some support to take the first steps towards working, training or volunteering, see information on the PACE project at the end of this factsheet.**



Remember, every three and four year old will still get 570 hours of free childcare per year whether or not their parents are working.

### **WHO is eligible?**

The extended entitlement is being introduced to support working parents with the costs of childcare and to help parents who would like to work more hours. To qualify:

- Both parents must be working and earning at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage, but less than £100,000 per person a year (**see below for exceptions**)
- Lone parents must be working and earning at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage, but less than £100,000 per year
- Self-employed parents must have earnings over a set period of time that equate to at least 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage but do not exceed £100,000 per year

**Earnings must be at least £120 per week for those over 25, £112.80 per week for those aged 21-24 and £89.60 per week for those aged 18-20. If parents work less than 16 hours, but earn at least the amounts above, they will still be eligible.**

**There are exceptions.** Children **may** be eligible for the extended entitlement, if;

In a two parent household where one parent is working, the child will be eligible if the other parent is in receipt of one of the following;

- Incapacity benefit
- severe disablement allowance
- long-term incapacity benefit
- Carers' allowance
- contributory ESA
- NI credits on grounds of incapacity for work
- UC element for carers or limited capacity for work
- Statutory sick pay
- all forms of parenting and adoption leave

In a lone parent household the parent is eligible if they are away from work and in receipt of

- Statutory sick pay
- all forms of parenting and adoption leave



Many people have varied work patterns, for example zero hour contracts, or self employment which means that earnings can change from week to week. If in doubt – apply!

### **HOW can parents check if they are eligible?**

The government has set up a new website where parents can enter their details and check if they are eligible. Visit <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/> to check your eligibility.

**The table below shows you when you should apply.**

<b>Child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday falls between</b>	<b>When you need to apply</b>	<b>When your child can take up their extended entitlement</b>
1 Jan to 31 March	By 31 March	The beginning of term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	By 31 August	The beginning of term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	By 31 December	The beginning of term on or after 1 January



You must apply on time. If not, your child **will not** be able to take up their extended offer from the term after their third birthday - they will have to wait until the start of the following term. However, they will still be able to take up their 570 hours a year universal offer.

**Apply as soon as you are able to – don't leave it to the last minute!**

## HOW do you apply?

Go to the Childcare Service online at <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/> and enter your details. The system will check if you are eligible for 30 hours free childcare and Tax Free Childcare as it is one single application. Once you have verified your identity online you will then be given a childcare service account.

If you have any problems with the application process, call HMRC's Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 1234 097.



You cannot claim both Tax Credits and Tax Free Childcare. The Childcare Service online will check whether you are eligible for Tax Free Childcare and opt you in for the scheme if you are eligible. **If you would prefer to stay on Tax Credits, you must opt out of Tax Free Childcare when asked.**

## WHAT happens next if you are eligible?

If you are eligible you will be given an 11 digit PIN that you will need to give to your childcare provider. They will then verify your PIN and discuss your childcare needs.



You will need to hold onto your PIN, as you must reconfirm your eligibility online every three months. You will be sent an automatic reminder, but it's a good idea to make a note of your PIN or save it on your phone. If you apply more than three months before your child's start date, you will need to reconfirm your eligibility before your child takes up their extended entitlement.

## WHAT if you forget your PIN?

Simply log into your Childcare Service account online and click on 30 hours free childcare. You can then view your "secure messages" where a copy of your eligibility letter is saved.

## WHEN can children start their extended entitlement?

From the term after their third birthday. If you do not get your code on time, they will have to wait until the beginning of the next term before they can start.

## WHAT happens if parents' circumstances change?

Parents will have to go onto the government's website every three months to confirm that their circumstances have not changed. If there has been a change, for example, the loss of a job, they will no longer be eligible. However, there will be a grace period (see table below) that will allow your child to continue having their extended entitlement until you find another job.

Date parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation	Grace period ends
1 January to 10 February	31 March
11 February to 31 March	31 August
1 April to 26 May	31 August
27 May to 31 August	31 December
1 September to 21 October	31 December
22 October to 31 December	31 March



You must let your childcare provider know as soon as possible if you are informed that you are no longer eligible for 30 hours free childcare. Your child will still be entitled to 570 hours a year of free childcare.

### **WHERE can children take up their 30 hours free childcare?**

Ofsted-registered childcare providers will be able to offer the extended entitlement. This includes childminders, pre-schools, day nurseries, nursery classes and schools and playgroups.



You can search for Ofsted registered childcare providers online at [www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk](http://www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk)

### **CAN parents take MORE or FEWER hours over the year?**

You do not have to take any of the 30 hours free childcare at all if you don't want to, or you can take fewer than the 1,140 hours per year. There are some restrictions as to how both the universal and the extended entitlements can be offered:

- There is no minimum session length, but no session can be longer than 10 hours
- No sessions can be provided before 6am or after 8pm
- Children can attend a maximum of two sites in one day
- Childcare providers should ensure that no artificial breaks are created throughout the day, for example over the lunch period

If you take more than the 30 hours free childcare, you will have to pay for them. Help towards the cost is available if you are eligible through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, or Universal Credit when it replaces Working Tax Credit. Other help is available through the Tax-Free Childcare scheme or your employer may offer a childcare voucher scheme.



Providers will offer the extended entitlement in different ways and they may limit the number of free places that they offer. You may not necessarily be able to get all of your extended entitlement at one provider. For example, some providers are open term time only or will choose not to offer free hours over holidays.

Other providers may offer specific session times for the free entitlement that don't match your requirements and you would have to pay for additional hours to meet your needs. Some providers will limit the number of hours a day that are free.

### **WHAT if a childcare provider does not offer the full 30 hours?**

You can split the free entitlement between multiple providers. However, you cannot use more than two sites in one day.

## **WILL parents have to PAY for anything?**

The government funding is to cover the cost of delivering 30 hours per week of free childcare. It does not cover the cost of other items such as meals, consumables, trips, additional hours or services. These additional charges should be voluntary; for example if you are just taking 30 hours free childcare and not taking additional hours, you should not be required to pay for additional services such as lunch.

Parents can be charged a small deposit, but this should be returned within a reasonable time of a child starting at a setting. Providers cannot charge a top up fee (the difference between a provider's usual fee and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver the extended entitlement).

If you choose to pay for additional hours or additional services, your childcare provider should show this on an invoice. The invoice should show that either the universal or extended entitlement is free of charge.



The extended entitlement should be totally free of charge. Make sure that you discuss any voluntary additional charges with your childcare provider and understand what you might need to pay for before your child takes up their entitlement.

## **WHERE can parents go for help?**

If you have a general enquiry about the extended entitlement, or funding for childcare, you can contact the Family Information Service (see below).

If you have an enquiry about your eligibility or the online application process, you can call HMRC's Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 1234 097.

**This factsheet was produced by the Family Information Service. The information it contains was correct at December 2017. The Family Information Service cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.**

For the latest updates, visit [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fis](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fis) or [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

For help and support contact the Family Information Service

Email: [familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Tel: 01273 293545

**Are you a parent of a two year old who is getting free childcare sessions?**

**Then let the PACE team support you with taking the first step into work, training or volunteering**

PACE (Providing Access to Childcare and Employment) is a European funded project designed to support parents in Brighton & Hove. Whilst your two year old is enjoying learning and making new friends at their childcare setting, you could be using the time to start thinking about what you would like to do in the future.

**With 30 hours free childcare for three and four year olds whose parents are working starting in September 2017, there's never been a better time to start thinking about taking the first steps towards work!**

**PACE will:**

- Give you a PACE keyworker who will get to know you and stay in touch regularly
- Support you to find childcare and access any funding you might be entitled to
- Help you with "back to work" calculations so you will know how much your household income will increase if you get paid work
- Advise and help you to find ad-hoc childcare for interviews and training
- Work with you to develop a Personal Development Plan that is unique to you
- Help you to identify your skills and abilities and build on your confidence
- Support you to work out what you would like to do in terms of work, training or volunteering
- Offer you help with CV writing, interview skills and preparing for work
- Help you with "back to work" calculations so you will know how much your household income will increase if you get paid work

**Want to find out more? Contact the PACE Team at the Family Information Service**

Tel: 01273 293545

email: [familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk)