



## Parent/Carer FAQs – extended childcare entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds (30 hours)

### What is the extended childcare entitlement?

Currently all 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours a week, the equivalent of 570 hours a year, of free childcare. From September 2017 this doubles to 30 hours a week, 1140 hours a year, for 3 and 4 year olds whose parents are working. The aim is to help families by reducing the costs of childcare, to support parents to increase the number of hours they work and/or encourage them into employment.

### Will my child be eligible?

The additional hours will be available to families where:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family);
- Both parents are working includes circumstances where:-
  - One or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on parental, adoption, maternity or paternity leave;
  - One or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay;
  - One parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring; or
  - One parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.
- Each parent has a weekly minimum in-come equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage; (parents do not necessarily need to actually work 16 hours a week, but rather their earnings must reflect

at least 16 hours of work at national minimum wage or national living wage) and;

- Neither parent has an income of more than £100,000 per year.

The definition of 'working' will include employed and self-employed persons and parents on zero hours contracts who meet the criteria. Many parents have irregular work patterns and the government are keen that the childcare is offered flexible to meet parent's needs. Parents who are studying and grandparents or other family members with parental responsibility for a child aged 3 or 4 will be eligible for the extended entitlement if they meet the above criteria.

### Can I use any childcare setting that I like?

If you are entitled to the free entitlement you will be allowed to use any Ofsted registered childcare. Information about local providers can be found on the Notts Help Yourself website [nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://nottshelpyourself.org.uk)

### Can I split the 1140 hours over more than one setting?

Yes, parents are allowed to split their free childcare across providers. Providers can only refuse this if they have a legitimate business case for why they cannot allow the split hours.

### Can I use my free childcare across the whole year?

Yes, the extended childcare offer has been introduced to support parents to have better access to more flexible childcare whilst at work, and to enable you to increase the number of hours worked. This means you can use your

childcare to cover school holidays if you need to. If you use your childcare in term time only you will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week. If you use it over the whole year, you will be entitled to approximately 22.6 hours per week.

### **Do I already need to be attending the childcare provider that I am planning to send my child to when the additional hours begin in September?**

No, your child does not need to be currently attending a provider in order to claim their free hours there – the only requirements are that the provider you apply to is Ofsted registered and approved to offer Free Early Education (FEE) places, and that they have space to take your child.

### **My child has special needs – will they receive sufficient care in the additional funded hours?**

Every family should have access to good quality childcare that meets their needs. The Government is considering ways to make sure providers have adequate support to meet the requirements of children with special educational needs and disabilities in the additional funded hours.

### **How do I apply for the additional hours childcare?**

Nearer the time, parents will be able to check their eligibility and apply online. Keep an eye out for more information in the coming months.

### **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN CONSIDERING A SUITABLE CHILDCARE PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD, can be found here:**

<http://nottinghamshire.family servicedirectory.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/landing.page?directorychannel=2>

#### **TOP TIPS**

- High quality provision is proven to be the best in preparing children for school – so check that your chosen provider has been rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted;
- Try and minimise the number of providers you use to reduce the level of disruption each day for your child.