

Harrow Families

Information Service

**Free Childcare Funding
for
2, 3 and 4 Year Olds**



Free Early Years childcare for 2 year olds

Did you know that your 2 year old could qualify for up to 15 hours a week of free childcare for 38 weeks a year (570 hours over a year)?

What is the offer?

Children become eligible from the school term after they turn 2 years old. They can get a maximum of 570 hours over a year or 15 hours per week over 38 weeks in a year.

Your chosen provider must have been inspected by Ofsted and be judged to be Good or Outstanding.

All parents/carers of eligible children are able to access up to 15 hours a week of free early years childcare and education, with an approved local nursery/pre-school or childminder, dependent on there being an available space for your child. You may have to pay for extra costs like meals, nappies or trips.

Please contact Harrow Families Information Service for the current list of approved providers or search online through our Families Resource Directory www.harrow.gov.uk/childcare

Why should I consider using childcare - I can look after my own child?

Childcare can be good for your child. Research has shown that good quality early years education can:

- Improve your child's development, for example; their communication skills
- Help them learn to socialise with other children and make friends
- Help them begin to get ready for school
- Give them access to exciting places to play and new activities

Childcare is also good for families - it can give you a bit more time to:

- Spend with your other children
- Take up a college course
- Go back to work or
- Pick up more ideas of what to do with your child at home and how you can help them develop and learn

What are the eligibility criteria for families?

Your 2-year-old can get free early education and childcare if you live in England and get one of the following benefits

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Tax Credits provided you have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, before tax
- Universal Credit - if you (and your partner) are on a low income from work (this usually means a combined income of less than £15,400 a year after tax)
- Guaranteed Element of the State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Parents who meet the following conditions, will also qualify:

Non-EEA citizen who can not claim benefits and are getting support under the Immigration and Asylum Act:

- Claimed asylum in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6').

- Been refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')
- If the combined household (both parents) income is £15,400 or less a year, after tax and have either;
 - Leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on family or private life grounds
 - Support from your local authority because you have a 'child in need' , for example they have a disability or child protection plan
 - The right to live in the UK because the parent(s) are the main carer(s) of a British citizen ('Zambrano Carer')

A child can also get free early education and childcare if any of the following apply:

- they're looked after by a local council
- they have a current statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- they get Disability Living Allowance
- they've left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order

Please note: If your child is eligible and takes up a place, you may be charged a refundable deposit. If you wish to remove your child once they have taken up a funded place, you must check with your childcare provider as to their notice period as signed in their Terms and Conditions, otherwise it may affect your funding. For further clarification, please call Families Information Services (contact details can be found at the back of this booklet).



Early Years Universal Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 Year Olds (15 hours)

All eligible 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to access up to 15 hours a week of free part-time early years education in an approved provider (day nurseries, pre-schools or independent schools in the private, voluntary and maintained sector). The entitlement starts the term after your child's third birthday.

The free entitlement of 15 hours per week over 38 weeks or pro-rata per year can be claimed over a maximum of two providers at any one time within Harrow or another Borough (if your child attends more than one setting it is **your responsibility** to inform them both).

The free entitlement must be taken over a minimum of 2 days per week, for example:

- three hours a day over five days of the week,
- five hours a day over three days of the week, or
- 15 hours over 2 days

It can be offered flexibly but in any one day, the limits are:

- No session longer than 10 hours,
- No session shorter than 2.5 hours,
- Not before 7am or after 7pm

When will my child be eligible for the free entitlement?

Your child becomes eligible from the start of the term **after** they become 3 years old.

Child born between	Term they can start
1 September and 31 December is eligible from January	Spring Term
1 January and 31 March is eligible from April	Summer Term
1 April and 31 August is eligible from September	Autumn Term

For example, if your child is born on 1 April 2018, their third birthday will fall on 1 April 2021 and they will become entitled for the free entitlement from the beginning of the autumn term in September 2021. (Where the Easter holiday falls has no bearing regarding eligibility).

When will the free entitlement finish?

The free entitlement finishes at the end of the school term before they reach statutory school age (the term after the child's fifth birthday). However if your child starts school before this time (even if it is on a part time basis), then the free entitlement will stop at the early years education childcare provider (day nurseries, pre-schools or independent schools in the private, voluntary and maintained sector) as the child is receiving education at school which is free.

How do I arrange for my child to have their free entitlement?

- You will need to contact the early years education provider that you are currently using (or intend to use) for your child's care and education.
- The provider will check when your child will become eligible. If your child is eligible, you will be asked to complete a funding claim form and sign it by the headcount week (headcount week dates are listed on pages 10/11). Children enrolled after this date but before the half term may receive funding for the number of weeks attended.

You must satisfy yourself that your childcare provider has the full details of your child (including date of birth, home address and postcode), and check that the numbers of days/hours attended are correct and then sign the claim form. After signing the claim form, your child must be in attendance for at least two weeks in order to receive any funding.

- Your provider will then claim funding for your child's place from Harrow Council. The funding will go to the childcare provider direct.
- If you decide to change your childcare provider part way through a term - the free entitlement **will not** automatically transfer with your child to your new provider (talk to your provider before you make a decision or call the Families Information Service). Please make sure you check the notice period at your childcare provider before moving your child.
- You cannot be charged for any part of the funded hours, either directly or indirectly. Providers might ask you to pay the fees, but the fee will be returned to you later when the provider receives the funding. This is a matter of agreement between you and the provider. Please note, you may be charged a deposit or registration fee to secure a place. Extra hours taken in addition to the free entitlement will be charged at the provider's rate.
- The provider can charge for additional services (e.g. meals, trips, additional lessons/classes outside of the Early Years Foundation Stage). It is recommended that you discuss any additional fees with your chosen childcare provider prior to taking up the place.

- Your childcare provider should set out their invoices clearly, so you can easily recognise and understand your free entitlement and any additional fees relating to extra services and hours. **Please check any contract/ agreement before signing it.**
- If a child is attending a local authority school nursery for 15 Universal hours a week (which is the most common pattern of attendance) no other setting can claim. If your child attends less than the 15 hours offered by the school, as well as a private or voluntary nursery, the school automatically receives the whole of the funding so another setting cannot claim for the balance of the 15 hours not claimed in the school nursery. (Other settings can however claim the additional Extended 15 hours for those children whose parent(s) are entitled to it - see *page 12*)
- A child moving to England from another country is entitled to free early years provision on the same basis as any other child regardless of whether they have British citizenship.
- If your child has a special educational need or disability, please speak to your childcare provider in regards to what additional support may be available.
- Free Early Education does not affect benefits received. However, the funding does mean that your childcare costs will be lower, so if you are claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, you should only claim for the childcare fees you are paying for to prevent an overpayment. For further information on tax credits please contact: HMRC – 0345 300 3900 or visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Please note if your child goes to a childminder you must check with them if they are registered to receive the funding.

It is a criminal offence to make false claims for funding and any suspected false claims will be treated seriously and the appropriate action taken.

No of funded weeks	No of hours claimed	Hourly-rate	Full term payment
11	15	£5.09	£839.85
12	15	£5.09	£916.20
13	15	£5.09	£992.55
14	15	£5.09	£1068.90
15	15	£5.09	£1145.25

HARROW SCHOOL TERM DATES 2022/2023

Autumn Term 2022:

Thursday 1 September - Friday 16 December

Half term: Monday 24 October - Friday 28 October

Eligible dates of birth: 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2019

Headcount week: 22 - 28 September 2022

No of funded weeks: 14

Spring Term 2023:

Tuesday 3 January – Friday 31 March

Half term: Monday 13 February - Friday 17 February

Eligible dates of birth: 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019

Headcount week: 19 - 25 January 2023

No of funded weeks: 12

Summer Term 2023:

Monday 17 April - Friday 21 July

Half term: Monday 29 May - Friday 02 June

Eligible dates of birth: 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020

Headcount week: 4 May - 10 May 2023

No of funded weeks: 12



Free 30 hours Extended Entitlement for working parents

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to access up to 15 hours a week of universal free part-time early years education at an approved childcare provider (Day Nurseries, Pre-Schools, Independent School Nurseries or Childminders). The entitlement starts the term after your child's third birthday.

Children of working parents/carers may be eligible to receive an additional 15 hours a week or 570 hours per year, meaning that some families will be able to claim 1140 hours of free childcare per year or 30 hours per term-time week, for each of their 3 or 4 year-olds. These hours can be taken 'term time only' or 'stretched' across the year, depending on the opening hours of the childcare provider.

Participating providers across Harrow are able to offer the additional 15 hours childcare for eligible parents/carers where they have the space to do so. This can be at:

- Pre-School Nurseries
- Day Nurseries
- Maintained State Nurseries
- Childminders
- Breakfast & After-School Clubs
- Holiday Playschemes

The rate for the extended entitlement is the same as for the Universal 15 hour entitlement of £4.65 per hour

You can find details of Ofsted registered childcare providers who are offering the extended entitlement by contacting the Families Information Service:

Tel: 020 8901 2690 (option 2) / Email: fis@harrow.gov.uk

Who is eligible for 30 hours/Eligibility Criteria?

You can usually get 30 hours free childcare if you (and your partner, if you have one) are:

- in work - or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave
- each earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week - for example over the next 3 months you expect to earn at least £1,976 for people over 23.
- 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 a parent is 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 the next 12 months.
- If a non-EEA national, the parent must have recourse to public funds.

From September 2018 a child in foster care is also entitled to free early years provision if the criteria set out below are met:

- That accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision making, and
- That, in single foster parent families, the foster parent holds additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer.
- And in two foster parent families, both partners hold additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer.

A parent 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).

When should I apply? You should apply during the term in which your child turns three, in order for your child to access the extended entitlement from the following term. *Please note: If you apply after the term starts you will have to wait until the following term to take up the extended entitlement. You must have applied by 31 August for the autumn term, 31 December for the spring term and 31 March for the summer term funding.

How do I check my eligibility and apply?

To check your eligibility and apply for the extended entitlement please visit:

<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>

or call the Childcare Service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097 and apply over the phone.

You will need:

- Your National Insurance Number, and your partner's National Insurance Number (if applicable)
- Child's name and date of birth

If you are eligible, you will receive an 11 digit eligibility code to take directly to your chosen participating childcare provider along with your National Insurance Number and proof of your child's date of birth.

They will then gain your written permission to verify the code with the Local Authority.

Once verified, a place can be confirmed for the funding period after your child becomes 3 years old and a start date will be agreed with the provider.

Your provider will then claim funding for your child's place from Harrow Council. The funding will go to the childcare provider directly.

Please Note A 30 hours place cannot be started if your Validity Date has expired and you have entered your Grace Period.- please ensure that you have reconfirmed before your child is due to start.

Flexibility - Taking up the extended entitlement and how it can be used

If you are eligible for the extended entitlement, you can take up to 1140 free childcare hours across the year. This can be taken 'term time only' or 'stretched' across the year, examples as follows:

- Up to 30 hours per week across 38 weeks per year or (term time offer)
- Up to 23.75 hours per week across 48 weeks per year or (stretched offer)
- Up to 22.25 hours per week across 51 weeks of the year (stretched offer).

Flexibility options will need to be discussed with your chosen childcare provider, as not all providers may be able to deliver the stretched offer, the full 30 hours per week, or the particular pattern of provision that you require. However, you can split your entitlement across more than one provider (between up to three separate childcare providers but no more than two locations in any single day).

If you will be using more than one childcare provider, you must nominate the one in which you wish to access the additional hours. You must make **all** providers aware if you are splitting the funding between them. The free hours should be delivered as flexibly as possible and there is no requirement for them to be taken on a particular day of the week. **However, you won't be able to:**

- claim any time before 6am or after 8pm
- claim more than 10 hours a day
- claim more than 30 hours a week
- claim more than 1140 hours per year

What happens if a parent loses eligibility and no longer meets the criteria?

You will be prompted by the HMRC every three months via text message or and/or email to reconfirm that the details you entered are still accurate and that you are still eligible.

If you miss the reconfirmation deadline, you will receive a message telling you that your eligibility has lapsed. Although you are no longer eligible, you may be able to retain your childcare place for a short period; this is known as a grace period. **See table below**

Validity end date:	Grace period end date:
1 Jan – 10 February	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	31 August
1 April – 26 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	31 December
1 September – 21 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	31 March

If your circumstances change during the grace period you can reapply again and continue to receive the extra hours.

You will still be able to receive the universal 15 hours of free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds even if you are no longer eligible for the extended entitlement.

If you do not check your eligibility when required and continue to receive funding which you are no longer entitled to, you will be asked by the HMRC to pay back any childcare funding paid to you.

When will the free entitlement for my child finish?

- When your child reaches compulsory school age
- When your child attends a reception place in a maintained school or academy

Additional Information

- You cannot change your childcare provider part way through a term - the free entitlement **will not** automatically transfer with your child to your new provider (talk to your provider before you make a decision or call the Families Information Service).
- The provider can charge for additional services (e.g. meals, trips, additional lessons/classes outside of the Early Years Foundation Stage). It is recommended that you discuss any additional fees with your chosen childcare provider prior to taking up the place.
- Your childcare provider should set out their invoices clearly, so you can easily recognise and understand your free entitlement and any additional fees relating to extra services and hours. **Please check any contract/ agreement before signing it.**

Free Early Education does not affect benefits received. However, the funding does mean that your childcare costs will be lower, so if you are claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, you should only claim for the childcare fees you are paying for, to prevent an overpayment. For further Information on tax credits please contact: HMRC – 0345 300 3900 or visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits



Tax-Free Childcare

What is Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is a Government scheme to help working families with their childcare costs.

The scheme will be available for children under 12 years old (under 17 years old for disabled children) and can be used to contribute towards approved childcare (for details of approved childcare visit <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>)

Who is eligible?

You can usually get Tax-Free Childcare if you (and your partner, if you have one) are:

- Each earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week - for example, over the next 3 months you expect to earn at least £1,976, the National Living Wage for people over 23. If you have a partner, they'll need to expect to earn at least this much too.
- You can work for an employer or be self-employed
- The scheme will be available to parents on paid sick leave and paid and unpaid statutory maternity, paternity and adoption leave
- Parents are not receiving support through, Tax Credits or Universal Credit
- Have children who are under 12, or under 17 for disabled children
- Each account will require eligibility validation every three months
- Adopted children are eligible but foster children are not

How does it work?

- For every £8 parents pay in to these accounts, the Government will add £2
- Parents could get a Government contribution of up to £2,000 per child, per year, or £4,000 for disabled children, to go towards their childcare costs
- The total amount in the account can only be spent on childcare
- Parents will be able to track how much they have paid in and how much they have spent for each child. The top up will be added into the account on the same day, and the total amount will be available to pay for childcare
- Each child will have a unique reference number

How do parents sign up?

Applications can be made online to check if you are eligible by visiting:

<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>

If you are eligible, parents will be able to open an online account through the Government website, just like a bank account. The account can then be used to pay in money to use towards your childcare costs with a childcare provider who has also registered for the scheme.

Grandparents, other family members and employers will also be able to pay into the account if they choose.

Childcare Providers must have signed up to be able to receive payments from Tax-Free Childcare. Parents who have a childcare service account can check whether their childcare provider is signed up from within their account.

Has the Tax-Free Childcare Scheme replaced childcare vouchers?

Parents are no longer able to register for childcare vouchers after April 2018. However, if you are already using childcare vouchers you can choose to continue to use these instead of joining the new scheme.

Your Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit payments will stop automatically if you successfully apply for Tax-Free Childcare.

To find out about all the government's childcare offers visit the Childcare Choices website:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Check what help you could get with childcare costs

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

Childcare Choices

Telephone: 020 8901 2690 (option 2)

Email: fis@harrow.gov.uk

Resource Directory:

Childcare:

<https://live.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/Harrow/SynergyWeb/3>

Family Services:

<https://live.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/Harrow/SynergyWeb/2>

FIS Website: www.harrow.gov.uk/childcare

Address: Harrow Families Information Service
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