

Newsletter for Early Years Providers, Schools and Childminders on the 30 Hours Free Childcare Entitlement

March 2017

.....

ELIGIBILITY

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

- ☐ They earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months.
- ☐ This equates to £115 a week (or c.£6,000 a year) for each parent over 25 years old or £111.20 a week (or c.£5,700 a year) for each parent between 21 and 24 years old.
- ☐ This applies whether you 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 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 12 months.
- ☐ If a non-EEA national, the parent must have recourse to public funds.

A parent will not receive a 'yes' decision where:

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

What happens if a parent loses eligibility?

- ☐ They will receive a 'grace period' – this means they will be able to keep their childcare for a short period.
- ☐ Once the 'grace period' has lapsed, the parent may be entitled to the universal 15-hour entitlement.

.....

Lunchtimes and additional charging

Lunchtimes provide an invaluable opportunity for learning and socialisation for children (and their child carers too), as well as supporting health and well being. Any provision of food must adhere to regulations, for example food hygiene and health and safety. Other considerations should also be taken into account when deciding how to deliver the free entitlements and childcare over a lunch period.

This information clarifies what providers can and cannot do in terms of the provision of lunches. It also suggests some questions for providers to consider in their decision making.

The DfE is clear:

“You should use government funding for childcare to provide 15 or 30 hours a week of high-quality, flexible early education and childcare.

You shouldn't use this funding to cover the cost of consumable items, such as drinks, meals or nappies, or additional services, such as baby yoga, music lessons and school trips.

You can charge parents for additional items or services, but you mustn't make this compulsory for any parents taking up a publicly funded place for their child.”

On that basis, providers who are delivering free entitlements and childcare over the lunch period can:

1. Provide and fund lunches for all children
2. Require families to bring a packed lunch for their child
3. Provide some lunches families can pay for, and offer the option of bringing a packed lunch
4. Offer some funded lunches (for example for children who would be eligible for free school meals), some paid for lunches, whilst still offering families the choice to bring a packed lunch.

Any charges for a lunch must be voluntary for the parent, and parents should be given the option of providing their packed lunch. Parents should also be given the option of buying their own consumables.

.....

Option one and four are dependent upon a setting being financially sustainable enough (through other income) to cover the costs of providing lunch options. The entitlement funding should not be used to cover the cost of consumables. Options two and three should not incur a cost to the setting. Option four mirrors the practice schools and many settings follow now.

Providers should consider and balance a series of questions when deciding how to manage the entitlement delivery across lunch periods. We have suggested a few below:

1. What would best meet the needs of children who attend the setting? Consider the needs of individual children, groups and the whole.
2. What does the business plan do to support the settings sustainability? Balance what is desirable, with what is possible and affordable.
3. What do facilities allow, and is their room for change? Could a partner or another local setting deliver lunches?
4. What can be learned from other providers and schools who are already offering a range of options?
5. If you are offering a 'paid for' lunch meal, how much will the charge be? The charge should cover costs, and not be unreasonable so that it is out of reach of families. A high charge for the lunch meal may influence decision-making of new families choosing provision moving forward.
6. Staffing will need to be considered if offering the entitlement over a lunch period for the first time. There are lots of providers who are delivering a range of options for lunches now, so there is a lot of experience in the sector to tap into.
7. Ultimately your decisions need to balance the settings needs and the demands and preferences of families, with what can be delivered within the framework of regulations, whilst maintaining a high quality sustainable service.



30 Hours - Frequently Asked Questions

When will 30 hours be rolled out in my area?

30 hours will be delivered in every area of England from September 2017. Parents in the four new early roll-out authorities (Dorset, Tower Hamlets, Leicestershire and North Yorkshire) will be able to benefit from 30 hours from April 2017, and around 4,500 parents are already receiving 30 hours in the existing 8 early implementer areas.



Is it childcare or early education?

All funded provision must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. There is no difference in the education and care standards which must be met for both the universal 15 hour and extended 30 hour entitlements.

How many weeks of the year is 30 hours available for?

Working families are entitled to 30 hours in each of the 38 weeks of the academic year. Parents can choose to stretch this offer over up to 52 weeks of the year where this meets their childcare needs, for instance 22 hours a week for 52 weeks, or just under 24 hours for 48 weeks.

Will the 15 hour entitlements continue?

All three and four year olds, and the most disadvantaged two-year olds, continue to be entitled to 15 hours early education a week.

Do providers have to offer 30 hours?

No. It is a provider's choice whether they deliver the 30 hours entitlement or not. They can choose to offer some or all of the hours. Parents are free to shop around to find appropriate funded provision.

Who can offer 30 hours?

Day-nurseries, childminders and playgroups that are registered on the Early Years Register, and childminders registered with an Ofsted-registered Childminder Agency can deliver the 30 hours entitlement in full, or work in partnership with other providers to deliver part of it. Schools can also offer 30 hours. Parents will be able to split their entitlement across more than one provider.

How can sessional providers deliver 30 hours?

We encourage providers to work in partnership to offer 30 hours. For example, sessional providers who cannot offer 30 hours a week can work with childminders to offer wraparound care which meets the needs of working parents eligible for 30 hours.

Do parents have to take up the full 30 hours?

No, parents eligible for the 30 hours can take up any amount of childcare up to a maximum of 30 hours.

Can providers charge for meals?

Providers are able to charge parents for meals, nappies and discretionary items such as trips and additional teaching such as learning a musical instrument. However, these charges are voluntary and at the discretion of the parent and therefore cannot be a condition of accessing any free entitlement place.

Providers should deliver the free entitlements consistently to all children accessing any of the free entitlements, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.

How much will providers be paid?

Local authorities determine the funding rates for providers in their area based on the EYNFF Operational Guidance. All local authorities must tell providers their hourly rate before 31st March 2017.

Local authorities must now pass on the majority of the funding they receive centrally to providers – from 2017/18 they must pass on 93% and from 2018/19 at least 95%.

Local authorities will offer the same funding rate for both the universal 15 hours as well as the additional 15 hours. They must also offer a universal base rate to all types of providers by 2019-20.

Will providers be paid more to meet the needs of children with SEND?

Additional financial support is available for providers to support access for children with special educational needs.

New legislation requires all LAs to have a SEN Inclusion Fund, and to consult on how it will be allocated. In addition, the new Disability Access Fund (DAF) will pay £615 per year directly to providers to support access into early years for eligible children. Parents will need to apply for this allowance. Providers will be able to use the parent declaration form template, due to be published alongside the Model Agreement to identify eligible children. LAs will then check that the DAF eligibility requirements have been met before releasing any funds. Further information can be found within the EYNFF Operational guidance.

Children with an identified special educational need (EHP) will receive additional funding.

Are there any other funding supplements for providers?

Local authorities must grant a supplement on the basis of deprivation. They also have the discretion to award supplements on the basis of rurality/sparsity, flexibility, quality and English as an additional Language.

How will providers know if a child is eligible?

Parents will apply online and will be given a unique code; they must give this code to their provider, along with their national insurance number and child's date of birth, so that the provider can confirm with their local authority or a provider portal that it is a valid code. If they are eligible, they will receive a 30 hours eligibility code.

Each area will have their own system for doing this and many will mirror the checking process for the two year old entitlement. We are funding local authorities to put digital portals in place so that providers can check this quickly and simply.

Will there be support for parents without IT?

HMRC will offer a telephone line and paper letter option. Mobile phone text will be used to alert parents when they need to check their eligibility. A family can nominate a family representative to pass on information.

Other useful information:

Business sustainability toolkit

DfE has launched a business sustainability toolkit with an initial suite of products available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-business-sustainability>.

Childcare calculator

HMRC is developing a range of digital tools to support parents and these include a childcare calculator to support parents to check what help they could get with childcare costs – which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

DfE Childminder grants for 30 hours

There are three types of grants available:

- ☐ A £500 grant for an early years childminder or childcare provider on domestic premises
- ☐ A £1,000 grant for an early years childminder or childcare provider on domestic premises of children with special educational needs and disability (SEN/D)
- ☐ A £1,000 grant for a Childminder Agency (CMA).

The scheme is only open to newly registered businesses. These are those which have been registered with Ofsted or a CMA within the last 12 months. From 1 May 2017, a newly registered business will be one registered with Ofsted or a CMA within the last 3 months.

The Childcare Business Grants Scheme is funded by the Department for Education. There is a fixed amount of funding available. The scheme is due to end by 31 March 2018, or sooner if all funds have been exhausted – <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-business-grant>. The 'find out more' link on that page takes you to the following website: <https://www.childcarebusinessgrants.com>.