

The 30 hour funding offer

30 hours funding eligibility.

To qualify for the full 30 hours of free childcare, each parent (or the sole parent in a single parent family) will need to earn, on average, the equivalent of 16 hours on the national minimum wage per week, (currently £111.20 per week for those aged 21 or over), and no more than £100,000 per year. (A family with an annual household income of £199,998 would be eligible if each parent earns just under £100,000). Self-employed parents and those on zero-hours contracts will be eligible if they meet the average earnings threshold. The Government intends to make provision to support families where one parent is in receipt of benefits relating to caring responsibilities or has a disability and the other parent is working. Parents can check their eligibility for 30 Hours Childcare (and for Tax-Free Childcare) by visiting the Government website.

Signing up for 30 hours

You will be able to apply for both 30 hour and tax free childcare using a single application which is available online via childcare service. If you don't have access to the internet, you will be able to do so by phone. To complete your application you will need to provide details such as your name, address and national insurance number, as well as whether you expect to meet the income requirements over the next three months and whether you are in receipt of any benefits. If you live with your partner, you'll need to provide the same information for them as well. This will enable HMRC to decide whether your child is eligible for the 30 hours (as well as tax-free childcare). If you are eligible, you will be given an 11-digit code that you will need to take to your childcare provider along with your national insurance number and your child's birth certificate. Your provider will then use the government's eligibility checking system to check the code is valid. If it is, they will be able to book your child's place. You will need to reconfirm your eligibility every three months and will receive a reminder by text message or email from the government before the deadline. If you give false information about your eligibility, you could be fined up to £3000.

Tax-free childcare

Tax-free childcare is a government scheme that allows all eligible parents of children under 12 – or 17, if your child has a disability – to open an online account to pay for childcare. For every £80 you pay in, the government will pay in an extra £20. You can save up to £10,000 in a tax-free childcare account (£8,000 that you've paid in, plus £2,000 that the government has paid in) or up to £20,000 (£16,000 that you've paid in, plus £4,000 that the government has paid in) if your child has a disability. The eligibility criteria for Tax-Free Childcare is broadly the same as for the 30 - hour offer (see the eligibility box-out). You can only use Tax-Free Childcare to pay registered childcare providers. It is important to note that, while you can use Tax-Free Childcare alongside the 30 - hour offer (or 15 hour offer), you can't use it at the same time as:

- Childcare vouchers
- Universal Credit
- Tax credits

Details are also available on the government's Childcare Choices website: childcarechoices.gov.uk

