



Frequently Asked Questions for Providers – Part 1

The 15 hours of childcare a week, available for all 3 and 4 year olds, is referred to as the **universal entitlement**. The additional 15 hours of funded childcare a week, for the working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, is referred to as the **extended entitlement**.

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Q1. What is the 30 hours (extended entitlement)?

The government has introduced an additional 15 hours a week of funded childcare, to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, who meet the **eligibility criteria**. This is in addition to the **universal entitlement** of 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds. It means that eligible families will be able to access up to a total of 1140 hours of free early education and childcare a year. In Kingston and Richmond the additional hours will usually be referred to as the **extended entitlement**. The extended entitlement was implemented across England in September 2017.

Q2. Who can offer the extended entitlement?

Childcare providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register can offer the extended entitlement although they may not choose to participate in offering the extended hours. This includes childminders, day nurseries, playgroups, pre-schools, nursery schools, schools with nursery classes and out-of-school providers.

Q4. How will parents find out about the extended entitlement?

Parents can find out about the extended entitlement and other childcare entitlements by visiting www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Q5. Who is eligible to access the extended entitlement?

The extended entitlement will be made available to parents where:

- both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family)
- each parent earns on average a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Living Wage, or if under 25 years of age, the equivalent of 16 hours at National Minimum Wage
- neither parent has an income of more than £100,000 per year

The extended entitlement will also be made available to families where:

- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave
- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave
- both parents are employed but one or both parents is 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

Q6. How will we know if parents are eligible for the extended entitlement?

HMRC have developed an online application system (via www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) that parents use to apply for the extended entitlement. If they are eligible they will be given an eligibility code, which they will need to present to the childcare provider of their choice.

Parents will need to reconfirm their eligibility every three months, through the online HMRC system, to continue accessing the extended entitlement.

Q7. Can parents use different providers to access the extended entitlement?

Yes, parents can take up the entitlement across a maximum of 2 sites in one day (this includes different types of provision on one site). This is to support the wellbeing of a child by minimising the number of transfers experienced in one day.

Q8. What will flexible provision look like?

The following points outline the government's response to what flexible provision will look like:

- The total funded entitlements for 3 and 4 year olds must be provided over no fewer than 38 weeks and up to a year. This allows parents to 'stretch' their funded childcare over the year if that is what they wish to do and if the provider can accommodate it.
- There will be no minimum session length for the delivery of the universal entitlement and the extended entitlement. This allows parents to use wraparound provision to meet their working needs, for example using a breakfast club.
- The hours in which the free entitlements can be funded are between 6am and 8pm, to provide additional flexibility to parents.
- However, to protect the child's wellbeing, the government has restricted the number of funded hours, which a child can access in one day, to 10 hours.

Q9. Can we charge parents for any hours they use, which exceed their entitlement?

Yes, if parents need to use hours that exceed their entitlement, providers can charge for these extra unfunded hours.

Q10. What happens if a parent no longer meets the eligibility criteria to access the extended entitlement?

If a family no longer meets the eligibility criteria, their child will not immediately lose their childcare place for the extended entitlement, as there will be a grace period to give the parents the opportunity to regain employment.

Achieving for Children (AfC) will complete audit checks to review the validity of eligibility codes for children who qualify for 30 hours free childcare at 6 fixed points in the year. Providers will be notified by AfC, following audit checks.

The following table sets out when parents are required to reconfirm their eligibility, when AfC will complete audit checks and, if parents fall out of eligibility during this period, what date the grace period ends.

Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	LA audit date	Grace Period End date
1 January – 10 February	11 February	31 March
11 February – 31 March	1 April	31 August
1 April – 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

If circumstances change during the grace period, parents can reapply again and if eligible they can continue to receive the extended hours.

However, once the grace period ends, if a parent still does not meet the eligibility criteria the child will no longer be able to access the extended entitlement, although will still be able to receive the universal 15 hours a week (570 hours a year) of free childcare, for 3 and 4 year olds.

Q11. Is there going to be a different funding rate for the existing universal entitlement and the extended entitlement?

No, there is a single funding rate for the universal and the extended entitlement.

Q12. Are there any changes in the way local authorities pass on funding to providers?

Local authorities will be required to:

- pass on and 95%, from 2018-19, of the planned early years funding directly to providers
- distribute a universal base rate to all childcare providers in their area, regardless of type, by 2019-20
- pay all childcare providers, who opt in for monthly payments, by September 2018

You can read more about the early years funding reforms, introduced by the central government, [here](#).

Q13. Can we charge for meals and snacks?

Government funding for the universal and the extended entitlement is for the purpose of covering the cost of delivering EYFS quality provision. This funding is not intended for the use of covering the cost of consumable items such as meals, snacks, drink and nappies.

Providers can charge for meals, snacks and other consumables (such as nappies), as long as these charges are voluntary for the parent and are not a condition of taking up a free publicly funded place. You can read more about meals and additional charges [here](#).