



# Free

**Early education  
and childcare for  
3 and 4 year olds**



**achieving  
for children**

## What is my child entitled to?

All 3 and 4 year olds in England are entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare a year. This is often taken as 15 hours each week for 38 weeks of the year. Children can attend fewer than 15 hours a week, or you can use the free hours as part of the childcare you need and pay for any extra.

You can start claiming free childcare the term after your child turns 3.

| Third birthday between    | Eligible from                     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 April - 31 August       | Autumn term starting in September |
| 1 September - 31 December | Spring term starting in January   |
| 1 January - 31 March      | Summer term starting in April     |

Some parents may be eligible for the extended entitlement of an additional 15 hours per week. For more information please visit [www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk) and search for 30 hours free childcare.

## Where can I claim the funding?

Your child must go to an eligible provider within the Kingston or Richmond boroughs, but you don't need to be a resident of those boroughs.

An eligible provider is:

- a maintained nursery school or class

Or one of the following who is eligible to offer funded places:

- a private nursery registered with Ofsted
- a private or voluntary playgroup registered with Ofsted
- an independent school registered with the Department for Education
- a childminder registered with Ofsted

## How do I find a place for my child?

To find out more, visit [www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk) and search for Early Education Funding.

To contact a private provider or childminder who offers the funding, visit [www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk) and search for childcare. You must let the provider know that you would like to claim the 15 hours funding when you book your child's place.

## How can I take the 15 hours?

### **Basic entitlement of 15 hours a week only**

If you require the basic entitlement of 15 hours a week only, you are advised to apply for a place at your local maintained nursery school or discuss your request with your nursery manager or childminder. If your provider is unable to offer you 15 hours, please contact the Family Information Service for further advice.

### **Splitting the 15 hours a week**

The 15 hours can be split between a maximum of two private providers each week. Each provider will claim your child's eligible hours each week. Funding cannot be split with a maintained nursery.

### **Flexible hours**

Some childcare providers are able to offer the 15 hours flexibly, for example not in fixed three hour sessions a day. You can ask your preferred provider whether they offer flexible places or not.

### **Childcare provider not offering 38 weeks**

If your childcare provider offers fewer than 38 weeks a year, you cannot send them to another provider at the end of term to make up the difference.

## Can I use a provider in another borough?

Each local authority pays the funding for children who attend registered providers within their borough. If your child goes to a provider in another area, your application will be processed by their local authority. You can find a list of all local authority Family information Service numbers on the Family and Childcare Trust website at [finder.familyandchildcaretrust.org](https://finder.familyandchildcaretrust.org)

## Can the funding be transferred if my child moves to a new provider?

Funding cannot be transferred mid-term, so you should not consider a move to a different provider until the start of a new term. Please speak to your provider for advice.

## How do I claim the funding?

You are not able to claim the funding directly. Childcare providers will claim on your behalf. During the first two weeks of each term you will be asked to sign a Parent Declaration Form. You cannot be asked to pay up front for the funded element of your child's day.

Each term, providers have a deadline to claim the funding. We cannot fund a child who has not started by this date.

## Will I have to pay any extra fees?

Please note that many of the childcare providers offer chargeable services on top of the free hours (for example additional hours or meals). Please speak to your provider for more information. Your provider should let you know in advance if you will be required to pay any additional costs, and they must be made clear on your invoice.

For more information visit  
[www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk) and search for  
Free Early Education Funding or  
contact **Family Information Service** on  
[fis@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:fis@achievingforchildren.org.uk) or  
[020 8547 5215](tel:02085475215)



[www.facebook.com/AfCinfo](https://www.facebook.com/AfCinfo)



[AforC\\_info](https://twitter.com/AforC_info)

