

Parent Guidance:

How to claim 15 hours Funded childcare including where to get your code

Applications are now open for eligible working parents of 2-year-olds to receive 15 hours funded childcare, starting from April 2024.

It's the first step in our promise to expand the [30 hours funded childcare scheme](#) for working parents from when their child turns nine months until they start school.

We're making the biggest investment by a UK government into childcare in history, doubling the amount we expect to spend over the next few years from around £4 billion to around £8 billion each year.

How do I apply?

You need to meet our [eligibility criteria](#) before you can claim 15 hours funded childcare.

You apply online here on [Gov.uk](#).

You'll need to make sure you have the following information to hand before starting the application:

- your national insurance number (or unique taxpayer reference if you are self-employed)
- the date you started or are due to start work
- details of any government support or benefits you receive
- the UK birth certificate reference number (if you have one) for your child.

You may find out if you're eligible straight away, but it can take up to 7 days.

Once your application has been approved, you'll get a code for funded childcare to give to your childcare provider.

Applications are open from now until 31 March. If you miss the deadline, or don't receive your code by 31 March, you won't be able to start using the new entitlements from 1 April.

What if I'm already registered for Tax Free Childcare?

Parents must reconfirm that they are still eligible for Tax-Free Childcare every 3 months.

As applications are now open for the new hours entitlement, when eligible parents reconfirm they will receive a code which will also enable them to access the new offer.

To provide reassurance to parents with reconfirmation windows in late February and March, we're taking additional steps to ensure every parent is able to give their code to their provider in good time.

If your reconfirmation window opens on or after the 15 February, HMRC will send you a letter with a temporary code before this date.

The letter will also explain how to use your code to claim your place in April. Where possible, please wait for your letter to arrive. You don't need to contact HMRC.

Before your letter arrives, you can speak to your provider and use your eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare to demonstrate your eligibility for the new hours entitlement, as the eligibility criteria are the same. You can do this by showing your provider:

- Proof of your Tax-Free Childcare eligibility (this can be a screenshot from your [childcare account](#), or simply showing your account to your provider)
- When your reconfirmation window is (you can get this from your [childcare account](#))
- Your National Insurance number, and

- Proof of your child's date of birth, for example your child's birth certificate, to show they turn 2 on or before 31 March 2024.

However, you must wait for your code (either via letter or through your regular childcare account) to formally confirm your place.

Do I need to wait for my reconfirmation window to add another child to my account?

A parent who is already using the childcare service for another child can add a new child to their account at any time.

Your reconfirmation cycle for your current Tax-Free Childcare will not affect this.

What happens once I receive my code?

You'll need to take the code to your childcare provider, along with your National Insurance Number and your child's date of birth.

Your childcare provider will process the code to provide your place.

Your local authority can provide support for finding a place in your area.

If I receive a code in a letter from HMRC, does this make my code on my childcare account invalid?

We're taking these additional steps as a small number of childcare providers are operating earlier deadlines to process codes.

If you are aware of your childcare provider's deadline, and your reconfirmation window opens before this deadline, you can continue to use the code accessed via your childcare account, even if you have received a letter with an alternative code. Both codes will be valid.

Do I still need to reconfirm if my window opens on or after 15 February?

If your reconfirmation window opens on or after 15 February, you will receive a letter with a temporary code which can be used straight away to claim your place.

However, once your reconfirmation window opens, you will still need to reconfirm via your Childcare Account and share this digital code with your provider.

This is because you will need to continue to reconfirm via your Childcare Account to ensure your eligibility doesn't lapse.

What happens if I lose the letter with my code?

Your letter from HMRC should arrive by 15 February. If you haven't received a letter by 15 February, or if you lose the letter including your code after it has arrived, you should contact HMRC.

Please wait for your letter to arrive before contacting HMRC.

My child turns 2 after 1 April. Why aren't I entitled to funded childcare?

You can only apply for the first phase of the new working parent entitlement if your child is already 2-years-old or will have had their 2nd birthday on or before 31 March 2024.

Children who are born on or after 1 April will become eligible later in the year:

Your child's birthday	When they can get their hours from
1 January to 31 March 2024	Term starting on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August 2024	Term starting on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December 2024	Term starting on or after 1 January

Parents are only able to claim the entitlements from the term after because this gives local authorities and childcare providers enough time to prepare.