

Frequently Asked Questions for parents

1. How do I know if I'm eligible?

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

Working parents in England who each earn more than £8,670 - equivalent to at least £167 per week or 16 hours at the National Minimum Wage - but less than £100,000 [adjusted net income](#) per year, will be eligible.

Eligibility is calculated on an individual basis rather than by household. This means if you have a partner, you must both individually earn between these two amounts.

If you, or your partner, are on maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, or one of you is unable to work because you are disabled or have caring responsibilities, you could still be eligible.

You (and your partner if you have one) must have a national insurance number, and at least one parent (the one who is making the application) must have at least one of the following:

- British or Irish citizenship
- [settled or pre-settled status](#), or you have applied and you're waiting for a decision.
- permission to access public funds - your UK residence card will tell you if you can't do this.

Parents already receiving [some additional forms of government support](#), such as Universal Credit, working tax credits or child tax credits, can also receive 15 hours of fully funded early education, including childcare, for 2-year-olds, separate from the new entitlement for working parents.

2. How do I apply?

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.

Parents will be asked to reconfirm that they are still eligible for the support every 3 months and will be reissued their code.

3. **What happens if I'm already registered for Tax-Free Childcare and my reconfirmation window doesn't open until late February or March?**

If you already have a Tax-Free Childcare account for your 2-year-old you will be given your childcare code when you next reconfirm eligibility for that scheme.

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.

We are aware that some parents with a late February / early March confirmation window may be anxious about confirming a place in time. For those parents whose reconfirmation window opens on or after the 15th February and who wish to give their provider a code earlier, we are setting out the following steps:

- HMRC will send out letters before the middle of February with a valid temporary code which you can use to confirm your child's place with their provider for April (with hours funded by the entitlement).
- After this you will still need to reconfirm your eligibility through your online [childcare account](#) in the usual way when your reconfirmation window opens.

- You will then receive a new digital code via your childcare account that you can then use for as long as you stay eligible and reconfirm when prompted to. You will need to provide this to your childcare provider, though you will not need to wait for this digital code to confirm your place (the temporary code can be used for this).

The next steps will be set out clearly in the letter you will receive. You should not contact HMRC before you've received your letter as they won't be able to provide you with a code.

4. Why is the limit per parent? Wouldn't per household make more sense?

The income eligibility criteria are applied on a per parent basis as tax is calculated on an individual basis rather than a household basis. Working parents who individually earn more than £8,670 (equivalent to at least £167 per week or 16 hours at the National Minimum Wage) but less than £100,000 [adjusted net income](#) per year, will be eligible.

5. I'm a student. Why can I not access the entitlements?

Students who work in addition to studying are eligible if you meet the income requirements. Students who do not work are not eligible, but we recognise the value of parents continuing in education and provide a range of support for those in further or higher education.

6. Am I eligible if I'm on maternity leave?

If your partner works and meets the eligibility criteria, and you are on maternity leave, paternity leave, or adoption leave, you may still be eligible. Please see [this article](#) for more information.

7. Why are parents who earn more than £100k not eligible for the entitlements?

The £100,000 [adjusted net income](#) level was chosen to correspond with income tax thresholds. The universal 15 hours funded childcare offer remains in place for all parents of 3- and 4-year-olds, regardless of parental circumstances, including those who earn over £100,000.

8. I'm on Universal Credit (UC). Will applying for 15 hours make me lose my UC?

You can apply for the 15 hours, and this will not affect your UC.

(If 30 hours is mentioned, then the answer changes to the following): If you are taking up more than 15 hours, you can claim UC childcare which can support you with up to 85% of the cost of the remaining hours.

9. I haven't received a letter from HMRC on what to do yet.

Letters will only be sent to parents who are already registered for Tax-Free Childcare and whose reconfirmation windows opens on or after 15th February and before 1 April 2024.

Please make sure that all your contact details on your childcare account are up to date, so that we can contact you if we need to about your childcare. HMRC are working to send letters to you before the middle of February. Before your letter arrives, you can speak to your provider and show them that you are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare and ask them to reserve a place for you.

That is because the eligibility criteria for Tax-Free Childcare and the new hours 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 in order to confirm your place.

10. 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 check the code and then allocate your child a place if available. We recommend parents speak with their chosen provider about when they will be able to offer them a place.

If your chosen provider doesn't have a place available, we advise that you explore other providers in your local area.

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

11. My child turns two 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 for 2-year-olds if your child is already 2 years old or will have had their 2nd birthday on or before 31 March 2024.

This is because children become eligible for a funded childcare place at different points in the year, depending on when they were born. They may have to wait until the next academic term before they are eligible.

Your child's birthday	When they can get their hours from
1 January to 31 March 2024	Term starting on or after 1 April 2024
1 April to 31 August 2024	Term starting on or after 1 September 2024
1 September to 31 December 2024	Term starting on or after 1 January 2025

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

12. How will I know when to reconfirm my eligibility?

You will receive a reminder:

- when your reconfirmation window opens • a week before your reconfirmation deadline
- on your reconfirmation deadline.

You will not be able to reconfirm your eligibility before your reconfirmation window begins.

13. My reconfirmation window isn't until the second half of February or March. Is this too late to secure a funded childcare place?

If you are already claiming Tax-Free Childcare and your reconfirmation window doesn't open before the 15th February, and you do not yet have a code for this reason, HMRC will send you a letter before the 15th of February with a valid temporary code.

This code can be used to confirm your place with a provider for April, but after this you will still need to reconfirm through your online [childcare account](#) in the usual way when your reconfirmation window opens. The next steps will be set out clearly in the letter you will receive.

You should not contact HMRC before you receive your letter as they will be unable to provide you with a code.

If you haven't received a letter by the 15th February, or if you lose the letter including your code, you will be able to contact HMRC who will be able to remind you of your code.

Where possible, please wait for your letter to arrive and refrain from contacting HMRC before this time. Before your letter arrives, you have the option to speak to your provider, explain that you are waiting for your HMRC letter, and ask if they can reserve a place for you.

You can show that you are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare if your provider asks for proof of eligibility. This is evidence that you are eligible for the new working parents entitlements as these forms of support have the same eligibility criteria. You can show them:

- Proof of your Tax-Free Childcare eligibility (this can be a screenshot from your [childcare account](#), or showing them your account on your phone)
- 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 that your child turns 2 on or before 31 March 2024.

You will need to show your provider the code that you will receive in your letter from HMRC. You must do this to formally secure your place. If you do not give your provider a code, you won't be able to take up a funded place.

We also know that some providers are able to amend invoices if they have issued them before a parent has received their code, so we recommend you speak to your provider if you are in this situation.

14. How do I reconfirm?

To confirm your details are up to date and that you remain eligible for Tax-Free Childcare and/or the funded childcare entitlements, you will need to log into your childcare account every 3 months.

In most cases reconfirmation should only take a few minutes.

You need to log into your childcare account using your Government Gateway ID to reconfirm: [Sign in to your childcare account – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The dates between which you should reconfirm will be displayed when you log in.

Even if you have received a letter from HMRC with a temporary code (for those with reconfirmation windows that open on or after the 15th February 2024), then you still need to reconfirm through your childcare account when your reconfirmation window opens and given this digital code to your provider. You do not need to wait until this point to confirm your place with your provider, which you can do with the temporary code.

15. Do I need to apply for new entitlements if I already claim Tax-Free Childcare or 30 hours for my older child?

If you get Tax-Free Childcare or 30 hours for another child (i.e. not your 2-year-old) then you will need to add your 2-year-old to the account and apply for the new entitlement.

16. 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.

17. What happens if I miss the reconfirmation deadline?

Your eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare and/or your funded childcare entitlements will lapse if you miss the reconfirmation deadline.

If you do miss it, and your child is attending a childcare provider, a grace period for your funded childcare will apply.

This means your child can continue in their place for the time being, but you need to submit another application as soon as you can to keep getting Tax-Free Childcare and/or the funded childcare entitlements.

You can submit such an application any time you meet the eligibility criteria for funded childcare entitlements or Tax-Free Childcare.

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You must then present your code to your provider to confirm your place can continue.

18. Can we get a rebate (if you're not eligible but would have been if it had been rolled out earlier)

This is not something we are able to offer, as you would have received the support that was available to you at that time. However, if you are eligible but were unable to take up a place due to a technical issue, [you may be eligible for compensation.](#)