

**3&4 Year Old Universal Entitlement  
(15 Hours)  
Information for Parents and Carers**



**What is it?**

Funded childcare is available for all 3 & 4 year olds in England.

It must be used with an approved childcare provider and stops when your child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school age).

**What is the criteria?**

All children resident in England are eligible from the term after their third birthday.

**How do I apply?**

You do not need to apply. Your child will be become automatically entitled the term after they turn 3 years old.

**How many hours are available?**

570 hours are allocated each year. This is split over 3 terms: Summer, Autumn and Spring. Un-accessed funding cannot be claimed retrospectively from previous terms.

Funding is normally delivered up to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks or up to 12 hours per week for 47.5 weeks (if you choose to stretch the entitlement over some school holidays). Please ensure you fully understand your childcare provider's delivery method, including what days are funded and what days are not funded.

You do not need to use all the hours allocated per week. Your child can attend for less hours. They can also attend for more hours. Additional hours and services are a private arrangement between you and your childcare provider. You should expect to pay for any additional hours and services voluntarily purchased.

**Will there be any cost to me?**

The 15 universal hours are funded.

Some childcare settings will offer additional hours for childcare at a private cost. Some settings offer voluntary additional services, such as meals, outings, nappies or sun cream. Your provider might give you the choice of paying for meals or providing food yourself, though it is important to note that this is not possible at all childcare settings (for example, some may not have food storage facilities). Some settings may also offer extra curricular activities, e.g. Forest school, yoga or music lessons. If you purchase any extra hours or additional services, you should expect to pay for these. Please make sure you fully understand what services you have selected from your childcare provider.

Each provider that offers Early Year Entitlements, should have a clear admissions policy and fee structure to help you make informed choices about your childcare.

**When does my child become eligible for funding?**

From the start of the term following the child's 3rd birthday.

A child born on or between	Will become eligible to start their place from
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 <sup>st</sup> August	The start of the autumn term (September)
1 <sup>st</sup> September – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	The start of the spring term (January)
1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> March	The start of the summer term (April)

### **Where can it be used?**

It's available at any registered early years and childcare provider, including:

- Nurseries
- Childminders
- Sessional pre-schools
- Schools

### **Can I use more than one provider for childcare?**

Yes, you can split the funding over more than one provider subject to a maximum 15 universal hours per week (or 12 stretched hours).

### **What paperwork do I need to fill out to claim funding?**

You will be required to complete a local authority parent declaration form and provide evidence of the child's date of birth to the childcare provider. Each childcare setting will have their own registration forms for completion.

You do not need to pay a registration fee to access your funded childcare. If your provider requests a deposit, this should be refunded in a timely manner.

### **What are the benefits of sending a child to a childcare setting?**

- Making friends and having fun
- Increasing confidence and independence
- Building social and emotional skills
- Encouraging communication and language skills
- Developing physical skills
- Identity building
- Being school ready when the time comes
- A well deserved break for you.



### **How do I find a childcare provider in Lincolnshire?**

If you need help finding a childcare provider in your area, please visit

<https://lincolnshire.fsd.org.uk/> or call 0800 195 1635

To find out more about funding for 3 & 4 year olds, please visit:

<http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/early-years-education/help-childcare-costs>