

What you need to know

Certain earning criteria apply



To be eligible, each parent or carer (in dual-parent households) must earn more than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week, but less than £100,000 per year*.

**Some exceptions apply*

Funding only covers term times

The early entitlement offer only applies for 38 weeks of the year. However, some providers will 'stretch' the offer, delivering fewer hours per week for more weeks of the year (for example, 11.4 hours a week for 50 weeks of the year).



Eligibility doesn't kick in right away



Eligible children can only access the entitlement the term after they turn nine months. For example, if your child turns nine months on 10 September, they will be eligible for a funded place from 1 January.

Provider can charge for extras

Government funding is intended to cover the cost of care and education but not extras like food, trips or nappies, so you may be charged for these.



Applying while on parental leave

If you are on parental leave, plan to return to work or start a new job by the end of September 2024 and are applying for a funded place for the child who is the subject of parental leave, then you can apply for an eligibility code from **12 May 2024**. If you're applying for a funded place for a child who is *not* the subject of parental leave, then you are only able to apply for an eligibility code 31 days before you return to employment or start new employment.

Tax-free childcare deadlines

If you needed to reconfirm your eligibility for tax-free childcare before 12 May but won't have another reconfirmation window opening until **after 9 June**, you will receive a letter from HMRC containing a valid temporary code and instructions on how to use it to claim your entitlement. If you haven't received your letter by 24 May, you should contact HMRC. If your window opens **before 9 June**, you won't receive a letter as your window will open in good time for you to register for a code and give it to your provider.

Impact of underfunding

The money the government gives to pre-schools, childminders and nurseries to pay for funded places has historically not covered the cost of delivering it. Over recent years, funding for entitlement schemes has failed to keep up with the many costs that early years providers face – like staff wages, rents, and energy – meaning that the situation is getting worse. As a result, providers have had to look for ways to fill the funding gap or risk going out of business, meaning higher fees for families.

For more information on the rules of the early entitlement offers and guidance on how to apply for a place, scan the QR code or visit the Family Corner website at www.familycorner.co.uk.

