

Poppy's
Day Nursery



Free Early Years Education

All children become eligible for Free Early Years Education the term after their third birthday. Some 2 year olds may also be eligible for funding through a different scheme called Free For 2 (conditions apply).

A child is eligible for Free Early Education at the start of the term after their third birthday in line with the DoE guidelines.

An eligible child born between:

1 April – 31 August
(inclusive)

1 Sept – 31 Dec
(inclusive)

1 Jan – 31 Mar
(inclusive)

**Will be able to take their free
Early education entitlement from:**

The start of Term 1 following their third birthday (after Summer holidays)

The start of Term 3 following their third birthday (after Christmas/New Year)

The start of Term 5 following their third birthday (after April holiday)

Your child is able to access their Free Early Education to a maximum of 15 hours per week. This is over 38 weeks of the term, currently in line with KCC school term dates. Proof of your child's date of birth will be required with sight of either a birth certificate of the red book.

Free Early Education can be split between a maximum of 2 providers up to the 15 hours per week (or 30 hours if eligible).

30 hours of Free Early Education may be available – please see separate pages – this is subject to separate eligibility criteria. Further information is available at www.kent.gov.uk/freechildcare

Do You Qualify For 30 Hours Of Free Early Years Education Funding?

Parents of three and four year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare: Further information at www.kent.gov.uk/freechildcare

- They earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months
- This equates to £120 a week (or c.£6,000 a year) for each parent over 25 years old or £112.80 a week (or c.£5,800 a year) for each parent between 21 and 24 years old
- This applies whether you are in paid employment, self-employed or on zero hours contract
- The parent (and their partner where applicable) should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work
- Where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or if they are on statutory sick leave
- Where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work
- Where a parent is in a 'start-up period' (i.e. they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months

A parent will not meet the criteria when:

- Either parent has an income of more than £100,000
- Either parent is a non-EEA national and subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public fund)

What happens if a parent loses eligibility:

- They will receive a 'grace period' – this means they will be able to keep their childcare for a short period
- Once the 'grace period' has lapsed, the parent may be entitled to the universal 15 hours entitlement

Signing up for the 30 hours Free Early Education Funding

You will be able to apply for both the 30 hours offer and tax free childcare using a single application online via www.kent.gov.uk/freechildcare

To complete the application, you will need to provide details such as your name, address and National Insurance number as well as whether you expect to meet the income requirements over the next 3 months and whether you are in receipt of any benefits. If you live with a partner you will need to provide the same information for them as well. This will enable HMRC to decide whether your child is eligible for 30 hours (as well as tax free childcare).

If you are eligible, you will be given an 11-digit code that you will need to take to your childcare provider along with your National Insurance number and your child's birth certificate. Your provider can then use the Government eligibility checking system to check that the code is valid. If it is, then they will be able to book your child's place.

You will need to reconfirm your eligibility every 3 months and will receive a reminder text or email message from the government before the deadline.

30 Hours Helpline – 0300 123 4097

FAQ about the 30 hours offer

Q: My child is going to turn 3 next year. How soon can I access the 30 hours?

A: Your child will be eligible for the 30 hours offer from the term after they turn 3, or the term after you receive your eligibility code – whichever is later.

For example, if your child turns 3 on 25th March and you apply for the 30 hours on 27th March, your child will be eligible for a place from 1st April (the start of the Spring term) but if you do not apply until 5th April then your child will not be eligible until 1st September.

Q: If I am not eligible for the 30 hours offer, can I still get my 15 hours?

A: Yes, the 15 hour offer is universal so if you are not eligible for 30 hours then you will still be eligible for 15 hours.

Q: What happens if I become ineligible for the offer i.e. I lose my job?

A: If you no longer meet the eligibility criteria your child's 30 hour place will continue to be funded for a 'grace period'. You should discuss this with your provider if and when you lose your eligibility. How long the 'grace period' will last depends on when you become ineligible for the offer and how long is left of the current term. Once the 'grace period' has expired you will still be eligible for the 15 hour funded childcare. If you are taking up your 30 hours at two separate providers you can decide at which one you want to continue using your 15 hours.

More information on this can be found on the Government's Childcare Choices Website – www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Tax Free Childcare

Tax free childcare is a Government scheme that allows all eligible parents of children under 12 or 17 if your child has a disability, to open an online account to pay for childcare. For every £80 you pay in the government will pay in an extra £20.

You can save up to £10,000 in a tax free childcare account (£8,000 that you have paid in and £2,000 that the Government has paid in) or up to £20,000 (£16,000 that you have paid in and £4,000 that the Government has paid in) if your child has a disability.

The eligibility criteria for tax free childcare is broadly the same as for the 30 hour offer. You can only use tax free childcare to pay registered providers.

It is important to note that while you can use tax free childcare alongside the 30 hours offer (or 15 hour offer), you can't use it at the same time as:

- Childcare vouchers
- Universal credit
- Tax credits

More information on this can be found on the Government's Childcare Choices Website – www.childcarechoices.gov.uk