

## Nursery Education Funding Applications from 12 May 2024

### FAQ

Starting from 12 May, eligible working parents whose children will be aged between 9- and 23-months old on 31 August, can apply to receive 15 hours childcare starting from September 2024.

#### Parents who are applying for the first time

When you apply, you'll receive a code to give to your childcare provider. It's important to remember that codes need to be reconfirmed every three months, so parents applying any time before 1 June will need to reconfirm their code prior to the offer starting in September.

You are able to claim your place the term after your child turns the relevant age. This gives local authorities and childcare providers enough time to prepare.

There is no limit on the number of codes available, so you don't have to apply on 12 May itself. We recommend, however, that you reach out now to your preferred provider to check by when they will require your code and that you apply by the start of the school summer holidays.

#### How do I apply?

You apply online here on [Apply for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) once you have checked our eligibility criteria [Check you're eligible for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.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 to give to your childcare provider.



Eligible parents are also able to access Tax-Free Childcare through the same application system. You can apply for Tax-Free Childcare at any time. However, if you don't wish to use Tax-Free Childcare, you don't need to apply for this to be eligible to apply for the 15 hours childcare scheme.

#### **Parents who also receive Tax Free Childcare**

##### 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. After 12 May, eligible parents will need to reconfirm to receive a code which will also enable them to access the new offer.

Parents who are already claiming Tax-Free Childcare and who reconfirm their eligibility before 12 May (and whose next reconfirmation window opens on or after 9 June) will be automatically issued a code in the post from HMRC by 24 May.

This is to ensure every parent can give their code to their provider in good time. This code will be valid to use for 15 hours of government-funded childcare from September.

### **What if my reconfirmation window opens before the 9 June?**

If your reconfirmation window opens before the 9 June you will not receive a letter, as your reconfirmation window will open in good time for you to reconfirm and receive a digital code, and give it to your provider.

The DfE are confident that all eligible parents will be able to get codes by the time they need them, and there is no limit on the number of codes available.

### **If I receive a code in a letter from HMRC, does this make my code on my Childcare Account invalid?**

No. Both codes will be valid, but if you have two codes, one from your letter beginning with 11 and one from the website beginning with 50, please give your provider the code from the website beginning with 50, as this is your permanent digital code for your child.

If you only have one code (beginning with 11) then you can use this code to start using your entitlements. Please remember that once your reconfirmation window opens, you will still need to reconfirm your eligibility through your Childcare Account and share the digital code you will receive at that time (beginning with 50) with your provider.



Parents on parental leave or starting a new job (affected by the 31 day rule change)

### **Can I apply for government-funded childcare if I'm on parental leave?**

If you are applying for childcare for an older child, who is not the subject of the parental leave, you can continue to apply as before.

If you are applying for the child who is the subject of your parental leave, The DfE have extended the period where a parent starting a new job or returning to a job after parental leave (including maternity leave) can apply for government-funded childcare.

Previously, there was a 31-day window in which new parents could apply for childcare before returning to work.

Now, as long as a parent plans to return to work from parental leave or start a new job by the end of September 2024, they can start to apply for a childcare code on 12 May at the same time as everyone else, giving them plenty of time to secure a place.

Parents on parental leave or starting a new job will need to apply online but will then receive a letter in the post within 1 to 2 weeks so they can access their childcare entitlement.

Parents who plan to start or return to work between 1 October 2024 and 31 January 2025 will be able to apply for a code from 1 September 2024 to use from 1 January 2025, in line with existing termly deadlines.