

Childcare Works Briefing 1: Who is eligible for 30 hours of free childcare?

Eligibility for 30 hours of free childcare

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average:
 - a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW), and
 - less than £100,000 per year.

At present, the living wage is £7.20 an hour. Therefore, the minimum income requirement for a parent (over the age of 25) is £115.20 a week. The minimum wage for 21 to 24 year olds is £6.70 an hour – therefore, the minimum income requirement for this group is £107.20 a week
- A parent expects (on average) to earn this amount over the coming three months. The eligibility criteria have been designed to accommodate parents with fluctuating incomes and those who are about to start working or increase their hours.
- For example, a parent who is on a zero-hours contract will get work some weeks, but not others, and may not know in advance if they will have work in any given week. If, on average they work two weeks out of every three, and when they are working they get 25 hours of work at the minimum wage, their child will qualify for 30 hours of free childcare
- Families where one parent does not work (or neither parent works) will not usually be eligible for the extended entitlement EXCEPT where:
 - Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity, adoption leave, or on statutory sick pay
 - One parent is employed and one parent either has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring, or is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits
- A child and parent must be resident (living) in the Local Authority, as evidenced by the parent's proof of residency
- The person applying for the childcare (usually the parent but could be their partner) is 'resident in the UK'.
- Parent means a person who has parental responsibility for the child or care of the child. In cases where a parent has remarried or is living with a partner, the step-parent or partner must also meet the earnings threshold.
- Foster carers are eligible for the extended entitlement for their own children if they meet the criteria, however they are not eligible for the extended entitlement for the children that they foster.