

What is funded childcare?

All 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to a minimum of 570 hours of funded childcare per year. This allows your child to join us for 15 hours per week for 38 weeks/term time. Some families qualify for an additional 570 hours, giving a maximum of 1140 hours per year. If eligible, this allows your child to join us for 30 hours per week for 38 weeks/term time. More information is available: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>.

How does it work at Always Growing?

You can use the funded hours alongside the other schemes, such as Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit. For example, if your child is not eligible for 30 hours funded childcare you could still pay for extra sessions using Tax-Free Childcare. Please see our separate guide to Tax Free Childcare for more information on this.

What is universal funding and how do I access it?

All families with 3 and 4 year old children are eligible for 15 hours per week funded childcare and there is no application process. You can start using this funding the term after your child turns 3.

What is extended funding/30 hours free childcare?

You, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) at least £142.00 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage). If you are self-employed, on maternity or paternity leave or on sick leave or annual leave you may still qualify.

You cannot get 30 hours free childcare if either you, or your partner, each individually expect to earn £100,000 or more per annum.

Eligibility also depends on your child's age and circumstances and your immigration status.

How do I access the extended funded/30 hours free childcare?

You will need to do the following things:

1. Read the information here: <https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>
2. Apply online: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-childcare>
3. Give us your code (it usually starts 500) and confirm the sessions you want your child to attend if you are wanting to change sessions
4. Complete the Parental Declaration form (we will give you a copy of this and highlight what we need to complete)
5. Re-confirm your eligibility every three months online. This is important as it can affect your claim otherwise

How soon after my child turns 3 can I access the extended funded hours?

When your child turns 3	When they can get 30 hours from	When to apply
1 September to 31 December	Term starting on or after 1 January	15 October to 30 November
1 January to 31 March	Term starting on or after 1 April	15 January to 28 February
1 April to 31 August	Term starting on or after 1 September	15 June to 31 July

How can I find out more about funded childcare and the other childcare options available?

The Childcare Choices website is a great source of information and will help you find the best offer available to you - <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Another handy tool is the Childcare Calculator - <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

Feel free to speak to us, or drop us an email at info@alwaysgrowing.co.uk, and we will be happy to help!