

Free childcare for three and four year olds



Good for you,

good for your child

This leaflet outlines the **free 15 hours** childcare for all three and four year olds, and the **30 hours** entitlement for eligible families.

To find out information
call 01582 548888

www.luton.gov.uk/fis

Luton



Free childcare for three and four year olds in Luton

As part of the government's aim to ensure every child gets the best start in life, all parents of three and four year olds in Luton are entitled to 15 hours of FREE childcare per week, starting the term after their third birthday. This means you are entitled to up to 570 hours per year which you can use flexibly to suit your needs. For example, you could choose to use 15 hours per week, during term time, or 12 hours per week over 48 weeks, as long as the total does not exceed 570 hours.

If your child was born between...	Their funded place will start...
1 January and 31 March	April after their 3rd birthday
1 April and 31 August	September after their 3rd birthday
1 September and 31 December	January after their 3rd birthday

If you live in Luton and have a three or four year old, we aim to offer you the hours that you'd prefer at a provider of your choice, to help you better balance your work and family life.

It's free and flexible!

Free

You will not need to pay anything if you are only taking your funded hours, your childcare provider should not charge you a registration fee. However if you do take additional hours you will be charged for these and a registration fee or deposit may apply.

Flexible

Subject to the availability of places and hours at the provider, the full 15 hours can be taken when you want, how you want. You can spread your hours over fewer days a week and you can even split your free entitlement between early years providers if you need to.



30 hours entitlement

If you're a working parent you could also be entitled to an additional 15 hours of free childcare per week; bringing the total up to 30 hours per week (in term time), or 1140 hours per year.

Will I qualify for 30 hours free childcare?

If you're a parent of a three or four year old, you will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare.

- Both parents must be in work, or for single parent families, the sole parent must be at work. "In work" is defined as being in employment (including self-employed) and earning at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage.
- Each parent must earn less than £100,000 per year.

Families will also be eligible if both parents are employed but one parent (or both parents) are:

- temporarily away from the workplace on maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave;
- temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay.

Or if:

- one parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring;
- one parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated and in receipt of specific benefits.

As a parent you will be responsible for checking your eligibility online or through a dedicated HMRC helpdesk.

You can apply online at www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/ or find out more at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/. Alternatively you can call **0300 123 4097 (or 0300 129 9232 for Minicom).**

If you are eligible for the additional 15 hours, you will need to take your eligibility code, your national insurance number, and your child's date of birth to your childcare provider.

You can choose for your child to attend more than one childcare provider, however you cannot use more than two sites in one day. You will also be required to reconfirm your eligibility with HMRC every three months.



The free childcare entitlements offer you a wide range of providers to choose from in Luton, including:

- some children's centre sites
- full day care nurseries
- pre-schools
- some childminders
- local authority nursery schools
- nursery units within an infant or primary school
- independent schools
- free schools
- academies.

So what are you waiting for?

There are a wide range of childcare providers across Luton, so you have a selection of high quality, flexible childcare options to choose from. Together with the free hours, this means greater choice so you can balance your work, family needs and childcare.

If your child is already attending a childcare provider in Luton, arrange to talk to them - they'll be able to tell you what they are offering under this scheme and what you need to do.

If your child isn't currently attending childcare you can find out about local providers, and what they offer, from the Family Information Service on **01582 54 88 88, email fis@luton.gov.uk or search online at www.directory.luton.gov.uk in the 'Family' section.**

 01582 54 88 88

 fis@luton.gov.uk

 www.luton.gov.uk/fis

 @lutoncouncil

 lutoncouncil