

# 30 hours free childcare – information for parents

[www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

- Eligibility can be checked up to 3 months before your child's third birthday at [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)
- Eligibility begins in the funding period following your child's third birthday.
- If you are eligible you will be issued with a voucher code. You must have your code before the period you wish to use it.

## Funding periods:

Child's 3rd birthday	Get your active code by	You can start
1 January to 31 March	31 March	1 April onwards
1st April to 31 August	31 August	1 September onwards
1 September to 31 December	31 December	1 January onwards

- All codes have a re-check date; this is usually every 3 months. Make a note of this each time.
- If you fail to reconfirm in time you fall into a grace period, this allows you to continue accessing the 30 hours free childcare with your current provider until the grace period end date.
- Only active codes at the start of a funding period can be used, those in their grace period cannot.
- Deadlines for getting active codes cannot be changed, it is important that you apply in good time to avoid missing the cut-off dates.
- There is a helpline number for any technical issues when completing the eligibility checker; the HMRC helpline number is 0300 123 4097.

If you have any questions, please email  
[childcare@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@hertfordshire.gov.uk)



## Free early education can be taken at:

- childminders registered with Ofsted
- day nurseries
- nursery schools
- pre-schools
- schools with nursery classes

All providers deliver the early years foundation stage curriculum and offer the same learning opportunities for children. All providers are inspected by Ofsted and some providers can provide flexible provision and opportunities for additional hours.

96% of all Hertfordshire providers are graded good or outstanding by Ofsted. Evidence shows that regular, high quality early education has lasting benefits for all children.

Regardless of where your child accesses their free early education entitlement they will experience a varied and stimulating range of play and early learning activities, including:

- learning by playing and exploring
- creative and critical thinking
- socialising and making friends
- having fun, in a safe and nurturing environment
- being school ready.

You can choose to take these hours at one provider or split them between providers.

You do not have to buy additional hours or additional services such as lunch or activities in order to access free early education. You do not have to pay for any part of your child's free early education.

You can find providers offering free early education places and 30 hours free childcare in your area by contacting your local family centre or on the Hertfordshire childcare directory, [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents)

Contact your local free early education provider, or look on their website, for advice about:

- place availability
- when your child can start
- visits and open days
- how they allocate places
- flexible provision, part-time placements, 30 hours free childcare and additional hours.

For more information visit  
[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents)

