

**ONE
ELIGIBILITY
CODE FROM
0-5 YEARS!***

*from 9 months until child attends Reception or the term following their fifth birthday, whichever is soonest.



KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

CHILDCARE EXPANSION PROGRAMME

CHILDCARE FOR WORKING PARENTS IS CHANGING FROM APRIL 2024. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Parents must meet the eligibility criteria to get the funded hours and application is through HMRC direct.

Applications can be made 13 weeks prior to the child turning 9 months or their birthday, whichever is soonest.

UNIVERSAL 15 HOURS FOR ALL 3 & 4 YEAR OLDS IS NOT CHANGING!
No need to apply, contact a childcare provider to arrange a start date.

- 1st April 2024** ← Eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours childcare support.
- 1st Sept 2024** ← The 15 hours childcare support will be extended to eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3-year-olds. Entitlement starts the term following the child turning 9 months.
- 1st Sept 2025** ← Eligible working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare a week.
- 1st Sept 2026** ← Parents to be able to access formal wraparound care for primary school aged children between 8am - 6pm.

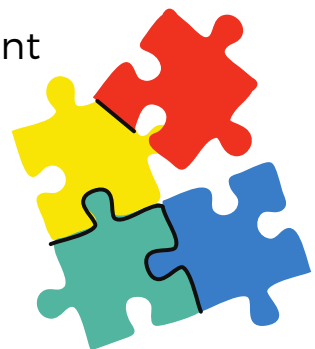
All 2, 3 & 4 year old funding starts the next school term following a child's relevant birthday. For children aged 9 months, they can access the school term after the the child turns 9 months.

- !** Parents must apply to HMRC and have their eligibility code in their possession by the **31st of the month prior** to the entitlement start date. **Families with children aged 9 months can access the term after the child turns 9 months.**
- !** Parents of low incomes or children who get additional support (looked after, adopted, in receipt of DLA etc), will continue to get 15 hours of childcare for their 2 year old providing they too meet the eligibility criteria. **This eligibility criteria and process for applying is not changing.**
- !** It is a parent's responsibility to reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC every 3 months. Failure to do so will result in the entitlement being withdrawn and any hours accessed will need to be paid for by the parent themselves.

15 HOURS CHILDCARE FOR 2 YEAR OLDS

For families receiving some additional forms of government support, may be eligible to 15 hours of early education for children aged 2 years.

Applications are made through the Warrington Council website www.warrington.gov.uk/twoyearfunding



Contact Us

Email: EEFteam@warrington.gov.uk
or
Call: 01925 443 131, our helpline is open 9-5pm Monday to Friday

FOR THE FULL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND TO APPLY, GO TO: WWW.CHILDCARECHOICES.GOV.UK

Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean, 'children from 9 months'?

A child's eligibility is based on the date they were born. This means if they were born on the 21st of January, they turn nine months on 21st October. As the entitlement starts the term following them turning 9 months, the earliest they can access a funded place is 2nd January.

How do I apply?

Applications are made through HMRC via the Childcare Choices website (www.childcarechoices.gov.uk). Warrington Early Years team do not process any of the working parent entitlements apart from families who are foster parents and who are applying for a child they have caring responsibilities for.

I have a temporary contract/zero hour contract, can I still apply?

Yes! If over a 3 month period, your weekly income or expected income will be more than the minimum amount, then you may still be eligible. Apply in good time so that should HMRC require additional evidence from you such as pay slips or letter of employment, they have enough time to do so before the deadline of that term. You must still have your eligibility code by the 31st of January, March or August - whichever is relevant to your application.

I've lost my job, or my circumstances have changed now what?

Don't panic, providing your child is already accessing their funded hours, you will continue to get your entitlement until the end of that school term - this is known as a grace period. This is to give you time to think about what your next steps are. If you find a new job and that means you still meet the eligibility criteria, you need to reconfirm as soon as you can with HMRC to continue without any breaks to the funded hours. You may be required to send evidence of your new employment along with its projected income to HMRC as evidence of your eligibility. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria at the end of the grace period due to not finding suitable work or your earnings are now above the £100,000 threshold, you should speak to your childcare provider about this. You may decide to withdraw your child from their care or agree to pay them through a private agreement. You can log into your childcare account, reconfirming your eligibility and have your code reverified by your chosen childcare provider as soon as you believe you meet the eligibility criteria again, but you will not be able to access the hours until the following term.

I applied but missed reconfirming - what should I do?

You will receive an email telling you that your eligibility has lapsed. Reconfirm as soon as you remember to avoid further delays and speak to your childcare provider about what options are available to you; you may decide to withdraw your child from their care or agree to pay them through a private agreement.

Can I lower my childcare bill further?

Yes, all of the funded childcare can be used in conjunction with Tax-Free childcare or the government Universal Credit help with childcare offer. You can also use these with the 2 year old funding for families receiving additional government support.

Are bonuses counted as income?

Any income earned that is taxed, is considered, so yes, unfortunately, bonuses are included in this. If the following tax year, you are not expected to get a bonus or it will not be as big as last time, you can apply again. If you already have an eligibility code from before, you can log into your childcare account, reconfirming your eligibility and have your code reverified by your chosen childcare provider as soon as you believe you meet the eligibility criteria again, but you will not be able to access the hours until the following term.

Can foster parents apply?

Yes, foster carers who work outside of their fostering role can have access to 30 hours free childcare their own children but also children that they have caring responsibilities for. In order to take up the offer, the foster carer and their partner (if any) must hold additional employment outside of the fostering and access must be consistent with the child's care plan which is confirmed through discussions with the child's social worker. Applications for children who are cared for are made through the Early Years team. Please email EEFTeam@warrington.gov.uk for an application form. For their own children, foster parents apply directly through HMRC in the usual way.

I have my code, but I received it on 1st of the new term. Is that ok?

Unfortunately, all eligibility codes must be received from HMRC by 31st of January, March or August (whichever is relevant) to be able to access the entitlement the following term. This is why we advise that you apply in good time to allow HMRC time to review your application and request additional evidence should they need to. This is despite what you, a parent may be told when you call HMRC about this.

Do all children get 30 hours?

No, a 30 hour funded place is dependant on a families circumstances as an eligibility criteria must be met. Families who do not meet this criteria, particularly those who get additional support from the government may still be eligible to 15 hours of childcare for their 2,3 or 4 year old. Families of 2 year olds wishing to access the 15 hours must meet a separate eligibility criteria that can be found at warrington.gov.uk/twoyearolds Families applying for this entitlement will receive a TYF877... funding code rather than an 11-digit eligibility code. All 3 & 4 year olds receive at least 15 hours of early education regardless of their family circumstances; no application is required. For 3 & 4 year olds, families with working parents can apply for an additional 15 hours to get 30 hours in total.

What is wraparound care?

Wraparound care is formal childcare during term time, for typically, primary school aged children (5-11 year olds). It is in the morning until the start of the school day, and from the end of the school day until usually 6pm. Times may vary by provider depending on the service demand from parents. The service can be provided as an extension by an early years provider, a school themselves, through a stand alone wraparound private provider or a childminder. There is no funded childcare for wraparound, parents use Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit to lower the costs associated with using the service.