30 Hours Free Childcare Entitlement and

Session Changes from September 2017

All 3 and 4 year olds and some 2 year olds in England are currently entitled to free, part-time early years learning, care and development with a recognised provider. Children can currently attend for 15 hours per week, for 38 weeks of the year. These arrangements will continue in September.

**From September 2017**, working parents of 3 and 4 year olds will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, depending on their circumstances. There are specific eligibility criteria which are to be applied uniformly across the country. However we appreciate that you may not know:

1. Whether you will qualify.
2. Where you can access the 30 hours of childcare.
3. Our plans and arrangements for supporting this important initiative.
4. How to go about applying.

**1 Will I qualify for 30 hours free childcare?**

Parents of 3 and 4 year olds will need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:

* They earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum of Living Wage over the coming 3 months.
* This equates to £120 per week (or c. £6,000 a year) for each parent over 25 years old or £112.80 a week (or £5,800 a year) for each parent between 21 and 24 years old.
* This applies whether you are in paid employment, self-employed or on a zero hours contract.
* The parent (and their partner where applicable) should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
* Where one or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or if they are on statutory sick leave.
* Where one parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work.
* Where a parent is in a ‘start-up period’ (they are newly self-employed) they do not need to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months.
* If a non-EEA national, the parent must have recourse to public funds.

**Who will not qualify?**

A parent will not qualify or meet the criteria when:

* Either parent has an income of more than £100,000 per year.
* Either parent is a non-EEA national and is subject to immigration control (and has no recourse to public funds).

**What happens if a parent loses eligibility?**

Everyone appreciates that the unexpected can sometimes happen and personal circumstances can change. If a parent loses eligibility:

* They will receive a “grace period”, which means that even if they no longer qualify they will be able to keep their childcare for a short period.
* Once the “grace period” has come to an end, the parent may well still be entitled to the universal 15 hours entitlement of free child care.

**2 Where can you access the 30 hours of childcare?**

* Any nursery offering the 30 hours
* Pre-school playgroups
* Registered child minders
* The 30 hours childcare can be split across up to 2 recognised providers

**3 Our plans and arrangements for supporting this important initiative.**

Following the issue of Essex County Council’s contract that we have to enter into in order to access the 15 and 30 hours funding, **we have had to revisit our opening times and hence our fee structure.**

In order to be sustainable we need to charge the Montessori premium.

**From September the fees will cover the cost of lunch**.

The fees are based on the grant funding from ECC which is increasing from £48.40 per grant hour to £53.30, hence the increase in fees. The Montessori premium has come down as a result but increased due to school lunches resulting in a net decrease from £65 to £50 per morning, per term.

The Trustees have agreed to continue subsidising this premium in the afternoon so that the grant funding covers the cost of the afternoon session completely.

**From September 2017 our times and fees for the main Pre-school Room (rising 3+) will be as follows:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Time** | **Hours** | **Fees**  | **Fees after Funding** |
| **Morning** | 8.30am-12.30pm | 4 | £263.20(including lunch) | £50 |
| **Afternoon** | 12.30pm - 3.30pm | 3 | £159.90 | £0 |
| **All day** | 8.30am - 3.30pm | 7 | £423.10(including lunch) | £50 |

**Our times and fees for the new Nursery Room (rising 2+) will be as follows:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Time** | **Hours** | **Fees**  |
| **Morning** | 8.30am-12.30pm | 4 | £325.00(including lunch) |
| **Afternoon** | 12.30pm - 3.00pm | 2.5 | £125.00 |
| **All day** | 8.30am - 3.00pm | 6.5 | £450.00(including lunch) |

The Government is very clear that the 30 hours entitlement is about supporting parents in and into work, but that it must not impact negatively upon the 15 hours universal entitlement for all children. Therefore if our nursery is full to capacity we will not be able to offer additional hours to make up 30 hours entitlement. At the moment we do not anticipate that this will be the case.

**We will be offering the 30 hours free, with no Montessori premium to pay, to a number of children per day.**

**For these families the hours will be 9.30am to 3.30pm**

(Lunch will cost £50 for the '30 hour only' families but will be optional)

**4 How do you apply?**

All 3 and 4-year-olds in England already get 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year of free early education.

The eligibility criteria are the same as the ones for Tax-Free Childcare, except you can continue to get these types of support at the same time as 30 hours free childcare:

* tax credits
* Universal Credit
* childcare vouchers or salary sacrifice schemes

When you apply, you'll be confirming that you need childcare so that you and your partner, if you have one, can work. You can apply for Tax-Free Childcare for more than one child as part of a single application.

You can only get a childcare service account if no one else holds an account for the same child.

You'll need: your National Insurance number

 personal details, for example, from your UK passport or driving license

In most cases, you'll be told instantly if your Tax-Free Childcare application is successful and if not, you will be told why you're not eligible.

Once you've successfully applied for your online account at [www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk](http://www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk) you can:

* view all your children's Tax-Free Childcare accounts in one place
* confirm you're still eligible for Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare
* start paying into your children's Tax-Free Childcare accounts and
* use it to pay for childcare costs

You should then receive a letter from Essex County Council either confirming that you are eligible for the extended entitlement or requesting that you submit relevant evidence in order for the ECC to check your eligibility. If the checks confirm that you are eligible you will receive a letter containing a voucher code which you will be required to give to us, as evidence that you are eligible for the extended free childcare entitlement.

**5 Financial Support from the Trustees**

All families are invited to inquire about bursaries available from the Pre-School Charitable trust. Financial support may be provided to those who are eligible; please speak to Catherine or Emma if you would like further information.

**6 Further Information**

If you still have queries thenplease contact our Principal, Michelle Wisbey or our Bursar, Emma Briggs for more information.

**office@montessorigroup.org**

**bursar@montessorigroup.org**

Yours sincerely

Catherine Hunter

Pre-School Manager