



What is the Early Education Entitlement?

From the term after your child's 3rd birthday until they start school he/she is entitled to up to 15 hours per week of early education. This is subject to availability and usually during school term-time*.

What are the benefits for my child?

Early learning gives your child the best possible start in life. Children can learn through play, experience new activities, build independence, get a good start to education, make new friends, have fun and prepare for school.

Who is the entitlement for and when is my child eligible?

The entitlement is for 3 & 4 year old children attending at a participating childcare provider. This is regardless of citizenship.

Your child does not become eligible for the entitlement until the **term following** their 3rd birthday.

Children who are 3 between:	Eligible from the following:
1 April and 31 August	September
1 September and 31 December	January
1 January and 31 March	April

What type of childcare provider offers the Early Education Entitlement?

A participating pre-school playgroup, private day nursery or independent school nursery. Alternatively, an accredited childminder who is part of the Children Come First Network may also offer this.

NB You do not have to be a resident in Hounslow to access the entitlement. Childcare providers in the London Borough of Hounslow are funded by the local authority regardless of where the child lives, as long as the provider you choose is offering the entitlement.

You can use a childcare provider outside of your local borough to access the entitlement for your child should you prefer.

How can my child access a place?

- Check the table to see when your child becomes eligible
- You then need to find a place for your child. If you are already using a childcare provider, speak to them directly about accessing the entitlement. If not, contact your local providers to ask about availability - the **Family Information Service** can provide a list of these on request.



Will I have to pay additional fees?

If you have been offered a totally free place then no additional fees will be charged. However, some childcare providers are offering limited free places. For that reason, if your chosen provider/s have filled all their totally free places, you may prefer to look elsewhere.

Alternatively you may still access the entitlement at this childcare provider if you agree to pay additional hours in line with the provider's model of delivery.

* Please note the full entitlement is made up of 570 hours over a minimum of 38 weeks each year. However the majority of settings match the school term dates of 39 weeks and therefore one of the weeks that the childcare provider is open for may not be funded.

What is a model of delivery?

A model of delivery is an agreed time period set by the provider of how the entitlement will be offered. Childcare providers must offer the full 15 hours entitlement over a minimum of 3 days in model/s of delivery they have developed. Please speak directly to the childcare provider for details of their model/s of delivery. See below some example models that providers may be offering.

NB These could be time specific.

5 mornings x 3 hours	3 mornings x 5 hours
5 afternoons x 3 hours	3 afternoons x 5 hours

What help can I get to pay additional costs?

If you are working and on a low income, tax credits can be used to pay some of the additional charges and are claimed by the parent/carer from the childcare element of working tax credit. This is up to £175 per week for one child and £300 for two or more children. A maximum of 80% of childcare can be claimed by eligible parents.

If you are unsure as to whether you are eligible to claim working tax credit, please check by visiting www.direct.gov.uk/taxcredits or call the tax credit helpline on **0845 300 3900**.

Another form of help available towards the cost of childcare is employer-supported childcare vouchers. You can use up to £55 a week to pay for childcare from your salary that is free from Tax and National Insurance contributions. Please contact FIS for a detailed guide on childcare vouchers.

Can I use more than one provider?

It is beneficial for your child if he/she is able to receive the entitlement at one childcare provider. However, if this is not possible the hours can be split between childcare providers. The maximum number of hours that will be funded is still 15. This applies to whether the providers are in the same or different local authority areas.

All childcare providers submit details of the children for whom they claim funding, so the number of hours claimed for your child is known regardless of the number of providers they attend.

What happens when my child starts attending a school nursery or reception class?

Once your child starts attending a maintained nursery or reception class they are considered to be using their full funded entitlement. If your child continues to attend a childcare provider in addition to the school nursery class for the other half of the day, you will be required to pay for the care your child receives at the childcare provider.

What happens if I need my child to attend childcare beyond the 15 hours of free early education?

At present your child is entitled to a maximum of 15 hours per week (570 hours per year) of free early education over a minimum of 38 weeks. Any hours required in addition to the free entitlement hours will be charged at the hourly rate and this may vary from provider to provider. Please see the following examples based on a day nursery with an hourly rate of £5.50. NB the full entitlement per year is 570 hours i.e. 38 weeks x 15 hours.

Weekly charges for a full time place in a day nursery open for **38 weeks** per year could be:

Full day care per week (5 days from 8am-6pm)	50 hours minus
Early Education Entitlement per week	15 hours
Balance payable by parent/carer	= £192.50 (35 hours x £5.50)

Weekly charges for a full time place in a day nursery open for **50 weeks** per year where the entitlement has been stretched:**

Full day care per week (5 days from 8am-6pm)	50 hours minus
Early Education Entitlement per week	11.4 hours (570 hours ÷ by 50 weeks)
Balance payable by parent/carer	= £212.30 (38.6 hours x £5.50)

** Some settings e.g. day nurseries may stretch the 15 hours across the full year resulting in fewer hours per week over more weeks per year i.e. over the school holidays.