

# Universal free Early Years entitlement for three and four year olds

## What is the Universal free early years entitlement?

Early Years entitlement is an opportunity for your child to join in play based activities in a quality environment in order to continue their learning. All three and four year old residents in Blackpool will have the opportunity to access 570 hours per year of free early years provision. This can be taken as 15 hours per week for 38 weeks or it can be spread over more weeks by taking fewer hours per week, if your provider can offer this and they are open all year round. You can choose to take this free entitlement at any of the following childcare providers that are in Blackpool and approved by Blackpool Council:

- **Pre School Playgroup**
- **Private Day Nursery**
- **Childminder**
- **Children's Centre**
- **School Nursery Class**

In this leaflet the above are referred to as 'eligible providers'. A complete list of all eligible providers can be obtained by visiting [www.fyidirectory.co.uk](http://www.fyidirectory.co.uk) or calling 0800 092 2332.

## How can I Use The Hours ?

The Universal free entitlement can be taken flexibly to meet the needs of you and your family dependent on what your chosen provider can offer. However, there are some guidelines as to how the 15 hours should be used:

- **No session longer than 10 hours**
- **Not before 6am or after 8pm**
- **A maximum of 2 sites in a single day**

## When can my child access a free place?

Children will receive the free universal entitlement from the term after their third birthday as shown in the table below:

If your Child's 3rd birthday falls between	He/She will be entitled to a free place from:
1 January- 31 March	April
1 April- 31 August	September
1 September- 31 December	January

## How do I claim the free early years entitlement?

You will need to choose an 'eligible provider' and agree attendance days and times. Your chosen provider will supply you with a registration form to complete. If your child is already attending an 'eligible provider' they should provide you with the form to complete during the term your child turns 3. You will be asked to provide documentary evidence of your address and your child's date of birth, such as their birth certificate, child benefit entitlement letter or NHS card.

## Can providers charge what they like for any additional time in excess of the funded hours?

The rate which providers charge for any extra hours is up to them. However, you should get a bill which is clear and which enables you to see and understand which hours are free and which are additional hours or services.

## How will I know if the provider is right for my child and my family?

It is a good idea to look round more than one type of provider as each one may offer different services that suit you and your child. You can get more information by calling the **FYi directory on 0800 092 2332**.



# Extended **free** Early Years entitlement for three and four year olds (30 hours free childcare)

**Up to 30 hours free childcare is now available for working parents, doubling the amount that is available with the universal free entitlement for all 3 and 4 year olds. The new extended entitlement is intended to support working parents with the cost of childcare and enable parents to return to work or to work additional hours.**

All three and four-year-olds in England already get 570 hours of free early education per year. So eligible, working parents will be entitled to an extra 570 hours of free childcare a year, that's 1140 hours!

The entitlement can be used flexibly for example during term time, which equates to 30 hours for 38 weeks per year or spread over 51 weeks at 22 hours per week. You can use your extended entitlement with more than one provider if you wish to, or if your preferred provider can't offer all the hours you require.

Find details of all early years and childcare providers at [www.fyidirectory.co.uk](http://www.fyidirectory.co.uk)

In general, families where one parent does not work (or neither parent works) **are not** eligible for these additional hours. To be eligible both parents need to be working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family) and each parent earns a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage, and less than £100,000 per year. There are some exceptions to this, so you may be eligible if:

- **Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave**

- **Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave**
- **Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay**
- **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 based on receipt of specific benefits**
- **Or if you are a single parent and any of the above exceptions apply.**

Foster carers will also be able to access the 30 hours for 3 and 4 year old children in their care if they are working outside of their role as a foster carer and if it is appropriate for the child.

## How To Apply:

You should apply the term before you wish your free place to start or as soon as you think you are eligible if your child is already taking up their free entitlement. You can apply and check your eligibility on the Childcare Choices Website. Visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk). Foster Carers should discuss this with the child's Social Worker and complete a Local Authority application form.

### What to Do Next:

If you are eligible for the additional funded hours you will receive an 11 digit reference number, which you should take to your childcare provider.

You must reconfirm your eligibility online every three months by logging into your childcare choices account.

