

## **Free early years entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds**

The free entitlement is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage for children aged 0 to 5 years. Your child will learn through active, play-based opportunities in a caring environment. Learning will focus on: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; problem solving, reasoning and numeracy; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative developments.

### **Do I have to apply for funding?**

No, your childcare provider will do this for you.

You will be asked to complete an application form and supply a copy of your child's birth certificate for the first term your child becomes entitled. For each subsequent term you will be asked to sign a parent declaration form stating how many hours you would like to claim.

### **How does the funding work?**

The council will pay for the free entitlement directly to your childcare provider. The funded places are free and you will not be required to pay towards this. You will be charged for any additional childcare your child has over the 15 hours free entitlement.

### **Does my child have to attend 15 hours to receive the grant?**

No. Your child will receive the grant for the hours attended. E.g. if your child attends 12 hours per week we will pay for 12 hours only.

### **Can I include the 15 hours entitlement in my claim for the childcare element of the Working Family Tax Credit?**

No. The 15 hours of Early Years Entitlement is free and cannot therefore be included in the assessment. However, any additional hours that you pay for over and above the free entitlement can be included.

If you have previously been claiming for a child that is now eligible for the free entitlement, you must inform [HMRC](#) so your tax credits can be adjusted accordingly.

### **If I want to move my child to a different provider, what do I do?**

Speak to your existing childcare provider. Check your next provider has a place. The free entitlement is calculated on a termly basis; therefore your funding will stay with your original provider for the full term even if your child leaves. You may be charged at your new provider and you should discuss this possibility before making any decisions.

**If my child lives in Wirral local authority area but I want them to attend a childcare setting outside the area, can I still access the free entitlement?**

This will depend on the location of your childcare provider. If the provider is in another English local authority area then that local authority is obliged to provide your child with a free place as cross border arrangements are in place.