

Will Little Sparkles Nursery be offering the 30 hours childcare offer?

Yes.

So what is the free childcare deal?

In a nutshell, many working parents of 3 to 4-year-olds in England will be eligible for 30 hours of free childcare - rather than the current 15 hours.

When will it start?

The scheme is scheduled to go nationwide later this year (2017).

What will the timings be for 30hours childcare?

Session time will be from 8:50am to 2:50pm.

Will my child get it?

Not necessarily as not everyone is eligible. But everyone **will** still receive the 15 hours free childcare that is currently available.

Eligibility rules for 30 hours free childcare:

- Your child will be aged 3 or 4 when the scheme starts
- Both parents must be working - or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage
- Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000
- You live in England

How much is the equivalent of 16 hours at National Minimum Wage?

It depends on your age. For this scheme, the minimum amount will always reflect the lowest hourly rate that a person of your age can legally be paid. Therefore, currently for a parent aged 21-24, you'd need to earn a weekly average of at least £111.20. For a parent aged 25+, you'd need to earn a weekly average of at least £115.20.

What if one parent in a couple isn't working?

This is basically a scheme to help working parents, so families where one parent doesn't work, or both parents don't work, will usually not be eligible for these additional 15 hours.

However, if one parent isn't working because they're an official carer (eg receiving benefits relating to being a carer) or they are receiving disability benefits, and the other parent is working, then the Government has stated it "intends to make provision" to support these families.

There is also additional entitlement if the parent normally works but is temporarily away from the workplace, for example on statutory sick pay.

What if you are self-employed or on a zero hours contract?

You will be eligible if you (or both of you in a couple) earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Minimum Wage.

What if one parent loses their job?

There will be a short "grace period" - although this hasn't yet been defined - allowing parents to have a chance to find new employment.

How do you apply for the 30 hours free childcare?

You'll be able to apply for both the 30-hour scheme and the [Tax-Free Childcare scheme](#) through a joint online application being developed by HMRC. This is because the eligibility requirements for both schemes are aligned.

Will all nurseries offer this?

Little Sparkles nursery will be offering this offer.

Most will - but some nurseries may not be able to offer the flexible 30 hours free childcare.

Term-by-term booking

Parents who are getting completely free childcare may find that they can only secure a nursery place on a term-by-term basis. This means they may need to re-apply each term and may not be guaranteed the same days or place allocation each term.