

Free childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year. This applies until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). Free early education places are available at a range of early years settings including nursery schools and classes, children's centres, day nurseries, play groups and pre-schools and childminders.

The free early years entitlement can be taken flexibly within the following limits:

The full 15 hours have to be taken over at least three days per week and a maximum of five days per week

A minimum of 2.5 hours can be taken in one day

A maximum of 10 hours can be taken in one day, but no more than 12.5 hours over two days.

You can take the free entitlement at up to two providers. The basic offering is three hours over five days a week, or five hours over three days a week, but many providers will allow you to take the provision flexibly, in a pattern that meets your needs. For example, your child could have nine hours at a nursery or reception class and six hours with a playgroup, day nursery, childminder or independent school over the course of 3 days or more.

What is my child entitled to?

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free early learning and care, over 38 weeks of the year.

- Children who are three in January, February or March can have their free place from the start of the summer term.

- Children who are three in April, May, June, July or August can have their free place from the start of the autumn term.
- Children who are three in September, October, November or December can have their free place from the start of the spring term.

Your child may go to any early years setting which is included in the Nottinghamshire Directory of Providers and has a place available. This includes many:

- day nurseries
- independent schools
- nursery centres
- nursery units in schools
- pre-schools or playgroups
- schools with pre-school groups
- some childminders
- sure start children's centres.

Contact us for help with finding a place . You may decide to visit several providers to help you choose the right setting for your child. Once you have chosen where you would like your child to go, check that there is a place available, and confirm the start date and the fact that you would like to claim your free early years entitlement. The provider will give you a form to complete, so that they can claim the funding for your child's place. This will be paid directly to the provider.

Each term, providers have a deadline for claiming this funding. The local authority may not be able to fund a child who has not taken up a free entitlement place by this date. Funding is for a minimum of half a term; if your child moves to another provider during a term then you need to inform the new provider as soon as possible, to

see if a free early years entitlement place is available.

Please note that if your child attends a part-time place in a school nursery, reception class or nursery class, then the hours attended will be counted as part of your child's entitlement.

If meals or snacks are included as part of your free entitlement hours, your provider will not charge you for these. Providers are only permitted to charge for meals, snacks or optional extras as long as they are not part of your free entitlement hours.

If you take more than 15 hours per week, or for longer than 38 weeks per year, there will be a charge from the provider for these additional hours. Please check with your provider for full details of any additional charges.

Extra support for children with special educational needs

The Local Authority is committed to supporting early years and childcare providers to work towards an inclusive approach and to meet the individual needs of all children.

Your provider can apply for inclusion funding to help with extra staff costs of supporting children with additional needs. For more information, speak to your provisions manager or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The provider will be able to get information from the [Pre-school Learning Alliance](#) or from their Early Years Specialist Teacher.

We are working to make sure that there are enough high-quality early years education places in the county.

Contact information:

Phone: 0300 500 80 80
Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 8am to 12 noon
(Calls cost 3p a minute from a BT landline. Mobile costs may vary).

Email: enquiries@nottsc.gov.uk
Website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Minicom: 01623 434993

Phone 0300 500 80 80 if you need the information in a different language or format.