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All three and four-year-old children can receive up to 570 hours of free early education and childcare per year. This is known as the universal entitlement, because it's available for all children. You do not need to apply for this entitlement.

## Free entitlement

Your child can start free childcare in the funding period following their third birthday until they [start a place in school Reception class](#) (usually the September following their 4th birthday).

A child born on or between:	Will be eligible for a free place from:
1 April and 31 August	1 September following their third birthday
1 September and 31 December	1 January following their third birthday
1 January and 31 March	1 April following their third birthday

The free entitlement is commonly offered by childcare providers as 15 hours free per week over 38 weeks of the year (term-time offer, generally linked to school term-times). The entitlement can also be "stretched" at some childcare providers, which means that fewer hours can be taken over more weeks of the year, commonly offered as 11 hours per week, each week of the year. Spreading the entitlement over the year is a flexible option, particularly useful for working parents.

All pre-schools and day nurseries, and most childminders in Peterborough offer the universal entitlement for three and four-year-olds. You can search for a childcare provider near your home or work on the [Peterborough Information Network website](http://fis.peterborough.gov.uk/kb5/peterborough/directory/family.page?familychannel=1) (<http://fis.peterborough.gov.uk/kb5/peterborough/directory/family.page?familychannel=1>).

## What do I need to do

You do not need to apply for this entitlement. You should contact the childcare provider of your choice to see if they have space for your child. If they do, you will be asked by the childcare provider to complete a form before your child starts. You will also be asked to provide identification for your child (such as birth certificate) to allow them to check your child is the right age for the universal entitlement. The childcare provider will then submit a claim to us for your child's funded hours.

You can choose to only use free hours and childcare providers cannot insist that you 'add-on' extras such as food costs or additional hours of childcare.

## Other financial help available to support with childcare costs

If your child is the correct age for the universal entitlement and you and your partner (if applicable) are in work, your child could be eligible for an additional 570 hours per year on top of the universal entitlement (1,140 total). This is known as [30 hours free childcare](#).



**FEEE - A guide for parents** (<https://pcc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.peterborough.gov.uk/and-childcare/FEEE-AGuideForParents-2018.pdf?inline=true>)  
Size: 189.02 KB File format: pdf

We would recommend parent/s complete the government's [Childcare Calculator tool](https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator) (<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>) to find out what financial help could be available to them to support with approved childcare costs. Tax Free Childcare, for example, could impact on a parent/s Tax credit award, therefore it's important to understand which available schemes could financially benefit your family the most.

For more details about all government schemes, visit the [childcare choices website](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/) (<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>).