

How to...

...claim your free nursery
education place for
3 and 4 year olds



What is the free entitlement?

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of free early education for up to 38 weeks of the year which is equivalent to a maximum of 570 hours per year.

In addition, families that meet the eligibility criteria may also be entitled to an additional 570 hours, a total of 1140 hours per year e.g. 30 hours per week for 38 weeks. For more information please visit <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/childcare/thirtyhoursfree>

How does it work?

Flexibility of the entitlement depends on the provider and is subject to reasonable demands and the provider's ability to offer it.

It can mean different hours over different days but you must commit to the same weekly pattern of hours for the term.

If your child stays with the provider over the lunch hour, this can be a part of the free entitlement. The provider can make reasonable charges for food or alternatively you may be given the option of giving your child a packed lunch. Your provider will discuss this with you.

The weekly entitlement can be split between providers as long as your child does not access free hours with more than two providers per day and they don't exceed 15 (or 30) hours per week. However, the Council will decide how the funding is allocated.

Where can my child access their entitlement?

Your child can access the free entitlement from several providers such as:

- Private Day Nurseries
- Pre-Schools and Playgroups
- Independent Schools
- Childminders
- School Nursery Class

Providers must be registered with Ofsted AND included on the Tameside Directory of Providers to be able to offer the free entitlement. Not every provider in Tameside can offer the entitlement.

If your child will be starting at a school nursery in the autumn term, please be aware that due to the high numbers of new children starting at one time, schools may take a phased approach to entry. This allows the children to settle in.



When can my child start receiving the free entitlement?

Your child can start the term after their 3rd birthday. So:

A child born on or between:	Can access their free entitlement from:
1st April and 31st August	1st September (Autumn Term)
1st September and 31st December	1st January (Spring Term)
1st January and 31st March	1st April (Summer Term)

What are the benefits for my child?

It is an exciting time for children as they learn through play based activities to become more independent and develop their own identity. Research has shown it helps them acquire the skills they need to make good progress at school.

How do I find a place for my child?

As a parent/carers you can decide where you would like your child to go (subject to availability). For more information about what is available in your area, or to find a place suitable for you, please contact:

Tameside Families Information Service (FIS)

Telephone: 0161 342 4260

Website: www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/nurseryplaces

Places are subject to availability and you should contact the provider of your choice as soon as possible in case there is a waiting list for places.

How do I claim the free entitlement?

At the start of each term your provider will ask you to sign a parental agreement which includes the following items:

- An agreed pattern of hours for the whole term
- Your confirmation that your child is not receiving more than 15 (or 30) hours free entitlement per week, including at any other provider within or outside Tameside

If you split the 15 (or 30) hours between 2 providers you will need to sign a parental agreement with both providers.

All parental agreements will be retained by the provider.

You will also be asked to show proof of your child's date of birth.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many hours can my child have in a day?

Your child can access a maximum of 10 hours per day. Some providers can offer the entitlement more flexibly. To discuss what options are available to you, please contact your childcare provider.

Do I have to sign up to the full 15 (or 30) hours?

Your child can attend up to 15 (or 30) hours per week e.g. if your child attends for less hours per week, funding will be reduced accordingly.

What happens if my child attends a provider for more than the 15 (or 30) hours?

The 15 (or 30) hours will be completely free and you should not be expected to pay anything for these hours therefore if your child just attends for 15 (or 30) hours this will be given as a free place. If your child has any additional childcare hours or services, your provider will charge you separately for these and they should be clearly identified in your childcare invoice / bill.

What happens if I want my child to move to a different provider part way through the term?

By signing the parental agreement you are agreeing that your child will stay with that provider for the whole term. This means you must check with the Council if you need to move your child.

