

## FAQs for parents

**What is the childcare offer?** The childcare offer will provide eligible working parents with a combined 30 hours of early education and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks per year. We are currently piloting this offer across the whole of Wales.

**What does it mean for me as a parent?** If you have a 3 or 4 year old you are entitled to access a minimum of 10 hours per week of early education for your child during school terms (sometimes known as Foundation Phase Nursery). If you're working, you could also receive additional hours of government-funded childcare, so that you receive a combined total of 30 hours of childcare and early education per week for up to 48 weeks a year. The 48 weeks is made-up of 39 weeks of combined education and childcare during school term-time and 9 weeks of 'holiday' provision outside of school terms when the entitlement is to 30 hours of childcare.

**What is early education?** All children are entitled to **early education** (Foundation Phase Nursery) from the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. All local authorities provide a minimum of 10 hours per week early education, either in the local school or in a setting like a playgroup, a day nursery or a Cylch Meithrin. During term time, this early education will be part of the childcare offer's 30 hours. During the school holidays, when there is no early education, the offer will provide 30 hours a week of childcare for eligible parents, for up to 9 weeks. Your local Family Information Service will be able to help you find a registered provider that offers the service that meets your needs. For information on the Foundation Phase please click [here](#) or search for Foundation Phase Nursery on the Welsh Government webpages,

**How will I know if I'm eligible?** All parents of 3 and 4 year olds can access the early education entitlement. You are eligible to receive the additional childcare if you have a child within the age range and earn on average a weekly minimum equivalent to, or more than, 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW) but less than £100,000 per year. If you are in a lone parent family you need to be working and if you are in a two parent family you both need to be working. If you are self-employed or on a zero hours contract you need to be able to prove this by providing the relevant documents. Foster carers and kinship carers may also be eligible. You can contact your Family Information Service for more information.

**Can I choose any childcare provider?** Yes, as long as they are willing to be part of the offer and they are registered with CIW (formerly CSSIW) or Ofsted (the inspectorates for childcare settings). They can do this by getting in touch with your local Family Information Service. Childcare providers can be outside of your area, your county or even in England if you live on the border. There is no restriction on when you can use the additional childcare hours of the offer but it is up to you to find

a childcare provider that suits your family's needs. The Family Information Service can help you by providing information on all the childcare settings.

**What if my child has additional needs?** The offer is available to all eligible parents but you and/or your provider may wish to contact your local authority who should be able to provide advice and details of any additional support available.

**Will I have to pay for anything?** The childcare offer funds a maximum of 30 hours of early education and childcare per week. The funding from the government is for the education and care the professionals within the setting provide. It does not include food, transport or off-site activities that incur an extra charge and providers will be able to charge you for these. The cost of transport will depend on where you live and how far they have to travel. Providers should not charge more than £7.50 per day for food or £4.75 for half a day (including lunch).

**Do I have to use all 30 hours per week?** No. You can choose how much of the 30 hours you use. However, if you do not use all of your 30 hours in one week, you cannot use them in another week. You cannot swap education hours for childcare hours, or childcare hours for education hours. You can pay for additional hours of childcare yourself based on a private contract between you and your childcare provider.

**How do I apply?** You can apply for the offer, including your early education entitlement place, through your local authority. If you are not entitled to the additional childcare hours, you can apply for your early education place through your local authority. Contact your local Family Information Service for more information.

