



FACTSHEET FOR FOSTER CARERS

30 HOURS FREE CHILDCARE FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you are a foster carer of a child/children aged 3 or 4 you may be entitled to an extra 15 hours a week of flexible free childcare entitling them to 30 hours a week for at least 38 weeks a year (1140 hours a year), if you meet certain criteria and have discussed with your child's Social Worker about whether accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan and if it's deemed right for the child.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

Children in foster care will be able to receive 30 hours free childcare the term after the child turns 3 if the following criteria is met:

- If you are a single foster carer you must be in paid work outside of your fostering role.
- If you and your partner are both foster carers you must both be in paid work outside of your fostering role OR one of you needs to be in paid work and the other is in receipt of qualifying benefits.
- You and your partner (if any) do not earn more than £100,000 a year each.
- In families where only one person is the approved foster carer: The partner (of the foster carer) is in paid work and earning a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum/ national living wage and does not earn more than £100,000 a year OR The partner (of the foster carer) is in receipt of the qualifying benefits

For further information on eligibility visit: [fis.sandwell.gov.uk](https://www.fis.sandwell.gov.uk)

Turn over to find out when and how to apply

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

Child's Birthday

1 January to 31 March

1 April to 31 August

1 September to 31 December

When can your child start?

The beginning of Summer term on or after 1 April

The beginning of Autumn term on or after 1 September

The beginning of Spring term on or after 1 January

HOW TO APPLY?

When a foster child approaches their third birthday, you should start to have discussions with your child's social worker about whether accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan.

TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION FORM CALL THE QUALITY EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE TEAM ON: 0121 569 4960

Once your application is processed you will be notified of the outcome. You will receive an email/letter from the Quality Early Years and Childcare Team, containing your unique 11 digits 30-hour code beginning with '400'. You must take this code to your chosen Early Years and Childcare Provider, who will validate the code and confirm your 30-hour place for the child.

Your code can be used at any Early Years and Childcare provider that is registered for the 30 hours free childcare.

To search for registered childcare providers visit: [fis.sandwell.gov.uk](https://www.fis.sandwell.gov.uk)

Your code will need to be renewed by Sandwell Quality Early Years and Childcare Team every 3 months, and you will need to contact us to renew this and confirm that your circumstances have not changed and that you still meet the criteria.

OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER

- You do not have to take up the full 30 hours.
- You can choose to fund additional hours above 30 per week if this is consistent with the care plan
- Costs in addition to direct child care e.g. food or nappies is not covered
- Children in foster care will continue to qualify for the universal 15 hours regardless of the working status of their foster parents.
- All applications must be re-confirmed every 3 months to ensure eligibility still remains the same. Failure to reconfirm could mean that a foster child is no longer eligible for 30 hours childcare.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Sandwell Family Information Service Hub: [fis.sandwell.gov.uk](https://www.fis.sandwell.gov.uk)

GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare

Childcare Choices: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk