

Understanding 30 Hours Applications

Step 1 – Parent applies for a code

Applying for 30 hours

- Parents can ascertain whether they are eligible for 30 hours extended entitlement via www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- The parent must apply for 30 hours extended entitlement themselves
- Foster carers must apply for their code for 30 hours for foster children by emailing NEF@birmingham.gov.uk
- The application process requires the parent to open an online childcare service account – there is a guide called ‘**How to find your 30 Hours Code if you have already applied**’ on EYMIS that shows you what the account looks like
- When the parent is issued with the code the letter they receive will inform them when they can access their free childcare place (also see Step 3). The letter will be in their online account in the ‘Secure Messages’ section and will state:

“You can access 30 hours from the term following the date of this message or the term after your child turns three, whichever is latest.”

- Parents will look for a childcare place once they know they are eligible
- Be very clear about the details of the funded place you have available
- Be very clear about any additional charges for consumables
- You will need to tell the parents that for EEE funding the terms start as follows:

1st January – Spring Term

1st April – Summer Term

1st September – Autumn Term

- Children can split their entitlement across more than one setting over a maximum of two sites in one day.
- A child attending a state-funded reception class on a part time basis is entitled to additional free hours at another provider if the child’s parents have a 30 hours eligibility code. If the child is accessing a full time reception place they cannot have any funded hours anywhere else.
- The parent may use their childcare service account to apply for Tax Free Childcare as well as 30 hours extended entitlement. Parents will have to maintain both accounts so when they reconfirm their eligibility make sure they update their 30 hours account and don’t confuse it with their Tax Free Childcare Account
- If parents experience problems with their account or application you need to signpost them to HMRC – Telephone: 0300 123 4097

Step 2 – Childcare Provider validates the code

Validating the code

- The parent gives their eligibility code to you and asks for a 30 hour extended entitlement place
- You must now validate the code before offering an extended entitlement place (also see Step 4)
- You validate the code by entering it onto ECS -:
www.cloudforedu.org.uk/oefe/birmingham/provider (there is a guide on EYMIS)
- Validating the code means that you are checking the code to see that it is eligible and to confirm which term it is eligible for. You must fully enter the information to ensure that the application is entered properly onto the system (there is a guide on EYMIS)
- It is your responsibility to check that the code is eligible for the term that you are offering an extended entitlement place for. **Remember** – the code may be an eligible code but it might not be eligible for use until the following term (see Step 3)

Step 3 – Understanding the application on ECS

Dates of Application on ECS

You must understand the applications to ensure you offer places accurately:

Validity Start Date

This is the date that the parent was confirmed as eligible by HMRC for 30 hours and was given their code. If the code is eligible you can offer a funded place as follows:

Validity Start Date	First Term the child can start
1 st September – 31 st December	Spring Term (January)
1 st January – 31 st March	Summer Term (April)
1 st April – 31 st August	Autumn Term (September)

Validity End Date

This is the deadline date for the parent to reconfirm their eligibility by logging on to their childcare service account. HMRC will tell them when to do this but you should remind them also so that they continue to be eligible. If they fall out of eligibility the parent could end up owing you fees that they may find difficult to pay and it may affect their ability to work if they lose the extended entitlement.

Parents may have to reconfirm their Tax Free Childcare application as well as their 30 hours – remind them to do both. If they only reconfirm the Tax Free Childcare element they will lose eligibility to 30 hours.

Grace Period End Date

Children should not start a new 30 hours place at a provider during the grace period. This includes where a parent falls into their grace period before the child has started a 30 hours place and where a parent falls into their grace period whilst their child is in a 30 hours place, and the parent seeks to move the child to a different provider. The child can continue to receive 30 hours childcare at an existing provider until this date but cannot start with a new provider once the application is in Grace Period. The grace period end date will extend each time the parent reconfirms their eligibility.

If the parent does not reconfirm by the deadline, the child will no longer be eligible for 30 hours after the Grace Period End date and they will have to revert to 15 universal hours. The 15 hours will be taken and paid for at the setting the parent nominates as their universal provider (See Step 4)

Step 4 – Universal or Extended Provider

The parent must choose who the universal provider is – not the provider. The Universal Provider is the childcare provider that the parent would choose to take their 15 universal hours funding at if they fell out of eligibility for 30 hours.

The universal provider must be recorded on the parent declaration form. Providers should explain to parents what this means and if a parent attends more than one setting ask the parents what they have recorded on the parent declaration form for the other childcare provider.

The childcare provider that is delivering the extended entitlement hours must validate the code on ECS and enter the code on the EEE portal or school Census when submitting the funding claim.

Step 5 – ECS notification emails

Changes in Eligibility

When the status of an application on ECS changes you will receive an automatic email notification from the system telling you the status of an application has changed (it will come from NEF@birmingham.gov.uk). Log onto your ECS and have a look at your applications:

Green Application – Eligible (ECS) – This means the application is eligible and everything is up to date

Blue Application – Eligible (Grace Period) – This means that the validity end date has passed and the parent has not reconfirmed their circumstances or they may no longer be eligible. Remind parents to do reconfirm as soon as possible if they have forgotten. If they have reconfirmed and can show you proof in their childcare service account, don't worry the ECS system will eventually update when HMRC updates their system. **Please Note:** A child cannot start at a new provider during the grace period or start a 30hours place for the first time when in grace period.

Red Application – Not Found (ECS Checked) – This means that the application has fallen out of eligibility – either the parent has not reconfirmed their application or they are no longer eligible. You may not be able to see the red application in your list because it is no longer eligible so you will need to search for it using the 6 digit reference number.

Step 6 –Claims and Complaints to HMRC

Issues with the online childcare service account and applications can only be addressed by HMRC.

If a parent misses out on a 30 hours place - through no fault of their own - they may be eligible for some monetary redress. Please note: the parent **must have made their application before the termly deadline; and must have paid out for childcare** that they would have otherwise have been entitled to for free (i.e. they must meet all other eligibility requirements, such as the child's age and earnings threshold).

If a parent thinks they meets these conditions they should make a complaint by the completing the standard HMRC complaints form or call the childcare service helpline on 0300 123 4097.