

Free Childcare for 3 & 4 Year Olds



When can my child access their place?

All children are entitled to a free early years place at the start of the school term following their 3rd birthday.

A child may access the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) until the end of the school term in which they celebrate their 5th birthday.

A child born on or between

Will become eligible for a free place from the

1 April to 31 August

September following their 3rd birthday
(Start of autumn school term)

1 September to 31 December

January following their 3rd birthday
(Start of spring school term)

1 January to 31 March

April following their 3rd birthday
(Start of summer school term)

Free place Summary

- A maximum of 15 hours a week, across school term time
- Or a maximum of 12 hours a week, across school term time and some holiday periods
- Available between 7am and 7pm
- Minimum 2 ½ hours per day
- Maximum 10 hours per day



The Early Years Entitlement for 3 & 4 Year Olds

Where can I access a free place?

You can access a free early years place at any early years provider on the local authority's directory of registered providers. This includes:

- Pre-schools and Playgroups
- Day Nurseries
- Independent Schools
- Maintained Nursery Classes
- Registered Childminders
- Registered Childminders on a Network

Your early years provider will claim funding from the local authority on your behalf, you will be required to sign a parent/ carer declaration requesting the funded hours and provide proof of your child's age.

How can I take the funded hours?

Early years providers offer the funding in different ways and you are advised to speak with the provider to decide what is best for your child. The basic model you can expect to be offered is 3 hours per day over 5 days a week, or 5 hours per day over 3 days per week.

What if I want to use more than one early years provider?

You can choose to access your free hours between no more than two early years' providers on the local authority's directory. You would need to agree attendance patterns with both early years' providers and ensure you only claim a maximum of 15 hours on a standard school term time offer or 12 hours on the stretched offer per week between these providers.

Do I have to pay for anything extra?

No, you are not obliged to pay for additional services in order to access your child's free hours.

Early years providers will not charge you anything extra for the free place. You do not need to pay a deposit for the free hours and do not have to purchase uniforms or book bags unless you wish to. However, providers can charge you for extra services you choose to take. This could for example be the cost of a hot meal where your child stays over lunchtime, access to forest schools or swimming lessons or additional hours on top of the free place. Early years providers will charge parents at their own rate for hours and services accessed outside of the free sessions.



For more information on choosing childcare and for a list of settings that are on the local authority's directory, please contact the **Family Information Service** on tel. **0800 195 1635** or email **fis@lincolnshire.gov.uk**

If you have any concerns about the way an early years provider is offering the funded hours to you, please contact the **Early Years Entitlement team** at the **Birth to Five Service** on tel. **01522 552752**



www.birthtofive.org.uk