



David Johnston OBE MP

Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing

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10 May 2024

To: All MPs in England

Dear Colleagues,

Childcare Entitlements Expansion for Working Parents

I am writing to highlight our plans for the next phase of the delivery of the expanded childcare entitlements for working parents.

This Government is delivering a brighter future for Britain, with long-term economic security and opportunity: where families are supported and young people get the skills they need to succeed in life, where ambitions and aspirations are celebrated and hard work is always rewarded.

We have now completed the first phase of our

rollout of the expanded free entitlements for working parents. Over 210,000 children across England are now benefitting from 15 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare.

As we enter phase two of the rollout, from 12 May eligible working parents of children from 9 months old are now able to apply for 15 hours of government-funded childcare a week starting in September¹.

This is the second step in the largest ever expansion of government-funded childcare, helping parents better manage their careers and bring up a family and follows the successful launch of the transformative offer for working parents of 2-year-olds last month.

By September 2025, the full rollout will be completed – saving parents an average of £6,900 per year. By the end of the rollout, the independent OBR estimate that this will help 60,000 parents back to work.

Applications opening from May 12

From 12 May, eligible working parents with

¹ To be eligible for the new offers, each parent needs to be earning at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage (equivalent to £183 per week). You will also need to be earning less than £100,000 [adjusted net income](#) per year. Parents ineligible for this offer may be eligible for the disadvantaged [2 year old early education](#) offer and/or the [universal credit childcare costs](#) offers.

children aged between 9- and 23-months old on 31 August 2024 can apply to receive 15 hours childcare starting from September 2024.

For parents of older children, applications are open now to receive either 15 hours (for 2 year olds) or 30 hours (for 3- and 4-year-olds) of childcare from September.

Reconfirmations for parents receiving Tax Free Childcare

We know that parents are eager to secure their places ahead of September, so we have implemented a solution to ensure that parents who are currently receiving Tax -Free Childcare receive a code in good time.

After 12 May, if a parent's reconfirmation window opens on or after 9 June 2024 they will automatically receive a letter from HMRC by 24 May 2024. The letter will provide a valid temporary code and instructions on how to use it to claim their entitlement.

We're confident that all parents will be able to get codes by the time they need them, and there is no limit on the number of codes available.

For those parents who are starting work or

returning to work from parental leave

Previously if a parent on parental leave sought to apply for childcare for the child they were on parental leave for, or if a parent was taking up new employment, they were only able to do so 31 days before they returned to employment or started new employment. This was the '31 day rule'.

As part of the next stage of the rollout, we have expanded the application window for these parents. Parents who plan to start or return to work on or before 30th September 2024 will be able to apply for their place at the same time as other parents - from 12 May. Parents on parental leave or starting a new job will need to apply online but will then receive a letter in the post within 1 to 2 weeks so they can access their entitlement.

If a parent is applying for childcare for an older child, who is not the reason for their parental leave, they can continue to apply in the usual way.

Please encourage parents in your constituency to visit childcarechoices.gov.uk to see what they are entitled to.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Johnston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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