

The Childcare Offer for Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

FAQ's for parents in pilot areas

What is the childcare offer? The childcare offer will provide eligible working parents with 30 hours of a combination of early education and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks per year.

What does it mean for me as a parent? If you have a 3 or 4 year old you could access your early education entitlement now. If you're working, you could receive additional hours of government-funded childcare on top, so that you receive a combined total of 30 hours of childcare and early education per week for up to 48 weeks a year, depending on when your child has their birthday.

What is early education? Children are entitled to **early education** (Foundation Phase Nursery) from the term after their 3rd 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 day-care setting or a community centre. 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 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.

How will I know if I'm eligible? All parents of 3 and 4 year olds can already access the early education entitlement. You are eligible to receive the additional childcare if you live within a pilot areas, have a child within the age range and earn on average a weekly minimum equivalent of 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW) or more. 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. You can contact your Family Information Service for more information.

Where are the pilot areas? They are in specific areas of Anglesey, Caerphilly, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Swansea. It will be available in all of Blaenau Gwent. More information on these areas is available on the local authority websites. We need pilots to test the offer to make sure it works, but it will eventually be available across Wales.

Can I choose any childcare provider? Yes, as long as they are willing to be part of the offer and they are registered with 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 pilot 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 families' needs. The Family Information Service can help you by providing information on all the childcare settings.

Will I have to pay for anything? The Childcare Offer funds a maximum and total of 30 hours of early education and childcare. This is for the education and care the professionals within the setting provides. It does not include food, transport to and from other settings 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 chose how much of the 30 hours you use. However, if you do not use all of yours 30 hours in one week, you can not use them in another week. You can pay for additional hours 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. Contact your local Family Information Service for more information.