<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/paying-for-childcare/funded-childcare-for-3-and-4-year-olds/>

Funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds

From the term after your child's third birthday, he or she can have up to 15 hours a week of funded flexible early years childcare and education. This is called the Funded Early Years Education and it is paid for by the government.

From September 2017, you may be able to get [**30 hours a week**](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/paying-for-childcare/30-hours-free-childcare/) of funded early education.

The places are available throughout England for 15 hours per week, for 38 weeks per year.

Once your child turns three, you can start claiming from the next term date which will be 1 April, 1 September or 1 January.

To claim, you will need to arrange a funded early years place for your child with any of the following types of childcare provider:

* A pre-school/playgroup
* A private/voluntary day nursery
* An independent school
* A network of childminders
* A nursery class in a state primary school
* A state nursery school

The service should be inspected by registered nursery inspectors and registered with the early years development and childcare partnership as an eligible provider.

[Search for funded childcare for three and four year olds](https://fisonline.lancashire.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/)

Rules and further information

We'll pay for up to 15 hours' funded childcare a week, for up to 38 weeks in the 12 months when your child is the right age to receive it.

Alternatively, you may be able to take your funded childcare for more than 38 weeks per year providing you have less than 15 hours per week. Your chosen childcare provider will be able to discuss this possibility with you.

The first 15 hours a week are funded, you can pay for more childcare hours to fit in with your family's needs. You can use one provider or divide the hours between a maximum of two providers.

If your child attends for 15 hours a week at a state nursery school or nursery class, you cannot also have funded childcare from another provider.

Funding is paid directly to the childcare provider that your child attends.

We can only fund Ofsted registered childcare providers (including registered childminders). We cannot fund any other types of care, including family arrangements. If a relative or friend looks after your child during the week, they can't be paid the Funded Early Education.

If you would like any further information contact our [Family Information Service](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/finding-childcare/childcare-advice/).

Getting the days you want

You can take the funded childcare flexibly.  For example, your child could attend for three hours a day over five days, or five hours a day for three days in a week, or they could take the offer over two days.

There are some rules that apply though. When you speak with a childcare provider they will be able to explain these to you, or you can contact our [Family Information Service](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/finding-childcare/childcare-advice/).

The provider will work with you to consider your child's needs, your preferred hours/days, and the sessions where they currently have vacancies. They will do their best to give you the hours you want, but it is their decision whether to offer you exactly what you want.

If after talking it through, if the provider is unable to take your child at the times you want, you will need to find another provider.

The Parental Agreement

Once you have agreed your hours or sessions for your child you should be asked to sign a Parental Agreement with your childcare provider.  This provides you and the provider with a document which clearly shows the agreed hours or sessions that your child should attend. This helps to protect everyone if there is a dispute, particularly one that involves money (in rare circumstances the provider may ask you to pay for any hours that your child has mistakenly received from them).

Changes in circumstances

If you decide you want to change provider during a term, it's best in the first instance to speak to your current provider about this as we don't allow funding to move within a term. The [Family Information Service](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/finding-childcare/childcare-advice/) can help you find new childcare but you may be expected to pay for the rest of the term if you do move your child.

Paying for childcare

* [Funded childcare for 2 year olds](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/paying-for-childcare/funded-childcare-for-2-year-olds/)
* **Funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds**
* [30 hours funded childcare](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/paying-for-childcare/30-hours-free-childcare/)
* [Help paying for childcare](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/early-years-childcare-and-family-support/paying-for-childcare/help-paying-for-childcare/)