

Guide to Early Education and Childcare in Tameside



What is Free Early Education and Childcare?

Children aged 3 and 4 Year Olds

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of free early education for up to 38 weeks of the year which is equivalent to a maximum of 570 hours per year.

In addition, families that meet the eligibility criteria may also be entitled to an additional 570 hours, a total of 1140 hours per year e.g. 30 hours per week for 38 weeks. For more information, please visit www.tameside.gov.uk/childcare/thirtyhoursfree

Children aged 2 Years Old

Eligible families with a 2 year old who live within Tameside and receive some additional forms of government support can access up to 15 hours of early education over 38 weeks of the year. For more information, please visit www.tameside.gov.uk/surestart/childcare/2yearoldfunding

How does it work?

Flexibility of the entitlement depends on the provider and is subject to reasonable demands and the provider's ability to offer it.

It can mean different hours over different days but you must commit to the same weekly pattern of hours for the term.

If your child stays with the provider over the lunch hour, this can be a part of the free entitlement. The provider can make reasonable charges for food or alternatively you may be given the option of giving your child a packed lunch. Your provider will discuss this with you.

The weekly entitlement can be split between providers as long as your child does not access free hours with more than two providers per day and they don't exceed 15 (or 30) hours per week. However, the Council will decide how the funding is allocated.

When can my child start receiving the free entitlement?

Your child can start their childcare place the term after they are age eligible and if necessary, have received a valid eligibility code, **whichever is later**. Term start dates are 1st September, 1st January and 1st April.

A child born on or between:	Can access their free entitlement from:
1st April and 31st August	1st September (Autumn Term)
1st September and 31st December	1st January (Spring Term)
1st January and 31st March	1st April (Summer Term)

What are the benefits for my child?

It is an exciting time for children as they learn through play based activities to become more independent and develop their own identity. Research has shown it helps them acquire the skills they need to make good progress at school.

How do I find a place for my child?

Your child can access the free entitlement from many types of providers.

Providers must be registered with Ofsted AND included on the Tameside Directory of Providers to be able to offer the free entitlement.

As a parent/carer you can decide where you would like your child to go (subject to availability). For more information about what is available in your area, or to find a place suitable for you, please contact:

Tameside Family Information Service (FIS)

Email fis@tameside.gov.uk

Telephone 0161 342 4260

OR view a list of eligible providers at www.tameside.gov.uk/surestart/nurseryplaces

Not every provider in Tameside can offer the entitlement. Places are subject to availability and you should contact the provider of your choice as soon as possible in case there is a waiting list for places.

What do I need to do?

When your child starts their place and becomes eligible, your provider will explain how it works. You be asked to show proof of your child's date of birth and sign a parental agreement, which includes the following items:

- An agreed pattern of hours for the whole term
- Your confirmation that your child is not receiving more than 15 (or 30) hours free entitlement per week, including at any other provider within or outside Tameside

If you split the 15 (or 30) hours between 2 providers you will need to sign a parental agreement with both providers.

Places are subject to availability and you should contact the provider of your choice as soon as possible in case there is a waiting list for places.



Frequently Asked Questions

How many hours can my child have in a day?

Your child can access a maximum of 10 hours per day. Some providers can offer the entitlement more flexibly. To discuss what options are available to you, please contact your childcare provider.

Do I have to sign up to the full 15 (or 30) hours?

Your child can attend up to 15 (or 30) hours per week e.g. if your child attends for less hours per week, funding will be reduced accordingly.

What happens if my child attends a provider for more than the 15 (or 30) hours?

The 15 (or 30) hours will be completely free however they are not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables (such as nappies or sun cream), additional hours or additional activities (such as trips). Providers may charge a fee for these additions. If you choose to pay for these, it is an arrangement between you and the childcare provider. However, you must not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a 15 or 30 hours place, and must be offered alternative options. Your provider will charge for any additional childcare hours or services separately which should be clearly identified in your childcare invoice or bill.

What happens if I want my child to stay for lunch?

If your child stays at the setting over the lunch hour, this can be a part of the free entitlement. The provider may make a reasonable charge for the food or alternatively you may be given the option of giving your child a packed lunch. Your provider will discuss this with you.

What happens if I want my child to move to a different provider part way through the term?

By signing the parental agreement, you are agreeing that your child will stay with that provider for the whole term. Please discuss with your provider if you need to move your child mid-term, as they can advise the earliest point when funding can be moved.

