

# Early Years Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds



## The 10 Year Childcare Strategy 2004 sets out how the Government plans to create early learning and childcare services which:

- help every child develop to their full potential
- help parents get back into work
- allow parents to make informed choices about their children's care and their family life.

Childcare providers who are registered to provide the Early Years Entitlement will be talking to parents to find out what services are needed and how they can be provided.

### What is the Early Years Entitlement?

At the moment, from the term after your child's third birthday until they start school, they are entitled to up to 12.5 hours of free early learning and child care each week for up to 38 weeks a year during school term time. The hours can take place in nurseries (including school nursery classes), playgroups, pre-schools or at certain childminders.

From September 2009 the entitlement will increase in some early learning and childcare settings, and will be available in all settings from September 2010. **The increased entitlement will be 15 hours of free early learning and childcare each week for up to 38 weeks a year during school term time** and the hours can be used more flexibly.

The 15 hours must be used over at least 3 days a week and you can use a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 10 hours a day between 8am and 6pm. You can also share the 15 hours between 2 providers. Ask your childcare provider when they will start offering the increased entitlement.





## How will this benefit my family?

- Free early learning and care gives your child a head start when they go to school. Singing songs, playing games with letters and numbers and having fun with other children help to prepare your child for school and for life ahead.
- The learning and experiences your child has when being cared for help to shape them and their development.
- A Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) survey of parents using the Early Years Entitlement found that parents:
  - were overwhelmingly positive about the effect of early years education and care on their child
  - saw a range of benefits in their child such as improved social and communication skills, access to a wide range of activities and increased cultural awareness
  - said that they benefited from using the entitlement - just under half said that access to free childcare meant that they were able to work.

## When can my child have their entitlement?

Child born between:	Entitled from:
<b>1 April and 31 August</b>	1 September after their third birthday until they go to school
<b>1 September and 31 December</b>	1 January after their third birthday until they go to school
<b>1 January and 31 March</b>	1 April after their third birthday until they go to school



## What should I do?

- Check the table to see if your child is eligible for the Early Years Entitlement.
- If your child is eligible make sure that you are using all the hours you need and are entitled to.
- Talk to your childcare provider about what you need and how you can get the Early Years Entitlement.
- Talk to your childcare provider about their plans to extend the entitlement to 15 hours each week.
- Get a copy of *0-5 Years – The Essential Guide to Early Learning and Childcare For You and Your Family*. You can download a copy at [publications.dcsf.gov.uk](http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk) or call **0845 60 222 60** for a hard copy.
- Visit our website at [www.devon.gov.uk/eyef](http://www.devon.gov.uk/eyef) or call our helpdesk on **01392 385530**. Always speak to your childcare provider before calling the helpdesk.



## Is there any other help I can get?

The cost of childcare can seem daunting, but there's help available. You may be able to take advantage of free childcare places, tax credits, childcare vouchers and other benefits. Talk to your childcare provider, call our Family Information Service (DISC) on **0845 155 1013** or visit [www.devon.gov.uk/disc](http://www.devon.gov.uk/disc) for more information.

