



Management information on the number of 30 hours free childcare codes issued and validated for the summer term 2019

The following number of 30 hours eligibility codes have been issued by the Childcare Service¹ and validated by local authorities and childcare providers for the summer term 2019².

Eligibility codes issued by 31 March ³	420,723
Eligibility codes validated by 22 April	379,115
Eligibility codes validated as a percentage of codes issued	90%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

Spring term 2019

On the 28 March 2019, the department [published](#) its final estimates for the number of 30 hours eligibility codes issued by the Childcare Service and validated by local authorities and providers for spring as follows:

Eligibility codes issued	353,763
Eligibility codes validated	335,749
Eligibility codes validated as a percentage of codes issued	95%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

There were an estimated 325,000 children in a 30 hours place in the spring term.

¹ In September 2018, 30 hours free childcare was extended to children in foster care. A foster parent will apply for 30 hours free childcare through their local authority and, if found eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code generated by the DfE Eligibility Checking System.

² Autumn refers to 1 September 2018 - 31 December 2018, Spring refers to 1 January 2019 – 31 March 2019 and Summer refers to 1 April 2019 - 31 August 2019.

³ Further details on the eligibility codes included is under the 'Notes' section

Autumn term 2018²

On 18 December 2018 the department published [“30 hours free childcare: autumn term 2018”](#) with its final estimates for the number of 30 hours eligibility codes issued by the Childcare Service and validated by local authorities and providers for autumn as follows:

Eligibility codes issued	254,136
Eligibility codes validated	242,646
Eligibility codes as a percentage of codes issued	95%

Source: Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System

There were an estimated 240,000 children in a 30 hours place in the autumn term 2018.

Background

All three and four-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours a week of free early education. In September 2017 the entitlement was extended to 30 hours free childcare for families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage, and less than £100,000 per year. We are now in the second term of the second year of delivery.

Parents apply and have their eligibility checked for 30 hours free childcare via the Childcare Service. If a parent is found to be eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code which they take to their chosen childcare provider. In September 2018, 30 hours free childcare was extended to children in foster care. A foster parent will apply for 30 hours free childcare through their local authority and, if found eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code generated by the Eligibility Checking System. Childcare providers or local authorities will then validate all eligibility codes via the Eligibility Checking System. A parent must have generated an eligibility code and this must be validated to enable a child to access the offer.

A parent can start claiming their 30 hours place the term following their child's third birthday or the term following the date their eligibility code was issued (whichever is later). Therefore, the number of children eligible for 30 hours free childcare will increase through the academic year as more children turn three. Children are eligible for 30 hours free childcare from the term after they turn three until they reach compulsory school age, the term following their fifth birthday. Eligibility codes cannot be used to get 30 hours free childcare once a child has taken up a reception place in a state-funded school.

The child must be three years old and have a valid eligibility code by the termly deadline, 31 March 2019, to be eligible for a summer term 2019 place. Local authorities may also consider offering 30 hours places to parents who applied by, or had attempted to apply by, the termly deadline but received their eligibility code up to 14 days after the termly deadline (e.g. up to 14 April 2019).

Purpose of this release

This release provides an estimate for the summer term 2019, the third term of the 2018/19 school year and the second year of 30 hours delivery. It continues to fulfil our pledge to provide transparency around the national rollout of the extended entitlement.

Further updates on the number of eligibility codes issued and validated for the summer term will be published in June, this will also include an estimate of the number of children in a 30 hours place based on voluntary local authority returns.

Notes

- 1) Local authorities and childcare providers can validate eligibility codes for summer term childcare places during the term. Therefore, the number and percentage of eligibility codes validated may continue to increase during the term.
- 2) Eligibility codes considered eligible for summer 2019 term are:
 - a) those with a validity end date during or after the summer term (e.g. 1 April onwards) and,
 - b) those with a validity end date in the second half of the spring 2019 term (e.g. 11 February – 31 March), and after early years census and schools census have taken place (e.g. 14 January), which would therefore mean the child could be in their grace period in the summer term.

A validity end date is the date at which a code ceases to be valid if a parent has not reconfirmed or is no longer eligible following reconfirmation.⁴

- 3) Code validations before 14 January are not included in the summer codes validated total above because we expect codes to have been validated after this date if the parent is still using a 30 hours place this term. Local authorities began carrying out their early years census and schools census on the week commencing the 14 January, therefore checks made before this date are less likely to relate to the summer term.
- 4) Eligibility codes have been excluded to avoid double counting in instances where a child is issued more than one eligibility code. For example, when a child has received a temporary code via a manual application route and subsequently generated a digital code via the Childcare Service.
- 5) Eligibility codes have been included where an application or reconfirmation was made by 31 March but the eligibility codes have an original validity start date between 1 – 14 April, inclusive.⁵
- 6) These figures are not directly comparable to figures released by HMRC referring to the Childcare Service due to a number of definitional differences:
 - a. These figures refer to the number of children rather than families; some families may have two or more children eligible for 30 hours free childcare.

⁴ More details on reconfirmation and grace periods can be found in the DfE's operational guidance for LAs - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629544/Early_years_entitlements-operational_guidance.pdf

⁵ More details on reconfirmation and grace periods can be found in the DfE's operational guidance for LAs – [as per footnote above](#)

- b. These figures only include children issued a 30 hours code who were three at 31 March 2019.
- c. These figures include eligibility codes that could be in their 30 hours grace period.
- d. These figures include temporary codes which were generated by a manual application route, not by the digital service. Parents in receipt of a temporary code will need to reapply via the Childcare Service at a later date to receive a digital code.
- e. These figures include 30 hours eligibility codes for foster children which were generated manually through the Eligibility Checking System.

7) The summer 2019 table excludes eligibility codes issued and codes validated for children aged four at 31 August, as it is likely these children will be in reception or of school age and therefore ineligible for 30 hours free childcare. Some of these children may defer their entry into reception and continue to be eligible for the additional 15 hours offer – these children are not captured in the tables above.

A separate table is published as part of this release providing a breakdown of the number of summer eligibility codes issued and validated by region and local authority.

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