

**A quick guide  
to childcare costs**

# All about our fees and funding



**July 2021**

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# Welcome to Busy Bees

A child's early years are so important. As the UK's leading childcare and nursery provider, nobody knows that like we do, and nobody does more to make them count. But while we're here to give every child the very best start in life, we're also here to offer support and guidance to parents, too. And when it comes to funding, you might find you need a little help in the right direction.

Whether you're new to our nurseries or already part of the Busy Bees family, there are a few different ways to help fund your childcare. It can be tricky to get to grips with all the ins and outs, so we've put together this handy pack to guide you through. From explaining the government's 15 and 30 hours schemes in England, to covering off those essential daily costs that create our unique Busy Bees experience, we'll help you work out all the fees and funding. Once that's sorted, we can all focus on the most important thing: taking care of your child.



# 15 hours funded childcare

Understanding childcare funding isn't always easy, but the good news is we're here to help. In England, there are two government funding programmes that can help your child join in with the exciting adventures and educational fun here at Busy Bees, for less. In simple terms, you can make the most of either 15 or 30 funded hours per week, depending on your circumstances. Here's how it all works.

## 15 hours funded childcare

This funding covers 15 hours of childcare across 38 weeks of term time. All parents of 3 and 4 year olds can access this scheme. Here's what you need to know:

- All 3 and 4 year olds qualify for this scheme.
- At Busy Bees, we can 'stretch' these hours over the whole year for more flexibility. How we do this varies between our nurseries, as it depends on how many weeks a particular centre can stretch the funding for, but most of our parents access around 10.95 funded hours per week over 52 weeks.
- Our parents usually need their child to spend longer in nursery than funding allows, but that's no problem. We offer additional, non-funded hours to fit in with your schedule – see our fees on page 13 for more details.
- You might be eligible for 15 hours funded childcare at the same time as other government schemes or incentives. Visit the government's **Childcare Choices** site to find out more.
- The essentials and extras are not covered by government funding and parents will be asked to pay for this.

We also offer the scheme to some 2 year olds, if:

- Parents are receiving certain benefits
- The child has Disability Living Allowance or Special Education Needs (SEND)
- The child has a kinship or guardianship order
- The child is being looked after by a local authority



**Our 15 hours funded places for 2 year olds are limited. To find out more, speak to your nursery.**

## Good to know



While the amount of government funding given to each childcare provider varies a little based on location, it doesn't cover the essentials and extras, we just wouldn't be Busy Bees without it. So, we ask you to pay a contribution towards these costs alongside your funded hours. We've explained in more detail on pages 16 - 17.



## Making childcare go further



For most of our parents, 15 or 30 hours childcare isn't quite enough. That's why we stretch funded hours into longer spells at our centres, to fit better with working parents' schedules. Having a consistent routine can be great for your child's development, too. Want to know more? Head to page 14 for how it all works.

# 30 hours funded childcare

This scheme is only for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, and offers twice as many funded hours each week, 30 hours of childcare across 38 weeks of term time and, like the 15 hours scheme, if you're living with your partner you'll need to apply together.

- Parents:
  - Should be working at least 16 hours a week
  - Can be on sick leave or parental leave
  - Must each earn less than £100,000 a year
  - Might still be eligible while claiming benefits.
- We can 'stretch' these hours, too – as with the 15 hours scheme, how that works varies between our nurseries. Most parents access around 21.9 funded hours per week, across 52 weeks.
- Again, we can offer your child more than 30 hours per week, if you need them – head over to page 14 for more details about this.
- The essentials and extras are not covered by government funding and parents will be asked to pay for this.

There are some other specific things that can affect your eligibility, like your immigration status, where your child lives, and your child's exact age. You can read more about this on the government [website](#)



### Other ways to save

If you need extra help, the government has some other ways to save money on childcare. Whether you're eligible depends on your circumstances, income, and a few other things. Visit [gov.uk](#) to find out more.

# Government funding at a glance

Take a look at the table below for a summary of each type of funding.

	15 hours	30 hours
Entitlement	15 hours per week	30 hours per week
Child's age	3 & 4 year olds Some 2 year olds	3 & 4 year olds
Parent eligibility	All parents of 3 & 4 year olds. Eligible 2 year olds only	Working parents of 3&4 year olds only
Eligible alongside government schemes and incentives	Yes, some. Visit <a href="http://childcarechoices.gov.uk">childcarechoices.gov.uk</a> to find out more	
What does it cover?	Just your child's place at nursery. It doesn't cover any of the essentials or extras (see page 16 - 17 for these)	
How can I get more out of my hours?	Most parents 'stretch' their hours across the year, usually around 10.95 hours per week for 15 hours funding, and 21.9 hours per week for 30 hours funding, depending on your nursery. See page 14 for more details	



## Where to get help?

**Talk to us:** speak to your centre director – they'll explain how the funding could apply to you and how stretching might work.

**Check the government website:** if you're struggling to make sense of eligibility, or want to find out about government schemes and incentives, visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) and follow the relevant links.





# Our Fees

Government funding only pays for a limited number of hours, it doesn't pay for all the essentials and extras that make Busy Bees such a special place. To help us give your child the best start in life, we'll ask you to pay for these along with the rest of your hours.

## What to expect

A Busy Bees funded fee sheet shows how your childcare is covered depending on the number of funded hours, and explains what you'll need to pay. You'll see:



### Funded hours

15 hours or 30 hours, which are allocated pro rata per session and per full day.



### Non-funded hours

Additional hours that cover the rest of your child's time in nursery.



### Combined fees

This is how much you'll pay Busy Bees for that session, day, or week in total.



### Essentials and extras per funded hour

All of these are not funded by the government and parents will be asked to pay for these.



### Hourly rate for non-funded hours

The charge for those additional hours.

We've already explained your funded hours on pages 6 to 10. But for the essentials and extras, and for any non-funded hours, we will ask parents to pay for these. If you have any questions regarding our essentials and extras charge please speak to your Centre Director. We'll explain a bit about these fees, and what they go towards, below.

# Non-funded and stretched hours

Ask any parent what they'd like more than anything in the world, and the answer is often 'more time'. Juggling work, children and day-to-day life isn't easy, and we want to help our Busy Bees families wherever we can.

We could divide your 15 or 30 hours funding across the 38 weeks of term, but most parents find it even more useful to stretch those hours across the whole year. Here are some options to think about, to help you get the childcare you need:

## Stretched hours

Remember: whether it's 30 or 15 hours, that number only applies to the 38 weeks in term time. So, most parents choose to 'stretch' their 15 or 30 funded hours across the whole year. Usually parents can 'stretch' their 15 hours into 10.95 hours per week, while those with 30 hours could have 21.9 hours per week, though it can vary a little between centres.

There are two big reasons to stretch your hours. Firstly, your child will get into a routine and benefit from everything they love about Busy Bees, all year round. Also, your fees will stay pretty much the same throughout the year, making it easier to manage your money.

## Non-funded hours

We don't provide childcare by the hour, which means your hours always need to cover a full day or session. So, just as an example, say you used 21.9 hours funding across three full days per week, all year round. That would give you 7.3 funded hours each day, which means your day would only be partially funded, and wouldn't quite cover the length of a 10-hour session. So, we'd then round out that time with additional, non-funded hours to cover the rest of the day.

Non-funded hours are charged at our standard rate, which covers absolutely everything your child will need each day for the very best care.

Whatever you choose for your child's time with Busy Bees will stick, so you can expect the same pattern of hours each week, which gives your child the consistency and routine they need. This does mean you won't be able to swap from using your full hours during term time to stretching them across the year. But, if your circumstances change, please chat to us to see if we can help, as conditions may apply.



## Here for you

While of course your child is our top priority, Busy Bees is here to make your life easier, too. Our nurseries are perfectly placed for commuters and hospital staff, and many offer extended hours for your convenience. Ask us how to make your childcare work around your schedule. It's just another way we support our Busy Bees families.



### Enhancements and activities

From their favourite toys and play equipment to books, art supplies, specialist training and more, this covers absolutely everything we need to create the enriching experiences that make us so very special – and everything your child needs to learn, play, grow, and practice their language and communication. It's everything they need for the best start in life.



## Quick recap

Most of the time you'll pay a combined fee at Busy Bees. This covers all your non-funded hours, along with the essentials and extras that make our nurseries so special.

# Essentials and extras

These are just what they sound like: all the important essentials like food and toiletries, along with the enriching experiences, dedicated care, and state-of-the-art play equipment that make our nurseries the best in the UK. The government funding doesn't cover the cost of things like this, so like most nurseries, we'll ask you to pay. But when you see what you're paying for, we think you'll understand:



### Meals, drinks and snacks

Our on-site chefs prepare healthy, delicious, NHS-accredited food every single day, offering a starter or dessert with every meal along with lots of fresh, nutritious snacks. You can take a look at our seasonal menus on our website, here.



### Toiletries

We do all we can to keep your child feeling clean and comfortable, and can also work with you to support them with potty training, building their confidence and independence.



### Dedicated care

Typically, we have one brilliant member of staff for every eight children (1:8), compared to 1:13 in some schools. This means there's much more one-to-one time with your child, which is great for their development.



### UP app

Our one-of-a-kind app is bursting with amazing information, activities, and music – and it's exclusive to Busy Bees parents.



### ParentZone

Keep track of your child's progress, and see all they get up to at nursery. It's a wonderful way to share in their day-to-day life.



### School ready programme

we know how important it is to feel prepared for that next step, so we help to build every child's skills to make the transition to school life simpler.

Of course, these are just some of the things that make Busy Bees special. At our nurseries, your child will also benefit from a National Curriculum-based education following the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) framework, along with the exceptional training, expertise, and specialist support of our Support Centre. For more about Busy Bees Childcare, [click here](#).

# How that looks

Now you understand the government funding and fees, let's take a look at how it all works together. We've shown a couple of our most popular scenarios to give you a clearer idea of how funding at Busy Bees might work for you.



## One full day

(Stretched funding x 52 weeks) for 10 hours from 8am to 6pm



### Funded hours

7.3hrs - No cost to parents



### Non-funded hours

2.7hrs - Chargeable according to the rate of the session (in this case the **full day** rate)



### Essentials & Extras

Charged per funded hour (based on hours stated in Funded Hours) eg if this charge was £1.10/hr the Essentials and Extras would be £8.03 for this day (7.3 x £1.10)

## Full-time place

(Stretching funding x 52 weeks) for 50 hours over 5 days from 8am to 6pm



### Funded hours

21.9hrs - No cost to parents



### Non-funded hours

28.1hrs - Chargeable according to the rate of the session (in this case the **full-time** rate)



### Essentials & Extras

Charged per funded hour (based on hours stated in Funded Hours) eg if this charge was £1.10/hr the Essentials and Extras would be £24.09 for the week (21.9 x £1.10)

# Applying for funding

How and when you need to apply for your childcare funding depends on their age, the scheme and some other factors. We've broken it down for you below.

## When to apply

You might be wondering when your child will be able to use the 15 and 30 hours of government funding. It's all down to when their birthday falls, so make sure you plan ahead. For 30 hours funded childcare, you'll need to apply online for a special 30 hours code.



15 and 30 hours funded childcare		30 hours funded childcare	
A child turning 3 between:	Can be funded from:	Recommended time to apply for 30 hour code:	Last date to apply for 30 hours code:
1st September to 31st December	Term on or after 1st January	15th October to 30th November	31st December
1st January to 31st March	Term on or after 1st April	15th January to 28th February	31st March
1st April to 31st August	Term on or after 1st September	15th June to 31st July	31st August

If you're a parent of an eligible 2 year old, the earliest you can apply for funding directly through your local authority is at the beginning of the term in which your child turns two.



### Don't forget!

Every three months, sign into your HMRC childcare account to reconfirm your 30 hours eligibility, then send your code to Busy Bees. If you forget, you might lose your funding for the following term, which means you'll have to pay our standard fee for any time that isn't covered by the basic 15 hours scheme.



# How to apply

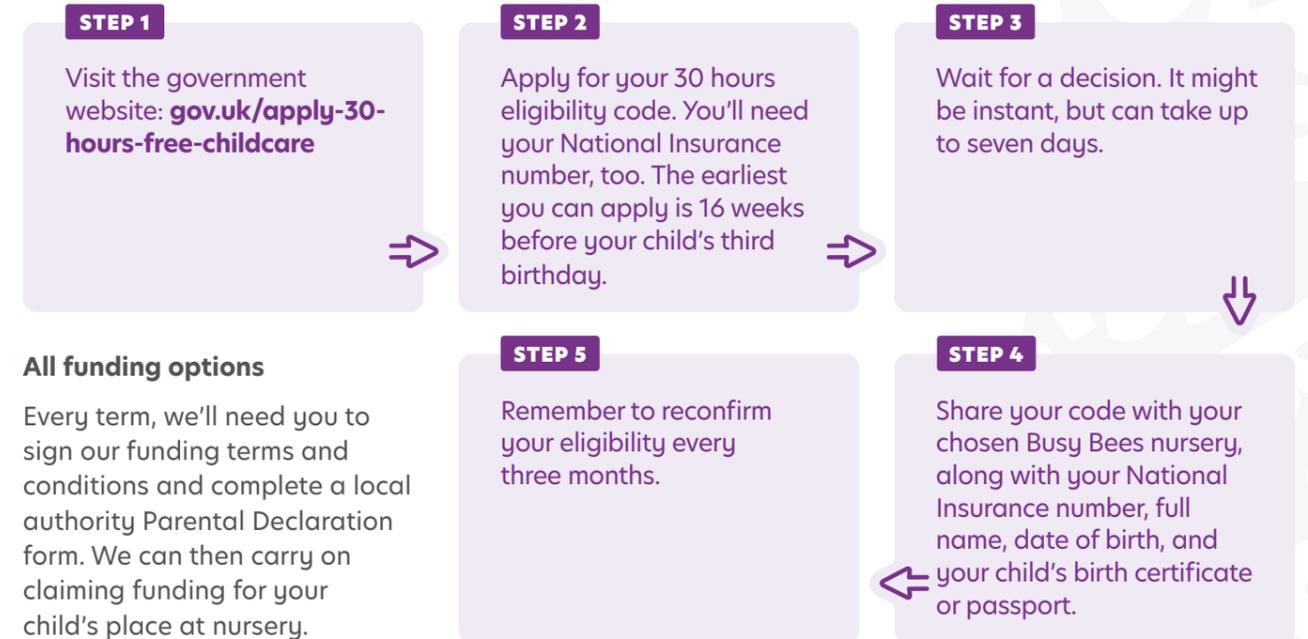
## 15 hours funded childcare

For 3 and 4 year olds, all you have to do is get in touch with your nearest Busy Bees nursery. Our lovely team will talk you through the process and ask to see your child's birth certificate or passport as proof of eligibility. It's as simple as that!

For eligible 2 year olds, you must get written confirmation from your local authority. Then show your confirmation to the director of your chosen Busy Bees centre and if eligible, your funding will start the term following application. Bear in mind that these funded places for 2 year olds are limited, so you'll need to speak to your centre director about availability first.

## 30 hours funded childcare

Unlike 15 hours funding, you need to apply for 30 hours funding as not every child will be eligible. It takes around 20 minutes - so make sure you have time set aside to do it properly. We've explained it below.



## All funding options

Every term, we'll need you to sign our funding terms and conditions and complete a local authority Parental Declaration form. We can then carry on claiming funding for your child's place at nursery.

**Good to know**

For 30 hours funded childcare, HMRC will usually send you reminders about when to reconfirm, but it's a good idea to set up a reminder yourself. That way, you won't miss out on this extra bit of help towards the cost of childcare.

# FAQs

## Any questions?

### Do Busy Bees offer totally free places?

Yes, although we prefer to call these 'funded', not 'free'. All of our centres offer funded places where parents won't need to pay for their child. While these are released each term, places are first come, first served and depend on staffing levels. As parents don't need to contribute towards these places, there's an operational and financial impact on our nurseries – so to ensure the care we provide isn't affected, and that our centres can run sustainably, we have to limit the number available at each centre.

### How many hours will my child be funded each day at Busy Bees?

In short, it depends on the centre's opening hours, the number of funded hours you have, and how often your child is in nursery.

We don't offer childcare by the hour, and instead apply each child's funded hours pro-rata across their sessions and days, spreading them across the week. As a Busy Bees parent, each month you'll be sent an invoice, which shows your child's funded hours as well as the chargeable non-funded hours and the fee for essentials and extras. So, it'll always be clear how many funded hours have been used each day.

### If I pay for extra hours and don't use them, can I be refunded?

Unfortunately not. We have to make sure we're covering all our running and team costs to provide high quality care for every child at Busy Bees.

### Can I roll over my 15 or 30 funded hours into the next term?

Sorry, due to restrictions by various local authorities we can't roll over your hours, but we can stretch your child's funding instead. If you're eligible for 15 hours, by stretching,

you can claim your child's funding allowance of up to 570 hours in just three visits each week over a whole year. If you're a working parent claiming 30 hours, you can access up to 1140 hours in six visits per week, all year round. Please speak to the centre director at your child's nursery to find out more.

### Why do your fees differ between nurseries?

We work hard to offer the same fantastic experience to Busy Bees children all over England, but the cost of doing so varies. This can be because of the geographical area, because some of our centres have higher running costs, or because different centres offer different benefits and services.

### Nurseries in my area allow parents to send in packed lunches. Does Busy Bees?

Unfortunately we don't allow packed lunches or snacks from home at our nurseries; many of the children in our care have allergies, and we just can't put their safety at risk. Our menus are healthy, varied, and NHS approved, and we cater for special dietary requirements, cultural food choices, allergies, and fussy eaters, so every child can look forward to tasty food they love to eat. There's more information about this [here](#)

### I've missed the deadline to apply for my 30 Hour Code. Can my child still be funded?

Codes only provide funding in the term after you apply, so if you miss the deadline (on the last day of March, August and December), then you're still eligible for 15 hours, because it's available to all children, regardless of whether parents are working. HMRC might prompt you to reconfirm your code before the start of the new term, so please remember to do this to stay eligible. When you have your code, give it to your child's nursery

– we'll check it's valid with the local authority and confirm your child's place.

### What happens if my circumstances change? Can I switch from termly to stretched funding or vice versa?

Your nursery team will explain and help you decide which funding model would work best for you and your child. Once your child reaches funding age, you'll also have a relationship with Childcare Choices, who provide the codes, and your local authority, whose policies can affect your funding claim. Some local authorities don't allow switching, and because we take the time to really talk through your options before you make your choice, it's unlikely you'll want to anyway. But, if you feel you need to, you can always speak to the centre director at your child's nursery.

### I'm planning to take my child on holiday. How will this affect my funded childcare?

If you're planning on being away for under two weeks, generally this is fine, but the more notice you can provide, the better. If it's likely to be longer than this, talk to the team at your child's nursery. They may need to check with the local authority about whether funding can continue.

### What should I do if I need to change how long my child attends nursery?

We ask for one month's notice, however if this applies to 15 or 30 hours funded childcare, then speak to the team at your child's centre. Some changes may affect your child's funding claim and depending on the hours involved or when the changes are requested, they may not be allowed by your local authority until the start of a new term.



# Helpful bits and bobs



If you need any **extra advice**, support or information, we've put together some quick links and contact details below.

**Government website:** visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for a wealth of information on the government funded childcare schemes. Just search 15 hours or 30 hours.

**HMRC helpline:** call 0300 389 8667 for questions about funded childcare or your 30 hours code.

**Busy Bees website:** find out more about us, and how we can give your child the best start in life. You can also read our **Terms & Conditions** and **Admissions Policy** documents when you're ready to take that next step.

**Busy Bees apps:** as the UK's leading childcare and nursery provider, we offer lots of extra bits to our parents and families, such as our **ParentZone** online learning journal and our exclusive **UP** app, which supports learning and development at home.

