



Abacus Ark

NURSERY SCHOOLS

Childcare Support at Abacus Ark



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CHILDCARE SUPPORT AT ABACUS ARK

At Abacus Ark, we are proud to deliver the government's free entitlement and funded hours for children aged 9 months to 4 years.

This guide explains the childcare funding options available to families, how they work at Abacus Ark, and what you need to do to apply.

THE TYPES OF CHILDCARE SUPPORT WE ACCEPT

We accept the following government-funded childcare schemes:

- **30 Hours Childcare for Working Families**

For children aged 9 months to 4 years, where parents meet the working eligibility criteria.

- **15 Hours Universal Childcare for All Families in England**

For all children aged 3 to 4 years, regardless of income or employment status.

- **15 Hours Early Learning for Families Receiving Support**

For children aged 2 years where parents receive certain benefits or forms of support.

- **Tax-Free Childcare**

For working parents and carers – for every £8 you pay towards childcare, the government adds £2. This can be used alongside the above childcare support.

- **Camden Enhanced Offer (Abacus Ark Maida Vale Nursery Only)**

An additional local offer for low-income families of 3- and 4-year-olds who live within the London Borough of Camden.

HOW FUNDED HOURS WORK

We spread the government entitlement evenly across the 50 weeks we are open each year:

- **15 hours Entitlement** = 11.4 hours per week (total of 570 hours per year)
- **30 hours Entitlement** = 22.8 hours per week (total of 1,140 hours per year)

This means that your funded hours are consistent across the full year rather than term-time only.

Government funding covers the cost of high-quality childcare, but **not**:

- **Meals**
- **Nappies**
- **Extra activities or trips**
- **Any additional hours outside your funded entitlement**

These optional extras may be charged separately but will never be a condition for accessing your funded place.

WHEN CAN YOU ACCESS THE FUNDING ENTITLEMENT FOR YOUR CHILD?

You can start using your entitlement from the term after your child reaches the relevant age or you meet the eligibility criteria.

Child's Birthday	Funding Starts From
1 st January to 31 st March	Summer Term starting 1 st April
1 st April to 31 st August	Autumn Term starting on 1 st September
1 st September to 31 st December	Spring Term starting on 1 st January

You are only able to claim the entitlements from the term after your child becomes the relevant age because this gives local councils and childcare providers enough time to prepare.

30 HOURS CHILDCARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

For children aged 9 months to 4 years, where parents meet the working eligibility criteria.

ELIGIBILITY FOR WORKING FAMILIES FUNDING

If you live and work in England you may be entitled to 30 hours funded childcare support from the term after your child turns 9 months old, until they start school.

You may be eligible if:

- You (and your partner, if applicable) each earn the equivalent of at **least 16 hours per week at National Minimum or Living Wage**.

There is no requirement to work a certain number of hours per week – it is all about how much you earn and whether you meet the minimum earning threshold. Apprentices are also eligible if they earn the equivalent to 16 hours at the apprentice minimum wage.

- Neither parent earns more than **£100,000 per year (adjusted net income)**.

This applies if you are self-employed or on a zero-hours contract and expect to meet the earning criteria on average over the three months after you have applied for the 30 hours. HMRC will look at data such as your previous earnings to consider whether you are likely to meet the criteria and may contact you for further information if they are unsure. If you are starting up your own business, you will not be expected to meet the minimum earning criteria in your first year of trading.

If you are not working but you expect to take up paid work within 14 days, you can still apply for the 30 hours, if you expect to meet the income criteria over the coming three months.

If you are a single parent and meet the above criteria, you will be eligible for the 30 hours. If you live with a partner, you both must meet the above criteria. This still applies if one of you is not the child's parent – for example, if you have remarried or have started living with a new partner. If you are separated/divorced from your child's parent, the eligibility rules will only apply to the parent that the child normally lives with (and their new partner if they are part of the same household).

- You meet the UK residency and immigration requirements.

To be eligible for funded childcare for working parents, you (and your partner if you have one and if they live with you) must have a National Insurance number.

The person who applies must also have at least one of the following:

- British or Irish citizenship
- settled or pre-settled status, or you have applied and you're waiting for a decision
- permission to access public funds - your UK residence card will tell you if you cannot do this

If you are on parental leave, starting a new job, or self-employed, you may still be eligible. See [full eligibility details on Best Start in Life](#).

HOW TO APPLY

You can [apply online for free childcare if you're working](#).

You'll need to make sure you have the following information to hand before starting the application:

- Your national insurance number (or unique taxpayer reference if you are self-employed)
- The date you started or are due to start work
- Details of any government support or benefits you receive
- The UK birth certificate reference number (if you have one) for your child

If you are a foster carer, there is a separate application process. Speak to your social worker to find out more.

WHEN DO I NEED TO APPLY?

You can apply for your code up to 16 weeks before your child turns 9 months old.

Date Child Turns 9 Months Old	Term You Want Funding To Start	Application Deadline
1st September to 31 st December	Spring Term (Starting 1 st January)	31 st December
1 st January to 31 st March	Summer Term (Starting 1 st April)	31 st March
1 st April to 31 st August	Autumn Term (starting 1 st September)	31 st August

The deadline is the day before the new funding term begins, but we encourage you to apply earlier and strongly recommend applying at least six weeks before these deadlines to ensure your funding can begin on time.

VERIFYING & MAINTAINING YOUR CHILD'S FUNDING

You'll usually find out if you're eligible straight away, but it can take up to 7 days. Contact the [Childcare Service helpline](#) if you have applied more than 7 days ago and have not heard from HMRC.

Once approved, you will receive an 11-digit eligibility code (usually starting with '11' or '50') in your childcare account. HMRC will let you know by text or email that the code is in your account.

Once you have received your child's 11-digit funding eligibility code, please complete this [form](#) so we can collect the information needed for verification:

- Your child's full name and date of birth
- Your full name and date of birth
- Your National Insurance number
- Your current address
- Confirmation that you are happy for us to share your details with the local council to confirm eligibility

Once we have received your code and details, we will verify them with the local council and confirm the following details to you:

- **Validity Start Date** – This is the date that you will be able to claim your funding entitlement from.
- **Validity End Date** – This is the date that your code ends and is when you will need to reconfirm your details with HMRC by. You will be prompted to reconfirm your details with HMRC every three months. If your child is no longer eligible for funding or you do not reconfirm your details with HMRC by this date, then you will move into a 'Grace Period'. The Grace Period refers to a short period that your child will still receive their funding entitlement after they have been deemed to be ineligible.
- **Grace Period End Date** – This is the date that your Grace Period ends, and your child will no longer be eligible for the funding entitlement hours.

Please ensure your details remain up to date on your childcare account to avoid disruption to your funding.

RECONFIRMING YOUR ELIGIBILITY

After we have verified your eligibility code, please ensure you reconfirm your details every 3 months via your childcare account on [GOV.UK](#).

You'll receive reminder emails before your reconfirmation date.

- The first email reminder is sent 4 weeks before reconfirmation is due
- A further reminder is sent 2 weeks before reconfirmation is due
- A notification is sent on the deadline date of reconfirmation to notify you that your eligibility for funded childcare for working parents has stopped and asking you to confirm your details as soon as possible

This message will come from GOV.UK. Please remember to make sure that your details are up to date.

Reconfirmation usually only takes a few minutes, and ensures your funding continues without interruption.

GRACE PERIOD

If you do not reconfirm your details with HMRC by the reconfirmation date, you will enter **the Grace Period**. During this time, your child will continue to receive funding only until the Grace Period end date.

Important: While in the Grace Period, you cannot:

- Change your childcare provider
- Begin claiming funding for the first time if your child was previously ineligible
- It is therefore essential to reconfirm your details with HMRC to avoid any lapse in funding. Once reconfirmed, HMRC will provide a new reconfirmation date (usually three months later) and may extend the Grace Period end date.
- Start claiming a new type of funding, For example:
 - Moving from Under 2's funding to 2-year-old funding, or
 - Moving from 2-year-old funding to 3 & 4-year-old funding



If you change funding type, your child will immediately become ineligible, and the Grace Period does not apply.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS MY RECONFIRMATION WINDOW?

If you miss your reconfirmation window, a **grace period may apply** so your child can continue attending for a short time while you renew your eligibility. You will need to submit another application as soon as possible so your child can keep receiving their funding entitlement.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE & I NO LONGER MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA?

If you become ineligible due to a change in your circumstances at the point when your child changes funding types (e.g., Under 2s moving to 2-year-old funding, or 2-year-old moving to 3 & 4-year-old funding), **your child will immediately lose eligibility, and the Grace Period does not apply.**

Otherwise, your child will continue to receive funding only until the Grace Period end date, after which funding will stop.

Please notify us as soon as your circumstances change so we can advise on next steps. For further guidance regarding eligibility during the Grace Period, please contact the Finance Team.

If your child is aged 2-years old and you or your child receive some additional forms of support, you may be eligible for [15 hours early learning for 2-year-olds](#) under a separate scheme and you should speak to your local council for further information.

If your child is 3- or 4-years old, you will be eligible to receive the 15 hours universal funding, which is available for all 3- and 4-year-olds in England, and does not require an application via GOV.UK.

15 HOURS UNIVERSAL CHILDCARE FOR ALL FAMILIES IN ENGLAND

For all children aged 3 to 4 years, regardless of income or employment status

ELIGIBILITY FOR UNIVERSAL 15 HOURS FUNDING FOR 3 & 4 YEAR OLDS

Every child **aged 3 to 4 years** in England can access **15 hours of funded childcare** from the term after their third birthday, regardless of income levels, benefit status or family circumstances.

This entitlement can be used on its own or combined with the **30 Hours Childcare for Working Families** scheme to provide an **additional 15 hours, giving a total of 30 funded hours**.

HOW TO APPLY

To access this entitlement at Abacus Ark, please share your child's birth certificate with us when confirming your place.

You will be required to complete a Parent Declaration Form to receive this entitlement. Please see our Parent Declaration Form section for further details.

You are not required to complete an application via GOV.UK to receive this entitlement.

15 HOURS EARLY LEARNING FOR FAMILIES RECEIVING SUPPORT

For children aged 2 years where parents receive certain benefits or forms of support.

ELIGIBILITY FOR 15 HOURS EARLY LEARNING FOR FAMILIES RECEIVING SUPPORT

If you are not eligible for the working families funding entitlement, you may qualify for 15 hours childcare for your 2-year-old, if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support, income-based JSA or ESA
- Universal Credit (household income £15,400 or less)
- Pension Credit (guaranteed element)
- The child has an EHC plan, receives Disability Living Allowance, or has been in care

NON-UK CITIZENS

If you're a non-UK citizen who cannot claim benefits and your immigration status says you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still get free childcare for your 2-year-old. You must live in England and your household income after tax must be no more than:

- £34,500 (within London, one child)
- £38,600 (within London, two or more children) and you have less than £16,000 in savings or investments.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, **contact your local council**. They will confirm your eligibility and provide either a code or a confirmation letter, which you can share with us.

TAX-FREE CHILDCARE

You can receive a £2 top-up for every £8 you pay towards childcare, up to £500 every 3 months (or £1,000 if your child is disabled).

ELIGIBILITY FOR TAX-FREE CHILDCARE

To be eligible for Tax-Free Childcare, you, and your partner (if you have one), must:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Be in the UK, or treated as being in the UK
- Be responsible for the child you are applying for
- Be in qualifying paid work, which can include being:
 - Self Employed
 - Moving from 2-year-old funding to 3 & 4-year-old funding
- Expect to earn on average at least a weekly amount equivalent to 16 hours a week at the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage over the next 3 months
- Not have adjusted net income of more than £100,000 per year
- Not be in receipt of:
 - Universal Credit
 - Childcare Vouchers

If you're not currently working, you may still be eligible if your partner is working, and you get any of the following:

- Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Carer's Allowance or (in Scotland only) Carer Support Payment
- Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
- National insurance credits on the grounds of incapacity for work or limited capability for work

Find out more about [eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare](#) on GOV.UK.

If eligible, you can receive Tax-Free Childcare for your child until 1st September after their 11th birthday, or until 1st September after their 16th birthday if they are disabled.

You can use Tax-Free Childcare alongside your funded hours for working parents.

HOW TO APPLY

There is a single application for both **Tax-Free Childcare** and the **30 Hours Childcare for Working Families**. As part of your application, you will find out whether you are eligible for one or both.

Steps to apply:

1. **Visit the official government website:** [GOV.UK/apply-for-tax-free-childcare](https://gov.uk/apply-for-tax-free-childcare)
2. **Create an online childcare account** for your child.
3. **Add Abacus Ark as your childcare provider** – please use your nursery's postcode to ensure you link to the correct account.
4. **Deposit funds into your TFC account.** For every £8 you pay in, the government will add £2 to help cover your childcare costs. You can receive up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 per year) for each child. If your child is disabled, this increases to £1,000 every 3 months (up to £4,000 per year).
5. **Pay for your childcare** through your online Tax-Free Childcare account or via the Family app. The full invoice amount should be paid via Tax-Free Childcare, as the government contribution is added to your account, not sent directly to the nursery. For assistance, contact finance@abacusark.com.
6. **Reconfirm your eligibility every three months.** You will receive a reminder, and it's quick and easy to update through your online account.

Tips / reminders:

- Make sure your child's details match exactly on your account to avoid delays.
- You can use Tax-Free Childcare alongside other childcare schemes where eligible but check your account carefully to ensure funding is applied correctly.
- Keep an eye on deadlines to reconfirm your eligibility to prevent any interruptions in funding.

CAMDEN ENHANCED OFFER

(MAIDA VALE ONLY)

Families living in the London Borough of Camden may be eligible for the Camden Enhanced Offer – additional 15 hours of funding for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income households.

CAMDEN ENHANCED OFFER

If you live in Camden and are not working, you can apply for 30 hours of early education and childcare through the Camden Enhanced Offer. You can apply 3 months before your child's third birthday.

To be eligible, you must be:

- A resident of Camden
- **NOT** eligible for the Government's [30 hours for working parents](#)
- Taking your universal entitlement of 15 hours free childcare in Camden

You must also meet one of the following criteria:

- Your family meets the criteria for free school meals
- Your family receives working tax credits, and your household income is less than £16,190
- Your child is being 'looked after' by the local authority or is a child who has 'left care'*
- Your child has an education, health and care plan*
- You receive disability living allowance for your child*
- You receive support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- You receive Universal Credit and have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £15,400.

***Evidence must be provided with application**

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, you must complete a form on [Camden's website](#).

If eligible, you will receive a confirmation letter from Camden. Please forward this to funding@abacusark.com before your child's start date or the start of the funding term, whichever comes first.

PARENT DECLARATION FORM VIA FUNDING LOOP

As required by the government, all parents claiming the 15 or 30 hours of government-funded childcare must complete a Parent Declaration Form. This form allows Abacus Ark to claim the funding on your behalf.

The form must be completed prior to each funding term (three times per year) to ensure your child can receive their entitlement. Without a completed form, we are unable to claim or pass on the benefits of the funding.

The Parent Declaration Form consists of the following sections:

- **Child's details:** full name, date of birth, and current address.
- **Additional details for 30-hour funding (if eligible):** National Insurance number and 30-hour eligibility code.
- **Setting and attendance details:** your child's attendance and funding hours for Abacus Ark to process.
- **Confirmation of the provider** who will claim the 15/30 hours.
- **Declaration:** to be signed and dated by yourself and Abacus Ark.

The form will be sent to you before your child becomes eligible for government funding. You will receive an email from Funding Loop, a secure online portal, where you can create an account and complete the form digitally.

Funding Loop simplifies the process of applying for and managing government-funded childcare. Through the portal, you can fill out forms, upload supporting documents such as proof of birth, and submit your information directly to Abacus Ark. The system also remembers previously entered details, making future applications quicker, and allows you to manage funding claims easily from a computer, tablet, or phone.

For parents claiming funding for the first time, we need to verify your child's date of birth before processing the funding. You will be asked to upload a copy of your child's passport or birth certificate through Funding Loop to complete this verification.

EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM (EYPP)

If your child is aged 9 months to 4 years old and you receive certain benefits, Abacus Ark may be able to claim additional funding (the Early Years Pupil Premium — EYPP) to support their learning and development. This extra funding helps us enhance your child's experience and outcomes.

You can check eligibility via the GOV.UK website: [Get extra funding for your early years provider.](#)

When completing the Parent Declaration Form via Funding Loop, you will be asked whether you wish to apply for this additional funding and to provide the relevant details if so.

MOVING TO SCHOOL RECEPTION CLASS

Children starting school reception classes in September will no longer be eligible to receive government funding at both Abacus Ark and their new school. **As a result, funding at Abacus Ark will end on 31st August.**

Once your child starts school, they will be funded through the school's funding grants rather than the early years funding received by Abacus Ark. This means it is not possible to access both types of funding in the same term.

NOT SURE WHAT CHILDCARE SUPPORT YOU'RE ELIGIBLE FOR?

We know that childcare funding can be confusing, and our finance team is always happy to help with any questions about eligibility, deadlines, or the reconfirmation process.

You can also check which schemes you may qualify for using the [Best Start in Life eligibility checker.](#)