

# Stockton Borough Families Information Service

## Free Early Education Entitlement for 3 & 4 Year Olds

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The Government's vision is for all children to have access to high quality early learning and childcare to help them to reach their potential; help parents to work and make informed choices about how to balance their children's care and family life. The free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds is at the heart of this vision. It offers free provision from the term following a child's third birthday until they reach compulsory school age.

- You can access this free provision via a maintained school nursery

OR

- You can access it via a private childcare provider if they are registered with the Local Authority to provide free early years entitlement

### New Arrangements

From September 2009, for **25% of the most disadvantaged 3 & 4 year olds**, the amount of free entitlement increased from 12.5 hours per week to 15 hours per week, over a minimum of 38 weeks, with the added option of using the entitlement flexibly.

From **September 2010** the 15 hours flexible entitlement will be available to all 3 & 4 year olds throughout Stockton, although it may be available in some settings from April 2010.

If your child is already attending a maintained school nursery or private childcare setting, speak to them about what they are offering.



### Choosing Your Hours

The 15 hours can be taken over a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 days per week between core hours of 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. However, each individual session must be no less than 2.5 hours and no more than 8 hours.

The flexible entitlement will enable you to vary the times and days you choose. You will not be tied to a.m. or p.m. sessions (e.g. 9-11.30 a.m.). This is subject to "reasonable" parental demand and the providers' ability to meet such demands.

You can even split the 15 hours between two providers if you need to.

### Choice

It's up to you to where you use your child's free entitlement:

- Day Nurseries or Preschools eligible to claim the Free Entitlement
- Independent Schools
- Local Authority maintained nurseries within infant or primary schools

A maintained school nursery may provide the additional 2.5 hours themselves on school site or work with a private provider either on the school site or through supervised transport arrangements.

### What To Do Next

If your child has not yet started attending any provision you can find out about local providers or get further information by contacting Stockton Families Information Service.

**Tel:** 01642 527225

**Email:** [fis@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:fis@stockton.gov.uk)

**Or visit:** [www.stocktonfiz.org.uk](http://www.stocktonfiz.org.uk)

