

## Help With Childcare Costs

If you are responsible for a child extra help with the cost of childcare may be available through Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

### Who can get help?

You may be able to get help with the cost of childcare if:

- i. **You are a lone parent aged 16 or over and work at least 16 hours per week, or**
- ii. **You are part of a couple and you are both aged 16 or over and both work at least 16 hours per week, or**
- iii. **You are part of a couple and you are both aged 16 or over and one of you works at least 16 hours per week and the other partner is either; incapacitated, in hospital, or in prison.**

A person will be considered incapacitated if they receive at least one of the following benefits; Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit at short term higher rate or long term rate, Severe Disablement Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit which includes a disability premium.

If you and your partner, if you have one, were working at least 16 hours per week you may still get help with childcare costs for 2 weeks of paternity leave, up to 39 weeks of maternity or adoption leave, or 28 weeks of sick leave.

### What Types of Childcare Count?

The childcare you use must be registered or approved, usually by Ofsted, such as: a registered childminder, nursery, after-school club. You can not usually get help with the cost of childcare provided by a relative such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle or brother or sister.

Help with childcare costs may be available to help with costs for any child you are responsible for up to the first Tuesday in September following the child's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. If a child qualifies for Disability Living Allowance or is registered blind help with child care costs can continue until they are 16 years old.

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## How Much help is Available?

The maximum amount of assistance you can receive is 80% of the childcare costs you actually pay up to a maximum cost of £175.00 per week for one child or £300.00 for two or more children. For example, if you have one child and pay £120.00 per week childcare costs the maximum assistance you can get is  $£120.00 \times 80\% = £96.00$  per week. If you have two children and pay a total of £240.00 per week childcare costs the maximum assistance you can get is  $£240.00 \times 80\% = £192.00$ . How much assistance you would actually get, if any, depends on your income as Working Tax Credit is means-tested.

## How to Claim

If you are claiming Working Tax Credit for the first time you must complete a claim form and include details of your childcare costs. If you are already in receipt of Working Tax Credit you can contact the Tax Credit Helpline 0845 300 3900, to tell them about your childcare costs. Make sure you have the details of your childcare provider(s) available. If have only just begun paying childcare costs you should estimate your average cost over the year.

## Changes

You must tell the HMRC (Tax Credit Helpline 0845 300 3900) within a month if your childcare costs go up or down by £10.00 per week or more. You should also notify the HMRC if you stop using childcare or change provider or if you stop working or reduce your working hours to less than 16 per week.

## Housing & Council Tax Benefit

The childcare costs you actually pay, up to a maximum of £175.00 per week for one child or £300.00 for two or more children, can also be taken into account for calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. Make sure you notify your local council about your child care costs.

## More Information

The Welfare Rights Service provide a range of guides and briefing notes available from Adult Social Care Offices and online on the intranet and internet at:

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/>

*All calculations used in this leaflet are based on 2008–2009 benefit rates.*