



Education Maintenance Allowance

The Children's Legal Centre is a unique, independent national charity concerned with law and policy affecting children and young people.

You could receive up to £30 a week through EMA

What is the purpose of EMA?

The purpose of the EMA scheme is to reduce the number of 16 year olds leaving education. In order to achieve this, EMA offers financial assistance to 16 year olds who continue in education after the end of compulsory school. (i.e. after GCSE's)

What is an Education Maintenance Allowance?

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a government scheme which entitles students over compulsory school age who continue into further education, and live in a household whose income is less than £30,810 to receive £10, £20 or £30 in return for regular attendance of their course.

Who can qualify for EMA?

- You can qualify for EMA if:
- You are 16, 17 or 18 and about to leave, or have already left compulsory education.
- Your household income is no more than £30,810 per year before tax.
- You are:
 - a person who is resident in the UK and has been for at least the three years prior to the start of your learning programme;
 - a national of any European Union (EU) country or the child of an EU national, and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the three years prior to the start of your learning programme;
 - an EEA migrant worker or the spouse/child of an EEA migrant worker, and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the three years prior to the start of your learning programme;
 - recognised as a refugee by the UK Government, the spouse/child of a refugee, have been granted humanitarian protection, or have EU temporary protection.
- You remain in education after GCSE's.
- You are enrolled onto a valid learning programme in England and attend that course as agreed each week.

The more qualifications you have, the more choice you will have when you're looking for a job.

This information is correct at the time of writing [November 2006] The law in this area is subject to change. The Children's Legal Centre cannot be held responsible if changes to the law outdate this publication.

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EMA

What courses are available?

A valid learning programme may be a further education course up to and including Level 3 requiring at least 12 hours guided study per week; or a Programme Led Pathway/Entry to Employment (e2e) programme requiring at least 16 hours guided study per week.

Will EMA affect any family benefits or a part time job?

EMA will not affect any other benefits your family might get. It is paid on top of any other support provided by the government, or any earnings from your part-time job.

How is EMA Paid?

Payment is made directly into your bank account and you are free to make your own decisions on how the money should then be spent.

It is possible to receive periodical bonuses of £100 if you can demonstrate real progress and commitment to your learning programme.

How often are payments made?

If you are entitled to EMA, payment will be made every week of the course as long as you attend classes regularly and show commitment to your course. EMA can continue for two or three years depending on how long the course is and providing that you continue to fulfil the criteria.

It is possible to receive periodical bonuses of £100 if you can demonstrate real progress and commitment to your learning programme by meeting specific goals agreed between you and your school, college or provider.

How much will I get?

The amount of EMA that you will receive will depend on the amount of income that came into your household in the tax year 2005-06:

If your annual household income was:

- **£20,817** or less, you will receive **£30** a week for the academic year 2006/2007.
- Between **£20,818** and **£25,521**, you will receive **£20** a week for the academic year 2006/2007.
- Between **£25,522** and **£30,810**, you will receive **£10** a week for the academic year 2006/2007.

If it was more than **£30,810**, you do not qualify for EMA for the academic year 2006/2007.

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How is household income assessed?

Household income is assessed by calculating the income of the adults in your household. These adults must have parental responsibility for you. This will usually be your parent(s), but in some cases depending on who you live with, may be grandparents or other family members.

Not all income is included. For example, if parents do not live together, and one parent is paying maintenance, this maintenance income is not included.

You do not
have to wait
until you
have your
GCSE
results
before you
apply for
EMA.

What do I need to apply?

EMA application forms are available from April 2006. Along with this application form you will need:

- Evidence from your parent(s) of the household income for the previous tax year. (This can be either their Tax Credit Award Notice or P60, both are issued every April).
- A bank account in your name. (You will need to send evidence that you have a bank account, either a copy of a bank statement or a letter from the bank).

Then send the application form to the Assessment and Payment Body (the address is on the EMA application form). They will assess whether you are eligible for EMA, if so, they will send you a Notice to Entitlement.

At this stage there is no need to decide on your course or where you decide to study.

When should I apply for EMA?

When you enter your final school year, you should be thinking about what you want to do when you leave school. A basic guidance of when to apply for EMA follows:

- Autumn term- Gather general information on EMA and consider EMA while making decisions about what to do when you leave school.
- Spring term- Find the information that is required when applying for EMA (i.e. household income). Application forms are available from April.
- Summer term- Apply for EMA (it is advisable to apply early as there could be delays on payments if you wait until to receive your GCSE results before you apply).
- August/September- enrol on your new course. If you apply for EMA after the end of September you can get back-dated money, but only from the date you applied.

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What happens when I enrol on my course?

When you enrol on the course, you will need to sign an EMA contract with your school or college, this will explain what is expected of you during the course in terms of attendance, coursework and progress.

Where can I find out further information?

The Department for Education and Skills website:
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp/ema/>

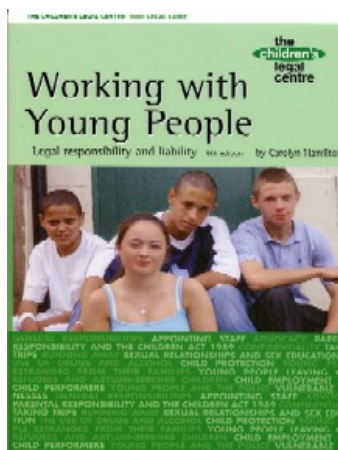
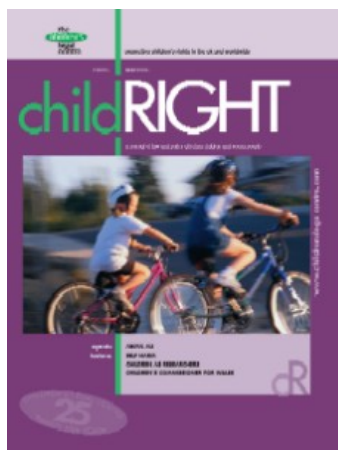
Where can I apply for EMA?

Further information can be obtained from:

- Your current school.
- The school/college you are thinking of attending.
- Connexions personal advisers.
- EMA free-phone helpline 0808 10 16 219.
- Or visit the DfES website: www.ema.dfes.gov.uk

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The Children's Legal Centre produces a number of publications including childRIGHT, a monthly publication and Working with Young People: Legal responsibility and Liability. For further information about our publications please contact us.



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