



Choosing the right childcare

If your child has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), childcare providers can offer more specialist care to meet their individual needs. Some settings (special schools) are dedicated to the care of children with high levels of SEND. Special schools require children to have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) before they can have a place there.

Choosing the right childcare is a hugely important decision for the whole family, with a number of different types of childcare to choose from. Selecting the right provider - one that understand the needs of your child and how best to care and provide for them - will help your child to learn, have fun and make new friends, as well as meeting all their day-to-day needs. You can choose from a home-based childminder, nanny or a day-care provider such as a private day nursery, or a pre-school playgroup, a maintained nursery class, or family support and play sessions via your Children's Centre services 0 - 5 years. Children can also access care at before and after-school and holiday clubs.

It is important that you to know your little one is being well cared for and enjoying themselves, while you are at home, work or studying.

Registered childminder

Registered childminders are self-employed childcare professionals, who care for small numbers of children, often of different ages, in their own home.

Children can take advantage of home-life experiences like outings to the shops, park and library. Registered childminders are inspected by Ofsted and some are able to offer free, funded, early education sessions for 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds.



Private day nurseries

Day nurseries provide care and education for babies from 6 weeks to children up to 5 years, often opening from 7.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. Day nurseries operate all year round, usually with the exception of bank holidays. Some may close over Christmas and New Year. They can offer free early education places to 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds.



Day nurseries are private businesses and are Ofsted registered, operating under the following ratios: 1 adult to 3 babies, 1 adult to 4 two year olds, and 1 adult to 8 three year olds (this can rise to 1 adult to 13 children where there is a qualified Early Years teacher).

Nannies

Nannies are employed by parents to care for their children in the parental home, often taking on all aspects of looking after the child(ren) such as caring for their clothes, cooking food, collecting from school etc. Many families work in a nanny-share arrangement, with a nanny caring for children from more than one family.

Pre-schools



Pre-school playgroups provide care and education for children aged 2 to 5 years. Most pre-schools are open five days a week, and offer flexibility on the sessions children can attend. Some pre-schools run term time only 8.30am - 3.30pm but some also offer before, after and holiday care sessions, to wrap around the school day/times. They offer free early education places for to 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds. Most pre-schools are not for-profit organisations and therefore fees are usually very competitive. They are Ofsted registered, operating under the following ratios: 1 adult to 3 babies, 1 adult to 4 two year olds, and 1 adult to 8 three year olds (this can rise to 1 adult to 13 children where there is a qualified Early Years teacher).

Maintained nursery classes

Primary schools may operate a maintained nursery class as part of their school offer; some may have an independent nursery unit or an independent provider offering the 0-5 childcare element, sometimes on the school site, with full days or sessional care (and a lunch offer) including before, after and holiday care sessions, to wrap around the school day/times.

Maintained nursery classes operate during school hours, usually 9.00am - 3.30pm, term time only, often with a session in the morning and a session in the afternoon, perhaps building up to full days as children approach compulsory school age. Adult to child ratios in maintained nursery classes are 1 adult to 13 for children 3 and 4 years old.



Wraparound childcare

Families with school age children often need childcare at the beginning or end of the school day as well as during school holidays. This is called wrap-around care, provided by a range of different settings from breakfast and after-school clubs to holiday schemes. These can be based in the local community (as above) or can be linked to the child's school. Services operating for less than 3 hours do not require Ofsted registration.



Ask Us Nottinghamshire,
c/o Futures,
57 Maid Marian Way,
Nottingham,
NG1 6GE

askus@futuresforyou.com

0800 1217772

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