



childcare

advice & information

0800 028 3008

www.employersforchildcare.org

Choosing Childcare

Who is going to look after your children can be one of the earliest and most important decisions you can make as parents. Parents need to feel content with their childcare choices. This leaflet is designed to explain the different childcare options available and allow you to make informed childcare choices that suits both you and your children.

Registered childcare

There are several different types of childcare that are required by law to be registered:

- Childminders
- Day nurseries
- Playgroups
- Out of school clubs (includes Breakfast Clubs, After School Clubs and Summer/Holiday Schemes if providing care for children under 12 years of age and for more than 2 hours a day)

Unregistered Childcare

Other forms of childcare which are available, but which do not have to be registered, include:

- Nannies
- Au Pairs
- Mothers help

A separate information sheet is available for this type of childcare.

You can only claim help for childcare costs through Working Tax Credit if you use registered childcare.

Who is childcare registered with?

All childcare settings are registered with their local Health and Social Services Trust (HSST) (Northern Ireland HSSTs are the equivalent of Local Authorities in England)

How are registered childcare providers regulated?

Registered childcare providers are inspected once a year by the local HSST and are required to demonstrate that they are meeting standards set by the Children's (NI) Order 1995. All staff working directly with children (or in the case of childminders, everyone over the age of 10 who lives in the house) must be police checked as part of the registration process.

What to look for when choosing childcare

The childcare you choose will depend upon a number of factors, such as:

- the age and development of your child
- the type and setting they will feel comfortable with
- whether you work full, part-time or unsociable hours
- if the facility has to be within walking distance, or you have transport
- if the provision needs to be near your child's school

- if there are other siblings of different ages who have to be catered for
- you are comfortable with your providers approach to childcare
- how your provider will accommodate your wishes, for example in behaviour management and in using treats and rewards

Take time to look at everything that is available in your area and then work out what will best suit your needs. It may be that the best solution for you and your child will be to combine different types of childcare

It is also worth bearing in mind that many childcare providers have waiting lists so you may need to think ahead about what type of care you want to use. For instance, expectant mothers who are planning to return to work after the birth, will probably need to start looking at what is available before the baby is born, as there is often a shortage of places for young babies.

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Breaking the Childcare Barrier



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For further information please contact Employers For Childcare:

Childcare Advice and Information Helpline:

t: 0800 028 3008

w: www.employersforchildcare.org

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