

Work and Childcare Toolkits

An Introduction to Finding Childcare

Childcare options.

Choosing the right childcare can appear daunting, this toolkit will outline the different options and some of the pros and cons, these are only a guideline and when making your decision on childcare, you need to think about what is best for you and your child and your budget, Your child should not be refused childcare if they have a disability.

Questions to consider

If your child has an Inherited Metabolic Disorder or additional needs will your chosen childcare be able to care and support them?

What is the childcare providers policy on poorly children?

Do you feel your child will be happy, safe and cared for?

Do you need full or part time childcare?

Is the childcare flexible?

Where would you like your child to be cared for, in your own home or somewhere else?

Is the childcare available all year round?

How far are you willing to travel?

If your child is sick, do you have a backup plan?

If your childcare provider is sick do you have back up plan?

When your childcare is on holiday, do you have a backup plan?

Can you use childcare vouchers, or working tax credit for your chosen childcare?

Are sundries such as food, snacks and nappies extra?

How experienced is your childcare provider?

Can you see references or testimonies?

What are the ratios of carer to children?

Do they have first aid training?

Can I afford this method of childcare?

Registered Childminder.

Childminders are self employed and usually take care of children in their own home. They should be registered with Ofsted, in England, the care Inspectorate in Scotland and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales.

Pros:

Childminders are self-employed and usually take care of children in their own home. They offer full and part time care and flexible hours.

Some offer a pick up/drop off of service for children at School or Nursery.

If your child is three or four years old, you can use your free weekly childcare allowance.

Some offer evening or weekend care.

Cons:

You will need to find alternative care arrangements if the childminder is ill or holiday.

More information <https://www.gov.uk/find-registered-childminder>

Day Nurseries

Day Nurseries offer childcare from birth to 5 years old. There are many different types of Day Nurseries including Local Authority, Private, workplace and community. They offer full or part time care and some run breakfast and after school clubs, collecting or delivering children from local schools.

Pros:

Often open between 7.30 a.m. till 6 p.m.

Fees are sometimes subsidised by local authorities or employers.

Must be Ofsted inspected

You can use, Childcare vouchers and/or claim working tax credit.

If you child is 3 or 4 years old, you can use your weekly free childcare allowance.

Cons:

You must pay a fee when you are on holiday.

Nursery Schools

Often attached to a primary school and open during term time. Your child will be cared for by qualified teachers.

Pros:

They are usually free.

If your child is 3 or 4 years old, you can use your weekly free childcare allowance.

Cons:

Usually open during school hours and term time.

You will need to find alternative childcare to cover school holidays.

Find a Nursery school www.gov.uk/find-nursery-school-place

Play group or Pre-school

Usually open for a few hours daily during term time, they offer childcare for children between 2 and 5 years of age. They are normally run by private groups, often parents or charities and as well employing staff, they are supported by volunteers.

Pros:

They are a low cost option.

You can use childcare vouchers, claim childcare working tax credit.

If your child is 3 or 4 years old, you can use your weekly free childcare allowance.

Cons:

You will need to find alternative childcare for the full day and school holidays.

Find your local playgroup or pre-school via your local council and children's service department
www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

Informal Childcare – family and friends.

A family member or friend looks after your child either for free, payment or you share each other's childcare (reciprocal childcare).

Pros:

Flexible hours

Low cost

Usually provide all year round childcare.

Cons:

They are not Ofsted registered.

You can not use childcare vouchers or claim working tax credit.

The legal rules around friends looking after your child can be complex for more information

www.netmums.com/back-to-work/childcare-swaps-the-rules

Au Pair

Generally, a person from outside the UK and often a student, they live with you and they wish to learn local language and culture.

Pros

They do not receive a full wage, usually just pocket money but you do need to provide board and lodgings.

You do not have to pay Tax, National insurance or pension contributions.

Cons

You are unable to use childcare vouchers or claim childcare element of Working tax credit.

More information is available on <https://www.gov.uk/au-pairs-employment-law>

Children's centre

Originally part of the Sure start programme but are now under local authority control. The centres vary which services they provide and not all provide childcare, those who do provide for 2 to 4-year olds.

Pros:

Low cost option

They offer parenting advice and support and sometimes linked to extended services including health care.

Cons:

Not usually all day care.

If your child is 3 or 4 years old, you can use your weekly childcare allowance.

More information www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre

Nannies

Nannies usually look after your child in your home, they can either live in or live out, depending on your requirements. They can voluntarily register with Ofsted.

Pros:

If they are registered, you can use childcare vouchers or working tax credit.

Your child is cared for in their own home.

Cons:

You'll be their employer and therefore will need to pay tax, National Insurance and pension contributions.

You will need to make alternative arrangements if they are ill or on holiday.