



Choosing Childcare Your options in Leeds



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



Contents

	Page
Childcare register	
What is registered childcare?	4
Ofsted inspections	5
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	6
Paying for childcare	
Paying for childcare	6/7
Free Early Education Entitlement for 2,3 and 4 year olds	8
Childcare for children with additional needs	8
Types of childcare	9-12
Choosing a childcare setting	
Questions to ask providers	14/15
Information required by the setting	16
What happens when you've chosen a setting?	17
Notes pages for you	18/19

Choosing Childcare

Choosing childcare and early education is a big step for you and your child and finding the right option for you that fits in with your work / training and family life can be a challenge. It is important to make the right decision so give yourself enough time to visit several different types of settings to get a good idea of what suits your child.

Whatever type of childcare arrangement you choose, you want to be confident that your child will be well looked after, happy and safe, in a stimulating environment where they can learn and develop through play. The aim of this booklet is to help you in making the right choice for both you and your child.

What is registered childcare?

This is childcare that is registered and inspected by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills). They fall under one of two registers, with the second register divided into two parts.

1. Early Years Register (EYR):

The Early Years Register is a register of people and organisations who care for children in the early years age group (children aged from birth until 31 August after their fifth birthday)

2. Childcare Register

A register of providers who are registered by Ofsted to care for children from birth to 17 years. The register has two parts:

- **the compulsory part**

Providers must register on this part if they care for one or more children following their fifth birthday until they reach their eighth birthday.

- **the voluntary part**

Providers who are not eligible for compulsory registration may choose to register on this part. These are mainly people looking after children aged eight and over, or providing care in the child's home (usually nannies).

Ofsted Inspections

How is childcare inspected?

Childcare providers on the EYR are inspected once every 47 months. It is a legal requirement that all providers on this register must meet standards for the welfare, learning and development of young children set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Ofsted inspector grades the settings under each of the following headings before making an overall judgement of the setting:

The report includes:

- a description of the provider
- the overall quality and standards of the provision, including the quality of teaching and learning
- how well the provider meets the needs of the children to ensure they make the best possible progress
- the contribution of the provision to the children's well-being
- how the leadership and management helps with understanding and implementing the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, you can view this here

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014__with_clarification_note.pdf

- Inspectors give providers one of four grades.

grade 1 – outstanding

grade 2 – good

grade 3 – requires improvement

grade 4 – inadequate

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Providers on the Early Years Register are required to follow the EYFS, which is a statutory play based framework for learning and development for every child from birth to the 31st August following their 5th birthday.

So whatever type of childcare you choose, you can be confident that they will be following the same framework of quality care and learning. With good early learning and childcare, your child will get a head start that will help them, not just for primary school but for the challenges that the future might bring.

For more information on the EYFS visit:
www.foundationyears.org.uk

Paying for Childcare

The cost of childcare varies depending on the hours and the type of care your child requires.

Childminders often operate on an hourly, daily or weekly rate while nurseries usually have a full or half day rate and either setting may ask for a deposit to secure a place and/or some fees in advance.

Depending on your circumstances, there are a number of ways you can get financial assistance to help pay towards your childcare.

Those at work may be entitled to the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or employer supported childcare such as workplace childcare provision or childcare vouchers. For more information on the childcare element of Working Tax Credit you can contact the helpline details opposite.

For information on employer supported childcare you need to talk to your employer.

Those going into training may be able to get financial help from the university or college, and young and lone parents could be entitled to extra support from Care to Learn or Job Centre Plus. To find out more about this ring the Family Information Service on 0113 247 4386 and ask to speak to a Family, Support and Parenting Adviser

It is important to be aware that childcare vouchers can impact on a tax credit claim. To find out which benefits are most suitable for you, contact The Tax Credit helpline on: 0845 300 3900 or visit their website: www.hmrc.gov.uk/childcare

Parents of children with additional needs may also have access to other financial help.



Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for 3 and 4 year olds

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to up to 15 hours FEEE per week.

This is funded through the government and makes sure that all children aged between 3 and 4 years have access to high quality early learning the term after their third birthday until school age (the term following their fifth birthday).

If you only take the FEEE (15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year) you will not pay for childcare.

Early learning settings include nursery classes, private nurseries, children's centres (that offer childcare), independent nursery classes, playgroups/pre-schools and some childminders. For more information on providers who offer FEEE contact the Family Information Service on 0113 247 4386

Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for 2 year olds

If your child is 2 and they meet certain criteria, they could be eligible for FEEE for 2 year olds. On offer is a free childcare place and early learning experience for up to 15 hours per week in a registered setting. To find out more or to check your eligibility contact the Family Information Service on 0113 247 4386

Childcare for Children with Additional Needs

High quality childcare is good for all children, finding childcare for a child with additional needs can be difficult but you may find your options are limited particularly for older children. Some childcare providers have tailored services for children with additional needs, others may have inclusive services. You can contact the Family Information Service or Scope in Leeds (0808 800 3333) for more guidance.

Types of Childcare

Childminders

- Childminders are self-employed and look after your child in their own home or that of another registered childminder.
- They must be registered with Ofsted to look after children under the age of eight years for pay or gain.
- They can offer full or part-time flexible care, childcare before and after school or during school holidays.
- Childminders are registered to look after a maximum of three children under the age of 5 and three children aged 5 to 8.
- They can also provide care for children aged 8 and over, providing the numbers don't affect their ability to care for those under 8.
- There are some childminders that will take secondary school age children.
- Childminders may also be able to provide care during evenings and weekends.
- Some childminders are registered to deliver the FEEE for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
- Childminders must complete a course deemed suitable by Ofsted.

Children's Centres

Many children's centres provide childcare and FEEE for children under the age of five, alongside other family services, such as links to Jobcentre Plus, health and family support. They can also provide you with general information and advice, parent and child groups, stay and play, courses and free early learning places.

Not all Leeds Children's Centres offer childcare but they will offer other family services. Contact the Family Information Service for further details about children's centre services.

Day Nurseries

Day nurseries provide care for children aged three months to when they start school. There are different types of nurseries, including: private, community, local authority and workplace nurseries. Most nurseries are open 7.30/8am until 6pm all year round (excluding bank holidays). They can provide care on a full or part-time basis and most nurseries in Leeds offer the 15 hours FEEE for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Check with individual providers to see if they offer FEEE.

Pre-schools / Playgroups

Pre-schools / Playgroups are usually run by a voluntary committee or private company and care for children aged 2 to 5. They are usually registered with Ofsted but if they open for a short number of hours or a few days, they may not be required to register. They provide sessional, extended or full time care and are usually term time only. They may also be able to register to deliver the FEEE to 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Nursery Classes

Nursery classes are often based within a primary school or infant school and therefore usually operate term time only. The nursery provides up to 15 hours FEEE per week for 3 and 4 years olds. Some nursery classes also provide extended childcare.

Please note: There is no guarantee that a nursery place will lead to a school place, as there are separate admission policies in place. For information about school places please contact the School Admissions Team on 0113 222 4414 or email: education.admissions@leeds.gov.uk.

Independent Nursery Classes

This is provision offered in independent schools i.e. schools where parents pay fees for their children to attend. They usually take children from the age of 2 and children are eligible to access the 15 hours per week of FEEE. Any other childcare your child attends at the nursery, that is over and above the 15 hours, would incur fees.

Out of School Clubs

Out of school clubs generally provide care for children aged 4 to 14 but you should check the individual schemes to see if they have their own age limits.

Out of school clubs normally run during term time and offer care before and after school. The clubs are held on a variety of premises such as schools, church halls and community centres. Some school clubs offer care during school holidays, these will be known as holiday playschemes.

Holiday Playschemes

Holiday Playschemes care for children during the school holidays. Some offer full day care but some offer sessional care. Playschemes are run by voluntary committees, private companies or by school. Not all playschemes run every school holiday so confirm with the Family Information Service or the setting itself to determine if the playscheme is operating.

Nannies / Home Childcarers

Nannies are employed by you as the parent, to care for your children at home and may be suitable if you need a more flexible childcare option. Although many nannies/home childcarers do have nursery or childcare training they are not required to hold qualifications. They are unregistered childcare unless they choose to register with Ofsted on the voluntary childcare register.

Crèches

A crèche provides occasional care for parents while they attend particular events such as training courses or meetings. Parents usually remain on the premises. Crèches are registered if they run for more than four hours in a day or for more than fourteen days in a year, or the parents are not within the immediate area. They usually provide care from birth to 8 years.

Parent and Toddler Groups / Stay and Play

Parent and toddler groups are not classed as childcare. Parents stay with their child, as they are drop-in sessions and give children the opportunity to play and socialise with others. They can usually be found in church halls, community centres and children's centres. Sessions usually last for a couple of hours and are held mornings or afternoons. Most only run during school term time.

Breakfast Clubs

Your child's school may have a breakfast club that will provide a nourishing breakfast at the start of the day. There is usually a small charge for this which can vary from place to place. Contact the school directly for information.



Choosing a childcare setting

You will find it useful to visit different types of childcare. It is a good idea to take your child with you. Try going when there are children there so you can see if they are happy and busy. You need to feel that your child will be happy and content to stay.

Don't be afraid to ask questions, a good childcare setting will expect this and you should be shown around the whole setting and not just the room(s) your child will be going into.

To assist you in your search for childcare here are some questions and things for you to consider:

Questions to ask childcare providers

- Are there vacancies? Is there a waiting list and how long?
- Do I have to pay a deposit? If so, how much?
- How much does the setting charge per hour/day?
- Does the cost include meals/nappies/other activities?
- Will I be charged if I am on holiday/my child does not attend and/or for late pick-ups?
- Do I pay when the childminder goes on holiday or is ill? Who will have my child when this happens? (Childminders only)
- Is there a settling in period? If so for how long?
- Can I see your Ofsted registration certificate and the latest inspection report? When is your next inspection due?
- Can I see any relevant insurance documents i.e. public liability, car insurance.
- What is your policy on behaviour and how do you manage this?

- Can I see copies of the setting's policies and procedures i.e. safeguarding children, lost children, behaviour and emergency.
- Do you have a current first aid certificate?
- What is the ratio of staff to children?
- What is staff turnover like? Which staff are qualified and are the criminal records checks up to date?
- How will you keep me informed about my child's progress?
- Do you operate a key worker system (this is where one staff member has primary responsibility for your child and usually operates in nurseries)?
- What is the daily routine and how will you incorporate my child's routine into that?
- Where can my child rest or sleep? Are they allowed to bring their own comforters?
- What sort of meals do you provide? Will my child's dietary requirements be accommodated?
- Can I see the current week's menu?
- How do you ensure the setting is inclusive for children with additional needs? Can I see a copy of your Local Offer?
- What happens if my child is sick and how do you contact me in an emergency?
- Do I need to bring a change of clothes?

Add any questions of your own and take the list with you when you visit so you don't forget what you want to ask the setting.

Things to look out for:

- The staff are welcoming and approachable and interested in you and your child.
- Are staff listening and responding to children and joining in with their play?
- Childcare that is homely, bright, comfortable, secure and clean with plenty of floor space for children to move around and with examples of children's work on display.
- Check that there are plenty of clean and safe toys and equipment appropriate for the different stages of children's development.
- Children should be able to choose toys easily and have access to the outdoors daily.

Information required by the setting

You will be asked for your child's/family details for the setting's records. These include who will be dropping off and collecting your child, relevant medical details, emergency phone numbers and your child's daily routine.

Parents will also be required to sign permission for any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment and share details of who has parental responsibility for a child.



What happens when you've chosen a setting?

- Discuss a settling in period; the length of time this takes will vary with each individual child. Settings normally offer several short introductory visits leading to gradually longer sessions.
- You will be asked to sign a contract/agreement. It is best to read it carefully before signing and keep a copy, as it is a legal document.
- Make sure that if you have taken up a FEEE place you sign a separate contract outlining your funded hours and attendance pattern.

The types of things that can be in a contract/agreement are:

- The hourly/daily cost and the hours/days your child attends.
- How to end a contract/agreement, what notice is required by both parties.
- If the cost includes food, nappies etc.
- Details of sick/holiday payment.
- A retainer or deposit (if required) to secure a place.
- Any reduction for siblings.
- Details of payment dates.
- What method of payment can be used.
- Use of childcare vouchers, if appropriate.

Use this space for your own notes, comments and questions...



Leeds Family Information Service (FIS)

The FIS provide an information service for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-19 (or up to 25 if your child has a disability). They provide families with information on a wide range of services including childcare, family support, education, training, health care and city-wide activities.

By Phone: 0800 731 0640 or 0113 247 4386

By Email: family.info@leeds.gov.uk

Online at: www.familyinformationleeds.co.uk/

Twitter: @FamilyInfoLeeds

By Post: Family Information Service
Technorth
9 Harrogate Road
Chapel allerton
Leeds
LS7 3NB

The FIS is constantly looking to improve its services and welcomes your comments, suggestions and/or complaints.

All enquiries to the service will be treated confidentially, however, if there are concerns about the health or well-being of a child this may not always be possible. A protocol between the FIS and Ofsted sets out how such concerns are handled in the best interests of the child.



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL