



Sheffield  
Information  
Link

# FACTSHEET

## A guide to day nurseries

### What is a day nursery?

Day nurseries are registered childcare facilities providing full and part-time childcare for children from 0-5 years. Some offer additional facilities for older children such as out of school or holiday playcare. They are usually open all year round to accommodate the needs of working parents. There are several different types:

- Private nurseries, which are run on a commercial basis.
- Community, non-profit making nurseries, usually serving a local community.
- Workplace or college nurseries for employees and students in an organisation.

Because a day nursery provides childcare for more than 2 hours a day they are required to be on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register with Ofsted. In addition to this they also need to be registered on the Ofsted Early Years (0-5yrs) Register. Please ask for our factsheet, "A guide to registration and Ofsted".

In Sheffield there is a rolling programme to develop Children's Centres for every community to provide a range of services for families with children from birth to 5 years. Children's Centre nursery places are generally charged at standard Local Authority rates, but these can vary according to income. Most nurseries are able to offer the Free Early Learning for 3 and 4 year olds. Please ask for our factsheet on "Free Early Learning".

Parents and carers may also be eligible for financial help towards any additional childcare taken with the nursery by claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Alternatively employer supported childcare vouchers may be used. Please ask for our factsheets "A guide to employer supported childcare" or "A guide to Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit".



### What will the children do at the nursery?

Children will be involved in planned activities which offer them the opportunity to learn and play with other children, such as: arts, crafts, water and sand play, reading stories and musical activities. Nursery staff aim to create a stimulating environment where children feel safe and secure.

### How do you choose a day nursery?

Visit the nursery with your child. You may want to visit several nurseries. Does the nursery have a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and do the children there look happy?

### Points to consider on a nursery visit

- Do the children look happy, settled and busy?
- Are staff friendly and approachable? How do they relate to the children?
- Is there a key worker for your child and are staff qualified? (All supervisors and managers must hold a relevant level 3 qualification, with half the remaining staff holding a relevant level 2 qualification.)
- The nursery should be registered and have current public liability insurance. Certificates will normally be displayed, ask if you cannot see them.
- How does the nursery deal with discipline and difficult behaviour?
- Are the premises warm, clean, light and well ventilated with enough space for play?
- Are there enough toys, books and play equipment provided?
- Are staff involved with children's play?
- Do the toys and activities take into account the children's ages, cultural backgrounds and any special needs?
- What are the staffing ratios? Nursery ratios are set according to the ages of the children – ask us for more details on this. Are there volunteers and are they properly supervised?
- Is there a safe, supervised outdoor play area that is kept secure?
- How much time will the children spend outside?
- Can the nursery provide Free Early Learning places for 3 and 4 year olds?
- Do staff carry out regular fire drills and have their equipment maintained?
- Are parents and carers provided with information about the nursery's service and policies, e.g. fire drills, medical emergencies?

## Quality Improvements

Those who look after children, whether offering childcare, early education or playcare are encouraged to ensure their services reach a quality standard, above basic requirements. There are a number of recognised awards and you may wish to check whether a provider has one.

## Does your child have a special need or disability?

SIL provides a specialist information service (SIGN) for families with children who are disabled or have special needs. The service can provide information on services, support and specific health conditions and disabilities. SIGN is based at the Ryegate Children's Centre and has an enquiry line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section.

## How much does a nursery cost?

Prices charged by nurseries do vary a lot, particularly between different areas. As an average, a full time nursery place would be approximately £150 per week (the average hourly rate is £3.70). Most nurseries can offer

part-time as well as full-time places and some offer discounts for multiple sessions booked. Prices can vary according to age. Most nurseries are able to offer Free Early Learning sessions for 3 and 4 year olds.

## How do you settle your child?

You will probably need to stay with your child for a few sessions until they become familiar with the new place and staff. Staff at the nursery may suggest you leave your child for short periods until you are able to leave them for the whole session. You will need to give your contact details to the nursery and any important information about your child, e.g. allergies.

## What to do if you are not happy with the nursery

Discuss any difficulties with staff at the nursery as soon as they arise. The nursery should have a complaints procedure, which you could follow. If you are unable to resolve your difficulties and they relate to the quality of care being provided, you can contact Ofsted's complaints line (see below).

## Useful contacts and information



### Sheffield Information Link

Sheffield's Family Information Service.  
11 Leopold Street, Sheffield,  
S1 2GY

**Tel: (0114) 275 6699**  
Text phone: (0114) 249 4939  
Email: [info@sheffinfolink.org.uk](mailto:info@sheffinfolink.org.uk)  
[www.sheffinfolink.org.uk](http://www.sheffinfolink.org.uk)

Drop-in Service & Library Opening Hours:  
Mon: 9.30am to 5.30pm, Wed: 9.30am to 6.00pm,  
Fri: 9.30am to 4.00pm

Telephone service available daily.  
Out of hours answerphone.

### SIGN Information Service

Free information for parents and carers with children or young people with special needs or disabilities.

Ryegate Children's Centre, Tapton Crescent Road,  
Sheffield, S10 5DD

Monday – Friday 10.00am – 1.00pm,  
drop in and phone service

**Tel: (0114) 266 9476**  
(out of hours answerphone)  
Email: [sign@sheffinfolink.org.uk](mailto:sign@sheffinfolink.org.uk)

### National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

Supports private nurseries.

**Tel: 0870 774 4244** Website: [www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)

### Ofsted

**Tel: 0845 640 4040** - Helpline and Complaints

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### Sheffield Community Childcare Network (SCCN)

Supports community childcare including nurseries.

**Tel: (0114) 249 3451** Website: [www.sccn.org.uk](http://www.sccn.org.uk)

### Early Years Inclusion Team

Works with young children with special educational needs at home and support nurseries, playgroups and primary school reception classes to include children with SEN and disabilities. Parents can refer direct or can ask a professional to refer on their behalf.

**Tel: (0114) 239 8336**

### Early Years Education and Childcare Service

Administers the Free Early Learning for 3 & 4 year olds and manages Children's Centres and some nursery schools.

**Tel: (0114) 281 1881**



This Factsheet is available in other formats upon request, please call 0114 275 6699 for more details.

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