



Sheffield
Information
Link

FACTSHEET

A Guide to Childcare and Play Provision in the School Holidays

What is available for my children in the school holidays?

Most children look forward to the school holidays, but for working parents the school holidays can be a difficult time to find childcare. Non working parents may well benefit from a break as well. Children can often find themselves at a loose end in the holidays and welcome opportunities for good quality play with their peers.

In Sheffield there is a variety of provision for the school holidays which aims to meet some of these needs:

Holiday playcare

Holiday playcare schemes provide group childcare and play for children during the school holidays. They are aimed at working parents and operate for the working day. There are more schemes open during the summer and Easter holidays, though there is some provision available for every school holiday and half term.

Most holiday playcare schemes will take children from 4 or 5 years old up to about 11 or 12 years. Some schemes based in nurseries will take children from 3 years old, often up to 8 years. Some schemes concentrate on primary school age children, while others will only take children aged 8 and over and will take children up to 15 or 16.

As a rule all holiday playcare which includes children under 8 years old and runs for more than 2 hours a day more than 14 times a year has to be registered on the compulsory part of the Ofsted Childcare Register (or the Early Years Register if they take children under 5).

Holiday playcare aimed at children of 8 years old or over does not need to be registered, but should be expected to be working to similar standards as registered groups. Clubs aimed at children of 8 and over now have the option of registering on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register. Registration will mean that certain standards of care have

been met and that all staff have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau. For more information on Ofsted please ask for our factsheet, 'A guide to registration and Ofsted'.

Holiday playcare schemes operate with a 'contract of care' between parents and staff. Children are booked onto the scheme and are looked after until picked up by their parent or carer.

Sports Camps

Sports camps provide holiday playcare giving children an opportunity to take part in a wide range of different sports. They are generally Ofsted registered and run mainly in the summer and Easter holidays.

Community Playschemes

These playschemes operate primarily for the benefit of children in a local area and often run with the involvement of parents. They may also be registered with Ofsted and operate a 'contract of care' with parents.

Open access playschemes

Open access playschemes provide play based activities for children, usually during the summer holidays. The children are supervised while they attend the playscheme, but are free to come and go when they like, with no 'contract of care' with the parent. They vary how long they open for and are not suitable as childcare for working parents. Children under 8 may need to be accompanied by an adult. Open access schemes for children over 5 years 11 months are not required to register with Ofsted.

Park based schemes

These are schemes running mainly in the summer to offer additional supervised sports or play activities in a park or other outdoor area. These will usually operate for a few hours at a time and children and parents or carers will be free to come and go as they like. Children under 8 may need to be accompanied by an adult.

What will my child do in a holiday playscheme?

Children should be provided with a range of safe and stimulating activities to choose from, with the emphasis firmly on fun and play. These will include sports, group games, arts and crafts, outdoor and adventurous play, drama and trips out.

How do you choose a holiday playscheme?

Look for a service you think will suit your child and visit the club with your child first. You may want to speak to other parents whose children use the playscheme.

Points to consider:

- Do the children look like they are enjoying themselves?
- Are the staff friendly and approachable? How do they relate to the children?
- Do the staff have any childcare qualifications? (In playschemes registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register at least half the staff should be qualified)
- Is there a wide range of activities on offer and are children involved in planning?
- Are the premises safe, clean and secure and is there enough space to play, including outdoor space?
- Are there enough toys, books and play equipment? Do they take into account the children's ages, cultural backgrounds, and any special needs?
- Are parents provided with information about the club's policies and procedures, eg for outings, medical emergencies etc?

How much will a holiday playscheme cost?

Prices vary from scheme to scheme and will depend on the type of care and activities offered, and on how much funding the scheme can access. Holiday playcare schemes range from £15 to £30 per day, with an average of about £20 per day. Some

schemes are low cost with places subsidised according to income. Many open access playschemes are low cost or free of charge and most of the park based schemes are free of charge.

If the scheme is registered, those parents who are eligible will be able to claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Using a registered provider will also enable parents to use employer supported childcare vouchers or directly contracted childcare.

How can children with special needs access holiday playschemes?

Under the Requirements for the Ofsted Childcare Register (compulsory and voluntary) registered playschemes must ensure that the childcare is accessible and inclusive, taking all reasonable steps to ensure children with disabilities have access to the premises and are not treated less favourably than other children. Holiday playschemes can also be used for respite care.

The Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS) can provide support to enable children with disabilities to access mainstream holiday playschemes. See useful contacts and information.

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

Other Activities and Children's Events

There are many family events and activities for children and young people run in the school holidays, especially in the summer. Contact Sheffield Information Link for our free **What's On** guide for each school holiday and our useful **Places to Visit** booklet. A lot of these activities can also be accessed via our online directory: www.asksid.net.



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Useful contacts and information

Sheffield Information Link (SIL)

Tel: (0114) 275 6699 (out of hours answerphone) • Textphone (0114) 249 4939

11 Leopold Street, Sheffield, S1 2GY

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am – 5.30pm; Weds 9.30am – 6.00pm; Fri 9.30am – 4.00pm

Email: info@sheffinfoolink.org.uk

For information and guidance on finding childcare and children's services in Sheffield. SIL produces a range of useful factsheets, including one on Children's and Young People's Rights, these can be viewed on our website: www.sheffinfoolink.org.uk

SIGN Information Service

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

Drop in and phone service Monday – Friday 10.00am – 1.00pm

Tel: (0114) 266 9476 (out of hours answerphone)

Email: sign@sheffinfoolink.org.uk

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

Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS)

Tel (0114) 273 4017

For information and support for children with disabilities or special needs to access playschemes.

Families may self-refer

Activity Sheffield Tel (0114) 273 4266

For information on open access playschemes and park based schemes.

Out of School Network (OSN)

Tel: (0114) 249 4941

Email: info@osn.org.uk

Website: www.osn.org.uk

Provides support and advice for out of school clubs and holiday playschemes and helps schemes to set up.

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Tel: 0845 640 4040 – Helpline and Complaints

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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