

choosing a nursery

are you looking for a nursery?

Here are some important points to consider when looking for a nursery:

seal of approval

1. Always ensure that the nursery you choose is registered with Ofsted in England, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales or the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care in Scotland. The registration certificate should be displayed together with a current certificate of insurance at all times.
2. Does the nursery belong to a professional organisation such as National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), keeping it informed of current issues?
3. You should ask to see a copy of the most recent inspection report highlighting the quality of the provision and the appropriateness of equipment and facilities. All nurseries inspected in Scotland, Wales or England will have an inspection report which shows the gradings and recommendations and/or actions for further improvement. Nurseries in Scotland that provide free pre-school places are also inspected by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). You can judge the nurseries capacity to improve by asking the nursery manager and/or staff how they have addressed these actions.
4. Has the nursery gained any awards of excellence, e.g. NDNA's e-Quality Counts or Quality Counts?

happy, safe and clean

1. Is there a safe and clean outside play area? Is the interior bright, warm, clean, well decorated and welcoming? Is the equipment good quality, clean, safe and appropriate?
2. What sort of meals are provided and at what time? Is the food fresh? Can they provide for special diets? Are the menus changed on a regular basis? Can parents provide input for these menus?
3. Do the children in the nursery look happy and well occupied? Are the children using a variety of equipment and are staff involved with their play? Are children able to access their own toys and equipment? How will staff accommodate your child's interests?
4. Are the staff happy, relaxed, well presented, calm and confident?
5. Ask about the staff to children ratios, how does the nursery ensure that the children are cared for safely, both in the nursery and on outings?

ratios

the minimum ratio of staff to children is as follows:

England and Wales:

Scotland:

Age	Adult : Child Ratio	Age	Adult : Child Ratio
Under 2	1:3	Under 2	1:3
2 - 3	1:4	2 - 3	1:5
3 - 8	1:8	3 - 8	1:8

high standards

Questions to ask:

1. In England, 50% of staff must hold relevant childcare qualifications such as NVQ Childcare Level 2 or above. At least one member of staff on duty should have a First Aid certificate and all supervisors are required to have an NVQ Childcare Level 3 or equivalent.

In Wales at least 80% of non-supervisory staff should hold at least a Level 2 qualification, and at least half of these should be a Level 3.

In Scotland all managers should be qualified in childcare to SVQ level 4, and as a minimum, at least half of the staff in any one facility should be qualified in childcare to SVQ level 2.

Many nurseries work above these standards - make sure you ask as nurseries with higher qualified staff can offer better quality childcare.

2. Do parents and staff work in partnership recording and sharing your child's activities and achievements?

3. Who will be your child's key-worker and how is this decision made? A key-worker is a named member of staff who has more contact than others with your child, allowing them to build a relationship. Who will be your main contact and who will keep you informed?

4. What will the cost of childcare be and what does this include? For example nappies, meals, holiday charges etc.

5. Discuss activities of interest to you, for example; diet, potty training, emergency procedures, discipline and other nursery policies.

finally

1. Did you enjoy your visit? Was it friendly, relaxed and informative? Did your child enjoy it?
2. Your local family information service will keep an up-to-date list of registered providers. The local authority switchboard will have the telephone number or visit www.childcarefinder.direct.gov.uk or www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk
3. Look for your nearest NDNA member nursery at www.ndna.org.uk. You can also refer to our FAQs for resolving nursery issues at www.ndna.org.uk/parents/resolving-nursery-issues
4. Speak to friends and family – personal recommendations are an excellent start. If possible look at more than one nursery before making your decision.

IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY WITH ANY ASPECT OF THE NURSERY, LOOK ELSEWHERE.

National Day Nurseries Association

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