

CHOOSING A DAY NURSERY

Day nurseries provide care and education from as young as 6 weeks to pre-school 5 year olds. There are different kinds of day nurseries. These are privately run, community council or workplace, but they must all be registered and regularly inspected by OfSTED.

The hours they open will need to fit in with an average working day of 8.00am – 6.00pm and care is usually provided all year round. Part-time places are often available. Nurseries are run by a team of staff, of which half must hold a childcare qualification.

There are different types of nursery with different ways of operating, so look around for one that suits your child and you.

Ideal if:

- You want your child to have opportunities to learn and play with friends
- They are geared to the needs of children with working parents
- They offer free, part-time early education or pre-school places for children aged three and four years old
- You feel happier leaving your child with a team of staff
- You need childcare that is 100% reliable – if one member of staff is away the childcare will continue

Q How many children will there be in a nursery?

A Most nurseries provide places for between 26 and 40 children although some are smaller and others larger. Children are usually divided into much smaller groups based on their age.

The ratio for staff and children is:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • children under 2 years | 1 adult to 3 children |
| • children aged 2 – 3 years | 1 adult to 4 children |
| • children aged 3 – 7 years | 1 adult to 8 children |

Q What age range are the children in a nursery?

A Nurseries are for children aged up to five. Some nurseries have places for babies and toddlers as well as children aged three to five. And some nurseries are part of childcare schemes, which also provide childcare for older children.

Q When are nurseries open?

A Most nurseries open at about 8.30am and close around 6pm. Some offer different hours for the children of people working shifts. Most nurseries are open all year round except for public holidays.

Q What about part-time childcare?

A Many nurseries are happy to offer you part-time places. Often they organise these into morning and afternoon sessions.

Q How much does a nursery cost?

A Care can be free in some local authority nurseries. For more information on these provisions contact the Children's Information Service

The average weekly cost in the East Midlands is £141 (Childcare Cost Survey, Day Care Trust, 2009). But you should anticipate paying more.

Q How do I find a nursery?

A First of all you know your child best – look for a nursery you feel will be suitable for your child.

Here are a few questions to ask:

- What was the turnover of staff in the last year?
- What will be your child's routine?
- When and where are the sleep sessions?
- What is the policy on discipline?
- How is the information about your child's day conveyed to you?
- What is their settling in policy?

Always check:

- that the staff ratio, premises and level of supervision is constant
- that the atmosphere is calm and happy
- what out of school activities and trips they do
- that toys and equipment are in good condition
- how friendly and open staff are to parents

**For more information and advice
Contact Leicestershire's Family Information Service
0116 305 6545 or email family@leics.gov.uk**