

## CHOOSING AN OUT OF SCHOOL SERVICE

School-aged children need safe care after school and during school holidays, right through primary education and often into the first couple of years of secondary education.

Out of school services will be registered with the OfSTED Early Years Directorate who will carry out an inspection of provision for children under the age of 8 years old.

Some out of school services do not currently need to be registered; for example, those which **only** cater for children aged over eight. You can ask if they are registered.

### **Ideal if:**

- You cannot collect your child from school, and want a safe place for them to enjoy a range of sports and creative activities with children of a similar age
- Your child wants a place to play and have fun with friends after school
- You have older children who you would like to be supervised by adults, some clubs offer facilities and support for homework

### **Q How many children will there be?**

**A** Most out of school services provide places for between 10 and 40 children although some are smaller and others are larger.

### **Q What age range of children will there be?**

**A** Most children attending out of school services are aged between 5 and 11 years old. Some services provide places for three and four year olds to fit around nursery or pre-school education. Some services provide places geared for older children aged 10-14 years old.

### **Q What about part-time care?**

**A** Many out of school services will be happy to offer you part-time childcare. You may need to book regular sessions to make sure a place is available when you need it.

### **Q How much will it cost**

**A** The average weekly cost in the East Midlands is £44 (Childcare Cost Survey, Day Care Trust, 2009). However you should anticipate paying more.

**Q What are different types of out of school service?**

- A**
- Breakfast clubs – open in the mornings before school so children can enjoy breakfast there
  - After school clubs – open in the afternoons between 3.30pm and 6.00pm
  - Holiday playschemes – open during school holidays between about 8.30pm and 6.00pm.

In England, out of school services are also sometimes called kids' clubs.

**Questions to ask:**

- What activities are planned for children?
- Who is in charge and what are their qualifications and experience?
- Do younger children have a separate area so they are not overwhelmed by the older ones?
- Is there a quiet area where all children can go to relax?
- How will they contact you in an emergency?
- Check their records and procedures
- Are children well supervised during activities?

**Always check:**

- staffing levels, ratio of staff to children, and safety records
- how rigorous the signing in and out process is, especially for older children who may have ideas about doing their own thing
- how far in advance you have to book – holiday clubs can be heavily over-subscribed, and you may have to put your name on a waiting list for an after-school club, and commit to the days you want in advance

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