

Parent's Guide to Nursery Types

Introduction

In this factsheet you will find information about the childcare requirements and the different types of nurseries to consider when choosing a nursery for your child.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – England only

The EYFS is the name of the framework that is mandatory for all early years' providers. This includes maintained schools; non maintained schools; independent schools; all providers on the Early Years Register; and all providers registered with an early year's childminder agency.

Ofsted and inspectorates of independent schools have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in carrying out inspections and report on the quality and standards of provision. Ofsted publishes inspection reports at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

It is advised that you look at these reports when deciding on the type of childcare to use. NDNA's choosing a nursery factsheet www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Stakeholders/Parents_resources/Parents_Factsheets.aspx also offers advice and information on what else to look at to ensure you make an informed choice about the childcare you choose.

Ofsted inspectors use a four point scale to make all judgements. These judgements are:

1. Outstanding
2. Good
3. Requires Improvement
4. Inadequate

The grade descriptors for the overall quality can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/458588/Early_years_inspection_handbook.pdf

The Care Inspectorate - Scotland only

The Care Inspectorate regulates early years services against the relevant legislation and National Care Standards. For those nurseries that provide funding for three and four year old children, Education Scotland inspects and reports on

the quality of education in voluntary and private pre-school centres, nursery schools and family centres and nursery classes within schools. HM Inspectors carry out inspections in those preschool centres which are funded to provide pre-school education for children aged three to five years.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and Estyn – Wales only

Nurseries in Wales are inspected by CSSIW on the National Minimum Standards. Further information can be found at: www.cssiw.org.uk

Nurseries that provide education (Foundation Phase/early entitlement funding) for three year old children are also inspected by Estyn to evaluate whether they are delivering the education programme in the nursery effectively. To access Estyn reports please visit the website below:
www.estyn.gov.uk

There are a number of different types of nurseries available and the information below provides you with a description of each of these:

Private day nurseries

A private day nursery is a setting that cares for children from birth to four or five years old. Some nurseries will also run before and after-school care (often referred to as wrap-around care) and holiday places.

The number of children attending a day nursery will vary; there are small and large independent nurseries and also small and large nursery chains. Children attending a day nursery are usually grouped together according to their age and stage of development.

Day nurseries follow an early years curriculum as this provides an all-round approach to developing individual children through play based activities and experiences.

Children attending a nursery should have opportunities to play and learn in both the indoor and outdoor environments each day. Parents are an important part of their child's development journey and have a wealth of information to share about their child so nursery staff will work with parents to ensure that they know all about the child and to enable them to meet the needs of individual children and families.

Day nurseries are usually open between the hours of 7am to 6pm (although this will vary) and can be flexible with times and sessions to meet the needs of working parents and families.

Montessori

Montessori nurseries, pre-schools and schools are based on the principals of an Italian doctor, born in 1870, called Maria Montessori.

Montessori's philosophy relied upon having respect for each child as an individual and whilst guiding them towards different goals, still allowing them the freedom within their learning experience to select their own way of achieving it. By keeping direction and help to a minimum, the aim was to enable each child to effectively 'teach themselves'.

Montessori educational practice helps children develop creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and time-management skills, to contribute to society and the environment, and to become fulfilled people in their particular time and place on Earth. The basis of Montessori practice in the classroom is mixed age group, individual choice of research and work, and uninterrupted concentration.

Steiner

Steiner pre-schools and schools are based on the principals of Rudolf Steiner, an innovative academic born in Austria whose ideas founded the basis of Anthroposophy.

The priority of the Steiner ethos is to provide an unhurried and creative learning environment where children can find the joy in learning and experience the richness of childhood rather than early specialisation or academic hot-housing.

Steiner Early Childhood education encompasses birth to seven years and most Steiner Early Childhood (EC) settings include sessions for parents and very young children. Each kindergarten group usually has about 16 children of mixed ages to rising 7 and is led by a specially trained kindergarten teacher.

Formal learning of the three Rs does not feature in the Steiner EC curriculum in the belief that a child will learn these skills more effectively if he/she has had plenty of time and opportunity to develop socially, emotionally and physically first in a creative, secure and harmonious environment.

The strong sense of routine enables the child knows what to expect and fosters a sense of security. Very careful consideration is also given to the impact of everything in the kindergarten environment upon all the senses of a young child.

There are no 'hard' corners, no strong colours and all the furniture and toys are made of natural materials, as is some of the equipment like beeswax crayons and sheep's fleece. Every kindergarten has a protected and safe natural outdoor area and where such space is limited, children are taken to a place where they can experience nature.

Local authority maintained nurseries

A local authority maintained nursery generally provides education for children aged from three to five, although education could start from two if the local authority chooses to fund it.

Determining the admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled maintained nursery schools and classes is the responsibility of the local authority. The local authority delegates the responsibility for administering the admission process for nursery schools and classes to the governing bodies of these schools.

This means that you apply for a place direct to the nursery school. Places in nursery schools and classes usually become available when the oldest children enter a primary school. Places may become available at other times if children leave nursery.

Useful links

- Choosing the right nursery for you and your child factsheet:
 - England
http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Stakeholders/Parents_resources/Choosing_the_right_nursery_for_you_and_your_child_-_England.aspx
 - Scotland
http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Stakeholders/Parents_resources/Copy_of_Choosing_the_right_nursery_for_you_and_your_child_-_England.aspx
 - Wales
http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Stakeholders/Parents_resources/Ch

[Choosing the right nursery for you and your child - Wales.aspx](#)

- NDNA I am a parent page:
http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Stakeholders/I_am_a_parent.aspx

The contents of this work are exclusively the property of National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA). NDNA would like to point out that although the information in this factsheet has been completed and checked by experts, it only provides a guide. As legislation and inspection criteria change on a regular basis to reflect new practices it is essential that you confirm legal matters with a solicitor and keep up to date.

NDNA cannot accept any responsibility if you implement the guidance without first confirming your legal position with a suitably qualified person.

We hope that you will continue to use this factsheet as a useful tool for guidance and would welcome any feedback. If you have any queries or concerns about the factsheet please do not hesitate to contact us.

National Day Nurseries Association

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