

*Childcare***Link**

[www.childcarelink.gov.uk](http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk)

**0800 0 96 02 96**

**Lines open 8am - 8pm weekdays,  
9am - 12pm Saturdays**

# **Choosing a Nursery Class or a Nursery School**

department for  
**education and skills**

### ***When are nursery schools and classes open?***

Nursery schools and classes provide a core day of 9am to 3.30pm. Children are offered full time and part time places. These vary in different settings. An afternoon or morning session lasts for 2½ hours. The majority of nursery schools offer extended day provision, which is usually from 8am to 6pm and referred to as wraparound care. Most nursery schools open throughout the school year.

### ***What about full-time childcare?***

Local Children's Information Services (CIS) and the ChildcareLink provide information on provision in your area for wraparound care. Many families need more childcare to fit around p/t hours. You could employ a childminder or nanny for this purpose.

### ***How much does a nursery class or nursery school cost?***

Nursery Schools fall within three sectors: State, voluntary and private. The fees vary according to the provider. Many nurseries offer Government-funded, free part-time early education places for eligible four year olds and now, for the first time, some three year olds. This funding is known as the Nursery Education Grant.

### ***How do I find a nursery school or a nursery class?***

Ask your local Children's Information Service for more information. They will help you find out about your local options and they will also help if you need extra childcare to match your working hours.

### ***What will my child do at nursery school/class?***

Nursery schools and classes are part of the Foundation Stage. Through well-planned play, children will develop skills such as speaking, listening, persistence, concentration, learning to work together and co-operate with other children, as well as early reading, writing and numbers. This will give them the best chance of achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of their first year in primary school and help ensure they experience the best possible start to their education.

Nursery classes and nursery schools provide early education and childcare for groups of young children. They offer full or half days and they are staffed by teachers and assistants.

Nursery classes are part of primary or independent schools. They are usually for three and four year olds.

Nursery schools are separate services which are for children under five.

Some are private and some are provided by the state.

Working parents may need to arrange for other childcare to fit around the hours.

### ***Plus points***

- Your child will play and learn and have fun with friends.
- Your child will be in a group led by a trained teacher.

### ***How do I know my child will be safe and secure?***

First of all you know your child best – look for a nursery class or nursery school you feel will suit your child.

These services are all registered and inspected. Different systems apply to the different types of service. You can ask to see the latest inspection report and registration certificate.

### ***How many children will there be in a nursery school or nursery class?***

The size of the school or class will vary but the number of staff will reflect the number of children who attend. In maintained nursery schools staffing levels are normally of 2 adults to 20 children with one of the adults being a qualified teacher and the other a qualified nursery assistant. The corresponding staffing levels

for maintained nursery classes are 2 adults to 26 children. In private nursery schools staffing levels of 2 adults to 20 children are expected if the head is engaged in teaching or 2 adults to 26 children where the head is excluded. In either case one must be a qualified teacher and the other a qualified nursery assistant.

### ***What age range are the children in a nursery school or class?***

Children in nursery schools and classes will often be between three and five years old. Some nursery schools will have places for younger children.

Copies of this factsheet can be obtained from:

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