



A Guide to Crèches

A crèche offers childcare on a temporary or occasional basis for limited periods of time on non domestic premises such as a shop or leisure centre. Often crèches are linked to a specific service such as a sports or retail facility or a training course that parents may be using. They provide care, usually for children from 6 months to 5 years, although age ranges may vary depending on the purpose of the crèche. Some crèches require parents to book a place in advance while others can be accessed on a more casual basis.

Some crèches are required to register with Ofsted, but this depends on the circumstances such as how long they run for and whether the parents are on the premises or nearby. However crèches may still be registered on the voluntary part of Ofsted's Childcare Register. For more information see Ofsted Factsheet 'Registration not Required' (ref 080134).

What do the children do at the crèche?

Crèches do not tend to offer structured activities in the same way as permanent or regular day care such as playgroups or day nurseries. However a range of play activities and resources should be available.

How do I choose a crèche?

Crèches will differ depending on the purpose and location. For example a crèche in a shopping centre may be quite large and busy whereas local community crèches may be smaller with a lower turnover of children. You may want to consider the following to help you decide if a particular crèche is suitable for your child:

Costs:

- Costs vary considerably and some are free of charge. However you can expect to pay from approximately £3.00 per hour.
- When claiming childcare costs under Working Tax Credits please note that only registered childcare is eligible.
- Are snacks and drinks included in the cost?
- Are nappies/baby wipes included or do you need to leave a supply?

Safety/Security:

- How will staff identify your child (e.g. wrist band)?
- What is the procedure for signing children in/out (if someone picks the child up other than the person that took the child how will they be identified?)
- If there is an outdoor play area is it safe, supervised and kept secure?
- Do staff carry out regular fire drills and have their fire equipment maintained?
- Are staff First Aid trained?

Visit First Point 8.30am to 5.30pm or ring us on 275 6699

8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

First Point is in the city centre at Howden House, Union Street - close to the Peace Gardens.

www.sheffield.gov.uk/firstpoint www.asksid.net

Activities/Environment:

- What sort of activities will your child be taking part in whilst at the crèche?
- Are there enough toys, books and play equipment provided?
- Do the toys take into account the children's ages, cultural backgrounds and any special needs?
- Do the children there look happy, settled and busy?
- Are the premises warm, clean, light and well ventilated, with enough space for play?

Staff:

- What is the ratio of staff to children?
- Do volunteers look after the children – if so are they supervised?
- Do staff have professional qualifications (e.g. NVQs, NNEB, Nursing Qualifications)
- Are all staff CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked?
- Are staff friendly and approachable? How do they relate to the children?

Formal Requirements:

- Check whether the group is registered (if this is required) and has current public liability insurance – certificates will normally be displayed.

How do you settle your child?

You may need to stay with your child for a short amount of time until they appear comfortable with their new surroundings. If you are using a crèche for a specific reason such as attending a meeting or course you may want to arrange to visit the crèche in advance and spend a short time with your child there. Staff at the provision may suggest you leave your child for short periods until you are able to leave them for the whole session. You will need to give your contact details to the crèche and any important information about your child, such as information about allergies or other health issues.

Quality Improvements

Those who look after children, whether offering childcare, early education or playcare are encouraged to ensure their services reach a quality standard above basic requirements. There are a number of recognised awards and you may wish to check whether a provider has one.

Is your child disabled?

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) provides a specialist information service for families with children who are disabled or have special needs. It can provide information on services, support and specific conditions and disabilities. This service is called SIGN and has an information line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section below.

What to do if you are not happy with the crèche?

Discuss any difficulties with staff at the crèche as soon as they arise. There should be a complaints procedure which you could follow. For registered provision, if you are unable to resolve your difficulties and they relate to the quality of care being provided, you can contact Ofsted's helpline (see below).

Useful Contacts and Information

Sheffield Information Link

Tel: 0114 249 8271 (out of hours answerphone)

9 Leopold Street, Sheffield, S1 2GY

Email: info@sheffinfo-link.org.uk

Website: www.sheffinfo-link.org.uk

Sheffield's Family Information Service. Additional support for families requiring childcare and other services for children and young people in Sheffield.

SIGN (Sheffield Information Giving Network)

Tel: 0114 266 9476 (out of hours answerphone)

Ryegate Children's Centre, Tapton Crescent Road, Sheffield, S10 5DD

Email: sign@sheffinfo-link.org.uk

Monday – Friday 10.00am – 3.00pm, drop in and phone service

Free information for parents and carers with children or young people with special needs or disabilities.

Ofsted

Tel: 0300 123 1231 - Helpline

Tel: 0300 123 4666 – Complaints and Concerns

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

For documents on registration requirements and reports on registered provision.

Pre School Learning Alliance

Floor 3, 9 Leopold Street, Sheffield, S1 2GY

Tel: (0114) 273 1007

Offers advice, information and support for people setting up crèches.

***The information on this factsheet is developed and maintained by Sheffield Information Link
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