



A Guide to Day Nurseries

What is a day nursery?

Day nurseries are registered childcare facilities providing full and part-time childcare for children from 0-5 years. Some offer additional facilities for older children such as out of school or holiday playcare. They are usually open all year round to accommodate the needs of working parents.

There are several different types of day nursery:

- Private nurseries, which are run on a commercial basis.
- Community, non-profit making nurseries, usually serving a local community.
- Workplace or college nurseries for employees and students in an organisation.

Because a day nursery provides childcare for more than 2 hours a day they are required to be on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register with Ofsted. In addition to this, they need to be registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register (this is the register for 0 – 5 year olds). For more information on Ofsted please ask for the factsheet, "A guide to registration and Ofsted".

In Sheffield there are Children's Centres that provide a range of services for families with children from birth to 5 years. Children's Centre nursery places are generally charged at standard Local Authority rates, but these can vary according to income. Most nurseries are able to offer the Free Early Learning for 3 and 4 year olds (please ask for a copy of our factsheet on "Free Early Learning").

Parents and carers may also be eligible for financial help towards any additional childcare taken with the nursery by claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Alternatively, employer supported childcare vouchers may also be used. For more information, please ask for the factsheets "A guide to employer supported childcare" or "A guide to Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit".

What will the children do at the nursery?

Children are able to be involved in planned activities which offer them the opportunity to learn and play with other children. The sorts of activities children might be involved in are: arts, crafts, water and sand play, reading stories and musical activities. The staff aim to create a stimulating environment where children feel safe and secure.

How do you choose a day nursery?

Visit the nursery with your child. You may in fact want to visit several nurseries.

These are some of the things you might want to consider or observe and questions you may want to ask on your visit:

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



Points to consider

- Do the children look happy, settled and busy?
- Are the staff friendly and approachable? How do they relate to the children?
- Is there a key worker for your child and are staff qualified? (All supervisors and managers must hold a relevant level 3 qualification, with half the remaining staff holding a relevant level 2 qualification.)
- The nursery should be registered and have current public liability insurance. Certificates will normally be displayed, if not you can ask to see them.
- How does the nursery deal with discipline and difficult behaviour?
- Are the premises warm, clean, light and well ventilated with enough space for play?
- Are there enough toys, books and play equipment provided?
- Are staff involved with children's play?
- Do the toys and activities take into account the children's ages, cultural backgrounds and any special needs?
- What are the staffing ratios? Nursery ratios are set according to the ages of the children. Are there volunteers and are they properly supervised?
- Is there a safe, supervised outdoor play area that is kept secure?
- How much time will the children spend outside?
- Can the nursery provide free sessions for 3 and 4 year olds through the Free Early Learning?
- Do staff carry out regular fire drills and have their equipment maintained?
- Are parents and carers provided with information about the nursery's service and policies, e.g. fire drills, medical emergencies?

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 the basic requirements. There are a number of recognised awards and you may wish to check whether a provider has one.

Does your child have a special need or disability?

Sheffield Information Link provides a specialist information service for families with children who are disabled or have special needs. The service, which is called SIGN, can provide information on services, support and specific conditions and disabilities. SIGN has an enquiry line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section at the end.

How much does a nursery cost?

Prices charged by nurseries vary a lot, particularly between different areas. As an average, a full time nursery place would be approximately £170 - £190 per week (the average hourly rate is £4.15). Most nurseries can offer part-time as well as full-time places and some offer discounts for multiple sessions booked. Prices can vary according to age. Most nurseries are able to offer free sessions for 3 and 4 year olds through the Free Early Learning.

How do you settle your child?

You will probably need to stay with your child for a few sessions until they become familiar with the new place and staff. Staff at the nursery 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 nursery and any important information about your child, e.g. allergies.

What to do if you are not happy with the nursery

Discuss any difficulties with staff at the nursery as soon as they arise. The nursery should have a complaints procedure, which you can follow. If you are unable to resolve your difficulties and they relate to the quality of care being provided, you can contact Ofsted's complaints line (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@sheffinfoolink.org.uk

Website: www.sheffinfoolink.org.uk

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

SIGN Information Service

Tel: 0114 266 9476 (out of hours answerphone)

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

Email: sign@sheffinfoolink.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 4666 – Complaints and Concerns

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

Tel: 01484 407070

Email: info@ndna.org.uk

Website: www.ndna.org.uk

NDNA provides nursery support, information and advice, childcare training and a quality improvement scheme, e-Quality Counts.

Sheffield Community Enterprise Development Unit (SCEDU)

Tel: (0114) 281 2222

Website: www.scedu.org.uk/sheffield-children

Supports community childcare including nurseries

Early Years Inclusion Team

Tel: (0114) 239 8336

Works with young children with special educational needs at home and support nurseries, playgroups and primary school reception classes to include children with SEN and disabilities.

Childcare Planning Team

Tel: (0114) 281 3785

Email: childcareplanning@sheffield.gov.uk

Plans for sufficient Free Early Learning for 2, 3 & 4 year olds and childcare for children aged 0 - 19 years.

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