

Family Information Service



A Guide for Parents

**Early Years, Family Support, Childcare
and Play services in Aberdeen, 2009**

Childcare

Play

Pre-School

Family Support

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Choosing High Quality Childcare

In Scotland there are many different types of childcare, early education and pre-school education services. It can be difficult to decide which is best for your child. This section will help you find out more about what makes for a good service.

All childcare and early or pre-school education services should have:

- trained or experienced staff - ready to respond to your child;
- safe and clean premises with plenty of space to play and explore;
- fun activities planned each day with a range of toys and equipment;
- a warm welcome for you and your child.

1. Trained and qualified staff

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) regulate the workforce by recommending training and qualification standards. Some staff already hold these qualifications. This means that every childcare setting continues to deliver a quality service to you and your child(ren).

Staff need:

- to respond to your child as an individual;
- to plan activities and play to help your child learn;
- to help your child be safe and secure;
- to communicate well with your child and with you;
- to respect your family's culture, religion or language;
- to be enthusiastic about their important job.

2. Safe and clean premises

Children deserve comfortable, well-equipped premises that are carefully looked after. Children should have access to a range of equipment and toys. Fresh, healthy food and snacks should be available.

Your child should be in a place which is:

- bright and cheerful;
- clean;
- safe and child friendly.

3. Fun activities planned each day

When children feel safe and happy they are learning all the time. All children learn at different rates and so activities need to be planned with the needs of each child in mind.

Children enjoy making friends with other children. This is much easier if children attend the childcare service regularly and know who and what to expect each day.

Make sure the childcare you choose provides plenty of encouragement for your child whatever his/her age, gender or abilities.

Early Learning

Every child and young person in Scotland is entitled to a broad general education with a particular focus on 3 key areas: Health & Wellbeing; Literacy; and Numeracy. A focus on Health & Wellbeing aims to establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which is sustained into adult life. A focus on Literacy and Numeracy is important to establish competence and confidence in skills that are fundamental to all areas of learning and helps individuals to function responsibly in everyday life.

Curriculum For Excellence, Early Level

All types of centres providing funded, part-time pre-school education places follow the Curriculum for Excellence, Early Level. This focuses on children learning through play and helps children's development in 8 curriculum areas with a particular focus on Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy across learning.

Pre-school establishments should provide your child with a range of opportunities to learn through play. They will do this by working in partnership with parents in developing children's learning experiences. The vital contribution of pre-school education lies in developing and broadening the range of learning experiences for children, so that they become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Birth to Three (supporting our youngest children)

All centres delivering a care service for babies and very young children take their guidance from the document Birth to Three. Centres use this document to ensure all children in their care are provided with the correct standard of support that enables them to reach their full potential and give them the best possible start in life. The key features identified in Birth to Three are relationships, responsiveness and respect.

4. A big welcome for you and your child

When you visit your childcare service, you and your child should feel welcome. Staff should find time to listen to you when you want to ask questions. They should answer any questions you have about the childcare service or about your child.

Think about how your childcare service will:

- include you in planning your child's care;
- help your child's routine - sleep, food, any additional support needs;
- fit in with your ideas on discipline and toilet training;
- encourage your child to feel happy and confident whatever his/her ability, race, culture, language or gender.

Paying for Childcare: Help From Your Employer

If you are working, your employer may help with childcare or childcare costs.

There are some good reasons why more and more employers are looking at their employees' childcare needs and trying to find ways to help.

Employers rely on parents as part of their workforce. Parents with safe, secure, high quality childcare arrangements that they can afford are:

- less likely to be worrying about their children while they work;
- more likely to come back to work after maternity leave;
- more likely to stay in work as their children grow up.

What could my employer do?

Any childcare help that your employer offers is likely to be part of a range of work-life balance policies designed to help you balance your work with the rest of your life.

Who could get help?

You should ask your personnel department, line manager or employer if any childcare help is offered and how it is allocated. You could also ask your trade union representative for advice.

What if my employer is not able to help with childcare?

If your employer does not offer help now, they may be keen to look at what you need and listen to your views. So it is worth discussing options with them.

The Government is keen to encourage employers to help out with childcare.

- The childcare element within Working Tax Credit will help some employees to pay for childcare;

- The Family Information Service in your area is there to help you find out about your childcare options and could help your employer by suggesting services for their employees.

Your employer must provide you with:

- up to 52 weeks maternity leave of which 39 weeks can be paid leave;
- up to 2 weeks paid paternity leave;
- unpaid parental leave of up to thirteen weeks subject to one year's service;
- the right to limit your working hours to less than 48 hours per week;
- four weeks paid annual leave;
- the right to rest breaks.

Your employer could also provide you with:

- flexible work options like term time work, flexi-hours, part-time work or job share;
- leave options, like extended maternity leave or paternity leave for fathers around the time their babies are born;
- tax disregard (childcare vouchers).

Finding out more

- Ask your employer for information about their work-life balance policies and what childcare help they provide.
- Contact the Family Information Service
Telephone: 01224 443344.
Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis
They may be able to tell you more about employers who offer these policies in your area.

Help for Student Parents

If you are a parent who wants to study or train, you may be able to get help with your childcare costs during this time.

Higher Education (advanced level)

You may be able to apply to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (<http://www.saas.gov.uk> or phone 0845 111 1711) for non-repayable supplementary grants for dependant adults for whom you have a legal responsibility. If you are a lone parent and a full time student you may also be eligible for the Lone Parents' Grant. Students who receive this grant may also be eligible for the Lone Parent's Childcare Grant to meet formal childcare costs.

Full-time student parents can also benefit from the HE Childcare Fund for academic year 2009/10. This fund is only available to meet the costs of formal childcare. Support from this fund is discretionary and is administered by colleges and universities.

Students facing particular financial difficulties can also apply for additional support from the Hardship Fund.

Part-time students may also be able to get help towards childcare costs from these discretionary funds. For information on the HE Childcare Fund and Hardship Funds contact the college or university you wish to attend.

Further Education (non-advanced level)

Full-time students may be eligible for discretionary bursary support from their college. This can include allowances for maintenance, travel, study, additional support needs for learning and adult dependants. Additionally, full and part time students can apply to the FE Childcare Fund for help with study related formal childcare costs. All eligible students can apply, although priority is given to lone parents, mature students and part-time students.

The fund is administered by the colleges as they are considered to be best placed to give support and react to the needs of individual students. Contact the bursary or finance officer for information and application details.

Students who face particular financial difficulties that would prevent them from staying at college can also apply for additional support from the FE Hardship Fund. This can help with travel and study costs. If you are a single parent currently receiving benefits and are undertaking a part-time course at non-advanced level, you may be able to remain in receipt of benefits. Although you would not qualify for living costs, you may be able to get help towards travel, study and childcare costs.

If you are not receiving benefits then you may be eligible for support towards your living costs in addition to travel, study and childcare costs. The options depend on individual circumstances and are paid at the discretion of colleges. You should check with the student support advisor at your college.

Finding out about financial help to contribute to your childcare costs

You could get some financial help towards your childcare costs although funds are limited.

- A few courses have funds for childcare costs attached so students/trainees on those courses can apply for help with childcare costs.
- If you are a lone parent on Income Support and need to train in order to get a job, New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) can help with childcare costs for approved courses. Contact NDLP before applying for the course – you are not eligible to apply to NDLP if you have already been accepted for the course. Telephone: 01224 618000.
- Ask about career development loans that could also be used to pay for childcare.

Choosing High Quality Childcare: What to look for - Top 10 questions to ask

Choosing childcare and early education is a big step for you and your child. You can find out about childcare and early education services in Aberdeen from the Family Information Service. They will be able to provide information about opening hours, price, age of children and vacancies.

All childcare which runs for more than 2 hours per day is regulated and inspected by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission). There are lots of differences between the various types of childcare, early education or pre-school services and also between individual childminders, nurseries, nursery classes or out of school clubs. Try and give yourself enough time to visit several possible options in your desired area to get a good idea of what could suit your child. Don't forget you are the expert on your child and should trust your feelings.

It can be a good idea to take your child with you to see how staff talk to him or her. Try to go when children are there so you can see if they are calm, happy and busy.

Here are some suggested questions to ask when you visit:

- 1 How long have you been working with children?
- 2 Do you undertake regular training for your job? Do you have any childcare qualifications?
- 3 Do you enjoy being with children and why?
- 4 Can I look around the building to see the rooms and outside play space? If there is no outside play space how will you make sure my child gets the chance to play outside?
- 5 Where will my child rest?
- 6 What kind of food and drink will you give?
- 7 What will my child do all day?
- 8 How do you encourage good behaviour?
- 9 Will my child be with a regular group of children?
How old are they? How will their timetable fit with my child?
- 10 How will you make sure I know how my child is getting on?

Top Quality Pointers

When you visit possible childcare options, look for these quality pointers. You could add your own as well:

- 1 Are the children safe, calm and happy?
- 2 Do the children play and talk together?
- 3 Are the staff listening to children and answering them carefully?
- 4 Are the staff friendly and proud of their work?
- 5 Are the staff joining in with what the children are doing?
- 6 Are there lots of fun activities planned to help children learn and play?
- 7 Are children involved in the planning process?
- 8 Are there plenty of clean toys and equipment for children to use?
- 9 Are the premises clean, well kept and safe for children with a fun outside play area or will children go to parks and other places regularly?
- 10 Do parents have plenty of chance to say what they want for their children?
- 11 If there are other things you want to know, do not be afraid to ask. Good childcare staff will expect you to ask questions and will be happy to answer them.

Top Tips

Always take up references. You could ask your chosen service if there is any feedback from parents available.

You can ask to see the childcare providers latest Care Commission Inspection Report, or check it online at www.carecommission.com.

Listen to your child and find out more if he or she seems unhappy.

Always trust your own feelings about your childcare - you know your child best!

Choosing a Childminder

Registered Childminders are professional daycarers who work in their own home to provide care, fun and learning for other people's children in a family setting. They are inspected and registered by The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (The Care Commission).

Registered Childminders are self-employed and take care of their own tax and national insurance. They are not 'employed' by parents but negotiate a contract for the service they provide.

Childminders can offer a flexibility of service that is difficult to find in other types of provision. Because they look after small groups of children, their daily routine is more adaptable. This flexibility makes Childminders ideal care providers for children whose parents work shifts, as childminding services are often open outside of standard opening hours.

Being cared for by a Childminder helps children to learn from real life experiences like shopping trips, school runs, family mealtimes and visits to the park. These activities help children learn about their local environment.

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

First of all you know your child best - look for a Childminder you feel will be suitable for your child.

Childminders must be registered with the Care Commission before they begin to work with children. The registration process is wide-ranging and rigorous, involving references, training, a health check and an Enhanced Disclosure Check through Disclosure Scotland on the potential Childminder and every other adult in the household. Their home is inspected too, to ensure it is a safe and suitable environment for children.

After a Childminder is registered, a Care Commission inspection is carried out every year to make sure the Childminder is continuing to provide a safe and suitable service.

You should ask to see a Childminder's registration and insurance certificate and latest inspection report. It is illegal for an unregistered person to look after children under 16 for reward. Any person who is a close relative of the child is not officially a Childminder and is not required to register to look after a related child.

How many children will there be with a Childminder?

Childminders can care for up to six children aged up to 16 years at any one time, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

What age range are the children with a Childminder?

Children can be cared for by a Childminder from birth right through until they reach secondary school, although they need only be registered to look after children up to and including the age of 16.

When are Childminders open?

Childminders are self-employed and so they decide on their working hours. Most Childminders will provide you with childcare between the hours of 8am and 6pm. Some Childminders will work early mornings, evenings and weekends as well. You will need to negotiate hours, terms and conditions with the Childminder and it is recommended that a contract is in place.

What about part-time childcare?

Many Childminders are happy to provide families with part-time places for children. They often drop children off at school and pick them up. Childminders can also take your child to a playgroup or pre-school as part of the routine.

How much does a Childminder cost?

Because they are self-employed Childminders set their own charges. There is no national rate but the average charge in Aberdeen is £3.50 per hour and £175 per child per week for full-time care (50 hours per week). You may be eligible to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit to help cover the costs.

Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits or ring the Tax Credits helpline on 0845 300 3900.

How do I find a Childminder?

Contact the Family Information Service to find out more about Childminders in Aberdeen.

Telephone: 01224 443344.

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Or contact the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) Development Officer for Aberdeen who can be contacted on 01224 443790 or see the SCMA website: www.childminding.org.

Choosing a Playgroup

Playgroups offer sessions for children from around 2½ to 5 years of age. Playgroups are usually run by a management committee who employs the playleaders.

Children have the opportunity to learn through play and develop their social and communication skills by interacting with other children.

Parents have the opportunity to participate in their child's learning experience by helping during sessions based on a rota system.

Parents can take on a larger role by becoming part of the management committee.

Plus Points:

- your child can enjoy learning and playing in a small group;
- you can meet and get to know parents in your area.

Some playgroups work in partnership with their local authority to provide free, part-time pre-school education places for three and four year olds.

Playgroups that operate for more than 2 hours will be registered with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (the Care Commission) who inspect all aspects of the provision to ensure it is of a suitable quality and will continue to inspect on an annual basis.

All childcare staff will be required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) by set deadlines. For further information please visit the SSSC website, www.sssc.uk.com.

You can ask to see the playgroup's registration certificate and latest inspection report, or check it online at www.carecommission.com.

Playgroups that offer part-time pre-school education places will also be inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Inspectorate reports can be checked online at www.hmie.gov.uk.

How many children are there in a playgroup?

If the Care Commission inspects the premises they decide how many children can safely be allowed to attend. It will vary depending on the size of the premises.

How much does a playgroup cost?

In Aberdeen expect to pay around £4.00 per session. Some playgroups offer funded pre-school education places for three and four year olds.

How long is a playgroup session?

Each session lasts 2 or 2½ hours depending on the group. Some are only open in the mornings; others offer a choice of morning or afternoon places or a combination of the two. Some playgroups also offer wrap around care, for example breakfast/lunch clubs.

How do I find a playgroup?

Contact the Family Information Service to find out more about playgroups.

Telephone: 01224 443344.

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Scottish Pre-school Play Association

Telephone: 01592 641642.

www.sppa.org.uk

Choosing a Nursery

Nurseries are for children aged from birth to 5 years old, where they will play, learn and have fun while their parents work, study or are busy elsewhere. They are usually open all day for most weeks in the year except public holidays. Full and part-time places are available.

Nurseries are run by a team of staff, and activities are planned to help children develop and learn new skills, playing indoors and outdoors, making friends and sharing mealtimes. Nurseries vary in size and children are cared for in small groups according to their age. When choosing a nursery it is important to select one that suits both you and your child, so it is advisable to visit more than one.

The majority of nurseries work in partnership with the local authority to offer free part-time pre-school education places for children aged 3 and 4.

What sorts of nurseries are there?

There are different types of nursery:

- private nurseries – designed to care for the children of working parents;
- independent nursery schools – attached to private schools;
- workplace nurseries – some employers provide childcare for the children of the employees.

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

First of all you know your child best - look for a nursery you feel will best meet the needs of you and your child.

All nurseries are registered with the The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission). This means the nursery is inspected annually by the Care Commission to ensure the service meets The National Care Standards which apply to the quality of care, quality and safety of the premises and equipment, and quality of staff.

The National Care Standards require a set number of staff at each nursery to work with the children. The ratios state one member of staff for every 8 children aged 3 – 5; one member of staff for every

5 children aged 2 – 3 and; one member of staff for every 3 children aged under 2.

The standards also state that staff should hold a relevant childcare qualification. Parents should ask to see a nursery's registration certificate and most recent inspection report, or check it online at www.carecommission.com.

All childcare staff will be required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) by set deadlines. For further information please visit the SSSC website, www.sssc.uk.com.

How many children will there be in a nursery?

On average nurseries provide places for between 26 and 40 children although this may vary. Children are usually cared for in small groups based on their age.

When are nurseries open?

Most nurseries open at about 8am and close at around 6pm and are open all year round except for public holidays.

What about part-time childcare?

Many nurseries are happy to offer part-time places. These can be arranged as morning or afternoon sessions or, for example, 3 full days.

How much does a nursery cost?

Fees vary but you can expect to pay around £160 per child per week. If your nursery is in partnership with the local authority to provide pre-school education, they will receive a grant enabling them to provide 2½ hours of free pre-school education each day from the term following their 3rd birthday until your child first becomes eligible to start school. You may also be able to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits or ring the Tax Credits helpline on 0845 300 3900.

How do I find a nursery?

Contact the Family Information Service to find out more.

Telephone: 01224 443344.

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Choosing an Out of School Service

Out of school services are for school-age children to play, learn and have fun in groups. They are usually set up to help families where parents work, and are based in or near schools.

Out of school services must be registered with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (the Care Commission) if they run for more than two hours a day and more than six days per year. Registered services are inspected each year. They are run by a team of staff, usually called playworkers. Activities are planned with the children to help them learn, play and relax with friends. Playworkers will often pick children up from local schools.

There are different types of out of school services so look around to find one that suits you and your child.

What are the different types of out of school service?

Breakfast/Before School Clubs:

open in the mornings before school. Some provide breakfast.

After School Clubs:

open in the afternoons when school finishes until about 6pm.

Holiday Playschemes:

open during the day in school holidays.

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

First of all you know your child best – look for an out of school service that will suit your child.

Staff in all out of school services registered with the Care Commission will have completed an Enhanced Disclosure check via Disclosure Scotland to ensure their suitability to look after children. At least half of the staff must have a relevant qualification or experience and there are rules on the ratio of staff to children depending on the ages of the children cared for.

A check is also done on the premises of the out of school service to ensure it is safe and suitable for children. An annual inspection is carried out on registered out of school clubs to ensure a safe and suitable service is being maintained.

All childcare staff will be required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) by set deadlines. For further information please visit the SSSC website, www.sssc.uk.com.

How many children will be there?

Most out of school services provide places for between 10 and 40 children although this can vary.

When will services be open?

Out of school services can be open before school and care for children after school until about 6pm. During school holidays they are likely to be open from around 8.30am and 6pm.

What about part-time childcare?

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.

How much will it cost?

You can expect to pay around £40 per child per week for an after school place, around £100 per child per week for a place at a holiday playscheme and around £4 per child per session for a before school place – some may cost less if breakfast is not provided. If you are using a registered out of school service you may be eligible to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits or ring the Tax Credits helpline on 0845 300 3900.

How do I find an out of school service?

Contact the Family Information Service to find out more about out of school services in Aberdeen.

Telephone: 01224 443344

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Home based Childcare

Childcare Agencies can provide childcare in a child's own home, at times that fit parental needs such as in the evening or at weekends.

Who is registered to look after my child in my own home?

Childcare Agencies such as Nanny Agencies must be registered with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (the Care Commission) to provide care in a child's own home. You can ask the Agency to show you their certificate of registration and inspection reports, or check reports online at www.carecommissio.com.

Why should I use a registered childcare agency?

A registered childcare agency is registered with the Care Commission. Staff have undergone an inspection process including an Enhanced Disclosure Check through Disclosure Scotland. They are also required to meet the relevant National Standards that are designed to ensure that the service provided is of a consistent high quality. For childcare provided in a child's own home the relevant standards are the National Standards for Childcare Agencies. Registration is renewed annually. Details of the registration process and the National Care Standards can be found on the Care Commission website: www.carecommissio.com.

If you are using a registered childcare agency you may be eligible to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits or ring the Tax Credits helpline on 0845 300 3900.

What is a Nanny Agency?

A Nanny Agency provides nanny services to parents, either employing nannies directly or introducing them to parents. A nanny can either live with the family or come in to the child's home on a daily basis, either full or part-time. If your nanny is supplied, or introduced, to you through an agency then you may be able to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Childcare Vouchers.

If you choose to employ a nanny directly (i.e. not through an agency) then your childcare will not be eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Childcare Vouchers.

How much does a nanny cost?

The cost is agreed with either the agency or the nanny. Cost depends on how many days the nanny works and whether employment is full or part-time.

How do I find a Nanny Agency?

Contact the Family Information Service to find out more about childcare agencies in your area.

Telephone: 01224 443344.

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Why Play?

**“To adults play is something to pass the time.
To a child it is his most important and serious activity”**

Alison Stallibrass (1924)

Play is:

- an essential part of everyone’s life at any age;
- fundamental to human development.

The Importance of Play

Through play, children learn to engage in the world around them. Play gives children satisfaction and a feeling of contentment and touches all aspects of their life. For many, play will continue into their adulthood.

What is Play ?

Through play, children discover and gain skills and understanding that prepares them for learning throughout their life.

Play provides children with opportunities for them to satisfy their intense curiosity and to begin to develop an understanding of themselves, the world around them and social relationships.

Play engages children in their own learning, enabling them to express and represent their ideas and feelings in many different ways.

What age do children start to Play?

There are 5 main stages of play:

- **Solitary 0-2 years.** Where children play alone. There is little interaction with other children.
- **Spectator 2-2½ years.** Children will watch other children playing around them but do not join in.
- **Parallel 2½ - 3 years.** Children will play alongside others but do not play together.

- **Associative 3-4 years.** Children begin to interact with others in their play and there may be fleeting co-operation between children in play. Children start to develop friendships and the preference for playing with certain other children. Play is usually in mixed sex groups.
- **Co-operative play 4+ years.** Children play together with shared goals for their play. Play can be quite complicated and children are supportive towards others in their play. As children reach primary school age, play is usually in single sex groups.

For more information on groups where you and your baby/child and children can play, contact the Family Information Service.

Telephone: 01224 443344.

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Pre-School Education

What is pre-school education?

Pre-school education is an important stage in a child's development where children learn as they play. A good quality pre-school experience builds on the valuable learning that takes place in and around the home and develops the learning and other skills that children will rely on in later life. Evidence suggests that a quality pre-school experience can bring a range of benefits, including a smoother transition into primary school and increased educational attainment.

Under the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, local authorities have a duty to ensure that a funded part-time pre-school education place of five sessions per week is available for every 3 and 4 year old whose parents wish it.

Does my child have to attend a pre-school education centre?

No, it is not compulsory. It is for parents to decide whether they want their child to participate. Some children may continue to benefit most by spending the time at home or in other forms of informal play activities such as playgroups or toddler groups.

When is my child eligible for a funded pre-school education place?

Your child is entitled to a funded place from the school term following his/her third birthday.

| Month of Birth | Entitled to place from: |
|----------------------|--|
| January and February | April - after the Easter Holidays |
| March - August* | August - after the Summer Holidays |
| September - December | January - after the Christmas Holidays |

*If you child's birthday falls in August after the start of the new school term, they may start nursery school in August after their 3rd birthday.

What should I do if my child is eligible?

You should contact the pre-school education provider of your choice to apply for a place for your child.

What sort of centre can my child attend?

Aberdeen City Council offers different types of pre-school nursery education. The majority of places are provided through nursery schools and classes run by the Council. It also works in partnership with private day nurseries, voluntary playgroups and independent schools to ensure the city has a sufficient number of places and a range of provision available.

What guarantee do I have that the centre is of a good standard?

All centres must meet the registration criteria and National Care Standards laid down by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission) and will be inspected annually. Aberdeen City Council is responsible for registering all pre-school education centres in the city and has its own Quality Assurance system for ensuring quality in its nursery schools and partner centres. Centres are also inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

To view inspection reports online visit www.hmie.gov.uk and www.carecommission.com.

What will my child do at pre-school?

All funded pre-school education centres will follow A Curriculum for Excellence, Early Level which is structured under the headings of 8 curriculum areas:

- expressive arts;
- health and wellbeing;
- languages;
- mathematics;
- religious and moral education;
- sciences;
- social studies;
- technologies.

Planned learning activities are provided for children to enable staff to extend the development skills, attributes, knowledge and understanding of all children.

How will I be involved in my child's pre-school education?

Pre-school education centres work in partnership with parents to support each child's learning and development. Opportunities will be available for staff and parents to share assessment information and review each child's progress and development.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing induction programmes that will ensure a happy and safe transition from pre-school to primary school. The primary school will consult fully with your child's pre-school centre and you to ensure that planning for your child takes account of his or her achievements and development needs. The primary school curriculum is planned so as to build on the full range of children's pre-school experiences.

Can my child be taught in Gaelic?

Aberdeen City Council has a Gaelic Medium nursery class at Gilcomstoun Primary School. Enquiries should be made directly to the school. Telephone: 01224 642722.

Where can I get further information?

For more information on pre-school education in Aberdeen contact the Family Information Service
Telephone: 01224 443344.
Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

Moving On

1. What is deferred entry to primary school?

Children who are 5 years old on or before the last day of February usually start primary school the previous August. However, it is beneficial for some children to have an additional year at pre-school to allow them time to mature and develop skills to become independent, confident learners ready for primary one.

2. If I choose to defer entry to primary one am I entitled to a nursery place?

- Children whose birthdays are in January or February are guaranteed a nursery place.
- Children whose birthdays fall between the beginning of the school term in August and the 31 December may access a nursery place at the discretion of the Local Authority.

3. When do I need to decide?

The decision should be taken during the immediate **pre-school year** - the year before the child would normally start school.

4. How do I decide?

Your child needs to be confident and independent before they start school.

5. Who can help me make this decision?

- The pre-school staff who are familiar with your child.
- The Head Teacher of the primary school you wish your child to attend.

6. What should I do if I want a pre-school place for my child in his/her deferred year?

- Complete an application form for a pre-school place at the centre of your choice.

What is Family Support?

All families benefit from family support at some time, short term or long term.

It is provided in every setting a child, young person and parent attends, ranging from a baby clinic to secondary school.

Raising children can be stressful and sometimes parents need a little reassurance and support from family, friends and professionals they have contact with.

Families can find themselves in complex and difficult situations from time to time, and for those who have limited family and friends, it can be difficult to get the support to help them through it.

Even those who have their family and friends around them can struggle to find the help they need if their situation is complex or sensitive.

Sometimes a professional support service is needed.

Some examples of different situations where support may be needed:

- bereavement;
- drug/alcohol abuse;
- concerns with child/family health;
- parent or child is a victim of domestic abuse;
- advocacy/legal advice is required.

Contact the Family Information Service to get more details of family support services in Aberdeen.

Telephone: 01224 443344.

Email: fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk



Family Information Service



Information on services for children and young people?

telephone 01224 443344

email fis@aberdeencity.gov.uk

text 07825 053136

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/fis

(All enquiries are confidential)

Please contact us on the telephone number below if you want this document in Braille, large print or on an audio CD, or if you want the document translated into another language.

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه الوثيقة بالخط العريض أو البريل أو الأشرطة الصوتية المدمجة أو كنت تود ترجمتها الى لغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال بنا على أرقامنا.

আপনি যদি এই দলিলটি ব্রেইলে, বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে বা শোনার জন্য সিডি, অথবা দলিলটি অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনূদিত চাল তবে অনুগ্রহ করে নীচের টেলিফোন নম্বরে ফোন করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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