

Childcare visit checklist

Children need continuity in their care so aim to stay with a particular provider. When choosing childcare for the first time, take your time and visit as many different providers as possible to see how they differ.

You know your child best so ask lots of questions to find out how the provider will meet their needs. We have provided some suggested questions below. Mark those you'd like to ask and take this list with you to help you ask them.

If your child has additional needs and/or disabilities, ask to see their *Local Offer* document which outlines how they meet their needs.

Quality and welfare

- Are the children happy during your visit? Is the atmosphere friendly, and are you, your child and your family made to feel welcome?
- Are the staff spending time talking to, listening to and playing with the children? Ask them about [Baby Grow \(Five to Thrive\)](#) and how they put this ethos into practice.
- Is the environment safe and clean?
- How is a healthy lifestyle encouraged?
- How are your views and requests respected and listened to?
- How does the provider demonstrate flexibility to ensure your child's home routines are met?
- How are a child's special dietary requirements or additional support needs met?
- How will you be informed if your child is unwell or has an accident?
- Who will be your and your child's particular member of staff as a contact?
- What training does staff access to ensure that they are up to date and have full and relevant qualifications?
- How does the provider ensure that it is continually developing its practice to offer the highest quality care and education possible? Are parents and children's voices part of this process?

Learning

- How is your child's individual development supported?
- How will the provider plan to make links with any other professionals already involved with your child?
- How will you be regularly involved and share information about your child and their learning?
- How does the provider offer opportunities for your child to choose what they would like to do and have a wide range of experiences?
- What opportunities are there for your child to socialise with others and be part of the local community?
- Is there a safe outside area for play throughout the day in all weathers?

Practical matters

- What trial or settling-in periods are available for your child?
- What are the days and opening times?
- Do they offer collection/drop-off services (if needed)?
- Are the provider's policies available for you to see, i.e. admissions, behaviour management/social development, equal opportunities, safeguarding, sickness, insurance cover, registration certificate, etc?
- How much does the provider charge and what does this include, when is payment due, do charges vary for unsociable hours, etc? What does the cost include, e.g. mid-morning snack, outings, nappies, etc?
- Is a deposit or retainer fee required?
- What arrangements are in place for holidays?
- Can the provider meet your needs for childcare within the Free Entitlement offer (if eligible)?
- Does the provider use a written contract?
- Are there suitable sleeping arrangements with places for your child to rest and relax (if applicable)?
- If the provider is home-based do they have children of their own who will be on the premises with your child?
- Do they have pets? (Does your child suffer from any allergies?)