

Choosing childcare – questions to ask childcare providers

Vacancies and costs

- ✓ Are there vacancies – is there a waiting list and if so how long?
- ✓ Do you have to pay a deposit? If so, what's it for? Is it returnable?
- ✓ How much does the setting charge per hour/day? Do you have to pay for holidays/meals/nappies/other activities?
- ✓ Do they offer a settling in period? If so, how long for?

Staffing and premises

- ✓ What is the ratio of staff to children? How many children do they care for?
- ✓ Do they operate a key (named) worker system? How will they keep you informed about your child's progress? What opportunities are there for you to be involved?
- ✓ What is staff turnover like? How well qualified are the staff? Are all the criminal records checks up to date?
- ✓ Is there plenty of outdoor space?
- ✓ Can you see a copy of the registration certificates and inspection reports for the setting?

Activities and support

- ✓ What are the daily routines and how can they incorporate your child's and other children's routines?
- ✓ Where can your child sleep or rest?
- ✓ What if your child is unhappy? How would they be looked after?
- ✓ What are their policies on discipline and how do they manage children's behaviour?
- ✓ How will your child's dietary requirements be accommodated? What systems do they have in place if a child has a severe food allergy?
- ✓ How will your child's cultural background be reflected and respected? Are there staff members from different backgrounds? Do they have books and activities representing all cultures? What about food/music/religious festivals?

Emergencies

- ✓ What happens if your child is sick?
- ✓ What happens if you are delayed picking your child up at the end of the day?
- ✓ How will they contact you in an emergency?