

FACT SHEET 9

Choosing a Playgroup

Playgroups provide sessions of play and education for children. Some playgroups also work in partnership with their local authority to provide funded, part-time early learning and childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds.

You will find playgroups in most areas across the country, often wherever parents or voluntary groups have set them up, in city centres and in most rural villages. Parents help the staff normally on a rota basis and many parents learn about child development through their involvement.

Plus Points

- Your child can enjoy learning and playing in a small group
- You can meet and get to know the parents in your area

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

Playgroups are required to register with The Care Inspectorate. This means that the premises and staff have to be in line with the National Care Standards for children aged up to 16. You can view these standards on the internet at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Regulate/Standards>

You can ask the staff at the Playgroup to see the registration certificate and latest inspection report. Inspection reports are also available to view online at www.careinspectorate.com under the "Find a Care Service" tab, by searching individual service providers on the Care Services List.

If the playgroup is providing funded early learning and childcare then it undergoes joint inspections by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. For more information about inspections go to <https://education.gov.scot/>

Inspectors look to see that staff are educating children in line with the Curriculum for Excellence. Further information about this is available online at: <https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/Early%20learning%20and%20childcare>

What age range are the children in playgroups?

Children in playgroups are usually between 3 and 5 years old.

When are playgroups open?

Playgroups are usually open for two to five sessions per week, and each session is likely to be for about 2½ hours.

How many staff are there in playgroups?

The number of staff required is set out in the National Care Standards mentioned above. Where children in a playgroup are aged 3 years or over, there must be one member of staff to every eight children. However, where children aged 3 and over receive care for a session which is less than a continuous period of four hours, as is common in playgroups, there may be one member of staff for every ten children.

What about full-time childcare?

Playgroups have developed because parents want their children to have some time in a group setting to play and be with new adults and children, before they start nursery or school. Although they have not been geared to the schedules of working parents, in some areas "extended hours" playgroups are open all day. Some parents prefer to combine childminding with playgroups to meet their needs.

How much does a playgroup cost?

Playgroups cost on average about £8.00 per session. However, playgroups that are in partnership with local authorities may be free of charge if you qualify for a part time funded place. You would need to check this with the playgroup and the local authority.

As part of Working Tax Credit you may qualify for help towards the cost of childcare. To find out more you can visit the Tax Credit pages of the Gov.UK website at www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits

How do I find a playgroup?

Ask your local Childcare or Family Information Service to provide you with details of playgroups in your area, or search your local authority area for information on www.families.scot.

Questions To Ask The Playgroup

What qualifications do staff hold?

Can you talk me through the learning and developmental activities my child will take part in?

How will I find out how well my child is settling in?

How many children do you care for?

Is the building/room safe and well kept (especially if it is used for other purposes e.g. a church hall)?

Are there lots of toys and equipment?

How much emphasis is on parental involvement and how can I get involved?

How will outings be supervised?

Will you keep a daily record of what they've done?

Are the children well supervised?

For further information about childcare services available in Dundee City please go to www.families.scot or contact DUNDEE CHILDREN & FAMILIES INFORMATION SERVICE on email cis@dundeecity.gov.uk or telephone 01382 433900

Information is available on our Dundee pages of the national website where alongside details about childcare services you can also access our online Directory for further advice, groups, local activities and other services for families available locally and nationally

View service provider details and family information online at www.families.scot

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1 March 2019



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