

Looking for Childcare



How do I find
childcare in
the area?

Family

INFORMATION SERVICE

How the Family Information Service can help you look for childcare

Torbay Family Information Service holds a wide range of information for families in Torbay. We provide a website and free helpline or you can come and meet our friendly and knowledgeable advisors face to face at our drop-in sessions. Whether you're looking for childcare, things for your child to do, or if you just need support and want to know who to talk to, we will be able to help.

We have information on a range of different childcare providers and can help you find ones that are close to where you live or along your route to work.

We can send you a list of childcare providers that meet your needs by post or email or you can search our website.

Getting in touch

Helpline: 0800 328 5974

email: fisenquiries@torbay.gov.uk

Website: www.torbay.gov.uk/fis

We provide drop-in sessions at a variety of locations across Torbay. Give us a call to find out where and when you can meet us.

Staying Safe

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) is the government body that inspects all registered childcare to ensure children get good quality childcare in a safe environment.

Registered childcare has been inspected by Ofsted to make sure it meets minimum national standards around welfare, care and learning; known as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 0-5 years old. It includes registered childminders, nursery

schools and classes, day nurseries, pre-schools, out of school care, holiday schemes and some creches. Children's centres are also inspected by Ofsted. To check a provider's latest inspection report visit www.ofsted.gov.uk or phone Ofsted on 0300 123 4234.

People working as registered childcarers have to meet strict standards of care and are required to be Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked.

Some types of childcare provider do not have to register but may choose to through Ofsted's Voluntary Childcare Register. This includes people who provide care in the child's home, short term care, activity groups and care for children aged 8 and over. Ask your provider if they have registered or intend to do so.

Unregistered childcare is more informal and includes nannies and au pairs, babysitters, family and friends who look after your child, some crèches and care when you are present such as parent and toddler groups.

Paying for childcare

If you use registered childcare you may be able to use Tax Credits or Childcare Vouchers to help with childcare costs. All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free childcare during term time from the start of the term after their third birthday. For more information on help with the cost of childcare contact the Family Information Service.

Childcare Choices

Choosing the best childcare is important for you and your child and you need to feel confident about the type of childcare that you choose.

The type of childcare that best suits you and your child will depend on the reasons you need childcare and the age of your child.

Day Nurseries

Day nurseries offer care for children on weekdays. Trips and outings may be provided. Day nurseries can provide 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

Ofsted registration: Must be registered, check their latest inspection report.

Age range: Usually between 3 months and 5 years.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday all day, usually between 8:00am and 6:00pm but sometimes opening hours are longer than this. Care is usually offered all year round except Bank Holidays and some may close for a week over Christmas.

Cost: Costs vary between each provider and depend on which sessions you would like. A full day is often around £30. You will need to check what is included in the price as you may be charged for extras such as meals and nappies in addition to the cost of the session.

Registered Childminders

Childminders are self employed and work from their own homes providing childcare. Childminders attend a range of different



activities such as outdoor environments, childminding groups and children's centres. Childminders can apply to become part of the Torbay Childminding Quality Assurance Network. Childminders belonging to this network may also be accredited, meaning that they can offer 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

Ofsted registration: Must be registered, to check their latest inspection report contact the Family Information Service.

Age range: All ages, depending on their registration.

Opening hours: Most work from 8:00am until 6:00pm but they are usually flexible, offering hours outside of these times. Some childminders provide evening or weekend care. Childminders can also pick up and drop off at other childcare providers and schools.

Cost: Costs vary between each provider, most charge an hourly rate and this is usually around £3.50.

Nursery Classes at a School

Nursery classes are usually attached to an infant or primary school and usually only provide the free 15 hours early education for 3 and 4 year olds, although you may be able to pay for extra hours if there are spaces available. They are sometimes referred to as maintained nurseries. Attendance at nursery classes does not guarantee a place for your child at the school.

Ofsted registration: Inspected as part of the school's registration.

Age range: Children can attend from the start of the term after their third birthday.

Opening hours: During term-time only.

Cost: Free for up to 15 hours. You may be able to pay for extra hours.

Pre-Schools

Pre-schools are often located in places such as community centres and church halls and are run by voluntary groups or committees. Pre-schools can offer 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

Ofsted registration: Must be registered. Check their latest inspection report.

Age range: From 2 years to 5 years. Some don't take children until they are 3 years old.

Opening hours: Sessions are usually offered during term-time and can be morning and/or afternoon with similar opening hours to the school day.

Cost: Costs vary between each provider. It is usually around £3.50 per hour.

Breakfast Clubs

Breakfast clubs are usually based on a school site and offer activities and breakfast before the start of the school day.

Ofsted registration: Inspected as part of the school's registration.

Age range: School age children.

Opening hours: Usually from 8:00am until school starts.

Cost: Varies between schools. Ask your child's school for details.

After School Clubs

After school clubs can be based on a school site or run by a private business or voluntary organisation. They offer activities for children once school has finished. Some clubs will pick up from schools nearby if they are not already on a school site.

Ofsted registration: Must be registered if caring for children in reception class, otherwise they may choose to register through Ofsted's

Voluntary Childcare Register. If they are on a school site they will be inspected as part of the school's registration.

Age range: Usually 5 to 11 years, but some may take children over the age of 11.

Opening hours: After school until around 6:00pm.

Cost: Varies between providers.

Holiday Schemes

Holiday schemes are open during school holidays and offer activities and trips. They can be based on a school site or run by a private business or voluntary organisation.

Ofsted registration: Must be registered if caring for children in reception class, otherwise they may choose to register through Ofsted's Voluntary Childcare Register.

Age range: Usually 5 to 11 years but some may take children over the age of 11.

Cost: Costs vary depending on the activities available and the sessions required.



Children with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs

Anyone providing childcare is required to consider how they will provide for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN). They should also have an inclusion policy that sets out how they will ensure that every child is included and involved in activities.

You will be able to get an impression of how inclusive and welcoming a provider is when you visit them. If you feel you need some more help when looking for childcare, you can contact the Family Information Service. Our advisors can support you in finding a childcare place that suits you and your child; this can include finding out which providers can meet your needs and arranging appointments for you to visit childcare settings or linking with professionals who can support or train a childcare provider.

All early years settings, such as day nurseries and pre-schools, have a specially trained and experienced Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). They are responsible for ensuring that your child receives care that meets their needs. They should also be able to tell you how they would plan for your child, show you suitable resources that they could use and explain how they might adapt activities to ensure your child is included.

Tips for Choosing Childcare

- **Contact the Family Information Service** - for details of childcare providers in your area.
- **Draw up a shortlist** - speak to providers on the telephone first as this will save you time and wasted visits. Check their opening hours, fees, vacancies and the ages they cater for.
- **Arrange visits** - the best way to see what a setting is like is to look around and meet the staff. Arrange appointments with two

or three examples of your chosen type of childcare. Childcare providers vary greatly in size, environment and atmosphere. Make sure the place is right for you and your child.

- **When visiting** - take along the list of questions in the 'What to Ask' section. It is a good idea to take your child with you and, where possible, visit during normal opening hours. This will give you the opportunity to view the setting whilst the children are around and see if they are calm, happy and busy. It will also allow you to see how the carer(s) interact with the children they are caring for.
- **Look at Ofsted reports** - this will tell you how Ofsted judged the quality of care at their last inspection, which areas are strong and which areas need improving. Trust your instincts, but make sure this is backed up by facts.
- **Agree a contract** - once you have chosen your preferred provider it is important to have a written agreement or contract on pay, hours and conditions. This will help to avoid disagreements in the future.

Many childcare providers will arrange 'settling-in' sessions before your child starts properly. This may be for just a couple of hours at a time and you can stay with your child.

What to Ask

It is a good idea to prepare some questions before you visit a childcare provider so you don't forget anything important. To help you we have prepared some questions you might want to consider. Add your own questions and don't be afraid to ask; good childcare providers will expect this and will also expect to show you the rooms and outdoor spaces used by children.

1. How long have you been established for?
2. What qualifications do you (or your staff) hold?

3. What other age groups will be with my child?
4. What will be a typical day for my child here?
5. Where will my child rest and how will my child's routine fit in?
6. How do you manage behaviour?
7. What is your approach to toilet training?
8. What sort of meals do you give children?
9. Do you make outside trips and visits and where to?
10. Do you keep a record of my child's progress and how will I be kept informed of it?
11. How will we exchange information and communicate about my child on a daily basis?
12. Can I see your registration certificate?
13. Where can I find your policies and procedures?
14. Can you tell me about your Safeguarding Policy and does that include CRB checks?
15. What are the ratios of children to carers?
16. Do you operate a keyworker scheme (where an identified member of staff has primary responsibility for your child)? If so, who would be my child's keyworker?
17. What happens if my child is sick or in an emergency?
18. How do you ensure children with disabilities or additional needs are included?
19. How do you ensure cultural differences, including language barriers are recognised and celebrated? Will my child learn about other cultures and celebrations?
20. What would I need to provide for my child's day here?

Are you still struggling to find what you need?

If you are struggling to find suitable childcare and you need more help, the Family Information Service can offer additional support to help you find childcare that meets your needs. This can include contacting providers on your behalf to arrange visits and a place for your child.

Torbay Family Information Service

**on 0800 328 5974 or visit
www.torbay.gov.uk/fis**

Useful contact:

**Ofsted on 0300 123 4234
www.ofsted.gov.uk**





**This leaflet can be made
available in other formats.
For more information please
telephone 0800 328 5974.**