

“Andrew is 7, and I was very careful to visit and discuss his needs at the after-school club. It now means I can work a full day knowing his needs are being met and he is in a safe place. He has made lots of friends, not just other kids but members of staff too. I can relax and get on with what I need to do...life is so much easier”

How do I make the right choice?

As a parent, you are often the best judge of whether a childcare service will suit your child.

When you leave your child in the care of others, you may want to check that:

- Their needs are being met
- Their cultural background is seen and understood
- They will be happy there
- It ‘feels right’
- There is a settling in arrangement
- The same group of children often attend so your child can make friends
- Mealtimes are relaxed and fun
- The outside area is well planned and there is plenty of space
- There is lots to do and it is carefully planned.



Ensure that your child is left in secure premises and that well trained and experienced staff are caring for them. You will also want the opportunity to get involved and know about what your child is doing day to day.

The main types of childcare available are:

Child-minders look after children usually in the child-minder's own home. They are registered with Ofsted and inspected every year. Child-minders can often be flexible about the hours that they work and will care for your child with lots of fun and learning. Every child-minder is different so look for someone who will suit your family. Some child-minders are part of a network; these child-minders have agreed to meet set quality standards and some may be accredited to offer early years education. Contact the Family Information Services (FIS) for more information

Day Nurseries take children from birth - five years old for the full length of the working day. Social Services, voluntary organisations, private companies, individuals, businesses or community groups might run them. They are registered and inspected by Ofsted.

Pre-schools are for children aged between two and five. Sessions can run from 2 1/2 hours - 6 hours depending on what the setting offers. Most of them are run by groups of parents with one or two paid members of staff.

Out of school clubs, or kids clubs, provide sessional play and care for school-aged children from three years upwards. There are breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and holiday play schemes. They are inspected by Ofsted, with an inspection timeframe determined by the outcome of their previous visit.



Your child will be entitled to Early Education Funding from the term after their 3rd birthday.

Some settings can also offer funded places from the age of two years if the child meets the required criteria.

Contact your **Early Years Development Centre** for more information.

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Warning Signs:

Sometimes, children are not always able to tell you if something is wrong, so look out for changes in their moods, what they do and their physical appearance.



Action:

Speak promptly to the person in charge about your concerns. If you have serious concerns about your child's safety, remove them at once and contact your local social services team (First Response)
Contact Ofsted.



What to say:

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where they are going, for how long and who they need to ask for their daily needs.
Find out about what a typical day or session consists of.
Be prepared and ask plenty of questions.



Prevention: Talk

to others who have used a particular childcare service. Look for trained and experienced staff. Visit the place your child will be cared for and look for busy and relaxed children. Check how you will be informed of how your child is getting on and in case of emergency

Contacts:

Buckinghamshire County Council First Response Team: 0845 4600001

Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Team: 0800 999 7677

Family Information Service: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231 www.ofsted.gov.uk/

Surestart: www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre