

Checklist of questions to ask when choosing a nursery

Looking for a nursery requires parents to consider a variety of childcare options before selecting the right nursery for their child.

To help you decide which nursery setting will work best for you, we have put together a checklist to help you find the right nursery for your child.

Fees

- ☐ What do the nursery's fees include?
- ☐ Do you have to pay extra for nappies, formula milk and snacks?
- ☐ Does the nursery ask for a retainer fee for before the child starts at nursery and does this get refunded?
- ☐ Does the nursery still charge fees if my child is ill or on holiday?
- ☐ Are there any other hidden costs?
- ☐ Does the nursery offer free childcare for nine-month-olds to four-year-olds?

Facilities

- ☐ Does the nursery have space available for your child at the time you are looking for?
- ☐ Is the nursery open only in term-time or does it offer all year-round provision?
- ☐ What learning resources do they have?
- ☐ Are the learning resources good quality, clean, safe and age appropriate?
- ☐ Do they have webcams so you can monitor your child while they are at nursery?
- ☐ Is there a good outdoor area which children can access freely?
- ☐ Do they have diverse books and toys?
- ☐ Do they have a role play area?
- ☐ What are the parking facilities like, are they on the street or on-site?

Activities

What is the philosophy of the nursery? eg. Does it have a Montessori approach, Froebelian, Curiosity,

- ☐ Reggio Emilia approach?
- ☐ Does it run Forest School or Beach School sessions?
- ☐ What activities does the nursery provide?
- ☐ Does the nursery put on extra wellbeing activities such as yoga or mindfulness?

Policies

- ☐ What is the nursery's settling in policy?
- ☐ Is there a set routine which children follow daily at the nursery?
- ☐ Are they free to choose what to do and what to play with?
- ☐ Can children have a nap if they need to and is there a designated area for this?
- ☐ What is the nursery's policy if your child is ill?
- ☐ How can parents be involved in their child's learning?
- ☐ Can my child bring in toys and books from home?
- ☐ Are superhero costumes allowed?
- ☐ What is the potty-training policy?

Staff

- ☐ Are the staff welcoming, friendly and professional?
- ☐ How do the staff interact with your child?
- ☐ What is the ratio of children to staff?
- ☐ What happens if staff are ill - how are the ratios maintained?
- ☐ Are all staff first aid trained?
- ☐ How many of the staff have a paediatric first aid qualification?
- ☐ Who will be your child's key worker?
- ☐ How does the nursery communicate with parents?
- ☐ Does the nursery regularly use customer feedback forms to make sure parents and children are happy with their care?
- ☐ What feedback about your child's day will you receive?
- ☐ What is the nursery's policy on cuddling your child if he or she is upset as some nurseries have a non-cuddling policy.
- ☐ Does the nursery take children out into the community or on outings?

Safeguarding

- ☐ How secure is the nursery and what system do they use for signing in and out of the nursery?
- ☐ What is the procedure when someone else collects my child?
- ☐ What extra safeguarding steps does the nursery take when the children are on a trip?
- ☐ Is everything clean and safe?
- ☐ What is the nursery's nappy changing policy and how does it keep children safe?

- ☐ Where does nappy changing take place, e.g. in view of staff or in another room with one staff member?
- ☐ How often are nappies changed?
- ☐ Do the children look happy and settled?
- ☐ What happens if a child gets ill or has an accident at nursery?
- ☐ Does the nursery maintain a record of vaccinations that children have had?

Behaviour

- ☐ How does the nursery promote good behaviour?
- ☐ How does the nursery deal with challenging behaviour?
- ☐ How does the nursery deal with children biting?

Food

- ☐ Is the food fresh and is it prepared daily?
- ☐ Does the nursery offer cooked food or will you need to give your child a packed lunch?
- ☐ If hot food is offered, study the menus to see how the food is prepared. Can I look at the menu?
- ☐ How often do you change it?
- ☐ Do you offer vegetarian or vegan food?
- ☐ What is the nursery's food hygiene rating?
- ☐ Can they cater for your child if they have any allergies or dislikes?
- ☐ How do they deal with fussy eating?

Notes