

Questions to ask...

If there are other things you want to know, don't be afraid to ask. Good childcare staff expect you to ask questions and will be happy to answer them. And don't forget – *you are the expert on your child and should trust your feelings.*

Staff

- Are staff trained and experienced?
- Are the staff friendly, happy and approachable?
- How long have staff been working with children and do they enjoy it?
- How many staff have joined and left the service in the last year?

Settling in

- How can I make sure my child is settling in well; how do you let me know?
- Will you agree to a trial run and would I be able to stay for 2 hours/ sessions to see if things work out?

Parental Involvement

- Do parents have plenty of chances to say what they want for their children?
- How can I get involved and play an active part in my child's learning and play?

Activities

- Are fun activities planned each day and what are they?
- Do the children have a say in what play they want to do?
- Do you keep a record of what the children have done that day and is it available for parents?

Registration

- Can I see a copy of your registration certificate and last inspection report?
- Can parents look at or take away policies and procedures?
- How many children can you care for?
- What is the ratio of staff to children?

Safety & Environment

- Are the children well supervised and what security arrangements are in place?
- Is there a safe and secure outdoor play area?

Relationships

- Do you operate a key worker scheme (where one member of staff has main responsibility for my child)?
- How will you keep me informed of my child's progress?
- How do you manage children's behaviour and support them in developing confidence, independence and resourcefulness?



Making Choices

Tips and Information on Childcare

Falkirk Childcare Information Service

Being a parent is often the most challenging and rewarding task which anyone will undertake and your child is unique, like most parents, you'll want the best for him or her.



Falkirk Council

Choosing childcare is an important step for any parent and you need to find the type of childcare that will best suit your needs as well as your child's.

- The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (commonly known as the Care Commission) registers and inspects all childcare providers using the National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – which can be downloaded.
- Inspections are carried out regularly. Each childcare provider will be happy to show you their registration certificate and a copy of their most recent inspection report.
- The Care Commission will no longer inspect or regulate on any fire safety matters. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will now inspect on these matters and will inform the Care Commission of any formal and informal enforcement notices and any alteration to prohibition notices.
- The people who work in childcare services, whether voluntary or paid, are all subject to rigorous background checks through an enhanced disclosure. Disclosure Scotland is the organisation that provides employers with any criminal history information on individuals applying for posts.
- The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training. All staff must be qualified, or working towards a qualification, and register with SSSC or another appropriate body (e.g. General Teaching Council Scotland – GTCS).
- Balancing Work and Family leaflet gives a guide to family friendly policies, benefits and other help available. For a copy, please contact Falkirk Childcare Information Service or download from Falkirk Council website.

Useful Links

Care Commission	● Regulation of care services & inspection reports	www.carecommission.com
Care Standards	● What to expect from care services	www.infoscotland/nationalcarestandards
Child Protection Line	● Worried about a child? Call 0800 022 3222	www.infoscotland.com/childprotection
Disclosure Scotland	● Criminal records check organisation	www.disclosurescotland.co.uk
Falkirk Council	● Local authority, information & leaflets available	www.falkirk.gov.uk
Fire Safety	● Fire Law in Scotland	www.infoscotland.com/firelaw
HMIE	● Education inspection reports	www.hmie.gov.uk
SCMA	● Scottish Childminding Association	www.childminding.org
Scottish Government	● Government information and Care Standards	www.scotland.gov.uk
SOSCN	● Scottish Out of School Care Network	www.soscn.org
SPPA	● Scottish Pre-School Play Association	www.sppa.org.uk
SSSC	● Register of social care staff	www.sssc.uk.com

To find out where childcare providers are in your area contact:-

Falkirk Childcare Information Service can provide you with full details and also a wide range of information on childcare provision, pre-school education and childcare issues.

Phone - 01324 506632

Fax – 01324 506604

Email – childcare@falkirk.gov.uk

Website – www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk, www.falkirk.gov.uk/childcare

Written in conjunction with Falkirk Childcare Strategy Team.

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There are lots of differences between different types of care, the table below shows average services available

Childcare	Service	Age	Hours	Average Cost	Open
Childminder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexible hours & adaptable routine wide age range catered for family environment 	Birth to 16 years	8am to 6pm	£3 to £3.75 per hour	All Year
Crèche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supervised childcare for occasional limited periods of time enables parents/carers to participate in adult education courses or training may provide a mobile service 	Birth to 12 years	9am to 4pm	£3 per hour	All Year
Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools ⁺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> full day and part time care pre-school education may provide places from 6 weeks to school age 	Birth to 5 years	8am to 5.30pm	£2.75 per hour	All Year
Nursery Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open during school term times provide pre-school education are attached to Primary Schools 	3 years to 5 years	9am to 11.30am, 12.30pm to 3pm	N/A	Term Time
Family Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open all year range of services that promote child development and foster parenting skills develop services in response to the needs of their local communities 	2 years to 5 years	9am to 4pm	N/A	All Year
Out of School Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open before and after school, often during school holidays provide stimulating experiences for children of school age collect children from school 	5 years to 16 years	8am to 9am, 2.45pm to 6pm	£2 to £4 Before, £6 to £9 After	All Year
Parent & Toddler (not registered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually situated in a community setting operated by a voluntary group of parents/carers allows children to interact before pre-school and primary school 	Birth to 5 years	9.15am to 11.30am	£1.50 to £2.50 per session	Term Time
Playgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parental participation early interaction with other children limited to 2 to 2½ hours per session 	2½ years to 5 years	9.15am to 11.30am, 12.30pm to 3pm	£2.50 per session	Term Time
Private Nursery ⁺⁺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> full day and part time care generally from 6 weeks to school age may be in partnership with Falkirk Council to supply pre-school education 	Birth to 5 years	8am to 6pm	£25 to £37 per day	All Year

⁺ Falkirk Council provisions offering extended hours

⁺⁺ Most costs are age related

Childcare Agencies supply or introduce to parents a childcare worker who looks after a child or young person up to the age of 16 e.g. Nanny, Home-based childcare.

What do you need?

The childcare that you choose can be influenced by:-

- Hours of care you need
- Your income
- The childcare preferences you have
- Transport
- Childcare vacancies and availability
- Whether the care needs to be linked with education
- Extent to which you wish or are able to be involved in the operation of the service



Top Tips and Things to Look for

- Aim to visit at least two or three places to meet the carers and compare services
- Don't leave it until the last minute. Even if you're not ready for childcare, give yourself as much time as you can to make your choice
- Research the options. Make a note of basic requirements e.g. opening hours, costs, locations and make those your first questions. Shop around, aiming to visit at least 2 or 3 places to compare services
- Are the premises clean, light, safe and are the equipment, toys and furniture well kept?
- Check if the other children are enjoying activities, looking happy & purposeful
- Look to see if staff are responding to children's needs, listening to them and answering carefully
- Be aware that childcare providers are not allowed to discriminate in any way



Does the service...

- include fees, deposit, costs, hours, sick/holiday pay, late pick-up/drop-off within contract?
- provide meals, snacks, nappies etc or will you need to provide them?
- have sleep/rest area for children?
- offer pick-ups and drop-offs to local providers, services, schools?
- operate a waiting list?
- go out on trips? Where to?

Additional Support Needs & Disabilities

If you have or your child has an additional support need and/or disability please share this information with your childcare provider.

Remember, you know your child best so inform staff of all elements of your child's needs:

- Behaviour
- Communication
- Dietary needs
- Health/medical care
- Personal & Intimate Care
- Physical Assistance
- Routines
- Sensory needs