

Childcare explained



There are a wide range of childcare options available in Barnet, find out more about the options and what is available by visiting www.barnet.gov.uk/childcare

Choosing childcare

Making sure you choose the right kind of childcare setting for your child is a big decision for any parent to make.

Things to consider:

- ask to see the childcare provider's: Ofsted registration, public liability insurance and First Aid certificate – are they all up-to-date?
- before signing the contract make sure you read it fully – don't forget to read the small print and be sure you know exactly what you're paying for
- some childcare providers will allow you to have a trial run; this will help you see how it works for you and your child (some may charge a small fee for doing this)
- to ensure you get the right service for your needs, speak to the childcare provider, they will be able to tell you exactly what you are paying for and how much it is going to cost you
- if your child is aged over eight and is looked after by a childminder, check to see if they are registered on the Voluntary Ofsted Childcare Register; if they are you may be able to claim childcare costs.

Before you make your final decision, visit a variety of childcare providers to give you an idea of which ones suit the needs of you and your child. Take your child with you to see how staff talk to them and try to visit during opening hours so you can get an idea of a typical day and to see if the children there are happy, calm and busy.

What to look out for?

When deciding on the best childcare option for you and your child, you should look out for:

Qualifications – what training and experience does the provider have?

Environment - is it secure, does it feel nurturing?

Diet – what's on the menu? Does it meet any dietary needs you may have?

Supervision – check the adult to child ratio, does it comply with regulations?

Equipment – what equipment is available, is it creative/varied and is there outside space?

Your expectations – make a list of your expectations such as hours, policies and procedures and your child's needs, are they all met?

Inspection reports – is there a copy of the Ofsted report available?



When the childcare is right, it's good for parents, for children, for everyone. If you get good childcare at the beginning, hopefully it's going to help with their future. – Parent



What options are available?

Childminders

Some childminder's can offer flexible hours to meet parent's needs. They work in their own home looking after other people's children.

Childminder's can provide care for up to six children under the age of eight, (this includes any of their own children). They can also care for older children too.

Some childminders provide overnight, holiday and weekend care and some can also do school drop offs and pick-ups. If you require this additional provision please contact FYi who will be able to put you in touch with providers who have this provision.

Childminders offer a range of activities including arts, crafts, trips to Children's Centres, parks and libraries and much more.

Did you know that some childminders, day nurseries and pre-schools accept childcare vouchers?

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
● ① ②	● ① ○ ②	○ ①

Day nurseries

Day nurseries are more formal settings designed to provide care and education for children aged up to five years old. There are different types of nursery including, private, work based, run by the council or a community group. Their hours may vary but many tend to coincide with a working day (8am – 6pm). Most nurseries will give you the option to attend on a full or part-time basis.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
● ①	● ①	

Pre-schools

Pre-schools (also known as playgroups), provide play and early education for children aged between two and five years old. Pre-schools are run as private, community or voluntary groups and hours provided may vary. They generally operate during school term-time; sessions are typically between 9am – 12.30pm or 12.30pm – 3pm.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
	● ①	

● = Full-time ① = Part-time ○ = Before/after school and holidays ② = One-off *Statutory school age

Children's Centres

Some Children's Centres provide childcare for children under the age of five, alongside other family services, such as links to JobCentre Plus and health and family support. They also provide advice about drop-in sessions, local childcare providers and free entitlement to early education. For further information on Children's Centres that provide childcare visit www.barnet.gov.uk/childrens-centres

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
● ○	● ○	



Remember: If your child is aged two, three or four you could be able to access up to 15 hours of free early education. Find out more at www.barnet.gov.uk/free-childcare

Home childcarer's

Also known as nannies, a home childcarer will work in the home of the children they are looking after and usually work for one family at a time. They can fit in with unusual working hours, and work part time or can even live in with the family.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
●	●	

Crèches

These provide occasional care for children during particular events (such as training courses); crèches are usually available at particular locations (such as shopping centres or leisure centres) and can provide childcare for a short amount of time while you are engaged in an activity.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
①	①	①

Breakfast clubs

Usually based in a school, breakfast clubs offer breakfast and a range of activities for children before school. They operate during term time only and are generally open from 8am until the start of the school day. Breakfast clubs can be run directly by a school or external organisation.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
	○	○

After school clubs

Held in a variety of venues including schools and community centres, after school clubs can serve several schools in the same area and are open from the end of the school day usually until 6pm. They offer a variety of activities and some clubs will operate a school pick-up service. After school clubs can be delivered directly by a school or external organisation.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
	○	○

Holiday playschemes

Holiday playschemes can take place in a variety of venues such as schools, community centres or halls and offer activities including arts and crafts, play, and sports.

Most operate during the summer holidays varying from four to six weeks, while some operate during all school holidays and half terms. Holiday playschemes can be delivered directly by a school or external organisation. Most holiday playschemes will require you to pre-book a place.

0 – 2 years old	2 and a half – 5 years old	5 – 8 years old and over*
	○	○

For further information on childcare in your local area contact FYI on **0800 389 8312** or **fyi@barnet.gov.uk** or visit **www.barnet.gov.uk/fyi**

Childcare for children with special educational needs/disabilities

When talking to potential childcare providers, you will need to discuss how they will meet the specific needs of your child and you should consider:

- any additional equipment your child may need
- any speech and language support
- what medical assistance is available if needed
- if the provider caters for special dietary requirements.

Some childcare providers may have services specifically tailored for disabled children and those with special educational needs. Others may have inclusive childcare which offers care and learning for children of all abilities.

Help with the costs of childcare for children with special educational needs/disabilities

If your child has special needs or a disability you may find that you need extra financial support to help with your childcare costs and everyday living expenses. There may be some additional funding that you can claim.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	Disabled child element of Child Tax Credit	Direct Payments
<p>This is the main financial support available to help towards the additional costs of living with a disability.</p> <p>It is usually paid every four weeks and is a non-means tested benefit. This means you can be paid this benefit regardless of your financial circumstances.</p>	<p>If you are claiming DLA for your child, you may also be able to claim extra support through the disabled child element of Child Tax Credit.</p> <p>There are two elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. disabled child element – for each child within the family receiving DLA or who is registered blind 2. a severely disabled child element – in addition to the disabled child element, for each child within the family who is receiving the highest rate care component of DLA. 	<p>If you have a child with disabilities you may be able to receive money to pay for services and equipment personally, instead of having them arranged by the local authority.</p> <p>Direct payments can be very useful in allowing you to shape your own childcare package, including support and services that are not routinely provided by community care services.</p>

Help with the costs of childcare

There are different types of financial help that might be available to you depending on your situation.

All families

Free Entitlement to Early Education	Child Benefit	Child Tax Credit
Some two year olds and all three and four year olds are entitled to up to 15 hours of free early education per week.	Child Benefit helps with costs related to bringing up children. It is currently paid for every child (or young person until their 20th birthday as long as they are in full-time education) regardless of your income or savings.	If your family income is less than £32,200 per year (£26,000 if you have only one child) you may be eligible for Child Tax Credit.

Working parents

Whether you are working full time, have a part-time job or are self-employed, there may be some financial help available for you to help pay towards your childcare costs.

Childcare element of Working Tax Credit	Working Tax Credit	Employer-supported childcare
Extra help is available for working parents through a childcare element, to help with the cost of registered childcare. It offers up to 70 per cent towards the costs of childcare.	Working Tax Credit provides financial support for those on low incomes.	Many employers support their staff with their childcare needs, including providing financial assistance, run a childcare voucher scheme or offering on-site childcare services.





If you would like more information about any of the childcare mentioned, including help with the costs of childcare or you would like to receive our free lists of registered childcare in Barnet contact FYi on tel: **0800 389 8312**
email: fyi@barnet.gov.uk or visit www.barnet.gov.uk/fyi