

Childcare Options

Choosing the right type of childcare

Finding the right type of childcare to suit you and your child is crucial. Different options are available, so give yourself plenty of time to research them. Draw up a list of all registered childcare (available from the Family Information Service) and have a list of questions ready to ask when you visit prospective child carers

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/childcare/childcareoptions/childcarechecklist.aspx>

The childcare you choose depends on the age and development of your child and what type and length of care is needed to fit in with your daily life. Parents and carers should seek information about all of the types of provision available to them locally and decide which option is best for them and their child. It takes time to find suitable care and you should also be prepared to spend time settling your child in with your chosen carer.

Many childcare providers have waiting lists for places, so it is always useful to think ahead about what type of care and provision you want and need. Women intending to return to work after the birth of their child should start considering their childcare options even before their baby is born.

Affordable childcare

Many people think that good quality childcare and early education come with a hefty price tag and are only for the well-off. However, it is worth remembering that, whatever your financial position, there are plenty of options. Most families are helped with the cost from the very start and a growing number of employers provide childcare help.

There are benefits that, surprisingly, many working families in the UK do not claim because they do not know about them or think they are not eligible. Missing out on them can make a massive difference to your choices.

Find out more about the **childcare element of working tax credits**

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/carehealthandsupport/welfarebenefits/workingtaxcredit.aspx> and Childcare vouchers.

Useful information

Medway Family Information Service (FIS) will provide you with contact details, opening hours, age restrictions, parking facilities and costs. Registered child carers are regularly checked by Ofsted, so you can be sure of safety and standards. Get in touch by phone on **01634 335566** or by email to familyinfo@medway.gov.uk

Please access the [Family Information Service Directory](#) for further information on Early Years and Childcare.