

# Family Information Service

## What is a pre-school or playgroup?

Pre-schools or playgroups provide care, play and education for children under school age. They allow children to socialise and offer fun activities with opportunities to learn and play. They offer sessional care, usually for 3 hours a day, mornings or afternoons, although some groups offer morning and afternoon sessions on the same day with a lunch club.

Pre-schools and playgroups normally run during term time, for 38 weeks of the year, and are usually for children from 3-5 years although some groups may take children from 2 years old. Most of them are registered to provide places for up to 26 children with a minimum staff ratio of one adult for every eight 3 to 4 year olds or one adult for every four 2 year olds.

Often groups are privately run or they can be run by a committee of parents and staffed by a qualified or experienced supervisor and assistant(s). Groups must be registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register and they have to operate within the standards set for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Copies of their latest Ofsted report can be found on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## Free early education

All children from the funding term following their third birthday, and some two year olds, are entitled to 15 hours of free early education per



[www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk](http://www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk)

Tel: 01934 426 300

Email: [fis@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:fis@n-somerset.gov.uk)



# Family Information Service



week for 38 weeks a year. This applies until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday).

The provider will make the claim on your behalf during each funding period (three times a year), but you will need to complete and sign a parent declaration form for the hours you want to claim during head count week in each of the funding periods. You will be given this form by your provider.

More information is available on: [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/earlyyears)

If you work and pay for childcare you may be able to get tax credits to help towards the costs. More information is available from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) Tel: 0845 300 3900

## Useful contacts:

### Ofsted

Tel: 0300 123 1231 - Helpline and Complaints (8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Post: Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA

### Pre-school Learning Alliance (West Division)

Tel: 0121 643 0063

Email: [westdivision@pre-school.org.uk](mailto:westdivision@pre-school.org.uk)

Website: [www.pre-school.org.uk](http://www.pre-school.org.uk)

Post: 5 Lower Temple Street, Birmingham, B2 4JD

### Gov.uk

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/free-early-education>

### HMRC – for information on tax credits

Tel: 0845 300 3900

Website: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits>