Pre-Schools & Playgroups

What is a pre-school playgroup?

Pre-schools and playgroups provide childcare and early years education for children aged two to five years. They are often held in community buildings and are run by qualified staff. All pre-schools and playgroups are registered and inspected by Ofsted. Most open for sessions of about three hours at a time, with up to ten sessions per week. Some pre-school playgroups offer extended sessions, for example including a breakfast club or a lunch club.

Choosing a pre-school playgroup:

First you will need to obtain a list of registered pre-school playgroups in your area. This is available from the Nottinghamshire Families Information Service (FIS) at www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk and clicking to enter the Families directory.

Phone round the ones near you and see if they have any spaces. If you want to make sure the pre-school playgroup is right arrange a visit. To get a really clear picture visit a few so you can get an idea for what you like and don’t like.

Here are a few things to look out for:
- Is it clean?
- Ask to see insurance & registration certificates
- Is there a safe outdoor space for play?
- Are there plenty of toys, activities and books?
- Do the children seem happy?
- Do the staff appear caring and welcoming?
- How do the staff interact with the children?
- Don’t forget to ask about fees.

Pre-schools and playgroups can be very busy so when you find one you like it is important to let them know as soon as possible that you want to take a place.

Don’t be afraid to ask if you can contact other parents who use the childminder to find out what they think.

Top questions to ask a pre-school playgroup:

- Can you stay with your child for the first couple of sessions to check they settle in?
- What kind of activities do you provide for children?
- What is the ratio of carers to children?
- What kind of food and drink do you give the children?
- What qualifications or training do the staff have?
- What is the turnover of staff?
- Are back up staff available to cover absences?
- What happens if my child falls sick?
- What safety and security measures are in place?
- How do you pass on information to parents?

There may be other questions you may want to ask – Take time to think of these before you visit.

Contact information:

Phone: 0300 500 8080
Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 8am to 12 noon

Email: enquiries@nottsc.gov.uk
Website: www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk