Deciding the type of childcare you want for your child is an important decision, so it is a good idea to get as much information as possible before deciding what is best for you and your child.

There are several different options for pre-school childcare:

- Childminders
- Nurseries
- Pre-schools
- Nannies

Childminders:
Registered Childminders are professional day carers who work in their own homes to provide care and education for other people’s children in a family setting, offering a flexibility of service that is difficult to find in other provisions.

Childminders can care for up to 6 children under the age of 8. Many childminders will also care for children over 8 years. All offer the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Inspections are carried out by Ofsted on both the home and the childminder. In addition, all adults living in the childminder’s home must have Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) formerly known as CRBs. The Family Information Service (FIS) updates information on all Ofsted registered childcare in the Reading area including childminders, information concerning registration is received directly from Ofsted. We offer families a tailored search for childcare depending on the age of child the time that care is needed, school drop-off / pick-ups and vacancies. Please contact FIS for an up to date list of childminders with vacancies in your area or visit our website.

Nurseries:
Day nurseries - are Ofsted registered and provide childcare for 0-5 year olds, usually open from 8am to 6pm weekdays most weeks of the year. They are often privately run however some maybe run by organisations at the workplace or by the local authority. Some offer 2,3 & 4 year funding, and children need to be attending on headcount day, however extra hours will need to be paid for by the parent/carer.

Nursery school - can be run by the local authority (maintained) or privately. Nurseries are usually independent of any school, although they may feed into a school. Each nursery will deal with their admission procedure, they usually offer a part time place term time only for mornings or afternoons. A nursery school has to be registered with the Government regulatory bodies. It will almost certainly offer a Government-approved Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Maintained Nursery school /Class are funded by the local education authority and free. Private Nursery schools are run independently and charge fees, although your child may be entitled to a free part time place through Early Years funding.

Pre-schools:
These are run on a not-for-profit basis (so they’re not state or private), most often by parent management committees. Normally, they charge fees, although these are kept to a minimum and your child may be entitled to a free part-time place through Early Years Funding. Providing your child is registered with a setting in time for ‘headcount day’ they will receive Early Years funding from the term following their third birthday. An increasing number offer ‘wraparound’ care, but the majority run shorter sessions, ranging from two-and-a-half to four hours. Preschools are registered by Ofsted. Half the staff must be trained and some may be qualified teachers. They’ll offer lots of opportunities for children to learn through play following the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
Nannies:
A nanny is employed by you to look after your child in your home and can 'live in' or come to your home for set days and hours. Many have a nursery nurse training or childcare qualifications, though this is not compulsory. Nannies are not inspected or registered with Ofsted, however, they may choose to register with Ofsted under the Voluntary Register. You have the responsibility of employing someone and sorting out their detailed contracts.

Childcare and school age children:
When your child starts primary school it is important to know that they are being well cared for outside of school hours.

For out of school care childminders provide very flexible care and can drop-off and pick-up from local schools. Subject to demand, schools may, as part of their Extended Services, provide activities and care, both before and after school. There are also Breakfast and After School Clubs during term time and Holiday Schemes during term breaks, they can be run by the school or by a private organisation. Visit our website for more details. [www.reading.gov.uk/fis](http://www.reading.gov.uk/fis)

For further information and advice, please contact:

Family information Service (FIS)
Tel: 0118 9373777 opt2
Email: fis@reading.gov.uk
[www.reading.gov.uk/fis](http://www.reading.gov.uk/fis)

Information for every member of the family

Ofsted: General Enquiries & Complaints
Tel: 0300 1231231