What is a Nursery school/Nursery class?
Nursery schools and classes provide early education and childcare for children between three and five years old. Some may take children from two and a half. Nursery schools and classes are usually open during school hours in term times. Most children will be offered a part time place. This usually means a morning or afternoon session of around two and a half hours. Some may offer additional out of school care to help working parents.

What will my child do at Nursery school/Nursery class?
At nursery school children will begin the first stage of the National Curriculum. This is called the Foundation Stage where children learn through planned play. The Foundation Stage has six areas of learning where the following skills can be developed: communication, language literacy and numeracy skills, personal, social and emotional development, creative skills, understanding and knowledge of the world and physical development.

How much does a Nursery school/Nursery class cost?
Some nursery classes and nursery schools are part of the state education system and are free except for meals and trips. Others are run by private or voluntary organisations and charge fees. Most offer free part-time early education places for eligible three and four year olds.

All Nursery schools and classes are regularly inspected by Ofsted to check that the early learning and care is satisfactory. The size of the class may vary but there should be one carer to every 13 children and the team will include qualified teachers and nursery assistants.

Questions to ask a Nursery school /class
Ask to see the school’s registration certificate and latest inspection report.

Official matters:
What is the ratio of carers to children?
What qualifications do the staff hold?

Children’s Needs:
Ask a member of staff to walk you round, room by room.

Ask yourself …
‘Is it clean, light and big enough?’
Do the children appear supervised?

Ask them …
How many children are cared for here and are they the same age as my child?
What kind of activities do you plan?
How do you manage challenging behaviour?
Do you keep a daily record of what the children have done?

Look around …
Is there a lot going on? Do children look happy and purposeful? Look for projects and drawings up on the walls.
What about stimulating toys and books on show?
Contracts/Costs:

Is there a waiting list?

Can you confirm costs for sessions required?

Are there any additional costs?

Some complaints about childcare are a result of misunderstanding the terms of the contract and the costs involved. Make sure you agree and understand the terms and conditions before you sign or agree to a contract. Say so if you don’t and negotiate with the provider.

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

Information for every member of the family

Ofsted: General Enquiries & Complaints
Tel: 0300 1231231

Questions for parents to ask.