

## Information for Parents

There are a wide variety of childcare options available and choosing the right one is a big decision. We hope that the information in this fact sheet will help you to choose childcare that suits both you and your child.

### **Why use childcare?**

There are a number of benefits of using childcare, both for yourself and your child.

#### **Benefits for your child**

- High quality childcare and early education gives your child a good start in life.
- Research shows that it improves communication skills and emotional and social development.
- Childcare can give children the chance to play and interact with other children.

#### **Benefits for you**

- Childcare can support you to go back to work, study, or training.
- Some types of childcare also provide an opportunity to meet and socialise with other parents.
- Childcare can also provide parents with a break from their caring responsibilities.

### **What is my child entitled to?**

- All parents should be able to find childcare that meets their child's needs.
- All children are entitled to be included and supported in a childcare setting.
- Children should be supported in a way that is appropriate to their needs and this should be agreed with their parents or carers.

### **What types of Childcare are available?**

Childcare settings may include childminders, home childcarers, day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, out of school clubs, holiday playschemes, crèches and wraparound care.

## **How do I choose a suitable childcare place?**

You can view details of Ofsted registered childcare providers in your area using [Solihull Family Information Service Directory](#)

The **Family Information Service** can tell you about your childcare options and give you details about what is available in your local area.

The Family Information Service (FIS) provides free and impartial information, advice, and assistance to families with children aged 0-19yrs and 0-25yrs with additional needs.

We can provide information on a range of topics including registered childcare, help with childcare costs, early education funded places for children of different ages, things to do and places to go, as well as people and support services that can help you.

Please contact Solihull Family Information Service if you would like further support finding a childcare place that is suitable for your child.

We can:

- Make you aware of your childcare options.
- Inform you about some of the financial support available to you.
- Advise you on the support available to settings to meet your child's individual needs.
- Let you know about other support available for you and your family.
- Contact settings on your behalf to find out if they have a suitable vacancy.

## **What should I look for?**

If you have a child with an additional need and/or disability, there may be things you want to look for or talk to the childcare setting about before you make your choice.

This may include things like:

- Are you and your child made to feel welcome?
- How will the childcare setting meet your child's particular needs?
- Is the space appropriate – layout of the setting, size of the rooms, door openings, lighting?
- How many children use the childcare setting?
- Is car parking and access to the building suitable?
- What about surrounding roads and open spaces?
- Are there suitable changing facilities?
- Are the activities and experiences on offer appropriate for your child?

**Solihull Family Information Service**

**Call: 0800 389 8667**

**Email: [familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk)**

**Web: [www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo)**



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## **What things should I talk about when I visit?**

It is important that staff know as much about your child's needs as possible. It will help prepare the childcare setting and will help your child to settle and enjoy the experience.

You may want to talk about:

- What your child is good at and where they might need help
- What your child likes to eat and any specific dietary requirements
- What your child likes and dislikes
- How to comfort your child if they are distressed
- Other information about your child's routines
- Any behaviour patterns your child displays.
- Any communication difficulties or communication methods used.
- Any physical needs of your child
- Any specialist equipment used by your child or needed for your child.
- The involvement of other professionals
- Any medical conditions your child has
- Any training the staff may need to meet your child's needs.

All childcare settings are required to have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), and it may be helpful to meet with this person and with the person who is going to be your child's main carer to discuss your child's needs and how they are going to be met.

For families who are already working with a group of professionals it may be useful to invite someone from the childcare setting to any meetings.

Childcare settings can get information and advice about how to best support and include a child with additional needs and/or disabilities by contacting the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Early Years Service.

## **Additional Funding for Childcare settings**

In some circumstances childcare settings can access additional funding:

- Inclusion Funding - Childcare settings can make a referral for a panel to consider if the extra funding can be made available. The additional funding can be used to help a childcare setting meet a child's individual needs. The childcare setting can contact their Area SENCo or Early Years Officer for more information.
- Disability Access Funding – If a child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) childcare settings can access further additional funding each year to help disabled children access their early education funded place. The family will need to give their consent to access the funding and nominate one childcare setting to receive the annual 'Disability Access Fund' (DAF) payment.

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## **Paying for childcare**

The **Family Information Service** can provide you with information about childcare costs in Solihull.

We can tell you about:

- Early Education Funding for all three and four year olds (up to 15 hours per week)
- Early Education Funding for some two year olds where the family are in receipt of certain financial benefits, or the child has particular needs (up to 15 hours per week)
- Early Education Funding for working families of children aged 9 months until they start school reception (up to 15 hours per week or up to an extra 15 hours per week for 3 and 4 year olds)
- Tax Free Childcare
- Tax Credits for Childcare
- Universal Credit for Childcare
- Support while you study.
- Flexible working and time off

Information about help with childcare costs is also available on the [national childcare choices website](#)

In addition to the help available to all families, you may be able to access additional financial help if you are the parent of a disabled child. This will depend upon your individual circumstances.

- You may be able to access Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to help with the additional costs of your child living with a disability. More information is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families> and you can call the DLA Helpline on 0800 121 4600
- You might qualify for Carers Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a child who gets the middle or highest rate of DLA. More information is available online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and you can call the Carers Allowance Unit on 0800 731 0297
- If you are claiming Disability Living Allowance you may also be able to access additional financial support through the disabled child element of Child Tax Credit. More information is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/child-tax-credit/new-claim> or you can telephone the Tax Credit Helpline on 0345 300 3900.
- If you are claiming Universal Credit, you may be able to access an extra monthly amount if any of your children are disabled. More information is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs> and the Universal Credit Helpline on 0800 328 5644.

Would you like to know what's happening in Solihull for children and families? Then join our Parent's Network for regular information [here](#)

For any further information or advice please contact:

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