



# Advice for Parents on Childcare Options



available in Counties  
**MEATH** and **MONAGHAN**

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# Introduction



## ADVICE FOR PARENTS ON CHILDCARE OPTIONS AVAILABLE IN COUNTIES MEATH & MONAGHAN.

Meath & Monaghan County Childcare Committees Ltd are delighted to work together to produce this guide for parents. The role of childcare in society is to support a positive quality of life for children and parents. Following consultation with all those involved in childcare, parents, service providers, schools, N.E.H.B. etc the committee developed a strategic plan for the county.

*The role of the Childcare Committees is to advance quality childcare provision at local level. This is achieved by promoting the development and delivery of a range of accessible affordable high quality childcare services, which assists the overall developmental needs of children, age ranging from 0 - 14 years.*

The County Childcare Committees, are funded by the Irish Government, the National Development Plan and part financed by the European Union Structural Fund.

# Advice

The following information is intended to be used as a guide to help you make a more informed choice when choosing a childcare service to meet your individual childcare needs.

When choosing a childcare service it is important to look at how the various facilities will meet you and your child's individual needs.

Take time to find and visit facilities in your area. Will the service be able to cater for all of your children i.e. nursery and school age children?

Write down questions you have for the service before you visit, then telephone to make an appointment.

There are many things to consider following the visit, the most important is, are you happy with the facility and do you think your child will be happy there?

# What kind of Service are you looking for?



- 1 Full Day Care
- 2 Sessional Services
- 3 Drop in Centres
- 4 School Age Childcare Services
- 5 Childminders

### **Private & Community Childcare Services**

*Each of the above types of service can be run as either a private or a community service. A private childcare service is generally owner-operated. Community services are run on a non-profit basis and are managed by a voluntary committee of parents and members of the local community.*

# Services

## 1 | FULL DAY CARE

Full day care facilities may also be called, a nursery, or a crèche.

### Age Range

3 months – 14 years

This age range varies from service to service; some services do not take in children who are under 12 months. Not all services have a school age facility therefore they only take children up to school going age.

### Opening Hours

Legally a full day care service is one that is open for 4 or more hours a day. The actual opening hours vary from facility to facility. The range is usually 9 to 11 hours a day

These hours are usually based on a 5 day week.

### Care/Education Programme

Facilities should provide a care / education programme for your child. Your child's daily routine and progress should be recorded.



# Services

## 2

### 2 | SESSIONAL SERVICES

Sessional Services comprise of Playschools or Pre-schools, they may also be called Montessori, High/Scope, Naíonraí, Frobel or Steiner Schools.

#### Age Range

2-5 years

This range varies from service to service; some facilities do not take in children who are under 3 years.

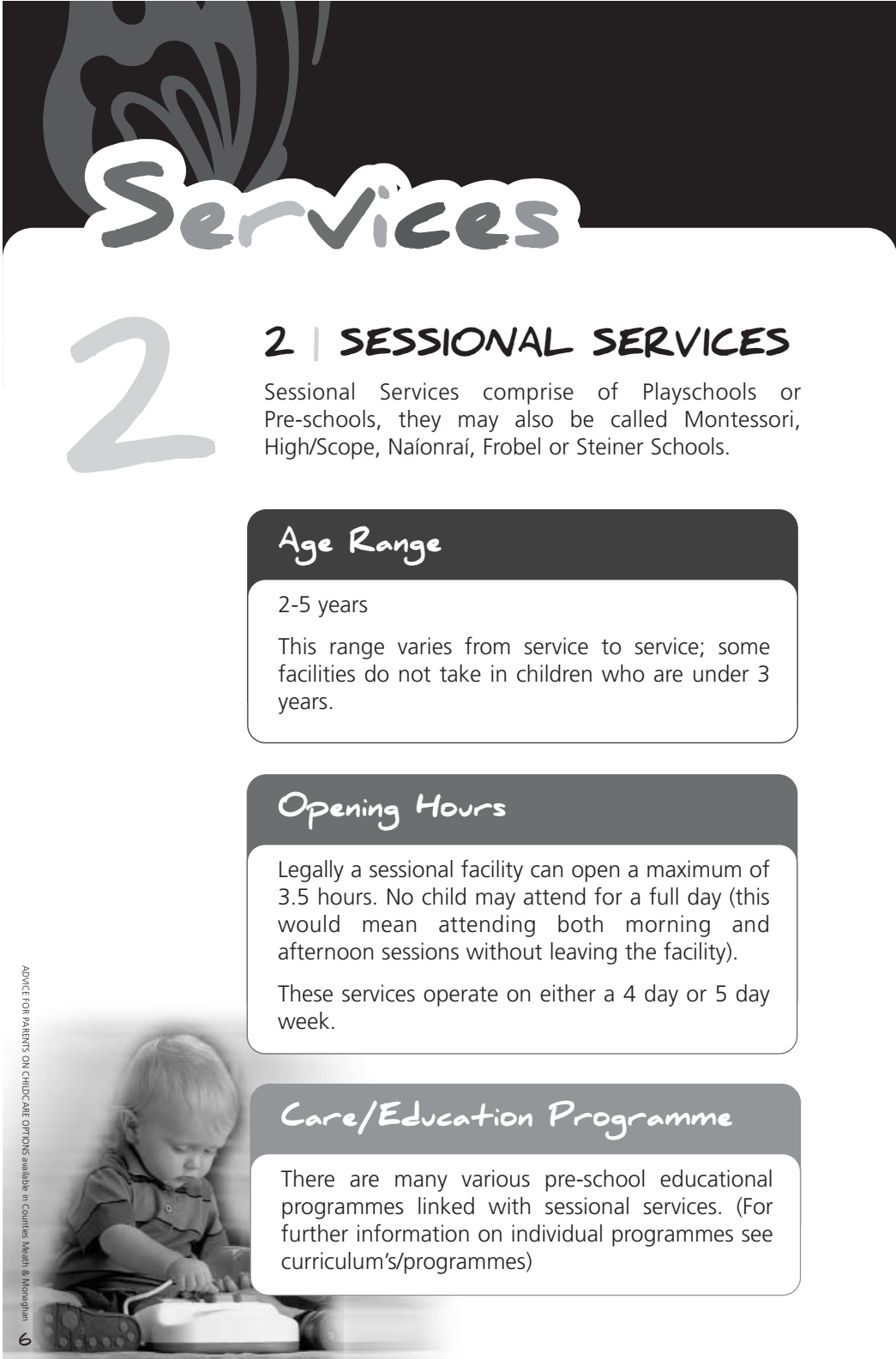
#### Opening Hours

Legally a sessional facility can open a maximum of 3.5 hours. No child may attend for a full day (this would mean attending both morning and afternoon sessions without leaving the facility).

These services operate on either a 4 day or 5 day week.

#### Care/Education Programme

There are many various pre-school educational programmes linked with sessional services. (For further information on individual programmes see curriculum's/programmes)



# Services

## 3

### 3 | DROP IN CENTRES

#### Age Range

3 months -12 years

#### Opening Hours

Usually open for full days, however children can only stay for a maximum of 2 hours.

#### Care/Education Programme

These centres are generally operated in local shopping centres, hotels, holiday homes etc. They provide short term care, usually at an hourly rate to enable parents to shop, use the hotel facilities etc.



# Services

## 4

### 4 | SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE SERVICE/ OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

This type of service can be offered as part of the full day care crèche facility or as a stand alone facility.

#### Age Range

4 -14 years

#### Opening Hours

2pm -6pm

The opening hours of these facilities can depend on the hours of your local school. Some facilities offer care before school also. Many will provide full day care during school holidays.

#### Care/Education Programme

This varies from facility to facility, some assist with homework, while others focus on extra curricular activities.

For more information, see page 16 & 17.



# Services

## 5

### 5 | CHILDMINDERS

#### Age Range

3 months – 14 years.  
No more than one baby under a year .

#### Opening Hours

Full-time, part-time, or flexible hours.

#### Care/Education Programme

This service provides a home from home type environment.

A childminder cares for a relatively small mixed age group of children including her/his own. It can be a year round service offered in the childminders own home. It should be noted that childminders do not come under the same regulations as other childcare providers. Childminders who care for 3 to 6 children including their own must notify the Health Board.



For More Information on any of the services contact the **Childminding Advisory Officer** at your County Childcare Committee office.



# Where to find Childcare Facilities in your area

- 1 | North Eastern Health Board notified pre-school list.
- 2 | Monaghan & Meath County Childcare Committee.
- 3 | The National Voluntary Childcare Organisations.  
(NCNA - National Children's Nursery Association,  
IPPA-the early childhood organisation, Barnardo's,  
Childminding Ireland, An Fobairt Naíonraí,  
St. Nicholas Montessori Association)
- 4 | Advertisements, in Newspapers or on the web at  
[www.childcare.ie](http://www.childcare.ie)
- 5 | Public Health Nurse.
- 6 | Other parents using the services, word of  
mouth-recommendations from friends.

# Checklist



## CHOOSING CHILDCARE CHECKLIST

DO THIS QUICK PHONE SURVEY OF FACILITIES IN THE AREAS THAT SUIT YOU.

**1** Are they notified to the North Eastern Health Board?

YES

NO

**2** Do they comply with the Pre-school Services Regulations?

YES

NO

**3** What age range do they cater for?

FROM..... TO .....

**4** What are the opening hours?

OPEN ..... CLOSE .....

**5** Is there a place available for your child?

YES

NO

**6** Is there a parent's handbook they can forward to you?

YES

NO

**7** Arrange a visit

DATE ..... TIME.....

# The Visit



## WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR ON THE VISIT

- 1 Does the service feel welcoming to both you and your child?
- 2 Are the staff friendly and pleasant and are there good interactions between staff and children?
- 3 Do the children there look happy, comfortable and relaxed?
- 4 Is there an outdoor play area? Alternatively, are there other forms or exercise/outdoor play opportunities available?
- 5 Are the premises and environment clean, bright, warm and well ventilated?
- 6 Are there plenty of toys, equipment and materials available?
- 7 Are there suitable sleeping arrangements?
- 8 Are the toys, materials and equipment in each room appropriate for that age group, and do they appear well maintained?
- 9 Are there clearly defined different types of play areas i.e. sand & water, home corner, construction, art.?
- 10 Is there a quiet comfortable area where the child can relax, look at books etc.?
- 11 Is there evidence of the childrens arts and crafts on the wall?
- 12 Do the children have the opportunity to choose their activities?
- 13 Is there a written care plan / daily routine programme displayed?
- 14 Where are the toilets, are they properly ventilated, of suitable height etc.?
- 15 Where is the nappy changing area?
- 16 Is there a menu displayed?

## Legal Requirements for Adult Child Ratios in a childcare setting

0-1 Years 1 Carer for every 3 children

1-3 Years 1 Carer for every 6 children

3-5 Years 1 Carer for every 8 children

### WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK:

- 1 What qualifications the staff have?
- 2 Is the service notified to the Health Board?
- 3 Is the premises insured and are there adequate staff to give your child individual care?
- 4 What are the policies and procedures, is there a handbook you can see?
- 5 What are the fees and how will they be paid?  
Remember to check is there a fee for A) Late collection, B) If the child cannot attend due to illness C) When the child is on family holidays D) When the service is closed (Christmas, Bank Holidays)
- 6 What daily feedback do the parents receive written / oral?
- 7 Does the service operate a key worker system? (the named person who has responsibility to ensure you and your child's needs are being met by the service)
- 8 How much of a role do parents play?
- 9 Ask to see a weekly menu plan.
- 10 Children with special needs (Dietary, physical etc.). Is the facility accessible for your child? Are the staff trained? Can your child attend with a support worker? How are your child's needs/requirements identified to all staff? Is there a policy on inclusion for children with special needs?

## The Childcare Act 1991 Pre-School Service Regulations 1996 state that:

“A person carrying on a pre-school service shall provide a parent or guardian of a pre-school child proposing to attend the service with the information referred to in article 14 (1), (a), (d), (e), (g), (i), and (j) of these Regulations”

THE INFORMATION REFERRED TO ABOVE IS;

- (A) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other person working in the service.
- (D) details of the maximum number of pre-school; children catered for.
- (E) Details of the staff / child ratios in the service,
- (G) The type of programme provided,
- (I) The facilities equipment and toys available?
- (J) The opening hours and fees.

### GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY:

- 1 Is there a telephone available for emergency contact?
- 2 Are there staff trained in first-aid, where is the first-aid kit stored?
- 3 Is there fire safety equipment visible?
- 4 Are emergency exits clearly marked?
- 5 Are there telephone numbers of local doctors, hospitals, and dentists displayed?
- 6 Does the service have an accident / incident record book?

- 7 Is there secure and safe access to the building?
- 8 Is the building, toys, furniture and equipment, clean unbroken and in good condition?
- 9 Windows, stairs and doors should be secure and have gates or locks on them.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

All childcare facilities should have a policies and procedures document. The content of these documents will vary from service to service. The following list highlights a number of policies and procedures, which are particularly relevant to childcare and parents. It is very important that you read these over as they can answer many questions that you may have, many services will have a Policies & Procedures agreement form, which you will be requested to sign:

- Admissions Enrolment and Payment
- Settling in
- Drop off and pick up of children
- Health & Safety
- Child Protection
- Confidentiality
- Child development
- Record keeping policy including use of photographic, video records and picture mobile phones.
- Parental involvement/ information sharing
- Behaviour management
- Equal opportunities
- Medicine administration
- Sick leave and holiday fee
- Accident & Emergency
- Nappy changing / Toilet training
- Sleeping arrangements
- Food preparation and storage
- Fire prevention, safety and drill procedures
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Field trip
- Grievance / Complaints

# Programmes/ Curriculum's



This is only a brief guide to the most widely available care programmes, other programmes are available, the most important thing for you to decide is what is the programme for you & your child.

## 1 | PLAYGROUP

The Playgroup Programme uses a play based curriculum to help the child learn from the world around them, the children have free choice in their activities and learn to socialise, and become independent, they also learn problem solving skills in a supervised atmosphere. Sand and water play, a dress up corner, block play, house corner are all activities you would expect in a playgroup along with arts and crafts.

## 2 | NAÍONRAÍ

The Naíonraí Programme incorporates a play based curriculum with the added benefit of introducing the Irish language in a fun and interesting way incorporating games and songs. They would have many of the same activities as playgroups.

## 3 | MONTESSORI

The Montessori Programme uses a series of equipment specifically designed to educate children through their senses, each child works at their own pace, and is individually taught. Group discussions are also a part of this programme and projects which include arts and crafts.

## 4 | HIGH/SCOPE

The High/Scope Programme aims to educate the child through experiences, The Plan-Do-Review, sequence is important in this setting, children learn through materials, events and interactions with adults. In the morning the children and staff plan their day, then they work through this plan and at the end they sit down in a group and discuss their achievements.

## 5 | SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE SERVICE

The School Age Childcare Programme will provide quality play / care and recreational opportunities for primary school children when they are not in school. Many services offer a service before and after school during the school year while school is operating only, others will provide full time care during school holidays. Caring for school age children requires different skills, equipment, premises and facilities than caring for infants or younger children. The type of service will vary. Most will provide a combination of care, relaxation and recreation with informal and some structured activities in a safe, secure and supervised facility. Some will include outdoor play/physical activities and provide a variety of training i.e. drug awareness, computers, personal development, dance and drama. Some services will also provide a limited time for the children to make a start on some of their homework. The children attending will be involved in planning some of the activities organised within the service. Check also if the service will provide cooked meals or are the children required to bring a packed lunch or microwaveable meal. Also worth enquiring about is does the service collect children from school?

*\* Please note that these programmes can be offered on a part-time or a full time basis, and can be for children of all ages. For example the Montessori approach can be started with children at birth and continued up to third level education.*

*\* The important thing to remember is that your child is getting both quality care and education regardless of the type of service you choose.*

## Some examples of a Routine Day in

ROOM	ACTIVITY
Baby Room	Floor Play
	Musical Instruments
	Story Time
	Puppets
	Finger Food
	Grabbing Toys
Toddler Room	Ball Play
	Construction Toys
	Crayons
	Play Dough
	Jigsaws
	Water/Sand Play
Pre-School Room	Dress-up, Tea Sets, Telephones, Cash Registers etc.
	Animals, Cars
	Jigsaws
	Painting / Arts and Crafts
	Songs and Rhymes
	Construction Toys
School Age Childcare	Quiet Time
	Physical Activity
	Teamwork

# an Early Years Full Day Care Facility

## PURPOSE

To strengthen baby's upper body

Listening skills, encourage speech

Visual perception, listening skills

Helps focus, improves vision

Encourages hand to eye co-ordination

Strengthens muscles.

Hand to eye co-ordination

Weight perception, consequences

Help pencil grip, imagination, visual improvements

Experience texture, imagination

Increase confidence, logic and hand skill

Teach about volume, consequences and quantity

Child learns about social well being, communication and language skills

Learns language, colours

Muscle control, problem solving skills, helps to plan and visualise

Creativity, individuality, understanding of materials

Aid memory and language development and to feel included in the group, this can also be a link to home life.

Aid large muscle development

Time to unwind after a busy day at school. Some children may choose to relax, listen to music, chat with friends. Others may wish to make some a start on homework

This time is used to promote healthy physical development and social interaction through a range of activities i.e. games, sport, music & dance, drama.

This time is allocated to provide physical and mental teamwork, personal development training or on the development or pursuit of hobbies/ interests in small interest-groups. Here the child is encouraged to take risks, explore new interests learn to compromise in a secure environment supported by the staff.

# Useful Numbers

## Meath County Childcare Committee

1 WATERGATE STREET, NAVAN, CO. MEATH.

☎ 046 9073010    ☎ 046 9067221

✉ meathchildcare@eircom.net

🌐 [www.meathcountychildcarecommittee.ie](http://www.meathcountychildcarecommittee.ie)

## Monaghan County Childcare Committee

7 THE GRANGE, PLANTATION WALK,  
MONAGHAN.

☎ 047 72896 / 77850    ☎ 047 72881

✉ mccc@eircom.net

Bredamccc@eircom.net

Jenmccc@eircom.net

## Monaghan Pre-School Inspection Team

NORTH EASTERN HEALTH BOARD  
LOCAL HEALTH CARE UNIT,  
ROOSKEY, MONAGHAN

☎ 047 30400

### Meath Pre-School Inspection Team

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE, COMMONS ROAD,  
NAVAN.

☎ 046 907443

### Pre-School Services Environmental Health

14 CHURCH SQUARE, MONAGHAN.

☎ 047 71926

### Border Counties Childcare Committee

UNIT 10D, M: TEK BUILDING,  
KNOCKACANNY, MONAGHAN.

☎ 047 72469

### The Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

CHILDCARE DIRECTORATE.  
72-76 ST STEPHENS GREEN, DUBLIN 2

☎ 01 602 8202 LO-CALL 1890 20 90 30

### I.S.P.C.C.

3, HILL STREET, MONAGHAN.

☎ 047 84420

### Barnardos

CHRISTCHURCH SQUARE, DUBLIN 8.

☎ 01 4530355

✉ info@barnados.ie

☎ 01 4530300

➔ www.barnados.ie

### *National Parents Council Primary*

12, MARLBOROUGH COURT, DUBLIN 1.

☎ 01 887 4034

### *National Parents Council Post-Primary*

UNIT 5, GLASNEVIN BUSINESS CENTRE,  
BALLYBOGGAN ROAD, DUBLIN 11.

☎ 01 830 2740

### *High/Scope Ireland*

C/O NIPPA, 6C WILDFLOWER WAY,  
APOLLO ROAD, BELFAST BT 12 6TA.

☎ 048 9066 2825

✉ [high/scope@nippa.org](mailto:high/scope@nippa.org).

### *Parentline*

CARMICHAEL HOUSE,  
NORTH BRUNSWICK ST, DUBLIN 7.

☎ 1890 927 277

### *National Children's Nurseries Association*

12C BLUEBELL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,  
OLD NAAS ROAD, BLUEBELL, DUBLIN 12.

☎ 01 460113

### *IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation*

UNIT 4 BROOMHILL BUSINESS PARK,  
BROOMHILL ROAD, TALLAGHT, DUBLIN 24.

☎ 01 4630010

# Conclusion



Finally, we hope this booklet is of some benefit to you in helping to decide on the most suitable childcare for your family. Making the right choice is very important to both you and your child, so take time to make the decision, use your own instinct when visiting each service, no one knows better than you what is right for your individual family needs. What is right for one family may not be so for you. If you need any further support please contact us at the address below.

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# Notes



**MEATH**

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