

What are the factors that may be important for me to make me happy leaving my child in this nursery?

I feel happy leaving my child in a place where there are qualified staff.

I need somewhere open virtually all year.

My hours fit in with their opening times.

I may need to vary the times to fit in with my work.

I need to know that my child will always be cared for.

I have emergency backup - ill children can't attend day nursery.

I want my child to have a variety of different toys and equipment to stimulate them and keep them happy.

I think my child is ready for new experiences.

Questions to ask your day nursery

What is the ratio of carers to children? Remember the rules: for under-tuos, it's three children per carer; for two-year-olds, four children per carer and older children, eight children per carer

What is the daily routine?

Where will my child eat/play/nap?

Ask a member of staff to walk you round, room by room.

Is it clean, light and big enough?

Are the indoor/outdoor play areas safe?

Are the children well supervised?

Do they look happy and purposeful?

Is there a lot going on?

Does the nursery have strict Policies & Procedures?

What additional staff training is planned?

Look for projects and drawings up on the walls. What about stimulating toys and books on show?

Will your child be taken off the premises? Ask for examples of where.

Are nutritious meals provided?

Are there alternatives for special diets?

How do they plan activities to meet the Foundation Stage Curriculum?

Will they keep a daily record of what they've done?

Do they offer school pick-ups and out-of-school care? Some nurseries will do this.

Are there penalties if you're late to pick up your child?

Are the security arrangements satisfactory?

Also remember...

Be certain the day nursery has places for your child's age group. Some don't take children under two.

Find out whether the nursery operates a key carer system - whereby each child is assigned a particular member of staff.

Go back for a second 'viewing'. Do this at a different time of day to your first visit. Take your child with you to see how they get on with other children, staff and in the surroundings.

Talk to other parents who use the nursery - ask their opinions on the provision.

Make sure you are happy that your child will be happy here.