

Questions to ask a potential childcare provider.

Choosing the right childcare provider is a crucial decision for any parent. It's important to ask comprehensive questions to ensure your child will be in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Here are some questions to consider when evaluating potential childcare providers for your child:

Initial questions when looking at potential settings:

1. Are you open all year or just term time?
2. What days and hours are you open?
3. What is the hourly/daily/session cost?
4. Is there any additional charge for meals, drinks, snacks or outings?
5. Do you offer any of the free funding? Including 15 to 30 hours for 9 months to 4-year-olds, 24U?
6. Do you have any vacancies (for the dates and times you want)?
7. Is there a waiting list?
8. Do I have to pay a deposit or a retainer?
9. Is there a charge if my child is poorly or on holiday?
10. Is there a charge if I am late picking my child up?
11. What is the child-to-staff ratio and group size?
12. Do all staff and volunteers have DBS checks?
13. What schools/nurseries do you drop off/pick up from?
14. How do you communicate with parents? How will you keep me informed about my child?
15. Do you administer medication?
16. Are the doors secured? How do parents and visitors gain access?
17. How does the setting care for and support children with a disability or additional need?
18. How does the setting support children with food intolerances and allergies?
19. Do you offer settling in sessions? how many and for how long?

Questions to ask when you visit settings:

1. What is your daily routine and curriculum? What does a typical day involve?
2. What activities do you do with the children?
3. Do children have access to an outdoor area?
4. Where do children rest or sleep?
5. Will my child have a key person, and how many other children will they have?
6. How do you support children's learning and development?
7. What festivals or special occasions do you celebrate and how?
8. What qualifications do staff have? Do they have ongoing training?
9. Are staff trained in First Aid?
10. What supplies should I provide for my child?
11. What is your child protection procedure?

12. What is your discipline and behaviour management policy?
13. What is your potty training policy?
14. What protocol do you follow if a child is sick?
15. What happens in an emergency?

When visiting a new setting, there are some key observations you can take note of to see if the setting is a good fit for your family:

1. Is there a variety of good quality, safe and clean toys and equipment?
2. Are children playing together? Do they look like they're having fun?
3. Are staff friendly and welcoming to you and your child?
4. Are staff interacting with the children in their care?
5. Do the children seem happy, safe and well cared for?

Additionally:

1. Ask to see a copy of the contract before you sign it.
2. Ask to see a copy of their insurance certificate.
3. A copy of the settings latest Ofsted Inspection report can be found via [Find an Ofsted inspection report](#)
4. If the setting provides meals and snacks ask to see a copy of the menu.

By asking these questions, you can gain a deeper understanding of the childcare provider's practices and ensure they are a good fit for your family's needs. Remember to also trust your instincts and observe the environment during your visit to make an informed decision.

The Shropshire Family Information Service have launched a handy new newsletter. that you can sign up. Each month we will send essential family news, recommendations, and handy information about different services in Shropshire directly to your inbox. [Sign up to the Family Information Service newsletter \(office.com\)](#)



The banner features a family of four (father, mother, and two children) sitting on a sofa, with an orange cat next to them. In the background, there is a framed logo for 'Shropshire family Information Service'. To the right of the family, the text 'Shropshire Family Information Service' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below this, 'Support for you and your family' is written in a pink font, followed by the website 'www.shropshire.gov.uk/fis' in a dark blue font. Further down, it says 'Find us on:' followed by three circular icons for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. At the bottom right, there is a dark blue curved banner with the Shropshire Council logo and the text 'Shropshire Council'.

Shropshire family Information Service

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