

Helping parents choose, find and pay for childcare



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WHY use childcare?

For children:

High quality childcare “supports the healthy development of children¹”, and provides “a positive influence on your child’s social, emotional, and intellectual development²”.

For parents/carers:

Childcare allows parents/carers to work or take advantage of training opportunities. It enhances work-life balance and contributes to increasing family income. Parents/carers can take on employment or work longer hours, creating wider benefits for family life. Childcare can also be used for respite purposes²

1: Social Care Wales: Early Years & Childcare Induction Framework for Wales [Social Care Induction Framework for Wales](#)

2: CWLWM: Choosing Childcare http://www.childcareinformation.wales/documents/Llyfryn_Choose_childcare.pdf



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Childcare Types

Registration.

Childcare that operates for children under 12 years old, and which operates for more than 2 hours per day, or more than 5 days per year, must, by law, be registered and inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

Non-registered childcare (under 2 hours per day, or less than 5 days per year) may still be high quality, but is NOT inspected, and a number of financial assistance programmes can NOT be claimed by parents/carers using non-registered childcare



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Benefits of a CIW registered setting



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- Provides assurance that children are cared for in a safe, secure and appropriate environment,
- Are more affordable as they offer various schemes to help with childcare costs (e.g. Tax Free Childcare; the Childcare Offer for Wales; UC for Childcare),
- Have practitioners (another word for staff or childminder) who are suitably checked, qualified, and trained to support your child to thrive,
- Have strict adult to child ratios (i.e. adequate numbers of practitioners to care for groups of children),
- Have detailed policies, procedures and insurance in place to ensure that practitioners and children are cared for and are safe,
- Are inspected by CIW inspectors (Inspection Reports and more information about choosing childcare can be found online at Care Inspectorate Wales). Childcare providers can also provide a copy of their Inspection Report.

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Childcare Types

Types of setting

- There are different types of childcare, which vary in the ages of children they care for; the types of building they operate from; when they open; the language(s) they use (Welsh or English); etc.
- Parents/carers may have strong views on the type of childcare they want for their children, or may want to know about all the childcare in their area, in order to make a choice.



Childcare Types

[Llyfryn Choose childcare.pdf \(childcareinformation.wales\)](#)



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Provider type	Childminder	Full daycare nursery	Playgroup	Cylch Meithrin	Out of School
Description	Operates from home (domestic premises)	Tend to operate from purpose built premises	May be on school sites, but many operate from shared premises (church halls, Scout huts, etc.)		Often, though not always, on school sites, unless a service provided at a full daycare nursery, then on their premises.
Children's ages (typical)	0 – 12, but sometimes older	From birth. Many also operate playgroup sessions (2-3 year olds); wrap-around (3 – 4 year olds), with some also offering breakfast, after school and holiday care for school aged children	2 – 3 year olds for pre-school sessions; 3-4 year olds for 'wrap-around' care	2 – 3 year olds for pre-school sessions; 3-4 year olds for 'wrap-around' care	4 – 12 (attending full time school - Reception onwards)
Opening times and sessions	Flexible, dependent on demand. Can operate before school (breakfast); 'wrap-around' part time Early Years Education; after school, or full or part days for pre-school children and during holidays	Full day (7.00 am – 6.00 pm) with full day, half day and 'sessional' (2 – 2.5 hour) provision for 2 -3 and 3 – 4 year olds. Breakfast (7.00 -9.00) and after school (3.00 -3.30 to 6.00 pm) and full day holiday for school aged children	May be one short session per day (e.g. 9 – 11.30), or two sessions with a break between. Where registered as 'full daycare' and there is a cross-over of children at lunchtime, children do not stay for more than one session per day (morning or afternoon)		Usually after school (3.00-3.30 – 6.00pm); with some breakfast provision (NB: explain Free Breakfast Initiative). Some setting provide holiday care
Language(s)	Welsh, English, bilingual	Welsh, English, bilingual	Welsh, English, bilingual	Welsh	Welsh, English, bilingual



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Childcare Types

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Provider type	Nannies	Creches	Open Access Play provision (staffed)	Other provision – not child care
Description	Provide childcare in parents/carers own home. Usually not registered by CIW, but can join voluntary scheme The Approval of Home Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme 2021 Care Inspectorate Wales which allows parents to access financial support with childcare costs	Crèches provide childcare to children from as young as six weeks and upwards. They are different to day care as they can offer temporary childcare solutions for parents to attend specific events such as training, learning or even exercise classes e.g in a crèche, children are cared for while their parents or carers do something else on the same premises	Although Open Access Play may be registered with CIW, as children are free to leave whenever they like (as opposed to being collected by a parent at the end of a session), we would NOT recommend this provision being used as childcare	A variety of ‘stay and play’, Parent and Toddler/Ti a FI, and other activities are available, but as these require the parent/carer to stay with and remain responsible for the child, there cannot be classed as ‘childcare’. Many schools offer ‘after school activity clubs’ – football, French, coding, etc., - but each of these usually only operate one night per week, and usually only for an hour or so. May be used by parents, but not strictly speaking childcare
Children’s ages (typical)	Usually younger children, but can include school age	Usually younger children, but can include school age	School aged 4 and above	
Opening times and sessions	As required by parents/carers	Alongside training or other class or event	Usually only during school holidays	
Language(s)	Welsh, English, bilingual	Welsh, English, bilingual	Welsh, English, bilingual	



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What childcare do parents want/need?

- When talking to parents/carers about childcare, how far developed is their thinking?
- Which, if any, of the following have they thought about?
 - Type of childcare – linked to age of child, use of other services (e.g. do they need to be picked up from school)?
 - Language – do they have a preference for the language (Welsh or English) used in the setting?*
 - Location – may be near child’s school, home or parents/carers workplace?
 - Timing – does their preferred provider cover all their working hours?
 - Cost – do they know the likely cost? Are they aware of any financial support they could access?
- NB: The above are interlinked, and may significantly reduce potential providers. The provider would also need a vacancy matching parent/carer needs – e.g. no use if 5 days needed but only 3 days with vacancies

* In line with Cymraeg 2050, Bilingual Cardiff and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan parents should be made aware of the benefits of bilingualism [Benefits of Welsh-Medium Education \(cardiff.gov.uk\)](https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/benefits-of-welsh-medium-education)



Finding Childcare – Childcare Information Wales

- Type “Childcare Information Wales” into your search engine
- Go to [Gwybodaeth Gofal Plant Cymru - Child Care Information Wales](#)
- Select ‘Cardiff’ from the drop down list
- Select a type of childcare. Multiple searches by different childcare types may be needed.
- The ‘**Location**’ (radial distance) ‘**Language**’ and ‘**School and other pick ups**’ filters can be very useful for narrowing down possible settings

Issues;

- Only settings with a published Dewis record are on ChildcareInfoWales
- Does not produce a print out of results – poss Print Screen?
- NB: Limited vacancy data. Parents/carers are advised to contact and ideally visit settings





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Finding Childcare – Cardiff Family Advice and Support (CFAS)

- If no suitable setting can be found, or if additional support is required, the parent, or professional working on their behalf can ring Cardiff Family Advice and Support on 03000 133 133
- Required information:
 - Geographical area childcare is required in
 - Age of child
 - Language of provision (Welsh, English, bilingual)
 - Duration of childcare (half day, full day and number of days per week)
 - Preference of childcare type, if the parent has one
- CFAS will provide the enquirer with a list verbally, and/or via email or post



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Finding financial assistance with childcare costs

- It is a patchwork, and can be confusing and difficult to navigate
- Two types of support. Funded places, or financial assistance with costs that are paid for by parents.
- Eligibility may be dependent on the age of the child and location OR employment status/income.
- Eligibility may end if the above factors change.
- There is a website that can help find some solution



Financial assistance with childcare costs – Childcare Choices website



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- Type “**Childcare Choices**” into the search engine or www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- Go to [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)
- NB: This is UK wide website, so **Wales** needs to be chosen under the “You are living in:...” drop down

A screenshot of the Childcare Choices website. The browser address bar shows 'https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk'. The page header includes the HM Government logo, the 'Childcare Choices' logo, and a 'MENU' button. Below the header, there is a teal banner with the text 'FIND THE RIGHT OFFER FOR YOU'. Underneath the banner, there is a form with the following fields: 'You are living in:' with a dropdown menu showing 'Wales'; 'You are:' with a dropdown menu showing 'I earn more than £152 a week'; 'My partner is:' with a dropdown menu showing 'earning more than £152 a week'; and 'My children:' with a text input field. There is also a section for 'Do you live with a partner?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons. The text 'Whether you have toddlers or teens, you could get support.' is visible above the form. At the bottom of the form, it says 'Entering your children's information will make the results more relevant.'

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Financial assistance with childcare costs – Childcare Choices website



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- This tool WILL highlight if families may be eligible for:
 - **Tax-Free Childcare** (working families, earning above £152 p.w. but below £100K p.a. each). Up to £2,000 per child per year.
 - **Universal Credit for Childcare.** Up to £646 a month for one child, or £1,108 for two or more.
 - **The Childcare Offer for Wales.** Parents who are working or on HE/FE courses, earning above £152 p.w. but below £100K p.a each, but only for children **aged 3-4**). 17.5 hours per week funded during term-time, 30 hours per week for 9 holiday weeks (48 weeks per year – 4 not funded). NB: Parents/carers are charged for food and refreshments, and pick up/drop off costs)
- BUT.....



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Financial assistance with childcare costs – Childcare Choices website



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- Does NOT highlight Flying Start childcare for 2-3 year olds.
- This is the **only geographical-based** scheme with funded places
- All families with a 2-3 year old child resident in identified areas are eligible for the childcare provision. There are no employment/income requirements
- 2.5 hours funded childcare per day, 5 days per week, term time only. Only at settings designated as Flying Start providers.
- Eligible postcodes can be checked here: [Welcome to Cardiff Flying Start - Flying Start Cardiff](#)



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Financial assistance with childcare costs

– limitations and pitfalls



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- **Tax Free Childcare.** Working parents only. Setting needs to be signed up (not all are). Can't be used alongside Tax Credits, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers
- **Universal Credit for Childcare.** Working parents claiming Universal Credit only. Can't be used alongside Tax credits, Tax-Free Childcare or childcare vouchers. Parents pay in advance and reclaim.
- **Flying Start childcare.** Only for children aged 2 – 3, in designated geographical areas. Only settings contracted with Cardiff Council as Flying Start settings. May not meet needs of parents looking for full daycare.
- **Childcare Offer for Wales.** Only for children aged 3-4, with eligible parents. Only settings contracted with Cardiff Council as Childcare Offer settings.



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Useful Links



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Site	Content
Cardiff Family Advice and Support Contact us - Cardiff Family Advice and Support : Cardiff Family Advice and Support (cardiffamilies.co.uk) 0300 013 3133	Access to Dewis and Childcare Information Wales databases; advice on financial support; signposting to Flying Start, Childcare Offer, etc.
Choosing Childcare http://www.childcareinformation.wales/documents/Llyfryn_Choose_childcare.pdf	Information on types of childcare; questions for parents to ask of setting
Benefits of Welsh medium education Benefits of Welsh-Medium Education (cardiff.gov.uk)	Information and FAQs regarding benefits of Welsh medium education /bilingualism
Childcare Information Wales Gwybodaeth Gofal Plant Cymru - Child Care Information Wales	Searchable database of published childcare provider details (location, language, times of opening, cost, etc.)
Childcare Choices Childcare Choices 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More Help with Costs GOV.UK	Database of financial assistance with childcare costs
Cardiff Flying Start Welcome to Cardiff Flying Start - Flying Start Cardiff	Postcode eligibility checker



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