

Taking your child to an early years setting: information for parents



Early years settings provide a caring, supportive environment where children can learn and develop.

At the Department for Education, we prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our children. Early years settings such as nurseries, pre-schools and childminders support parents and deliver crucial care and education for our youngest children.

Your local authority can help with finding a place that is right for your child.

Why should my child attend an early years setting?

Early years settings are wonderful places for children to learn, develop new skills, make new friends and have fun. Early education supports children's development and their overall wellbeing, and helps to give them a routine. It is not something that can be done remotely. Children develop quickly in their earliest years, which is why it's important to take up the early education and childcare offers available to you.

What Government help with early years provision is available for families?

A wide range of financial support is available for families with children aged 0-5. All 3- and 4-year-olds, and some 2-year-olds, can access 15 hours a week of funded early education, worth up to £2,500 per year on average. Working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds may also be eligible for an extra 15 hours per week of funded childcare, saving them up to £5,000 per year. And working parents may additionally be entitled to Tax Free Childcare, which can save them a further £2,000 per year (or up to £4,000 if their child is disabled). To find out what support you can access, visit: childcarechoices.gov.uk

I'm looking for childcare, can I visit the settings I'm interested in?

Yes, you can. You should plan your visit with the early years setting, so that you are aware of the safety measures they have in place and how this impacts you during your visit.

Can my child attend more than one setting?

Yes, your child can attend more than one setting.

What if my child has a special educational need or disability (SEND)?

Talk to your early years provider and plan together for your child's attendance, including specialist support, so that it is as smooth as possible.

Can children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable attend an early years setting?

Yes, clinically extremely vulnerable advice applies to individuals, not households.

Any children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend their early years provider as usual.

How are early years settings responding to coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Early years settings are using the **Public Health England (PHE)-endorsed 'control measures'** These measures create an environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

Settings have been cleaning more thoroughly, promoting more frequent hand washing, and doing regular testing of staff.

Do pre-school children transmit COVID-19 more than adults?

No. Current evidence suggests that pre-school children are less susceptible to infection and are unlikely to be playing a driving role in the spread of COVID-19.

What should I do if my child has COVID-19 symptoms?

It's important that if your child has any of the main COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste), they should not attend their early years setting and should stay at home. You should arrange for them to get a **polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test** and tell your early years setting the test results. Your child should not attend an early years setting while you are waiting for test results, even if they are feeling better.

What should I do if my child has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms?

From 16 August 2021, children who are identified as close contacts will not need to self-isolate. Children who are aged under 5 years old who are identified as close contacts will be advised to take a PCR test if the positive case is in their own household. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Your child can continue attending their setting as normal unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive.

Do we need to report our rapid lateral flow test results (also called LFDs) even if they are negative?

Yes, staff and families should share their results, whether void, positive or negative, within 24 hours to the NHS. Reporting your result helps the NHS to prevent and reduce the spread of the virus. You can **report test results** quickly and easily from your phone, tablet or laptop.

For further information and guidance:

How to get government help with childcare costs:

[**www.childcarechoices.gov.uk**](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Covid research evidence summaries

How to order a rapid COVID-19 test for asymptomatic testing:

[**https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk**](https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk)

How to report your test results:

[**https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result**](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)

How to order a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test if you have COVID-19 symptoms: [**https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test**](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)