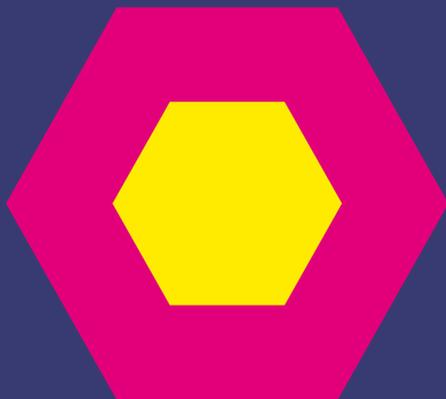




# Partners in Learning

**A Parent's Guide to  
Partnership in Childcare**





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Barnardos supports children whose well-being is under threat, by working with them, their families and communities and by campaigning for the rights of children. Barnardos was established in Ireland in 1962 and is Ireland's leading independent children's charity.

Barnardos' vision is an Ireland where childhood is valued and all children and young people are cherished equally.

Barnardos' mission is to challenge and support families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focusing specifically on children and young people whose well-being is under threat.

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# What is this Guide About?

**1**

This guide is for parents who want to understand how they can work with childcare providers to give their child the best opportunities and experiences possible.

Your involvement in your child's early care and education, in partnership with your childcare provider, is vital in helping your child to learn necessary life skills and feel happy and secure.

The opportunities that children are given to experience life through meaningful activities and play will carry them forward into adulthood and assist them in becoming a happy, productive members of society.

When you put your child into the care of someone outside of their own home, the relationship of trust and respect that you build between you is extremely important. This is a partnership that develops over time.

A quality childcare service will value your input as the main carer and educator of your child.

The benefits of good quality early childhood care and education have been widely documented. Children's emotional, intellectual, social and physical development are dependent on the caring, nurturing relationships that they experience in the first few years of life. The first step in partnership, therefore, is choosing a quality childcare setting.

Identifying quality can be a daunting prospect because you want the best for your child and may well feel overwhelmed by the importance of this choice. There are obviously a number of practical matters you must consider, such as opening times and location, but it is just as important to spend time looking at the other things the service has to offer.

It may seem most convenient to place your child in the service in the next street but it is essential that this is the right place for your child to be. Time spent thinking about quality before your child starts may well prevent disruption a few months down the line if you have to change your childcare provider as things aren't working out.

Caring for a child's health and welfare and guiding their learning and development should be the utmost priority for all adults caring for them.

For more information on children's early learning and development see **Learning Together: A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Learning** (see [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie))

It takes a  
village to  
raise a child.



# What is Partnership?



Children who have attended quality early childhood services where staff work in partnership with parents are better able to learn, better prepared for school and have fewer emotional difficulties.

Partnership means that all adults work together for the benefit of a child and respond to the child's individual needs. Partnership requires an active, participative role for you as a parent in the life of your child in their childcare setting.

Good communication is the key to good partnership.

As mentioned in the Barnardos' publication **Learning Together: A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Learning**, children's learning and development are closely linked with the experiences that they are provided with and the love and security that they are given from the significant adults in their lives. When you put your child into the care of someone outside of their own home, the relationship of trust and respect that you build between you is extremely important to your child's long-term holistic development.

## Parents, Children and Staff in Partnership

While issues such as health and hygiene are very important in ensuring your child is safe from illness, it is the attention to the opportunities to play and the relationships that are built up that are most important when looking at quality in a childcare setting.

The relationship between your child and their carer is vital to their happiness, well-being and learning in the setting. This relationship will be pivotal in creating good learning patterns for later life.

Experienced childcare providers will realise the importance of your involvement in the care of your child.

### Think about...

- ▶ How are your child's likes and dislikes respected in the setting?
- ▶ How are their interests catered for?
- ▶ Are you asked to share information about your child with the service?

## **Partnership in childcare is between three parties:**

- ▶ **You**, as a parent, have knowledge about your child's interests, likes and dislikes.
- ▶ **Your childcare practitioner** has experience of child development and group care. They will be able to share observations made about your child and make you aware of significant happenings and developments.
- ▶ **Your child** is developing their own ideas about how they play and their likes and dislikes, and they can express these opinions with the adults in their lives.



## How does Partnership Work?

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All parents, both fathers and mothers, have a right to be involved in their childcare service and, wherever possible, to join with staff members in ensuring their children's well-being, development and learning.

Partnership involves informally sharing information between you and your childcare provider. Any issues or concerns can be expressed in an open way with the needs of your child at the centre. Partnership requires the willingness to listen to others and to show respect for what both parties are trying to achieve.

A child's confidence in themselves and their abilities has been proven to develop when parents and childcare staff work together. Participation in the childcare setting shows how important your child's learning and development are to you.

## Think about...

- ▶ What do you consider is a partnership approach?
- ▶ How will the service communicate with you? How will they involve you in your child's activities/experiences?
- ▶ Does the service provide you with feedback on child observations?
- ▶ Will it be informally through verbal feedback only, will you get daily written feedback only or will it be a mixture of both?
- ▶ Does the service have a method for taking parents' suggestions on board?
- ▶ Do they host parenting classes?
- ▶ Do they provide a resource library?
- ▶ Will you receive newsletters or a parent's handbook? (see page 36)
- ▶ Is there a parents' room or area?
- ▶ How will they ask you to help them with your child's learning and development?
- ▶ Will they follow any new interests that your child has developed from time spent with you so that they can reinforce new learning?

Is it not just adults who are involved in partnership in a child's learning. Children themselves will play an active role in contributing their own opinions, making plans for their own play and making decisions for themselves

(see page 30-33).

## How You Can Contribute to the Childcare Setting

You should feel comfortable sharing your ideas and what you want for your child with the staff. You may well be under time constraints when dropping off your child but these opportunities to talk with staff about what your child has been doing and feeling are vital to them being able to provide the appropriate care and attention for your child for that day.

Maybe you don't have time to go on outings or spend time in the service but perhaps you can help in other ways. You can help your child to develop skills they have learnt, such as putting on their own coat, or you could bring old toys, books, or any natural resources you may have such as pine cones or shells into the setting.

### Think about...

- ▶ Are you welcome to talk to staff when you collect your child?
- ▶ How will you approach staff if you have a query or concern?
- ▶ What type of information will you be asked to share and why?
- ▶ Many services rely heavily on parents to be involved in helping out on outings or provide other voluntary services. Are you asked to input your skills?

## Sharing Decision Making

### Think about...

- ▶ Does a parent representative sit on the board of management?
- ▶ Are parents asked to get involved with decision making for the childcare setting?

You should feel comfortable sharing your ideas and what you want for your child with the staff.



# Security and Attachment

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Whether you choose to use a childminder or send your child to a pre-school, crèche or nursery, one of the key things to notice is the way that adults respond to children.

How will they help a child to feel secure? This partnership that you build up with your child's key person will be important to your child's security and attachment.

## Key Person System

In a nursery or pre-school, one person in particular – a 'key worker' or 'key person' – should be appointed to look after your child as they settle in and beyond. The key person system is especially important for babies. A person who is sensitive to your child's needs and responds with care and gentleness is vital to their well-being and to maintaining low stress levels. Attaching to one person is important so that your baby feels safe and secure.

The key person is the person that you approach to give information about your child and you should build a working relationship with to ensure that your child is happy. This does not, however, exclude your child from building relationships with others in the crèche, as the key person is not always going to be around.

It has been found that the fewer children within a group, the better the adult–child interaction. This is important for your child because it means that time and attention will be spent on each child.

The committed adult will come to know your child well and understand them as an individual. This will not be to the detriment of your relationship with your child, but will enhance the partnership between you and your child's key person to ensure that all their needs are met.

## Your Baby's Care

The early years of a child's life are instrumental in shaping their emotional and intellectual development. Both genetic and environmental factors play vital roles in this development and subsequently in a child's life chances.

The part of the brain that deals with memories and coincides with the child's growing awareness of and attachment to caregivers develops between six and eight months. The experience young babies have of forming relationships at this time, therefore, influences all future relationships. For infants in childcare, the attachment to a key person is vital to their social and emotional development.

As well as providing play and plenty of talk to help acquire language, a carer's response to the routine care needs of babies is important to their development. Nappy changes and feeding should not be a conveyor belt system as these are special moments for babies, which help them to gain trust and feel secure.

## Think about...

- ▶ Will the same person look after your child every day?
- ▶ What would happen if this person is sick or on holiday?
- ▶ How are babies held? Is eye contact made?
- ▶ Look at how babies are fed and put to sleep. Are these tasks done by their key person?

## Transitions

The way the transition from home to the childcare setting and subsequent transitions such as preparing for school are supported is very important.

When your child is settling into a new place with new people to get to know and a new environment, the key person is vital to how this is managed effectively. Children who do not feel that they have someone specific to go to may not settle in well or may withdraw because they don't know how to cope in the setting.

Children who are helped by sensitive adults to manage transitions will learn how to cope with change and to view it as natural, rather than traumatic or something that they should be afraid of. They are also better able to learn when adults, both parents and staff, help them to become familiar with everything.

## Think about...

- ▶ How will your child be settled into the childcare environment?

Working with children is a tiring job, but in a good childcare environment you will see adults who enjoy being with children. Talk to people already using the service to get some feedback.

Children who are helped by sensitive adults to manage transitions will learn how to cope with change and to view it as natural, rather than traumatic or something that they should be afraid of.



# Your Child's Learning in a Childcare Setting

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**When we talk about your child's learning we are not talking about formal learning such as reading and writing, but about all the other things a child must learn to become a happy member of society.**

These include how to eat, to become mobile, how to share, take turns, make decisions and problem solve.

For your child to be able to learn and develop in a childcare setting they need to have opportunities to play. This play should be varied and freely chosen by them as they are active learners (see page 29).

The service should have a good balance between child-led (where the child initiates their play) and adult-led (where adults plan and organise) activities. These should include opportunities for children to play together in small and large groups. Children also need the chance to play alone to reinforce learning they have gained.

**Both parents and childcare providers are vital in providing support to enable children to play freely.**

# Play

Play is a child's work and is central to their development. Through play, children learn about the world and about the give and take of relationships.

The type of play opportunities that are on offer for your child should be varied and there should be a balance of outdoor and indoor activities. Your child will benefit from being able to play freely rather than doing formal learning tasks. A group of children sitting at small desks and tables all 'colouring in' may look 'cute' but it is not the best way for a child to learn and develop, unless they have willingly chosen that activity.

Children should be able to reach toys and resources for themselves. Well-organised childcare practitioners will also show children how to tidy away.

## Indoor play

To develop all their skills, children need lots of different ways to play. Look out for equipment that helps children to play in the following ways:

- ▶ Pretend play: dressing up, farm sets, play people
- ▶ Physical play: tricycles, climbing frames, balls
- ▶ Construction play: bricks, train sets, Lego, jigsaws
- ▶ Exploratory play: play dough, water, sand, objects that seem strange to children
- ▶ Creative play: paint, musical instruments, a range of equipment for drawing, junk for model-making

- ▶ Table work and activities using fine motor skills: jigsaws, threading beads, stacking, etc.
- ▶ A quiet corner and a good selection of children's books: appropriate books for the different stages of the pre-school child's development

## Think about...

- ▶ How are activities chosen?
- ▶ Are there a range of toys, natural materials and resources?
- ▶ Are they all at child level?
- ▶ How and when are they put out?
- ▶ Do the children choose the activities and decide what will be put out?
- ▶ How involved are the children in their play?
- ▶ How do the adults respond and interact in children's play? Do they listen and follow the child or do they interrupt and direct the play?
- ▶ How can you develop what your child has learned/ experienced in the childcare setting in your own home?

## Outdoor play

The Child Care (Pre-School) Regulations 2006, which outline the minimum legal requirements with regard to standards of health, safety and welfare in childcare settings, require that there is adequate access to outdoor play space that children can play in regularly. See the Barnardos' publication **A Parent's Guide to the Child Care Pre-school Regulations** for further details.

Playing outdoors is vital to your child's overall development and children should be given the opportunity to be outside as often as possible. As well as the health benefits of exercise and fresh air, children will develop all of their skills – physical, emotional and intellectual.

When children are outdoors they will find challenges and explore activities that they cannot do indoors. Children will benefit from things to dig with, jump off, ride on, climb on, hide on and under, and pull and push. Providing obstacle races in the outdoor space, playing with beanbags and playing hopscotch are activities that will enhance development.

Outdoor activities in a childcare setting generally mean that a child can choose to play with others outside of their group, for example, siblings, who they may not get to spend much time with indoors.

## Think about...

- ▶ Do children play outside for long periods?
- ▶ How is this organised?
- ▶ Will your child have a choice in when they get to play outside?
- ▶ What is outside for your child to enjoy? Can you see things to play on, hide in, climb over and up, jump on?
- ▶ Does the ground have natural coverings like grass and mud or is it artificially covered?

## Active Learning

Children are active learners from the time they are born. This means they learn through mixing with people and exploring the world around them.

In active learning environments, children have the freedom to watch, touch, mouth, feel, crawl, climb, explore, choose and manipulate a wide variety of materials. They experience positive responses from their caregivers – enjoyment, control, interest, probability of success – and later they develop feelings of competence and self-confidence.

In the care of a trusted adult, a baby looks towards the ball rolling on the floor and feels free to reach out to touch it. A toddler chooses to leave the security of his carer's lap to crawl through the tunnel to see what interesting experience is on the other side.



## Partnership with Children



Partnership with children is the foundation for providing quality care for your child.

## Positive Attitudes and Communication with Children

The attitudes of the staff and the way in which children are communicated with is vital to this partnership.

Communication plays an important role in helping children to feel special. It is also an essential ingredient in helping them to learn.

Adults who are good with children are able to chat to them and bring out even the shyest child. They are also able to develop children's language by adding to what a child has said. Carers should have fun with language – making up stories and rhyming word games so that a child learns to enjoy using language.

### Think about...

- ▶ Is a nappy change seen as an opportunity to talk, sing and laugh with your child rather than a nuisance?
- ▶ What way do the adults talk about children already in their care?

- ▶ Is a boisterous toddler seen as 'bold' or 'naughty'?
- ▶ Do children appear keen to talk to the adults? Do they ask for help?
- ▶ Are the adults genuinely listening and interested in what children are saying?
- ▶ How do staff get children to make plans for their play and share these plans with others?
- ▶ How do staff help children to extend their capacity to give their views and opinions on their experiences?

## Observing the Children and Planning their Activities

To plan well for children, adults need to note down what skills and strengths each child has.

They also need to look at what interests each child so that they can provide activities that will tap into these interests and extend their learning opportunities. They will then provide activities to build on what the child knows and extend it further.

Children need support in managing changes throughout the day, whether that is settling in each morning or changing from one activity to another. A small child may find it difficult to separate from their parent in the morning. Parents and staff can work together to understand and respond to the child's need for reassurance and help to ease the child into the environment.

Other changes that need to be carefully managed are breaks in activities for the care routine (nappy changing, meal times, sleep time etc).

For example, pre-school children cannot wait for too long for lunch so find out what happens in between clearing up activities and eating. Skilled staff should have mini activities ready like action songs or a 'mystery' bag for the children to investigate.

**Communication plays an important role in helping children to feel special. It is also an essential ingredient in helping them to learn.**



# Quality Counts



Partnerships are important in enhancing the quality of early care and education that each child receives in a setting, whether it is with a childminder or in a larger group setting.

For partnerships to be effective, there must be a solid foundation of quality care within the childcare service.

Quality is achieved in childcare through the provision (among other things) of the following:

- ▶ Good facilities both indoors and outdoors.
- ▶ Imaginative materials that meet the different needs of the children in the facility.
- ▶ A warm and caring team of childcare practitioners.
- ▶ A good relationship between parents and the childcare team.
- ▶ Sound management policies and practices.
- ▶ Awareness of equality and diversity.
- ▶ A responsiveness to the individual needs of each child.
- ▶ Equally important are the appropriate ratios of staff to children, the presence of qualified staff and the contentedness of staff with their working environment and structures.

## Parent's Handbook

Some services will provide parents with a parent's handbook when their child starts. A parent's handbook is a helpful way for you to become familiar with the setting and lay a good foundation for this new partnership. It will give you relevant information such as:

- ▶ Settling in a new child
- ▶ Child protection (see also the Barnardos publication *Our Children First: A Parent's Guide to the National Child Protection Guidelines*)
- ▶ Behaviour management (see page 37)
- ▶ Fire drill – How often are they done? How do they organise this procedure? What do they use for immobile infants, children?
- ▶ The curriculum/programme that is offered (see page 45)
- ▶ Health and safety – What have they in place to ensure the reduction of infection and cross infection? For example, what policy do they have on how long sick or infectious children must stay away from the setting?
- ▶ Opening times – What are the hours and weeks of opening?
- ▶ Payment of fees – How and when will you pay your fees? What happens when your child does not attend?
- ▶ What is their policy on supporting children who are recently in a separated family?
- ▶ How do they manage celebration of father's/mother's day in a bereaved, separated, single families or in a same sex parent families?
- ▶ How do they ensure that all children and families who have different experiences of living feel included?

## Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are a road map for what happens in a setting and how it happens. The Pre-School Regulations require that a setting has a policy and procedures on child protection and behaviour management as well as ones on health and safety.

Clearly written policies and procedures are important for a number of reasons:

- ▶ They help you to know that it is a professional and effective setting.
- ▶ There will be consistency in how things are done.
- ▶ The delivery of the service will be more efficient.

### Think about...

- ▶ Does the service provide a parent's handbook that includes information on their policies and procedures?

## Behaviour Management

Under the Pre-School Regulations, each childcare provider is required to have a behaviour management policy. This policy will outline how children will be supported to learn how to behave appropriately with regard to sharing, taking turns, listening to and understanding others. Procedures then give specific information on how staff will respond to behaviour in a positive way.

Behaviour management policies and procedures should be based on respect for one another, acceptance of the stage of development that a child is at and a recognition that a child is learning to be with others and to cooperate in a social setting.

It should go without saying that no child should be physically punished. However, it is also important that children are not made to feel humiliated or scared. Children at this age are still learning what is appropriate behaviour.

Behaviour management policies and procedures should be based on respect for one another, acceptance of the stage of development that a child is at and a recognition that a child is learning to be with others and to cooperate in a social setting.

### **Think about...**

- ▶ What does the behaviour management policy state?
- ▶ In practical terms, how do staff manage behaviour?

A setting that understands child development will avoid labelling children and will not use terms such as 'bold' or 'naughty'. They will instead, talk about supporting childrens' behaviour so that they come to understand what is socially accepted.

### **Staff Qualifications or References**

While looking out for all these indications of quality childcare, check out the professional level of qualifications that staff members of a service hold. Some practitioners have degree level qualifications and above, or a Fetac level 5 or 6 full child care award. There is a requirement that staff are trained in First Aid and understand how to deal with situations such as choking and bleeding.

Ask about other types of training that staff have taken as this will give you an idea of the spread of expertise and motivation that staff have. Perhaps they have studied topics such as positive behaviour management, play therapy, child psychology etc.

It is important to ask to see references for childminders. You can approach your local childcare committee who will have lists of these and other childcare services in their area.

## **Is a Crèche or a Childminder Better for my Child?**

One adult to one child is considered the most supportive environment for providing a baby with what they need. Young babies develop well with one adult who responds sensitively and in a timely manner to their needs. Of course, this is dependent on an adult who adapts to your baby's needs.

In a crèche environment, an adult will be responsible for up to three babies. A childminder, however, may have responsibility for two babies under 15 months and then two or three older children. You will need to decide whether you wish your baby to be in a family-type group or just with other babies of their own age. (See page 19 for detail on the Key Person System.)

A childminder will provide a home from home environment in which the child is able to initiate her/his own activities in an informal setting.

A good quality crèche will be able to provide an older child with activities that perhaps they don't get to do at a childminders, for example, opportunities for group activities such as drama classes or 'gym' sessions on site.

One of the challenges for crèches, however, is that it is difficult to provide children with the outings that would naturally happen if a child was at home or with a childminder. Even a visit to the shops is not something that can be done spontaneously with children in a large group setting.

What you want for your child will help you to decide on the type of care that is best for them. To ensure that you are happy with your choice, spend as long as you need finding out information such as how much experience a childminder has or whether a service is registered with the HSE or notified to their local Childcare Committee.

Word of mouth is always helpful in ascertaining the quality of care. However, it is important to remember that what one person may like about their childcare provider may not be what you are looking for.

**One adult to one child is considered the most supportive environment for providing a baby with what they need.**



# Childcare in Ireland

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## **Recent Developments in Childcare in Ireland**

In the last few years there have been a number of significant developments in childcare in Ireland.

Some of the most important are outlined below.

### **Síolta**

Síolta, meaning 'seeds' in Irish, is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education developed by the Government. Its purpose is to increase quality in the childcare sector in Ireland.

Within the framework there are 16 standards which cover areas such as Identity and Belonging, Parents and Families and Communication. Childcare settings who are partaking in the Free Pre-School Year agree to provide a curriculum that will adhere to the principles of Síolta.

For more details see [www.siolta.ie](http://www.siolta.ie).

## Aistear

Aistear, meaning 'journey' in Irish, is the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to six years. This framework was developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in partnership with the early childhood sector. Its aim is to help adults, both parents and childcare practitioners, plan for and provide stimulating, enjoyable and challenging learning experiences for children.

There are four interconnected themes in Aistear:

- ▶ **Well-being:** Children will be happy, healthy and confident.
- ▶ **Identity and Belonging:** They will value themselves and feel respected as part of their family and community.
- ▶ **Communication:** Children will develop their confidence in sharing their experiences, thoughts and ideas with others
- ▶ **Exploring and Thinking:** They will learn more about the world through exploring, playing, observing, questioning, with others and for themselves.

For more information see [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Pre School Regulations

The Pre-School Regulations were updated in 2006. They cover the minimum standards that must be reached in a childcare service.

For more information you can download A Parent's Guide to the Childcare (Pre-School) Regulations 2006 from [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie).

## Free Pre-School Year

In January 2010, a free Pre-School Year of appropriate programme-based activities was introduced for all children in the year before they start primary school. Eligible children are aged between 3 years 3 months and 4 years 6 months on 1 September each year.

A list of those services accepted under the scheme is available from your local City and County Childcare Committee.

For more information check out [www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie).

## Childcare Programmes

While you are looking at potential childcare services for your child you may come across certain terms such as Montessori or High/Scope. These are names of programmes that offer different approaches in providing children with learning experiences that enrich their holistic development.

Having a curriculum implies that there are learning objectives that are followed for the children. All 'curriculums' should be child led and based on their interests, facilitated by, rather than directed by, adults.

The most common programmes are listed below.

## Montessori

Montessori is a method that emphasises learning through all five senses. Children learn at their individual pace and choose their own activities to learn.

## High/Scope

High/Scope is a method of working with children based on the High/Scope Curriculum. Children are supported in developing their independence, becoming competent problem solvers and decision makers. They are seen as active learners who can learn to make choices and follow through on these with support from adults.

## Naíonraí

Naíonraí are playgroups that operate through the medium of Irish.

## Steiner

Steiner principles are based on the premise that children should be supported in their changing needs as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally. Education should help a child to fulfil their potential but should be based on the child rather than the goals that adults or society feel are important.

If you have any queries about childcare services you should contact your local City or County Childcare Committee office. There is an office in each City and County (see Sources of Further Information).

If you have any concerns regarding the operation of a pre-school service, you should contact the Pre-School Officer in your local Health Service Executive (HSE) office (see Sources of Further Information).

# Final thoughts...

Partnership between you and your childcare service is in the best interests of your child. Children who have attended quality early childhood services where parents work with staff and where children's decisions and choices are considered and respected are better able to learn, better prepared for school and have fewer emotional difficulties.

Note whether the children and the staff look happy. Look for adults who are warm, friendly, professional and welcoming. A quality service will value your input.

Children need a spacious environment with an interesting outdoor space. Look to see if there is a lot of activity happening with children that looks industrious and organised by the children.

Check to make sure the service has a key person system and how they deal with transitions of settling children in to the setting or going off to school.

Building a trusting relationship with your childcare provider is extremely important both for your own happiness and that of your child. By working together in partnership you can help to ensure that your child gets the best care possible and a quality early learning experience.

## Sources of Further Information

### Useful contacts

#### **Barnardos' Training and Resource Service**

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T: 01 4549699 F: 01 4530300  
E: [resources@barnardos.ie](mailto:resources@barnardos.ie)  
or [training@barnardos.ie](mailto:training@barnardos.ie)  
[www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

- ▶ You can find contact details for your local Pre-school Officer at [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
- ▶ You can find contact details for your local City/County Childcare committee on [www.pobal.ie/childcare](http://www.pobal.ie/childcare)

### Useful websites

**[www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)**  
Childminding Ireland

**[www.ippa.ie](http://www.ippa.ie)**  
IPPA The Early Childhood Organisation

**[www.montessorireland.ie](http://www.montessorireland.ie)**  
St. Nicholas Montessori Society Of Ireland

**[www.naionrai.ie](http://www.naionrai.ie)**  
Forbairt Naionrai Teoranta

**[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)**  
Aistear, National Curriculum Framework

**[www.ncna.ie](http://www.ncna.ie)**  
National Children's Nurseries Association

**[www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)**  
Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

**[www.steinerireland.org](http://www.steinerireland.org)**  
Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

**[www.siolta.ie](http://www.siolta.ie)**  
Siolta, National Quality Assurance Framework

### Useful books

**Parents As Partners**  
Jennie Lindon (2009) Step Forward Publishing Ltd

The following publications are available to download for free from [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

**Learning Together A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Learning**  
Barnardos (2010)

**A Parent's Guide to the Child Care (Pre-School) Regulations**  
Barnardos (2007)

**Parental Involvement - A handbook for childcare providers**  
Barnardos (2006)

**Our Children First – A Parent's Guide to the National Child Protection Guidelines**  
Barnardos (2004)

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