



## PRE-SCHOOLS & SCHOOL NURSERY CLASSES

### WHAT DO PRE-SCHOOLS AND NURSERY CLASSES PROVIDE?

Pre-schools and nursery classes in schools provide care and education for children on a sessional basis, for two-and-a-half to three hours: morning or afternoon during term time only. Some pre-schools offer extended hours so children can stay morning and afternoon without going home in between, and some include a lunch or breakfast club. Some run school holiday activities.

### NURSERY CLASSES ATTACHED TO SCHOOL

Some schools have nursery units attached to them that act like pre-schools offering sessional care, either morning or afternoon, during term time only. They take children from 3 years-old. School nursery classes are subject to the same regulations as the school to which they are attached. Please note that if your child attends a nursery class attached to a school this does not guarantee them a place within the school and you will need to go through the school's standard application process.

### WHERE DO I FIND OUT ABOUT PRE-SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL NURSERY CLASSES NEAR ME?

Information about Pre-schools can be found at our online directory:  
[www.southendinfopoint.org](http://www.southendinfopoint.org)

If you are a parent/carer for whom English is a second language, a parent/carer whose child has additional needs or you are a professional working with parents/carers then the Family Information Service can help provide additional support looking for childcare. Please contact us on 01702 215007 or email [fissos@southend.gov.uk](mailto:fissos@southend.gov.uk)

### EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE [EYFS]

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years of their life has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that the services they access will keep their children safe and help them to thrive.

The Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] is the framework that provides that assurance – it also requires children to experience exciting activities enabling them to learn through play both indoors and outdoors. Continuous provision, such as sand, water, construction, creativity, role play, music and movement is readily available, with focussed activities tailored to meet individual child development requirements included in the daily planning. Children's emotional and social well-being is continually fostered throughout the day following a routine that is similar to the home environment.

### REGISTRATION

All pre-schools that are open for more than two hours must be registered by Ofsted [Office for Standards in Education]. Ofsted Inspectors make announced and unannounced visits to pre-schools to ensure they are complying with the requirements of the EYFS. Ofsted reports on pre-schools may be viewed at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you have a complaint concerning a registered pre-school you

should contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666. School nursery classes are subject to the same regulations as the school to which they are attached.

### **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

All pre-schools and nursery classes must employ qualified staff with relevant experience. Leaders must be qualified in a relevant early years childcare and education qualification to Level 3, which is the equivalent to A Levels, but may leaders are qualified to degree level. Half of all other staff must be qualified to Level 2.

### **COST**

Pre-school session costs vary and you will need to contact individual settings for their current rates. From the term following their third birthday children are eligible for free early years provision. Some children are eligible for Free Early Years Education and Childcare from the term after they are 2.

For more information request or view our factsheets 'Free Early Years Education and Childcare for 3 and 4 year olds' and/or 'Funded places for targeted 2 year olds'

### **ALLOCATION OF PLACES**

Many pre-schools operate a waiting list, so it is a good idea to register your child before he/she is 2½ years old. Pre-schools all have their own individual admissions policy and you will need to request a copy of this - particularly if you wish to access free early years provision at the setting. You will need to contact schools regarding their admissions policy to their nursery classes.

### **CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS**

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all childcare and early years settings in the Borough provide a service that includes all children and support is available to achieve this.

### **LOOKING FOR A PRE-SCHOOL OR A NURSERY CLASS ATTACHED TO A SCHOOL**

- Start looking for a pre-school well in advance as some pre-schools may have waiting lists.
- Visit the pre-school and take your child with you to see their reactions. When you are there consider the following points:
  - Ask about staff qualifications and experience and about staff ratios. Do they rely on parent helpers?
  - Is the pre-school adequately equipped with toys and other types of play materials.
  - Ask about the structure of the day and what types of activities are provided.
  - Look to see whether there is an outside play area which the children can use. If not ask whether there will be outings to local parks.
  - Ask for a copy of the Admissions Policy.
  - Is your child eligible for the Free Early Years Education and Childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, or is this date approaching? Ask which hours the setting offer the funded hours for and their flexibility.
  - What is the price for sessions if you require care above the entitlement or if your child is yet to receive free Early Years Education and Childcare? How will you be expected to pay these fees?

- Find out what is included in the fee, for example whether you will need to provide your own nappies or milk.
- Ask about the opening hours each day, whether there are extended hours to accommodate late pickups and how these are charged. Also confirm the opening times over school holidays and Bank Holidays, if applicable.
- Ask how they will select your child's key worker.
- Ask whether meals, snacks and drinks are provided and if these are included in the fee. Ask to see menus or find out about what food is provided.
- If you need to provide a lunchbox are there any restrictions, such as products containing nuts.
- Will you have to pay if your child was absent, through sickness or due to family holidays?
- Ask how the setting manages challenging behaviour.
- Find out how you would reserve a place for your child and if there are limited intakes or whether children can start throughout the year.
- Ask about what settling in procedures can be put in place to suit the needs of your child.
- Does your child appear to be happy in the environment?
- Speak to other parents/carers who use the Pre-school.
- Make a second visit to the Pre-schools you like.
- Go to the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)) to view the latest Ofsted Inspection Report for the pre-schools you are considering. Nursery Classes attached to schools are inspected through the schools Ofsted inspection.

### **CONTACT THE FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE**

**01702 215007 | [fissos@southend.gov.uk](mailto:fissos@southend.gov.uk) | [www.southendinfopoint.org](http://www.southendinfopoint.org)**

*Southend-on-Sea Family Information Service cannot recommend or endorse any childcare providers and does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this information. Updated March 2016*

