

How to choose the right preschool for my child

5 handy tips for parents



Chosing childcare

Sending your child to a creche or a preschool for the first time can be a very emotional experience. Some of us can stay at home till the children are 3 or 4 or have a family member helping out or a child minder, but others have to send their children to the creche earlier as need to go back to work. No matter what your family circumstances are, sending your child off to a childcare facility is a hard decision to make. For parents to be able to go on with their work duties they need to be 100% sure that their offspring is in good hands. When it comes to chosing your childcare provider you should do your homework and go and visit few places around, so you are happy with your choice. Your child will be spending most of their time with the staff members, they will be looking after your child, feeding, taking care of them, teaching and they will become a part of your childs. They will have a huge impact on your child's development so it is important that you have a good relationship with your childs carer and that you share similar principles. In this article i will give you few handy tips of what to ask and what to look out for when it comes to chosing the right childcare provider for your family.

1. Pre-school ethos



Each childcare facility should have a written ethos that they go by. It will give you an idea what is the preschool like. Are they inclusive, do they work closely with families, what curriculum do they use, are they following each child's individual needs, do they celebrate different cultural and traditional events, would they work closely with you and respond to your child's needs etc Asking about the ethos will give you a general feel for the facility.

2. Ratios and TUSLA inspection

Ask the manager about ratios for your child's age group. They should be: Babies: 1:3, Wobblers 1:5, Toddlers 1:6, preschool sessional 1:11, pre school part time and longer : 1:8.

If you are at the viewing have a look around and see if the rooms are within the ratios, this is important for your child's safety.

Each creche/preschool should be inspected regularly by TUSLA. All the reports are published on TUSLA website, you can go and check your creches reports and you can also ask the manager when was their most recent inspection.



3. Induction

Ask the manager how do they settle children in, is there a settling in period, will they gain information from you on your child's favourite things to do, favourite toys and games, will they work with you during settling in, will they call you if your child is upset?



4. Communication and feedback

Ask the manager about daily feedback and communication policy. Will you be told about your child's day in the creche? Will you see any pictures? Will you know what they had to eat, did they sleep etc? Is there a communication book or maybe an app they are using? Will you know what activities was your child doing during the day and will they let you know how is your child progressing. All those are very important questions to ask and will give you an idea about the childcare facility.



5. Special requirements

Every child is different and they may have different needs when it comes to diet, toilet training, learning support etc. A good quality childcare facility will be happy to assist you with any requirements that you may have. If your child is only small you may not realise it yet that you may need assistance from your preschool later on. So ask a general question about dietary requirements: what if my child has any allergies or intolerances will you be able to provide food? What if they have learning difficulties will you be able to provide learning support, what if he struggles with potty training etc.



Don't be afraid to ask those questions. A good childcare facility will be happy to reply to all of them and help you to make a nice and easy home to creche transition. You may also want to see your creche policies booklet- they should have one available for all the parents. Also it may be a good idea to check out their website or a facebook page.