



Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd
Family Information Service



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Choosing Childcare



What is a Family Information Service?

The Family Information Service (FIS) is a free impartial information and advice service for ALL parents/carers of children and young people aged between 0-20 and the professionals who work with them. They can provide information, assistance and advice to help you find and choose:

- Registered Childcare
- Unregistered Childcare
- Children and young people's activities
- Family Support Organisations

The FIS can also provide information on:

- Help with the costs of childcare
- Careers in childcare
- Childcare training

The FIS is your ideal starting point if you have any questions regarding support for your family. Your local FIS will be able to provide you with information tailored to your individual needs... so call them first.

How to contact your FIS?

There is a FIS in every local authority and contact details for each of these services can be found on pages 11-13.

The FIS works closely with childcare providers in your area to provide you with accurate and up to date information about what they offer. This booklet takes you through the things you need to consider when choosing childcare and the options that are available to you.



Chapters:

1.	How to choose a childcare service	4
2.	Help with the costs of childcare	5
3.	Types of childcare (registered and unregistered)	6
4.	National Minimum Standards	9
5.	Childcare for all	10
6.	Useful links	11



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1. How to choose a childcare service

a) Contact as many childcare providers as possible before deciding which one is best for you and your child, and check with your FIS that providers are registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) – please see chapter 4.

b) The following questions may be helpful in considering what you are looking for in a childcare service:

- a. Is it welcoming?
- b. Is it a stimulating place for children?
- c. What facilities does it have?
- d. Is it caring?
- e. What about the staff?

For more questions to ask, contact your local FIS or visit your FIS website.

See Chapter 6 (pages 11-13) for more details.

c) Once you have found a childcare service you are happy with, try to have a settling in period with a few short visits for your child and yourself. This will help you both feel more confident and at ease.

d) Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in summary states that all organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child. Article 5 recognises that we should also respect the rights of parents/guardians and their families in choosing appropriate childcare to ensure that as the child grows they learn about accessing their rights, helping them to reach their full potential.



2. Help with the costs of childcare

Childcare may seem costly, but do you know families can be entitled to financial help? This help includes:

1. Tax Credits/Universal Credits
2. Assisted places and helping hands schemes
3. Free part-time education for all 3 and 4 year olds
4. Childcare employer voucher schemes
5. Flying Start

Your FIS can provide you with information about work life balance, Jobcentre Plus and other local programmes, as well as Universal Credit when it is introduced in the future.

*For more detailed information please read the leaflet:
Support for parents and financial help with childcare costs.*



3. Types of childcare (registered and unregistered)

Anyone who provides childcare for children under the age of 8 for more than 2 hours a day for reward must be registered with CSSIW.

This chapter provides a brief description of the types of registered and unregistered childcare provision that are available to you. For more details contact your local FIS (contact details on page 11-13).

Registered

Childminders:

Childminders are childcare providers who work in their own homes caring for children and are based in the community.

Day nurseries:

Day nurseries provide childcare for young children from birth to age 5. They usually open from early morning to early evening, Monday to Friday, all year round. They offer a caring, safe, stimulating environment either as full day care or part-time care for babies and pre-school children. Some may also provide care before and after school and in the holidays for older children too.

Playgroups / Cylchoedd Meithrin:

Playgroups cater mainly for children aged 2 ½ to 5 years, usually for 2 to 3 hours in the morning or afternoon and mainly during term time. Cylchoedd Meithrin are Welsh-medium playgroups which give children an opportunity to become bilingual (in English and Welsh).



Part-time education for children aged 3 and 4:

All children have the right to a free, part-time, good quality early education place in an approved setting the term after their third birthday. Part-time means a minimum of 10 hours a week, for around the same number of weeks as the normal school year. An approved setting may be a school, playgroup, day nursery or childminder.

Out of school childcare clubs:

Out of school childcare clubs help parents or carers who work or attend training. They provide breakfast clubs, after school clubs, holiday clubs and wrap around day-care for school aged children.

Open access playschemes:

Open access playschemes are places where children are free to come and go. They must be registered with CSSIW if they cater for children under 8 for more than 2 hours a day.

Unregistered

The following childcare options are not required to be registered with CSSIW. (Please note that if you use childcare which is not registered or approved you will not be able to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit).

- Parent and toddler groups/cylchoedd ti a fi
- Au pairs
- Babysitters
- Friends and family members (for further details contact your local FIS)

Types of childcare (may be registered/approved):

The following childcare options are not usually registered by CSSIW but do require registration in particular circumstances:

- Nannies
- Crèches



Childcare Approval Scheme Wales:

Anyone, other than a close relative who provides childcare in the child's home may apply to become an approved childcare worker. In order to be approved under this scheme, childcare workers must:

- be aged 18 or over
- have a childcare qualification included in the List of Accepted Qualifications for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce in Wales, a document produced by the Care Council for Wales (www.ccwales.org.uk/)
- have a first aid certificate
- have received criminal records check clearance

Visit the website or call the information line below for more information on the approval of childcare workers in your home, how to access the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or use childcare vouchers when you have an approved child carer working in your home.

www.cssiw.org.uk

0300 062 5609

Please note the Childcare Approval Scheme in Wales is an approved scheme. Although it does not include registration, you may still be eligible to claim tax credits.



4. National Minimum Standards

All settings which are regulated by CSSIW need to comply with National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care, March 2012. The document may be found on the Welsh Government website www.wales.gov.uk.

The standards are made in accordance with section 30 (3) of Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. Registered persons must have regard to the standards that relate to the type of care provided.



5. Childcare for All

Your local Family Information Service has details of suitable childcare provision for disabled children and children with special needs in your area.

It will also have information about how to access help to cover childcare costs. Referral schemes in all parts of Wales help children with special needs to attend playgroups/cylchoedd meithrin with other children of the same age.

Accessibility and the Disability Rights Commission

All childcare providers must meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and make 'reasonable adjustments' to include disabled children. They must not treat a disabled child "less favourably" because of their disability. You can phone the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) on 0800 444 205 for advice or information.



6. Useful Links

Family Information Service – Local Authority contact details

Anglesey	01248 725800 cis@anglesey.gov.uk www.younganglesey.org.uk
Blaenau Gwent	08000 32 33 39 (freephone from a landline) fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Bridgend	0800 180 4320 familyinfo@bridgend.gov.uk www.bridgendfamilyinfo.org.uk
Caerphilly	01443 863232 fis@caerphilly.gov.uk www.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis
Cardiff	029 2035 1700 fis@cardiff.gov.uk www.childcareincardiff.info/fis
Carmarthenshire	01267 246555 FIS text service: start your message with 'Children' and send to 07786 202747 childreninfo@carmarthenshire.gov.uk www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Ceredigion	01545 574187 cis@ceredigion.gov.uk www.fis.ceredigion.gov.uk
Conwy	01492 577850 plant.children@conwy.gov.uk www.conwy.gov.uk/children
Denbighshire	01824 708220 fis@denbighshire.gov.uk www.denbighshire.gov.uk



Flintshire	01244 547017 fis@flintshire.gov.uk www.flintshire.gov.uk
Gwynedd-Ni	01286 675570 Text for information 07920083909 Gwynedd-Ni@gwynedd.gov.uk www.gwynedd-ni.org.uk
Merthyr Tydfil	01685 727400 fis@merthyr.gov.uk www.merthyr.gov.uk
Monmouthshire	01633 644527 info@monfis.org.uk www.monfis.org.uk
Neath Port Talbot	01639 873018 fis@npt.gov.uk www.npt.gov.uk
Newport	0800 328 84 83 01633 212801 family.information.service@newport.gov.uk www.newport.gov.uk/fis
Pembrokeshire	01437 775700 fis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk
Powys	0300 111 0234 fis@powys.gov.uk www.powys.gov.uk/fis
Rhondda Cynon Taf	0800 180 4151 FREEPHONE from landlines 0300 111 4151 FREEPHONE from mobiles fis@rctcbc.gov.uk



Swansea	01792 517222 fis@swansea.gov.uk http://www.swansea.gov.uk/fis
Torfaen	FREEPHONE 0800 0196330 fis@torfaen.gov.uk www.torfaenfis.org.uk
Vale of Glamorgan	01446 704 704 FIS@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/fis
Wrexham	Tel: 01978 292094 E-mail: fis@wrexham.gov.uk www.wrexham.gov.uk/fis

Welsh Government - www.wales.gov.uk

The official website for the Welsh Government.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) www.cssiw.org.uk

North Wales

0300 062 5609

cssiwnorth@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Southeast Wales

0300 062 8888

cssiwsoutheast@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Southwest Wales

01267 245 160

cssiwsouthwest@wales.gsi.gov.uk

The role of CSSIW is to make sure that care services meet standards that people have a right to expect. It is an operationally independent part of the Welsh Government.

The following are just a number of organisations in Wales that are able to provide help and support. For further contacts, please contact your local FIS.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

www.clybiauplantcymru.org

029 2074 1000

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs promotes and supports high quality, affordable accessible out of school childcare clubs.

Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL)

www.dwp.gov.uk

0800 88 22 00

A confidential helpline offering information and advice about Disability Living Allowance and other benefits.

Jobcentre Plus

www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

0845 604 3719 (English)

0845 604 4248 (Welsh)

Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions. It provides services that support people of working age from welfare into work, and helps employers to fill their vacancies.

Mudiad Meithrin

www.mym.co.uk

01970 639639

Mudiad Meithrin aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years experiences through the medium of the Welsh language.



Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY Cymru)

www.pacey.org.uk

0845 880 1299 (Wales)

PACEY is the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years. A standard-setting organisation which promotes best practice and supports childcare professionals to deliver high standards of care and learning.

National Day Nurseries Association

www.ndna.org.uk

01824 707823 (Wales office)

NDNA is the national charity and membership association for nurseries. It provides information, support, advice and resources for nurseries so that they can provide the best possible care to young children.

Play Wales

www.playwales.org.uk

029 2048 6050

Promotes high quality play provision for all children, provides support for all aspects of staffed playwork, playground development, playwork education and training.

Tax Credits

www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits
0845 300 3900

A link to the HM Revenue and Customs Tax Credit site which explains tax credits and has a calculator to help you work out your entitlement.

Wales Pre-school Providers Association (Wales PPA)

www.walesppa.org
029 2045 1242

The Wales Pre-school Providers Association (Wales PPA) provides information, resources and support to parents and early years settings to enhance the development and education of children.

Information correct at time of publication.

