



Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd  
Family Information Service



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

[www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

# 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 12-14.

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.



# Sections:

1.	How to choose a childcare service	4
2.	Help with the costs of childcare	6
3.	Types of childcare (registered and unregistered)	7
4.	National Minimum Standards	10
5.	Childcare for all	11
6.	Useful links	12

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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 which providers are registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) – please see section 3.
- b) The following questions may be helpful in considering what you are looking for in a childcare service:
- Is it welcoming?
  - Is it a stimulating place for children?
  - What facilities does it have?
  - Is it caring?
  - Are the hours when childcare is available suitable for your needs?
  - Do they provide meals, snacks, nappies etc or will you need to provide them?
  - What is the cost?
  - Do they have places available for your child?

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

See section 6 (pages 12-14) for FIS contact 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.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that promotes the human rights of children under the age of 18. All those caring for and working with children and young people have a role to fulfil in recognising children's rights and helping them reach their potential as individuals. Together all the UNCRC articles contribute to ensuring that children are kept safe, nurtured and treated with respect. The UNCRC also recognises and supports parents' role in bringing up their children.



## 2. Help with the costs of childcare

Childcare may seem costly, but do you know families may be entitled to financial help? This help currently 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. Employer-supported childcare, including voucher schemes
5. Flying Start

Your FIS can also provide you with information about work life balance, Jobcentre Plus and other local programmes.

*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 the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

This section 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 pages 12-14).

#### 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 2½ 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 include breakfast clubs, after school clubs, holiday play schemes 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 financial assistance from the UK government).

- Clubs and sessions that run for less than 2 hours
- Au pairs
- Babysitters
- Friends and family members

## 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 at home Voluntary Approval Scheme Wales:

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

- be aged 18 or over
- have a relevant qualification. For advice please contact the CSSIW ([www.cssiw.org.uk/](http://www.cssiw.org.uk/))
- have a relevant first aid certificate
- have received clearance from an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check

Call your local FIS for more information on the approval of childcare workers in your home and how to access any related financial support from the UK government you may be eligible to receive.

*Please note the Childcare at home Voluntary Approval Scheme in Wales is an approved scheme. Although it does not include registration, you may still be eligible to claim financial support from the UK government.*



## 4. National Minimum Standards

All settings which are regulated by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) need to comply with the current **National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care**.

The document is on the Welsh Government website [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

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 can support you to find childcare suitable for your child's individual 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 additional needs to attend playgroups/cylchoedd meithrin with other children of the same age.

### Accessibility

All childcare providers must meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and make 'reasonable adjustments' to include disabled children. They must not treat a disabled child "less favourably" than a non-disabled child because of their impairment or health condition. You can phone the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) on 0808 800 0082 for advice or information.



## 6. Useful Links

### Family Information Service – Local Authority contact details

Anglesey	01248 725800 <a href="mailto:cis@anglesey.gov.uk">cis@anglesey.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.younganglesey.org.uk">www.younganglesey.org.uk</a>
Blaenau Gwent	08000 32 33 39 (freephone from a landline) <a href="mailto:fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk">fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk">www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk</a>
Bridgend	01656 643643 <a href="mailto:familyinfo@bridgend.gov.uk">familyinfo@bridgend.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.Bridgend.gov.uk/FIS">www.Bridgend.gov.uk/FIS</a>
Caerphilly	01443 863232 <a href="mailto:fis@caerphilly.gov.uk">fis@caerphilly.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis">www.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis</a>
Cardiff	029 2035 1700 <a href="mailto:fis@cardiff.gov.uk">fis@cardiff.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.childcareincardiff.info/fis">www.childcareincardiff.info/fis</a>
Carmarthenshire	01267 246555 <a href="mailto:childreninfo@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">childreninfo@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk">www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
Ceredigion	01545 574187 <a href="mailto:fis@ceredigion.gov.uk">fis@ceredigion.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.fis.ceredigion.gov.uk">www.fis.ceredigion.gov.uk</a>
Conwy	01492 577788 / 577865 <a href="mailto:plant.children@conwy.gov.uk">plant.children@conwy.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.conwyfamilyinformation.co.uk">www.conwyfamilyinformation.co.uk</a>
Denbighshire	01745 815891 <a href="mailto:fis@denbighshire.gov.uk">fis@denbighshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk">www.denbighshire.gov.uk</a>



Flintshire	01244 547017 <a href="http://www.fisflintshire.co.uk">www.fisflintshire.co.uk</a>
Gwynedd	01286 675570 Text for information 07920083909 <a href="mailto:Gwynedd-Ni@gwynedd.gov.uk">Gwynedd-Ni@gwynedd.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.gwynedd-ni.org.uk">www.gwynedd-ni.org.uk</a>
Merthyr Tydfil	01685 727400 <a href="mailto:fis@merthyr.gov.uk">fis@merthyr.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.merthyrfis.org">www.merthyrfis.org</a>
Monmouthshire	01633 644527 <a href="mailto:info@monfis.org.uk">info@monfis.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.monfis.org.uk">www.monfis.org.uk</a>
Neath Port Talbot	01639 873018 <a href="mailto:fis@npt.gov.uk">fis@npt.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.nptfamily.com">www.nptfamily.com</a>
Newport	0800 328 84 83 01633 840669 <a href="mailto:family.informationsservice@newport.gov.uk">family.informationsservice@newport.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.newport.gov.uk/fis">www.newport.gov.uk/fis</a>
Pembrokeshire	01437 775700 <a href="mailto:fis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk">fis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk">www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk</a>
Powys	0300 111 0234 01597 827666 <a href="mailto:fis@powys.gov.uk">fis@powys.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.powys.gov.uk/fis">www.powys.gov.uk/fis</a>
Rhondda Cynon Taf	0800 180 4151 FREEPHONE from landlines 0300 111 4151 FREEPHONE from mobiles <a href="mailto:fis@rctcbc.gov.uk">fis@rctcbc.gov.uk</a>

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

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## Welsh Government

[www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

The official website for the Welsh Government.

## Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

[www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

Tel: 0300 7900 126

Email: [cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cssiw@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 that are able to provide information, help and support. For further contacts, please contact your local FIS.

### **Disability Benefits Helpline**

[www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline](http://www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – 0345 712 3456

Attendance Allowance (AA) – 0345 6055

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – 0345 850 3322

This offers information and advice about Disability Living Allowance and other benefits.

### **Jobcentre Plus**

[www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus](http://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus)

0345 604 3719 (English)

0345 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.

### **Tax Credits**

[www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits)

[www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits)

Tax Credit Helpline

Telephone: 0345 300 3900

A link to the UK government site which explains tax credits and has a calculator to help you work out your entitlement.

## **Universal Credit**

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

Universal Credit helpline

Telephone: 0345 600 0723

Welsh language (make a claim): 0800 012 1888

Welsh language (report changes): 0345 600 3018

Textphone: 0345 600 0743

## **Citizen Advice Bureau**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

The Citizens Advice service offers information and advice through face-to-face, phone and email services, and online. They deal with any issues including benefits, debt and housing.

## **Contact a Family**

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

0808 808 3555

Contact a Family provide information, advice and support to families of disabled children.

## **Mudiad Meithrin**

[www.meithrin.co.uk/](http://www.meithrin.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](http://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](http://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.

## **Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs**

[www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org)

029 2074 1000

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

## **Wales Pre-school Providers Association (Wales PPA)**

[www.walesppa.org](http://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.



## **Play Wales**

[www.playwales.org.uk](http://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.

## **Groundwork Wales**

[www.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.groundwork.org.uk)

01495 222605

Groundwork Wales aims to increase and enhance the accessibility and quality of children's outdoor play experiences across areas of Wales.

Information correct at time of publication.

