

Choosing an early childhood education and care service

Early education matters

Quality early childhood education and care services (long day care, family day care, preschool, outside of school care) will give your child the best start in life and provide important opportunities to learn and develop.

Babies are born ready to learn, with the majority of brain development occurring in the first five years of life. Enrolling your child in a service will provide them with the opportunity to explore their world and develop new skills that will stay with them as they grow.

Enrol early

With a high demand for early childhood education and care services, it is important to enrol your child as soon as possible. Consider doing this if your child needs to start by a particular age or time.

Many services will have a wait list if there are no spots available. You can put your child on the wait list for more than one service.

Understanding quality

All approved services in NSW are assessed and rated against the National Quality Standard (NQS) which sets a benchmark for the quality of all services across Australia.

In NSW, a service's quality rating is displayed on a certificate using a star graphic. The certificate must be visible at the service and gives families important information about the overall rating of a service, as well as a rating against each of the quality areas.



Star graphic from the quality rating certificate.

What to consider

-  **A service's quality**
-  **Service type** considering your child's age and family needs. Find out more: education.nsw.gov.au/choosing-a-service
-  **Location** e.g. close to home or work
-  **The times and days your child needs care**
-  **How different backgrounds are celebrated**
-  **Any health care needs**

Find a service



To locate quality early childhood education and care services in NSW, use the early childhood education finder.

finder.service.nsw.gov.au/ecec

What to ask

Call the service to make an appointment for a tour. This will ensure there is a staff member available to show you around and answer the following questions:



- ☐ Are places available for the day/s and hours I need?
- ☐ What days and times do you open and close?
- ☐ What is your quality rating?
- ☐ What do I need to do or who do I speak to if I need change the hours of care?

- ☐ What are the fees?
- ☐ Are there any fee subsidies or assistance from the government to help with costs?
- ☐ Are there any other costs I'll be asked to pay over and above the fees?
E.g. Enrolment fee, extra for public holidays?

- ☐ How will the service's program support my child's learning and how will my child's development be communicated to me?
- ☐ What is the approach for transitioning between rooms and transitioning to school when ready?

- ☐ How many educators are there to children?
- ☐ What happens if my child is unwell, upset, or unsettled?
- ☐ Can families be involved in the service and how?

- ☐ What do I do or who do I speak to if I have any concerns?
- ☐ Does the service provide meals (and nappies if required) or are these brought from home each day?
- ☐ Can you show me where the children sleep and tell me how often you check them?

How to find out more?

Find out more about choosing a quality service visit [choosing a quality service](https://www.education.nsw.gov.au/choosing-a-quality-service) web page.

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