

Choosing a Parent & Toddler Group

When you are looking for childcare for your child, Walsall FIS understands that it is a difficult decision. To help you we have put together a guide to helping you choose the best provision for you and your children.

If you are considering attending a parent and toddler group then this fact sheet gives tips and hints on what to look for and what to ask.

Firstly is a parent and toddler group for you? A parent and toddler group maybe for you if:

- The care doesn't need to be Ofsted registered
- You want your child to meet and play with other children
- You can stay with your child
- You want to meet other parents
- You want inexpensive care

If you decide that a parent and toddler group is for you the first thing you need to do is establish which groups are available to meet your needs.

The information that Walsall FIS holds about groups is as accurate as possible, but as they are run by people who attend the group, it is a guide and we would always recommend that you contact a setting directly for up to date details.

Once you know which groups are running at times that are convenient for you, we would always suggest arranging a visit to see them. When you go to see them, if possible, take your child with you.

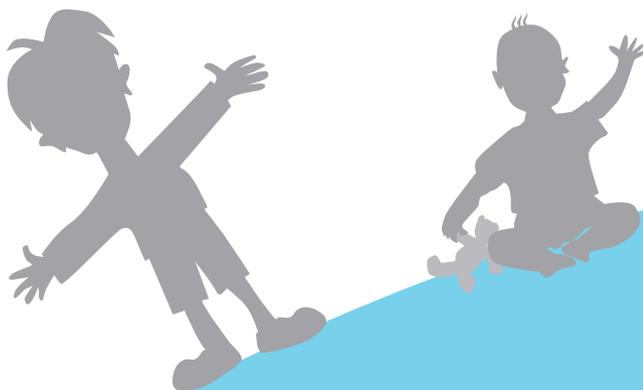
When you visit the group you may want to look for the following:

- Are you and your child made to feel welcome?
- Do the other children look happy?
Are they playing and talking with each other?
- Do you think there is enough space, toys, stimulation for your child?
- What are the premises like? Are they clean?
Do they have health and safety equipment ie, child proof locks on doors, plug socket covers, etc?

Questions you may wish to ask on your visit:

- How long have you been operation?
- Do you have the appropriate public liability insurance?
Can I see it?
- Do you take children on outing?
If so how is this arranged?
- How much do you charge?
- What activities do you do with the children?
- Are snacks available? If so, What?
- How do you cater for special needs/disabilities?

Remember – trust your gut. If you don't think a group is right for you and your child, you don't have to keep going.



Choosing a Parent & Toddler Group (continued)

Ratios

As parent and toddler groups are not registered and you stay with your child there aren't any ratios to meet.

Obviously the group should have enough space for all the parents and toddlers attending.

I'm not happy with my parent and toddler group – What should I do?

If you are not happy with your parent and toddler group for any reason, we would always recommend talking to them first. It maybe just a misunderstanding of what is expected from both parties and can be easily cleared up.

If this is not the case then please contact Walsall FIS on 01922 653383. All parent and toddler groups have an Information Officer and Improvement Officer who can offer advice on concerns.

Alternatively if you are concerned for a child's welfare then you should contact Ofsted on 0845 601 4771.

