

11-16 YEARS

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS
AND HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES
FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



department for
children, schools and families

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Though your child is now in secondary school, just like when they were younger there are still times when neither you nor a relative or a friend can be there to look after them when school's out. So you still have to find **care that's right for them.**

There are **lots of options**, from out of school clubs and schools' extended services to holiday clubs and play schemes, offering **benefits for young people** and **reassurance and flexibility to you.**

This booklet is designed to help you by giving information about what's available and the range of support you can get. **Whatever your circumstances**, you can be confident that your child is being **cared for in a safe environment.**



How out of school care can help



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Out of school and holiday care can really help you to manage all your family and other commitments - whether you're in a job, studying for qualifications or training for new skills.

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Good for them - and you!

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Out of school and holiday care can be great for children and young people. Research shows that spending time with others at clubs doing drama or playing sports, for example, or doing their homework during extended school hours, can improve behaviour and achievement levels.

Being part of a team or a club can also help motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as increasing opportunities for them to do the things they enjoy.



And it can be great for you too. As a mum or dad there are almost certainly lots of pressures on your time, so out of school and holiday care can give you more freedom to manage your family and other commitments in the best way possible – whatever your circumstances.

There are several options, and you'll need to work out the best arrangement for your family, your lifestyle and your pocket. But extra support really makes a difference.

You can also get financial help, too. From tax credits to vouchers and other entitlements, there's lots of support to make your life easier (see page 18).

FIND OUT MORE...

Contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346** for help and advice.

Your options



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If you're working or studying, out of school and holiday care
can be important to your child, by giving them a safe place to
study or to hang out and have fun. So here are the options...
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Making choices

There's no single type of out of school or holiday care that best suits every family, and it may be that a mix of care plus support from friends and relatives will be the best solution for you.

The care options you can consider are:

- schools' extended services
- out of school care
- holiday playschemes and clubs.



To help you make the best choice for your family, call your local Families Information Service **(0800 2 346 346)** and find out what's available near you.



Extended services

Many schools provide extended services for children, families and the local community. This means things like homework clubs and drama clubs for children, and family learning and parenting support for mums and dads. They are usually open from 8am to 6pm, but some also open in the evenings and at weekends and during the holiday.

.....
Well over 80% of all schools in England

now offer the full range of extended services.

The Government wants **ALL** schools to do so by **2010**.

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Extended services help you balance work and family commitments, support your children and introduce them to a variety of experiences and interests. From a breakfast club in the morning to a sports or homework club after school, they can provide a safe place for your child to relax or study.

Schools are also offering services to you and other adults. For example, you could learn more about computers or improve your writing or maths skills. More and more schools are now offering the kind of services that families and communities say they really want.



Your local Families Information Service (FIS) can give you up-to-date information on local school-based care, out of school clubs and holiday and breakfast clubs, along with costs. Call on **0800 2 346 346**. And don't forget to ask your school what they offer.

So what's on offer?

For children and young people, secondary schools will offer a safe place where they can complete their homework, take part in other activities offered by the school and relax and socialise with friends:

- breakfast/after-school clubs
- homework clubs, plus extra study support for pupils who need it
- holiday clubs, for young people to try their hand at things like canoeing, cycling or adventure courses
- activities for all children up to the age of 14 (16 if they have special educational needs or a disability) such as sports, computers, music and drama
- positive activities for all young people aged 13-19.

For adults and families

- family learning, where parents can learn alongside their children
- parenting and family support, like advice on healthy eating and help with budgeting
- specialist services such as speech and language therapy, social care, youth work, housing and help for parents of disabled children
- Keeping Up With The Kids sessions.

What people say about extended services

"Up to 50 young people come to our youth club every evening, who had nowhere to go before. It's definitely had a positive effect, both on them and on the local community. The young people respect it - it's their club."

Stella, Area Youth Worker

"Because the breakfast and after school clubs are attached to the school, I can drop the children off any time from 7.30am, which is excellent. The community club is on the same premises. They run all sorts of activities for adults and children, including karate, salsa dancing, accountancy classes and bingo. It's fab. It really brings the school into the community and brings us together as families."

Hayley, Mum



Out of school care

As well as schools, lots of youth clubs, village halls and community centres are offering out of school care. These provide a safe place for children and young people to relax and socialise after the school day.

They're usually open from 3.30pm to 6pm in term time – though many clubs also have a holiday scheme. Some clubs will even pick up children from schools in their area.

Holiday playschemes and clubs

Holiday playschemes and clubs may be based in community centres or youth clubs, and offer a wide range of activities during the school holidays.

They're usually open from 8am to 6pm for all or part of the summer holiday, and some open over Easter and half terms.

FIND OUT MORE...

For more information on the extended services your local school provides, visit **www.schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk** or call your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346**.

Out of school and holiday care:

What does it cost?

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Costs vary widely, so it's important to check out what's available near you. Your local Families Information Service (0800 2 346 346) can advise you, and don't forget you may be able to get financial help (see page 19 for more details).

Here's a very rough guide to help put you in the picture:

- **Extended services:** Some services and activities are free, but you will usually have to pay for childcare and certain activities such as music clubs and museum visits
- **Out of school clubs:** Costs vary, but average at around £7 per session
- **Holiday playschemes and clubs:** Costs can be around £20 per day but vary widely
- **Positive Activities for Young People:** a range of activities are available in your area. Contact your local authority for more details or log on to www.direct.gov.uk/getinvolved.

Remember!

Families can get help with the costs of childcare, so costs indicated here may not be what you actually have to pay (see page 19).

If you're on a low income you may be able to get financial help from your school, local authority or through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit (see page 19).



Help with finding and choosing out of school or holiday care

Finding care in your area

It can take research and planning to arrange your child's day before and after school and in the holidays. Ask your local school what's on offer, or call your local Families Information Service (FIS).

What is the Families Information Service?

The Families Information Service is free for mums and dads and carers of children aged up to 19.

It provides quality information and advice that will help you find out about and choose childcare, and fun activities for you and your child near to where you live.

It may also be able to give you information about other children's services and support available to you and your family such as:

- Local schools, as well as courses and training opportunities for parents and families
- Health and welfare services including hospitals and smoking helplines
- Local sports and other facilities
- Parenting and relationship services, including support for disabled parents.



Where is my nearest Families Information Service?

There's one in every local authority. Call **0800 2 346 346** (lines open 8am-8pm weekdays, 9am-12pm Saturdays) to find yours. Or you can go to **www.direct.gov.uk**. Ask your school what extended services are available or visit **www.schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk**

Choosing out-of-school care

Questions to ask

- Who's in charge?
What qualifications do they and their team have?
- Are the staff warm and welcoming? What are their views on discipline?
- What activities are there?
Is everyone there busy and happy?
- How are the children and young people supervised? How much individual attention will your child get?
- How far is it from the school?
- Is there a quiet area for doing homework?
- How secure is the building?
What happens in an emergency?
- Are they Ofsted-registered?

"You provide a great service to people in the community. With the care I found through your service, I could return to work part-time. Your staff are very good and knowledgeable of the information people need. Information which can be a bit confusing and worrying for some parents is much more easy to understand after talking to your staff."

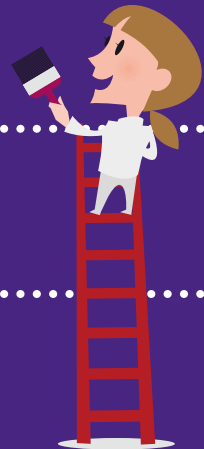
Parent returning to work



Ofsted registration means the provider and premises must meet certain standards and that staff have been properly checked. A school offering out of school care doesn't need to be registered as a childcare provider, but it will be inspected by Ofsted as part of the school's inspection (see page 16). Parents are, however, still eligible for tax credits for this type of provision.

Best for your child outside school hours

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Young people need safe, stimulating, enjoyable
care outside school, and there are lots of things
you can do to make sure they get it.
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How you can support your child

Whatever out of school or holiday care you choose, there are some really simple ways that you can help your child when they're at home with you.

- Show an interest in their day – talk to them and ask them questions about what they've been doing.
- Help them with homework if they need it. Ask your provider if there are any joint projects or extra-curricular work you can do with your child.
- Tell your child when you're proud of something they've done – it helps build self-confidence.
- Allow them to have private, quiet time – young people need space to start thinking for themselves, and to use their imagination.
- Take advantage of extended services for adults. Why not do a computer course, for example? The more you know, the more confident you'll be at passing it on.
- Pick up on your child's interests and encourage them all you can. If they're into dancing, for example, see if you can find a class for them.



FIND OUT MORE...

For more information contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346** or visit **www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/schoolslearninganddevelopment**

Knowing they're safe

All services provided by schools are inspected by Ofsted as part of the school's regular inspection, to make sure they meet specific standards and that staff are suitable to care for children and young people.

Other sorts of care for children over eight do not have to be registered by Ofsted, but providers can choose to register.

It's best to choose a provider that's registered, because you can then be sure that a check has been made on their suitability to care for children and young people. Another reason is that you'll only be able to claim the childcare element of tax credits (see page 19) if your childcare provider is registered.

Staff in registered settings will have to have had Criminal Records Bureau checks carried out on them to make sure they're safe to work with children.

As well as being confident that your child is safe, having Ofsted-registered care means you may be eligible to claim towards the cost through tax credits or childcare vouchers (see page 19).



If you're worried about any aspect of child safety or child protection you should raise your concerns with the childcare provider. If you're still concerned you should then contact Ofsted, who will investigate. Contact Ofsted on **08456 404040**.

What if my child has a disability or special educational needs (SEN)?



All childcare providers are under a legal duty to consider how best to offer extra support to meet the child's needs. The **Special Educational Needs Code of Practice** (you can find this on www.direct.gov.uk) gives guidance on the different levels of support that are available.

Local councils and all schools will have an SEN Co-ordinator who will be able to discuss your child's particular needs and ensure that your child can enjoy all the activities on offer. Talk to the Co-ordinator if you want to discuss your specific issues and concerns.



Help with costs

Disability Living Allowance can help you with the day-to-day costs of looking after a child with a disability. Call the Disability Benefits Helpline on **0845 7123 456**.

Time away from work...

If your child is disabled, and you've been in the same job for a year or more (and qualify in other ways), then you're entitled to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave before their 18th birthday. Call **0800 2 346 346** for more information.

FIND OUT MORE...

For more information contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346**, or visit: www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/moneyandworkentitlements

Financial and other help



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The cost of childcare can seem daunting, but there's help available. This section is about boosting your childcare budget by taking advantage of the tax credits, vouchers and benefits on offer.

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Help with costs

Tax credits

Families who are in work and who pay for Ofsted-registered out of school care can get financial help with those costs through tax credits. Depending on your household income, tax credits can give you back up to 80 percent of your costs, up to a maximum of £140 a week for one child and £240 a week for two or more children. It's worth checking out with HMRC or with your local Families Information Service.

Childcare vouchers

Some employers offer childcare vouchers or 'salary sacrifice', where you offer up part of your salary in return for help with the cost of childcare. These schemes give you the first £55 a week of vouchers free from tax and National Insurance. Some families will be able to get tax credits as well as vouchers. Check it out and see how much you could get.

HOW DO I CLAIM TAX CREDITS?

Call the **HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Tax Credit Helpline** on **0845 300 3900** (open 8am-8pm seven days a week) or visit **www.hmrc.gov.uk** for a claim form. A special web-calculator on **www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/calculator** can help you find out how much you may be able to claim.



A few examples of help for families...

ONE

Claire and Martin both work part-time and earn **£17,000** per year between them. They have 2 children with childcare costs of £70 per week in the school year. They receive an average of **£41*** a week to help with childcare costs.

TWO

Samuel works full-time and earns **£25,000**. He has 2 children with childcare costs of £70 per week in the school year and £150 in the holidays. He receives an average of **£64*** a week to help with childcare costs.

*This average amount is paid for 52 weeks of the year



FIND OUT MORE...

For information on all the financial help you might be able to get contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346**, or log on to **www.direct.gov.uk/workandfamilies**

Counting the benefits

Don't miss out on your other entitlements:

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Child Benefit

All mums and dads are entitled to this until their child is 16, or 19 if they're in full-time education.

Help if you are in training or learning

There are a number of different schemes on offer to help you with the cost of out of school care while you're in training or at college learning new skills. It's definitely worth picking up the phone to find out more, as there is lots of help out there, such as:

New Deal

If you are registered on Jobcentre Plus New Deal programmes you may be entitled to help with childcare costs to support you back into work. Talk to your adviser.

Learner Support Funds

If you are aged 20 or over, you could get help towards early learning and childcare costs through your college or school.

For students in higher education

Students with children using registered childcare can also get means-tested grants. Check it out when you apply for your course.

Free Childcare for Training and Learning For Work

This helps pay for childcare while you learn new skills that could lead to a job. It's for parents aged 20 or over whose partner is in work.



FIND OUT MORE...

For information contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346**.

Help from your employer

As well as all the high-quality out of school and holiday care on offer, if your child is 16 or under (17 or under if disabled) and you've worked for your employer for at least 26 weeks, then you're entitled to ask for flexible working.

Flexible working is designed to help you cope with your family responsibilities. It can include options such as flexi-time, homeworking, job-sharing and compressed hours, and is built around your own needs.

If you're entitled to make the request then your boss will have to consider it, and can say no only if there's a clear business reason, which must be given in writing. These days most employers recognise that flexible working for staff makes good business sense.

EMERGENCY!

All employees have the right to take unpaid emergency leave (sometimes called compassionate leave) at very short notice when there's a crisis such as sudden loss of childcare.

HOME ALONE?

Though there's no legal minimum age, it's an offence to leave a child at home alone if it places them at risk. Ask yourself if you think your child will be safe, and if so for how long? The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children advises that children under 13 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period.

FIND OUT MORE...

For more information contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346**, or visit **www.direct.gov.uk/workandfamilies**.

You can also get help from the Advisory and Arbitration Service (ACAS) helpline, on **08457 474747**.

Want to work or volunteer in childcare?

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Raising your child in a safe, happy environment is of utmost importance to you as a mum or dad. But did you know there are also opportunities for you to work or volunteer in childcare yourself?

This is a great time to do it. A major drive by the Children's Workforce Development Council is under way to improve the quality of early learning and childcare, giving you an opportunity to take your skills and experience further. There are also lots of ways you can volunteer too, at pre-school, playgroups, nurseries and Sure Start Children's Centres, from reading to kids to helping out on trips.

It's rewarding, you can fit it around working hours and the skills and experience you've developed through being a mum or dad yourself will be highly valued. Employers welcome people with a range of qualifications and experiences, and from all backgrounds.

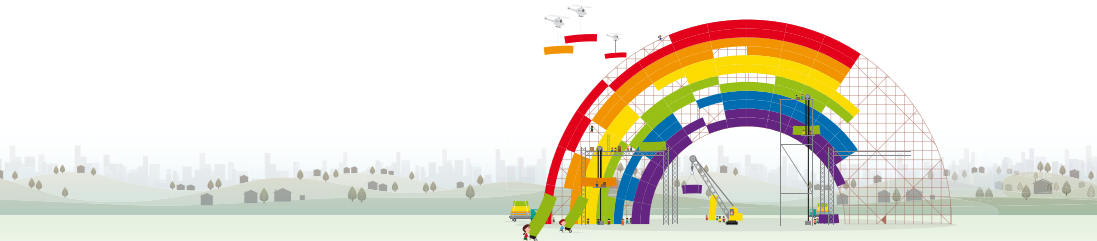
"When a vacancy came up at the after school club, I jumped at the chance. There's a wonderful sense of community. We do everything from model-making to games - and we provide a listening ear. I love this job. It's very satisfying to know that we play an important role in their lives and can really help them."

Mavis, Play Leader

FIND OUT MORE...

For more information contact your local **Families Information Service (FIS)** on **0800 2 346 346**, visit **www.childcarecareers.gov.uk**, or call Childcare Recruitment on **0800 996 600**.

Contact your local Families Information Service (FIS) for a copy of **5-11: The Essential Guide to Childcare for you and your family**.



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