Your guide to free nursery education for 3 and 4 year olds in South Tyneside

South Tyneside Council

South Tyneside EYDCP

SureStart

Contents

Pages 2 & 3 **Nursery Education Grant (NEG) - what you need to know**

- When is my child entitled to free nursery education?
- How many hours is my child entitled to?
- Who provides free nursery education?
- How do I find a place for my child?
- What will my child learn at the nursery?
- Which nursery is best for my child?

Page 4 **Finding a place in a Local Authority maintained nursery school**

- How do I register my child for a nursery place?
- What happens if my chosen nursery is full?
- Can I transfer my child to another nursery?

Page 5 **Finding a place in a private nursery**

- How do I apply for a place in a private nursery?
- Do I have to apply for funding?
- What happens if the nursery is full?
- What if I'm not happy with this?
- What if I need to pay for extra childcare?

Back page **Contact information**

- Families Information Service

Nursery Education Grant (NEG) - What you need to know.

When is my child entitled to free nursery education?

Your child can start the term after their 3rd birthday. For example if your child is 3 in January they can start in the summer term which starts in April. Once started your child can continue until they start full time school

Term dates are:-

- Spring Term 1st Jan -31st Mar
- Summer Term 1st Apr - 31st Aug
- Autumn Term 1st Sept - 31st Dec
- How many hours is my child entitled to?

Three and four year olds are currently entitled to five sessions of two and a half hours per week for a minimum of 38 weeks (expected to rise to 15 hours per week in South Tyneside by March 2010). Sessions should be planned by arrangement with the nursery manager

Who provides the free nursery education?

Places are available at Local Authority nursery schools and nursery classes, private nurseries and children's centres. All providers must be registered with the Local Authority

How do I find a place for my child?

As a parent/carer you can decide where you would like your child to go (subject to availability). You should contact the provider of your choice as soon as possible in case they have a waiting list for places.

The Families Information Directory which is available from your local Families Information Service lists providers in South Tyneside and you can find a number for the FIS at the back of this leaflet.

The FIS also offers a brokerage service to assist you in finding a place for your child.

What will my child learn at the nursery?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) principles cover a child's development from birth to the end of their first (reception) year at school. It describes how staff should work with children and their families to support their learning and development. This includes how your child should be kept safe and cared for and how everyone involved can ensure that a child achieves the most that they can in their early years.

The EYFS is based on four very important themes :

- a unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments
- learning and development

More information about the EYFS is available from the Early Years Teaching & Learning Advisor on (0191) 426 8121

Which nursery is best for my child?

By arrangement with the nursery, you can visit, look around and talk to the staff. You can ask to see their prospectus or latest Ofsted inspection report. Do not be afraid to ask questions, such as :

- Is there a waiting list for places?
- Does the nursery encourage parental involvement?
- How will staff help my child to settle in?
- Will I be kept informed about my child's progress?

If you have the childcare provider's Unique Reference Number (URN) you can also access a copy of their report via www.ofsted.gov.uk

Finding a place in a Local Authority maintained nursery school

How do I find a place in a private nursery?

After your child's second birthday, arrange to visit the Head Teacher of the nursery. You will be asked to complete a registration form - ask for a copy of this form as proof of registration.

As children become eligible for a place from the term after their third birthday, you may want to discuss when a place may become available.

What happens if my chosen nursery is full?

You should be aware that although a nursery place may be available, the Local Authority cannot guarantee that it will be in the school or nursery of your first choice. Also, an admission to a nursery unit / class attached to a Primary / Infant school is not a guarantee of a place in the Reception year of the school.

Can I transfer my child to another nursery?

Should your circumstances change, for example if you move house, then a transfer may be possible if vacancies are available.

Finding a place in a private nursery

How do I find a place in a private nursery?

Private nurseries usually offer places for children aged birth to five years old. They are open all year and charge a fee for the childcare offered. Many provide free nursery places also. All providers who offer nursery education, but are not run by South Tyneside Council must be registered with Ofsted and you can ask the person in charge to show you a copy of their latest Ofsted report.

Do I have to apply for funding?

No, your nursery education grant provider will do this for you. Each term you will be asked to sign a form to say that you are not claiming more than 5 sessions per week in total.

What happens if the nursery is full?

Your child's name can be placed on a waiting list but you may want to consider other nurseries in your area.

What if I'm not happy with this?

Any disputes over admissions need to be discussed with the nursery manager or Head Teacher of the school.

What if I need to pay for extra childcare?

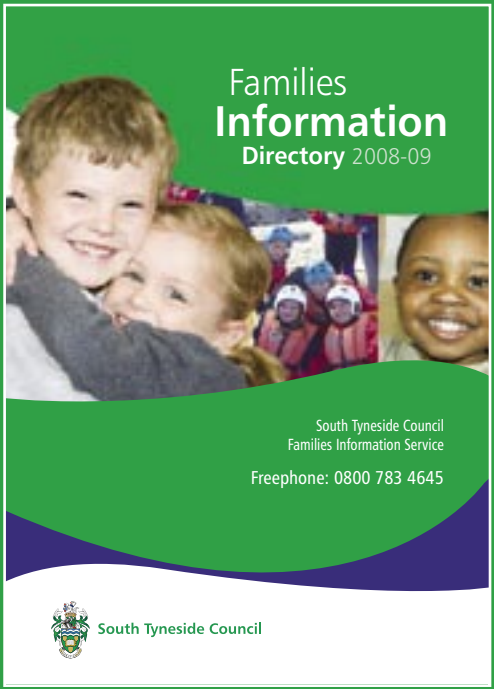
You may be entitled to help towards the cost of childcare through Tax Credits. For more information or to order a claim pack, telephone the Tax Credits helpline on 0845 300 3900 or go to their website www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Contact Information

To obtain a list of all Local Authority Nursery Schools and Private Nurseries, contact the Families Information Service on :

Freephone 0800 783 4645

or go online to www.chilcarelink.gov.uk (under Childcare / Early Education)



If you don't already have yours, ask for a copy of the Families Information Directory when you call.

If you know someone who would like this information in a different format contact the Communications Team on 0191 424 7385

Comms/0000/JAN2009

5089