

# Childcare/ Early Years Education Providers: Premises and Planning information

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## **Introduction:**

Finding suitable premises to run your childcare provision from can be the biggest hurdle. These are some of the issues that you need to consider.

## **Premises**

Is there a need for planning permission?

- Your local authority can advise on criteria for planning approval if appropriate permission is not already in place.
- Do not assume that even if the appropriate classification for use of the building is in place that you can operate your business from the premises – sometimes there are conditions attached to the classification and sometimes if the premises have not been used for the purpose detailed in the permission then it may have been deemed to have lapsed by the council's planning department.
- Do not assume that you can run your childcare from the premises even if you know that a childcare facility has been in existence there before.

## **Speak to the planning department as early as possible**

- by telephone
- some offer appointments or drop in surgeries
- check their websites for any related planning policies.

## **Considerations will be made by planning departments to include:**

Access/parking:

- space for delivery vehicles
- space for refuse vehicles/ turning circle
- spaces will be needed for drop-off and collection of children
- access to the site from the road – could it cause congestion?
- will it increase the flow of traffic along a well used road?
- Is access off the road at a dangerous point along the road? Some local councils may add a charge for a crossing to be put in if so.

Surrounding neighbours:

- their views – often noise created by children is a concern
- in residential areas be prepared for resistance to your proposals
- consider consulting informally with neighbours before submitting an application.

Converting a domestic premises to a childcare facility:

- check on the local authorities policy relating to this
- conversion of an entire house may be restricted
- the type and size of house may cause restriction on the number of childcare places you can offer
- Planning permission may be granted on a time-limited basis subject to review (this could have serious implications for running your business).

Using primary shopping frontages:

- the loss of retail use may be resisted
- space and access to outdoor play areas may be difficult in retail areas

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- appropriate security could be an issue
- parking could be an issue

### Access into the building:

- the local authority will have regard for people having equal access
- good design is essential to ensure access into and around the building
- check your responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act

### Saturation

- the number of other such uses in existence in the local area may have an effect on whether planning permission will be given
- may be restricted use where planning permission is granted e.g. for a day nursery, where this may be the only use possible
- within D1 class
- planning permission may limit the number of children that can be cared for
- hours of use may be limited to avoid disturbance to local residents and/ or other users of the building if community based.

### **Please note:**

**Any project planned, can not go ahead unless the appropriate planning permission is in place from the appropriate local authorities.**