

Choosing Childcare and Play



Changing *Lives* 



**Family
Information
Service**



www.1bigdatabase.org.uk

1BigD - 1 Big Database is a website which holds information about national and local organisations that offer help and support to parents and carers living in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

Information held on 1BigD includes:

- Housing
- Education
- Play and Leisure Activities
- Health
- Money Matters
- Community Groups
- Information about Safe Lifestyle Choices
- Employment
- Family Support



Contents	Page
Family Information Service	2
Registered Childcare	5
Keeping Children Safe	6
Choosing Childcare - A Child's Point of View	7
Early Years Foundation Stage	9
Choosing a Childminder	10
Choosing a Nanny	13
Choosing a Nursery / Pre-school / Playgroup	13
Early Years Entitlement (EYE)	16
Activity Groups for you and your child (under 5's)	16
Sure Start Children's Centres	17
Choosing a Babysitter	18
Choosing an Out of School Club (Breakfast and After School Clubs and Holiday Playschemes)	19
Clubs and Activities at School	21
Play	21
Play Rangers	22
Information about services and activities for Families with Disabled Children and Young people	22
Positive Activities for Older Children and Teenagers	23
Financial Support for Parents	23
Useful Information	
Bath & North East Somerset Council	26
Useful Contacts	27

The Family Information Service holds up to date and accurate information on the range of registered Childcare, Early Years Education, Play and Activities for Young People across the whole of Bath and North East Somerset

This includes:

- Childminders
- Nurseries / Pre-schools / Playgroups
- Out of School Clubs - Breakfast and After School Clubs
- Holiday Playschemes
- Creches.

What sort of information do we hold?

- Location
- Opening hours
- Age range
- Vacancies
- Costs
- Provision and Support for Disabled Children and Children with Additional Needs.

Please note that in order to make a claim for the childcare element of Working Tax Credits the provider you use for childcare must be Ofsted registered. For more information see 'Financial Support for Parents' page 23, and the specific detail about the childcare providers included in this booklet.

The Family Information Service also holds a range of additional information including:

- Under 5's activities
- New Parent and Toddler Packs
- Leisure, positive activities and play opportunities for children and young people aged 0-20
- Provision and Support for Disabled Children and Children with Additional Needs
- Working, and training to work, with children
- How to register yourself as a childcare provider
- Family Support
- Family Services Directory of services and activities for local families - 1 Big Database www.1bigdatabase.org.uk

We recognise that parents and carers seeking information from us are from a wide range of backgrounds and have differing needs. All our enquiries are dealt with in the strictest confidence and the advice given will be impartial. We work in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act.

The Family Information Service is a member of the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS), has achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award and Families First Award.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) is responsible for registering and inspecting childcare. The Family Information Service is responsible for updating and maintaining the Ofsted Register for Bath and North East Somerset.

Most care for children under eight has to be registered with Ofsted.

By being registered with Ofsted, parents can expect that providers will be meeting the Government's Welfare Requirements for Childcare. This means that the childcare will undergo regular inspections.

The Welfare Requirements for under 8's day care and Childminding cover issues such as:

- Health, safety and suitability of premises and equipment
- The provision of appropriate activities, learning and play opportunities
- Managing children's behaviour and keeping them safe
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children (taking into account disability, age, gender, religion, culture, ethnicity and language)
- Support for Disabled Children and Children with Additional Needs. Providers should have an Inclusion Policy/Statement
- Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on all providers.

All registered Providers must display their Certificate of Registration on their premises. Parents can contact Ofsted on **0300 123 4234** to check that the provider is registered or visit the website for further information at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Registered Childcare

Providers who wish to join the Childcare Registers must demonstrate to Ofsted that their people, premises and provision are all suitable to deliver childcare. Providers will also be required to undertake safeguarding checks on all staff who have unsupervised access to the children in their care.

Types of Registered Provision both Compulsory and Voluntary Register

- Childminders
- Nurseries
- Pre-schools
- Playgroups
- Out of School Clubs – Breakfast and After School Clubs
- Holiday Playschemes
- Creches
- Nannies who work with more than two families, at the same time, but not nannies who are employed by one or two families to work in the family home
- Some activity based care and care for children aged eight and over.

For more information about the types of childcare and the registration process please visit www.ofsted.gov.uk or call the Ofsted Helpline on 0300 123 4234. You can also visit this site to view the latest inspection report of a registered provider.

Additional information about help towards childcare costs can be found in the Financial Support for Parents section on page 23.

Keeping Children Safe

We all have a duty to promote the welfare of children and to make sure they are safe. If for any reason you feel concerned for the well being of a child then you must bring it to the attention of those who can help.

If you are concerned that a child is in immediate harm, then you should call the police:

Police Child Protection Team 01225 842786 (24 hours)

If your concerns are not of an immediate nature then you should call the Referral and Assessment Team. They will ask you about details of the child (e.g. their name and where they live) and about the nature of your concerns so that they can get as clear a picture as possible.

The referral will then be investigated to make sure the child is protected from harm.

Referral and Assessment Team:

Bath area: 01225 396312

North East Somerset area: 01225 396313

If you have concerns, or wish to make a complaint, about a registered Childcare Provider then contact Ofsted on
0300 123 4234

If you are using a new activity or service you may wish to look at the following link where you will find useful safeguarding information for your family and guidelines for organisations and services to ensure that they adhere to child safe practices.

http://www.child-safe.org.uk/about/cs_in_sport_and_organised_groups.aspx

In addition for more information on personal safety you may wish to visit the Suzy Lamplugh Trust website:

<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/parents-handbook/>

Choosing Childcare - A Child's Point of View

When parents and carers are selecting suitable childcare provision for their children there are many things to consider such as:

- The type of setting the child will attend
- The type of person/people who will be caring for them
- Health and safety issues
- The cost of the provision
- The opening hours and number of weeks they provide care

What is important to your child?

Children view things very differently from adults and although the issues we consider as a parent or carer are very important for our children's safety and well-being, they are often not the things most important to young children.

We have put together some of the things that we think may be important to your child/ren with regards to childcare. They have not been put in any particular order and you must remember that they are an adult's idea of what children may think. We hope that they are useful to you when you begin the process of selecting childcare.

Welcome

- Does anyone notice when I come in; do they say 'hello'?
- Can my Mum/Dad stay until I feel happy if I want them to?

The Place

- Can I reach the things I need (toys, handles, toilet)?
- Can I see out of the window?
- Are there any people, or pictures of people, who look like me?
- Is there somewhere safe for my things?
- Is there somewhere I can be quiet/by myself?

Things to do

- Are there a variety of things to play with?
- Can I choose what I play with?
- Do grown-ups let me finish what I am doing?
- Do grown-ups tell us what is going to happen?
- Is there something different to do each time?
- Can I play outside?

Food and Sleep

- What happens if I am thirsty or hungry?
- Will they make me eat food I don't usually eat at home?
- Will they make me go to bed if I'm not tired?

The People

- Do they listen when I try to tell them something?
- What happens if I don't understand something?
- Who do I tell if something is wrong?
- If I really want my Mum/Dad, will they get them for me?
- Can I choose who I play with?
- Can I bring my teddy/toy/comforter with me?

The Rules

- Does anyone tell me what I am allowed and not allowed to do?
- What happens if I do something wrong?
- What happens if I wet my pants? Will they be cross?
- What happens if other children tell me I can't play?
- What happens if other children hurt or frighten me?
- Can I help make the rules?

Whenever and wherever possible ask your child for their thoughts and suggestions. Remember they know you better than anyone else and you know them better than anyone else.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use Early Years childcare, they want to be sure that the provision they choose will keep their children safe and will help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework that will provide that assurance.

All providers are required to use the EYFS to ensure that whatever setting parents choose, they can be confident that their child will receive a quality experience that supports their development through care, play and learning.

For more information visit

www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears

Choosing a Childminder

What do Childminders provide?

All Childminders are registered with Ofsted, trained, hold a 12 hour paediatric First Aid Qualification, CRB checked and offer a highly professional service.

Childminders provide full time or part time day care for the under 5s and before/after school and holiday care for school aged children. Childminders provide a wide range of activities for children including taking them to a variety of groups, such as parent and toddler groups and local toy libraries. Most Childminders will provide meals and are willing to cater for special dietary requirements; this should be discussed with the Childminder at your first meeting. All Childminders use a contract, which will detail the hours they will work and their terms and conditions. This will be signed and dated by both the Childminder and the family using the service. Childminders are also required to take out public liability insurance.

Childminders also help meet the needs of Disabled Children and Children with Additional Needs and some will cater for shift patterns and provide childcare for weekend and evening working.

Ages catered for

Childminders may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 8. Of these no more than 3 children may be under the age of 5 and normally only one of these may be under 12 months. These numbers include the Childminder's own children.

Childminders can also care for children over 8 years but this must not adversely affect the care provided for the children under 8.

Registration

All Childminders must be registered and inspected by Ofsted and meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Qualifications

Most Childminders work alone or sometimes with a registered assistant. Occasionally Childminders work together in partnership. All Childminders undergo initial childcare training and a 12 hour, paediatric first aid course. Many have childcare qualifications and access further training which is offered on a regular basis. All Childminders have the support of the local authority Childminding Support team.

Some Childminders are accredited to deliver Early Years Education for 3 and 4 year olds. These Childminders have to undertake additional training and are qualified to at least level 3 in Childcare, Early Years or Play. They also receive enhanced support from the local authority Childminding Support team.

Cost/Allocation of places

Childminders are self employed and therefore entitled to set their own fees and this varies not only from minder to minder but from area to area. Most Childminders charge by the hour and you may find that they charge a higher rate for part time places, due to the difficulties in matching vacancies. Some Childminders give a discounted rate for looking after groups of siblings and some Childminders will charge a retainer to secure a booking for a place, particularly if this is made in advance. Some Childminders hold waiting lists, and some give priority to the siblings of those children they already look after. Most Childminders advertise their vacancies with the Family Information Service as soon as they arise.

Issues to consider

- Start looking for a Childminder well in advance
- Visit several Childminders before making a decision
- Prepare a list of questions and issues beforehand and make notes during your visit to refer to later when making your decision
- Ensure the Childminder can cater for your needs - hours, holidays
- Ask to see all areas of the home in which children are looked after.

Questions you may wish to ask a Childminder

To meet all of your family's needs and make a successful childcare choice here are some questions you might like to ask the Childminder,

- Can you tell me about how you will protect my child and keep him/her safe at all times?
- When was your last Ofsted inspection?
- Can I see your most recent Ofsted inspection report?
- Can I see a copy of your registration and insurance certificates and the policies you apply to your practice? e.g inclusion policy, complaints policy
- What training, qualifications and experience do you have?
- Are you a member of a Childminding network?
- Do you take children to any play based groups or Children's Centre activities?
- What are your opening hours/holiday/sickness arrangements?
- Do you have any cover arrangements for emergencies, your sickness or holiday commitments?
- Do you have immediate vacancies that would suit my family's situation?
- How will you support my children's needs during the day/session?
- How will we communicate about my children's needs on a day to day basis?
- If my child needs to be given medication, what arrangements will I need to make?
- What are your fees?
- When are the fees payable?
- Is there an additional charge for food/nappies/outings?
- Will you charge me if we go on holiday?
- If my child is ill will you charge me?
- Do you require a retainer if I book a place with you?
- Are you insured for outings? (car insurance, public liability)
- How much notice will I/you need to provide to end the arrangement?

Choosing a Nanny

Nannies provide childcare in your own home and are a popular choice for many families. They can look after children of any age and should provide plenty of fun and learning opportunities in a safe environment. Nannies can often work flexible hours and can be a suitable option if you work at times when other forms of childcare are not available.

Nannies can now register voluntarily on the Voluntary Childcare Register and you may prefer to use nannies on this register as you will know that they have met specific requirements.

Nannies registered on the Voluntary Childcare Register will have undergone an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and have met other requirements such as holding a paediatric first aid qualification and have training in child development. They will also hold a Public Liability Insurance certificate.

Contact the Family Information Service for a list of Nanny Agencies and some details of their checking procedures.

Choosing a Day Nursery / Pre-school / Playgroup

What do they provide?

Day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups can provide care and early years education for babies and children from birth to 5 years. Nurseries are usually open from 8am-6pm most of the year. Pre-schools and playgroups often offer shorter days and are usually run in the school term time. All the settings offer young children the opportunity to take part in group activities, whilst also enabling them to establish independence and confidence.

Day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups offer care by qualified staff for children of pre-school age. The settings should provide opportunities for your child to develop and learn in a stimulating, varied and enjoyable way. Most people working with children now believe that young children learn best through play; settings structure the day so that children's play extends their learning and development, although the way it is approached may vary.

Registration

Day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups are inspected by Ofsted. All settings must meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The current Ofsted Registration Certificate should be displayed and this will set out the specific conditions under which the setting will operate, including maximum numbers of children allowed to attend.

Staffing/Qualifications

All childcare settings in Bath and North East Somerset have to ensure that at least 50% of their staff are qualified up to level 2 or 3 with an appropriate Childcare, Early Years or Play qualification. Some may employ an Early Years Professional or have regular input from a qualified Early Years teacher on site. All settings link to local authority Early Years Teachers and the Childcare Development team. It is worth checking the qualifications staff have when you visit the setting.

Fees and conditions

Some settings have waiting lists, and all will charge fees. Ask about extras, e.g. meals, nappies and holiday and sickness retainers. Most will expect payment in advance. You may also be asked to pay a registration fee for your child.

Things to consider

Plan in advance if you can.

Give yourself as much time as possible to visit several settings before making your choice and settling your child in.

Ask for any written information available about the nursery/pre-school or playgroup, before you visit.

Questions you may wish to ask your childcare provider

To meet your family's needs and make a successful childcare choice here are a few questions you might like to ask the Nursery, Pre-School or any other childcare provider you are thinking of using...

- Can you tell me about how you will protect my child and keep him/her safe at all times?
- How is your organisation managed - who is in charge? What qualifications and experience do your staff have?
- When was your last Ofsted inspection?
- Can I see your most recent Ofsted inspection report?
- Can I see a copy of your registration and insurance certificates and the policies you apply to your practice? e.g inclusion policy, complaints policy...
- What are your opening hours/holiday/sickness arrangements?
- Do you have immediate vacancies that would suit my family's situation?
- How will you support my children's needs during the day/session?
- How will we communicate about my children's needs on a day to day basis?
- Will my child have a specific person to support them?
- Do you encourage parental involvement?
- If my child needs to be given medication, what arrangements will I need to make?
- What are your fees?
- When are the fees payable?
- Is there an additional charge for food/nappies/outings?
- Will you charge me if we go on holiday?
- If my child is ill will you charge me?
- Do you require a retainer if I book a place with you?
- Are you insured for outings? (car insurance, public liability)
- What about a settling in period?
- How much notice will I/you need to provide to end the arrangement?

Early Years Entitlement (EYE)

The Government provides funding towards the cost of childcare called Early Years Entitlement for all three and four year old children in Bath and North East Somerset. There are three eligibility dates for receiving the entitlement during the year depending on the date of birth of your child. Call the Family Information Service to check your child's entitlement date.

Currently the entitlement covers a maximum of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year, however some providers may be prepared to offer further flexibility. EYE can be used in Nurseries, Pre-Schools and Playgroups in the Bath and North East Somerset area and some Childminders are also registered to receive the EYE. Contact the Family Information Service to check when your child is eligible and which childcare providers in your area take EYE.

Activity Groups for you and your child (under 5's)

There is a whole range of parent and toddler groups, bumps and babies, messy play, music and other activity groups for you and your child.

These groups are not registered with Ofsted as parents and carers do not leave the children unattended. You must stay with your child and take responsibility for them at all times. They are sometimes based in church halls, community centres, schools, or other centres, like Children's Centres or where children are cared for, such as nurseries or pre-schools and playgroups. Most of these groups cater for pre-school children.

They may be open a few times a week for a couple of hours, possibly term time only, but some have regular set days throughout the year.

They are often used as social venues for families and children. Contact Family Information Service for details of groups in your local area.

Some groups are aimed at particular groups of parents, for example:

- First time parents and carers
- Single parents and carers
- Young parents and carers
- Parents and carers of Disabled Children/Children with Additional Needs
- Dads and male carers.

These groups provide an excellent opportunity for children to play with different equipment and interact with other children, as well as giving parents and carers an opportunity to meet others.

- Your child is able to socialise and play with others, so that they gain confidence without having to leave them alone. This means that activity groups are a good step towards leaving your child in some form of daycare
- You have a chance to talk to other parents and carers and so avoid the isolation that looking after small children can sometimes cause
- Groups based in Children's Centres give you access to whole host of other family related services eg health visitors.

Sure Start Children's Centres in Bath and North East Somerset

Children's Centre Services are for the whole family to use and are based in local communities, often but not always in one building. Everyone involved in Children's Centre Services is working towards our vision: *"We want all children and young people to enjoy childhood and be well prepared for adult life."* Many services and agencies work together to help achieve this vision.

Research shows that children do best when parents and professionals work together and Children's Centres recognise, respect and support parents as the key people in children's lives. Children's Centre Services work together with families to find solutions and meet individual needs by offering:

- Health services
- Childcare
- Early education
- Family support
- Information and advice.

Some priorities for further development in Children's Centre Services over the next 2 years include early support for disabled children and a new Buddy Scheme to support mothers when they give birth.

To find out where your local Children's Centre services are contact the Family Information Service.

Choosing a Babysitter

Babysitting is an informal type of childcare and the Babysitter comes to your home, usually in the evenings or at weekends, to look after your children.

The Babysitter could be:

- A family friend, relative or neighbour
- A local young person
- A parent from a Babysitting Circle (and in return you would look after their children)
- A student following an Early Years and Childcare course at College
- Someone employed through a Babysitting Agency
- A qualified childcarer like a Childminder, nursery worker, or nanny who fits babysitting around their normal working day.

The Family Information Service does not hold a list of Babysitters. We can give you a list of the Bath and North East Somerset Secondary Schools where Babysitting Awareness Courses have been run or details of Colleges running Early Years and Childcare Courses (including Norland College). We can also provide you with a list of registered childcare in your area (including Childminders) and information about local parent and toddler groups and Children's Centres where Babysitting Circles may already exist.

Please note that Babysitters do not need to be registered with Ofsted and it is the parents' responsibility, not the responsibility of the Family Information Service or Ofsted, to ensure that the Babysitter is a safe person to leave their children with.

For more information about leaving children in the home alone and tips for choosing a Babysitter contact the NSPCC on 0800 800 5000 or visit the NSPCC website www.nspcc.org.uk

Choosing an Out of School Club - Breakfast and After School Clubs and Holiday Playschemes

Out of school clubs care for children aged between 4 - 16 (some cater for children from specific age groups within this range). They operate from a variety of locations, including school premises, village halls and community centres:

Registration

Out of school clubs that are open for over 2 hours and cater for children under 8 must be registered with Ofsted and are subject to inspection. Clubs that run in a community centre or village hall require Ofsted registration in their own right, if they run as part of the school they may be covered by the school Ofsted registration.

Breakfast Clubs

Open in the morning before school, if they are not based at school premises then staff escort the children to school.

After School Clubs

Collect children from school and take them to the provision. They usually operate between 3pm and 6pm during term time. You may wish to ask the club how they manage the pick ups from schools. Some may charge extra to cover escorts.

Holiday Playschemes

Usually operate between 8.30am and 6pm during the school holidays.

What do they provide?

Out of school clubs and holiday playschemes offer a wide range of activities for children and a quiet area if the children just wish to relax. Most clubs have an outside play area. In addition, holiday playschemes may offer trips and outings.

Staffing/Qualifications

All settings in Bath and North East Somerset have to ensure that at least 50% of their staff are qualified up to level 2 or 3 with an appropriate Play qualification.

Cost and allocation of places

Out of school clubs and holiday playschemes vary in cost and may be reduced for families on low incomes or for groups of siblings. Clubs often have waiting lists and tend to work on a first come first served basis.

Ofsted have a voluntary register which will promote quality and may enable parents and carers to access the child care element of the tax credits.

For further information about the Voluntary Register please visit www.ofsted.gov.uk and for more information about tax credits, including the childcare element please visit www.hmrc.gov.uk

Issues to consider:

- Will your child be able to cope in a large group out of school?
- Will your child have space and quiet to complete any homework set?

- Are you happy with the transfer to/from school that the club provides?
- Do you have an alternative person to collect your child in the evenings if you are delayed?
- Are you happy for your child to attend all the outings? These may incur an additional cost.
- Would your child enjoy the structure of a holiday playscheme?

Clubs and Activities at school

The Government wants all children and families to have access to a range of extended services in and around their school. They are usually activities which run outside of the school day involving children and sometimes their families too. Schools are working with local providers to ensure these services are available. Schools themselves also provide a range of after school activities. The school your child attends will be able to provide you with more information.

Play

Play is the first and most natural way that children learn about themselves and the world they live in. Bath & North East Somerset supports a range of open access play activities across the area for children and young people.

For further information about what is happening in your area contact the Family Information Service or have a look at the Bath & North East Somerset website www.bathnes.gov.uk/communityandliving/childcare/PlayOutHangOut/Pages/default.aspx

Play Rangers

What do Play Rangers do?

- They work in parks and open-spaces to ensure that all children have access to safe and challenging play opportunities outdoors
- They listen to what children say that they need and work with the local community and other agencies to provide for children's needs
- They use children's play as a starting point for helping the community to get more use from their public spaces
- They help to raise awareness of the importance of play for children and the right of children to use public spaces to play in
- They offer children more choices by showing them games, activities and acting as positive role models.

Play Rangers are working in a range of parks Bath & North East Somerset Council. Contact the Family Information Service to find out where they are and what activities are being offered in your area.

Information about services and activities specifically for Families with Disabled Children and Young People

As part of the Family Information Service we have a dedicated worker who provides information and advice to families with a disabled child or young person. Families are supported to identify and access services, activities and play opportunities that will meet their families needs.

A newsletter of useful and current information is produced three times per year and the Rainbow Resource Directory of Services, currently a printed document, will be available in September as a searchable website service for families at www.rainbowresource.org.uk

Contact the Development Worker for more information using the FIS freephone number **0800 073 1214** or email fis@bathnes.gov.uk

Positive Activities for older children and teenagers

Bath & North East Somerset Council's Youth Service works with young people aged 11-25 years old, although it focuses its work on those aged 13-19 years. The Youth Service employs a range of full-time and part-time, experienced and professionally trained staff, who support, challenge and enable the learning of young people in order that they may realise their full potential.

The Youth Service runs youth centres, youth activities, the local Duke of Edinburgh's Award, organises project work on issues such as drugs, participation, crime prevention, community safety, health, homelessness and the environment. This promotes the social and economic inclusion of all young people so they can contribute to, influence and be valued as a part of their community and society as a whole.

If you want to find details about a wide variety of activities and more about what is going on locally why not visit the **B-Active** website www.B-Active.info or the Youth Service web pages at www.communityandliving/youthsupport/Pages/default.aspx

Financial Support for Parents

There are a range of benefits available to families who are in either full or part time employment, are not working or who are studying. As everyone's circumstances will be different, the Family Information Service strongly recommends you take specialist advice before making any decisions about applying for or claiming benefits.

Early Years Entitlement

The Government provides funding towards the cost of childcare called Early Years Entitlement (EYE) for all three and four year old

children in Bath and North East Somerset. There are three eligibility dates for receiving the entitlement during the year depending on the date of birth of your child. Call the Family Information Service to check your child's entitlement date.

Currently the entitlement covers a maximum of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year, however some providers may be prepared to offer further flexibility. EYE can be used in Nurseries, Pre-Schools and Playgroups in the Bath and North East Somerset area and some Childminders are also registered to receive the EYE. Contact the Family Information Service to check when your child is eligible and which providers in your area take EYE.

Childcare Voucher Schemes

Some employers offer a Childcare Voucher Scheme for their employees, which can be used to help with childcare costs. Childcare vouchers effectively let workers swap untaxed income for childcare. Users pay no income tax and national insurance on the money they spend on childcare (be aware that if your income drops below the national insurance threshold future entitlement to benefits may be affected). This is known as a salary sacrifice scheme and the vouchers requested are deducted from your pay packet prior to National Insurance and Tax being applied so giving you savings. Contact your employer to see if they offer a scheme.

General Benefits

We have included some useful links to benefit helplines and websites. For more information on the types of benefits available to families, contact Family Information Service.

Working Tax Credits/Child Tax Credit

- Tel: 0845 300 3900
- <http://taxcredits.hmrc.gov.uk/Qualify/WhatAreTaxCredits.aspx>
- www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCreditsandChildBenefit/TaxCredits/Gettingstarted/whoqualifies/Childrenandtaxcredits/index.htm

Child Benefit

- Child Benefit Office PO Box 1, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE88 1AA
- Tel: 0845 302 1444

Citizens Advice Bureau

- Tel 0844 477 2020
- www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/life/benefits/benefits_for_families_and_children.htm

General Benefits

- www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCreditsandChildBenefit/TaxCredits/peoplewhohelpothers/Entitlementtablesfortaxcredits/DG_174821
(entitlement tables for those who don't work but have children)
- www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCreditsandChildBenefit/TaxCredits/peoplewhohelpothers/Entitlementtablesfortaxcredits/Youworkandalsohavechildren/index.htm
(entitlement tables for those who work and have children, with various pages available depending on hours worked, if childcare paid for etc)
- www.direct.gov.uk/en/DioI1/DoltOnline/DoltOnlineByCategory/DG_172666
(tax credits calculator)

Useful Information - Bath & North East Somerset Council

Family Information Service

Advice, information and support for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-20. Contact details on the back cover.

The Disabled Children's Team

The Disabled Children's Team consists of Social Workers and an Occupational Therapist dedicated to serving disabled children and young people up to the age of 18 in Bath and North East Somerset. They work with children and their families where a child has learning difficulties/disabilities and/or a physical and/or sensory impairment.

Tel: 01225 825307 or visit

www.bathnes.gov.uk/healthandsocial/disabilities/disabledchildren/Pages/default.aspx

Parent Partnership Service

Bath & North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service has a statutory duty, under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, to provide information, advice and guidance to parents and carers of children from pre-school up to the age of 19 years, who have been identified as having additional needs.

Tel: 01225 394294 or 01225 394382 or email

parent_partnership@bathnes.gov.uk

Schools Admissions

When your child starts school or moves school you will need to complete and return an application form to the Admissions & Transport Team. The form can be downloaded from their website and you can also complete the form online. The admissions procedure for all schools within Bath and North East Somerset appears in the booklet 'A Primary School for your child in Bath and North East Somerset' and 'A Secondary School for your child in Bath

and North East Somerset.' Both these booklets are available at www.bathnes.gov.uk/educationandlearning/Schoolsandcolleges/schooladmissions/Pages/default.aspx

or you can contact the Admissions Team on: 01225 394312 or by email admissions_transport@bathnes.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

Citizens Advice Bureau – Bath and North East Somerset

Tel: 0844 848 7919 or visit www.bathcab.org.uk

Contact-A-Family a helpline for the parents and carers of Disabled Children and Children with Additional Needs 0800 808 3555
www.cafamily.org.uk

Gingerbread offers information and advice to lone parents, through a telephone helpline, publications, and website.

Tel: 0808 802 0925 or visit the website www.gingerbread.org.uk

Family Lives is a national charity that works for, and with, parents.

Tel: 0808 800 2222 or visit the website www.familylives.org.uk

Working Families is the UK's leading work-life balance organisation.

Tel: 0800 013 0313 or visit the website www.workingfamilies.org.uk

How to contact us

Office hours

Monday - Thursday 8.45am - 4.45pm, Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm

There is an answerphone available outside of these hours.

By Telephone	0800 073 1214
By Text	07980 998906
By Email	fis@bathnes.gov.uk
Local Website	www.bathnes.gov.uk/fis

Or by visiting us at your local Children's Centre.

For information about where to find your nearest Children's Centre and details of local activities contact the Family Information Service.

This document or individual sections can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats. For further information on this service please contact Family Information Service on 0800 073 1214



75% recycled
This brochure is printed
on 75% recycled paper

Prepared by Bath & North East Somerset Council's Family Information Service and published
by Bath & North East Somerset Council's Print Services, Dartmouth Avenue, Oldfield Park, Bath BA2 1AS
DP 3282 08/11 AR