

## Holiday childcare top tips

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### Finding holiday childcare

There are a number of good sources for information about holiday childcare in your area:

- ✚ Your local authority Family Information Service will have information about local holiday childcare services. They can help you find childcare and also advice on getting support with childcare costs. You can find contact details for your local Family Information Service through a simple postcode search at [www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/finder](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/finder).
- ✚ While schools are not obliged to provide holiday childcare, many schools put parents in touch with local childcare services and activities, and may arrange some activities directly, often in partnership with other schools. You should contact your child's school to find out what support it offers to parents during the holidays.
- ✚ You may find details of local childcare providers on noticeboards at local schools, community centres, libraries, cafes and online. It is important to take up references for providers, particularly if they are not registered with Ofsted.
- ✚ Other parents' advice and experiences can be very useful. Remember, however, what works for one family may not be quite right for you! And, although personal feedback is helpful, informal information may not be as reliable as that offered by a school or local authority.

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### What is available?

There are typically a range of services available locally, including:

- ✚ Club and activities run by a school or group of schools.
- ✚ Independent holiday clubs, which offer varied activities and play opportunities, often developed around sports, drama or art.
- ✚ Childminders, who will look after your child in their own home and are registered with Ofsted. Childminders can often be flexible, for example caring for children before and after a holiday club.

- ✚ Nannies and home carers, who are employed directly by parents or through an agency and care for your children in your own home (and may arrange activities and trips). While all childminders must have minimum qualifications covering first aid, safety and child wellbeing, nannies may not have this training (though many do). You should always interview nannies and check references.

More advice about childcare options can be found online at [www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare).

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## Help with the costs of holiday childcare

If you are working, you may be able to get support to help pay for childcare:

- ✚ Parents who are in work and are eligible for working tax credit can claim up to 70 per cent of the costs of childcare for children aged up to 15 (or 16 for disabled children).
- ✚ If your employer offers childcare vouchers, these can be used to pay for holiday childcare for older children.

Childcare providers must be registered with Ofsted in order to be eligible for this support – most providers can register with Ofsted, including nannies and holiday clubs for older children.

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## What to do if you cannot find suitable childcare or activities for your child?

Although there is no entitlement to holiday childcare, local authorities have legal responsibilities to make sure that as far as possible, there is enough childcare for children aged up to 14 (or 18 for disabled children).

Not being able to access childcare is not just about lack of places. It could be that the only options available may not be suitable for your child, or are too expensive.

It is important that you tell your local authority if you cannot find suitable childcare as this encourages the local authority to identify and respond to problems. To raise your concerns you can:

- ✚ Tell your local Family Information Service if you are unable to find suitable childcare, and ask them about brokerage.

- ✚ You can also contact the Head of Early Years and Childcare Services or the Director of Children's Services at your local authority. Details of your local authority can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council>.
- ✚ If you are not satisfied with the response from your local authority, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at <http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint/>.
- ✚ You can also write to your MP <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>.
- ✚ If your child's school is not taking steps to help parents access out of school or holiday childcare, you can write to the school head teacher to raise your concerns. Schools may not realise they can help families unless they are aware of the demand from families. You may wish to encourage your school to consult with parents about their holiday childcare needs so that the school can respond accordingly.
- ✚ If your child is disabled or has special educational needs, the Family and Childcare Trust has developed resources to help you find suitable childcare, and make a complaint, at <http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare-children-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities>.

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## Other ways to manage childcare over the school holidays

If you have worked for your employer for more than one year, you can request unpaid parental leave to help you cover childcare during the school holidays. Employers need the request 21 days in advance, and guidance can be found at <http://www.acas.org.uk/parentalleave>

You can also ask your employer to allow flexibility during the summer holidays, such as home working or a change to your work timetable.

Some employers offer annualised hours contracts that help parents manage school holidays throughout the year. Further guidance on flexible working options are available at <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1616>