

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT NURSERY FOR YOU



**Choosing which of the many nurseries to send your child to can be a daunting task, but our tips will help make the options clearer for you.**

**Firstly, be clear on what you want.**

- Are you looking for full day care or term time only school days?
- Are you willing to pay for added extras, and if so, how much? For example at our school, we offer an 'all inclusive' package of extras which covers the cost of additional highly qualified staff, sports coaching, Montessori teaching, Forest School sessions, as well as all consumables.
- Is there a particular approach that is important to you - such as Montessori 'teaching', or spending most of the day outside, do you want play based learning etc.

Once you are clear about what it is you really want, you can research childcare providers in your area; most have websites and Facebook pages – ours are [www.delaceynurseries.co.uk](http://www.delaceynurseries.co.uk) and [www.facebook.com/elmwoodmontessori](https://www.facebook.com/elmwoodmontessori)

You can find out more from Ofsted reports. Ofsted look for very particular things, which may or may not be important to you, but they do give a good indication of quality. We are very proud to have an Ofsted 'Outstanding' rating. [www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk)

## Visiting Nurseries

The most important thing to look for when visiting a nursery is the feel of it. You need to know that your child will be loved and cared for, in an environment that suits them, with a philosophy that you believe in, and the best way to find this is by following your intuition.

Questioning can help you make up your mind if you are still unsure;

- Can the nursery accommodate your preferred attendance pattern and are there any fees to pay – there is no use falling in love with a nursery that cannot meet your needs.
- How many staff does that nursery have, do they have more than their ratio requires and how well qualified are they?
- How do the nursery know what they are doing is working? For example, at our nursery, we take part in various accreditation schemes to check our quality, but also assess progress that children make to ensure our children reach the highest standards.
- What do the nursery do for you as parents? How do they keep in touch? Are there events you can take part in? How will you know how to help children develop at home? We have all kinds of events at school, a restaurant, an art gallery, our Christmas Show, and keep in touch via EYLog, an online 'Learning Journal'.

Ultimately, to learn, a child needs to be happy and well settled at nursery, so these are the most important ingredients, and a great nursery will give you time and information to help you make this important decision and get it right!

We are always here to help you, so please just ask us and we will do whatever we can to help.



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CHILDCARE

# FUNDING OPTIONS

## Your Guide to Understanding the different childcare funding options available to reduce your childcare costs.

The government have a 'One Stop Shop' website for all things funding, where you can find out about all of the different funding options available, and which you might be eligible for, using your National Insurance number to check and then to claim. You can find the website by googling 'childcare choices' or visiting [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

Childcare funding can be complicated, so this is the best way to get all of the information in one place, but always feel free to talk to us for more information and to discuss your individual circumstances.

### Working Parents Funding

The children of working parents, aged 9 months and over, get 15 hours of funded childcare per week from September 2024, going up to 30 hours per week from September 2025.

This is available again the term after your child reaches 9 months of age, and covers 38 weeks of the year.

You can get 30 hours funded childcare if you (and your partner, if you have one) are in work (or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave), and each earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage equivalent for 16 hours a week, but neither you or your partner has a taxable income over £100,000.

To access this funding, you apply for a code, which then stays with you until your child moves up to Reception class when they are 4.

You can get 15/30 hours working parents funding at the same time as claiming Universal Credit, tax credits or childcare vouchers, though please note that this may affect your tax credits claim.

You will need to renew your code every three months, we suggest setting a reminder. You may lose your funding if your work situation changes, though you will still qualify for the 15 hours universal funding. Check your eligibility and make your claim here [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

### Two Year Old's

Your 2-year-old can get 15 hours of funded early education and childcare if you get one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit
- Tax credits and you have an annual income of under £16,190 before tax
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit) You can find out if you are eligible by visiting [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

### Universal 15 Hours for children over 3 years of age

Every three and four year old gets 15 hours of funded childcare for 38 weeks of the year – so during term time. This begins the term AFTER their third birthday. We will apply for this funding for you, and will automatically apply the funding to your invoice, you don't need to do anything at all.

### Tax-Free Childcare

You pay money into a government account, and the government add 20% to what you pay in. You then pay the money directly into our account. It is a very popular scheme for the children of working parents and is very easy to use. You can find out more and apply at [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

### Fair Funding

You will have seen in the press that these different funding streams usually do not cover the cost of providing a childcare place, yet providers of childcare need to be sustainable, and make enough money to be able to reinvest in your child's quality education, so you will be asked to pay 'additional services' and/or 'consumables' charges. These are both completely legal and unfortunately necessary. For more information, please visit [www.champagnenurseries.co.uk](http://www.champagnenurseries.co.uk)



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# FUSSY EATERS

**It can be worrying and frustrating when your child is a fussy eater, but it is pretty common and most children will go through at least a phase where they are fussy about what they eat.**

As parents we worry that our children are not eating enough, but this is very rarely the case, children regulate their intake surprisingly well and will not miss out if they don't eat much or many foods.

The first, and biggest tip for dealing with your fussy eater is not to let your frustration or worry show and make food a battle ground. If it takes 45 minutes to get one bite of food in, there is crying, shouting, bribing and threats, then it is most certainly not going well. If this is you, stop now! Stand back and try a new approach.

Remember that the aim here is for your child to have a balanced, healthy diet over the course of the day, not necessarily at every mealtime. If mealtimes are fun and relaxed, the eating part will of mealtimes will soon follow suit.

Here are some strategies to try out. Remember a strategy is unlikely to work immediately, you might need to stick to the strategy for a week or more before you see any progress. The idea with any of these tips is to set up your child to succeed, make it easy for them to get your praise.

- 1** Firstly, give your child much smaller portion sizes. If a child is unsure about a food, seeing a large amount of it might really put them off, and they have less to do to succeed in eating well. They can always have more if it goes well.
- 2** Secondly, try combining foods that you know they will eat with new foods. This can be a safer way into trying something new. Another good tip is to try separating foods on the plate, or serve foods in separate bowls while you try to introduce new foods
- 3** Thirdly, give your child their meal. If they refuse their meal, respect their decision without argument, fuss or any other reaction, but don't give them an alternative. Ask them to stay at the table for a few minutes while you eat and chat about your day. This might cause a big reaction for a few days, but if you stick to this no fuss mealtime, your child might quickly become keen to join in.
- 4** Four, if your child cries or shouts for a particular food, it can be ok to use it as bribery very occasionally – but please don't use this tool often as children will quickly learn what they need to do to get their favourite food and you won't have made any progress.
- 5** Five, let your child eat independently, it might be messy, but children want to be independent and do things for themselves, and something as simple as this might be holding them back from eating more.
- 6** And last but not least, talk to us at Elmwood Montessori School. We have a lot of experience with supporting fussy eaters, and often, being with other children who eat very well can be enough to encourage your child to expand their food choices.



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# SETTLING IN

**We know that starting school, often for the very first time, can be a daunting experience for us as parents, and for our children, but there are ways to make the process as easy and pain free as possible for you and your child.**

Children settle into nursery in different ways. Some are confident and march in as if they've been doing it all their lives, others take longer. You may experience clinginess, crying or tantrums for a period of time. Don't worry! We've all been there, but here is how to help

## Settling In Sessions & Positive Talk

We offer a flexible settling-in-session programme for all our families, and try to tailor what we offer to suit you and your child. The idea behind these is to familiarise the child with the setting, the staff and other children; to start to build relationships. You are welcome to stay during these sessions, or leave as you see fit. You can pick your child up early, or stay for the whole session, we are very flexible! You should talk to your child about starting nursery before they start. Tell them they will be going to a wonderful nursery for the cleverest children, and point us out every time you pass the building so that they begin to understand what is happening and aren't surprised when it does.

## Nursery key workers

Each child has a key worker who will be their main carer during their time at nursery. The key worker will get to know your child, will soon know their likes and dislikes, and will have some useful tricks for settling them. For example a child may like to start their day with a story in a quiet corner, or physical activity when their parent says goodbye.

## But what if my child cries inconsolably when I leave?

We all know how distressing it can be when your child is crying. The first thing to remember is that your child is crying because you are leaving, not because they are unhappy at nursery. Generally they will settle down very quickly after you are out of sight!

If you're not convinced then pop back for a sneaky peek ten minutes after you've "officially" left: 9 times out of 10 you'll find your child happily playing and getting on with nursery life. You are also very welcome to call or text us during the day to get an update on how your child is getting on.

## Making the goodbyes easier; here are 5 tips for making the goodbyes easier.

- 1** Take advantage of settling-in sessions. Familiarising a child with the nursery when you are present gives them confidence that it's a good place to be.
- 2** Arrive early. Try to build time in for staying. It can be easier to settle an upset child in a quieter environment before everyone else arrives, or to wait until later when other parents have dropped off and everyone else is settled for the day.
- 3** Use the "plaster approach". A quick, decisive goodbye is often better than a long, drawn out farewell! Returning for "just another kiss or cuddle" protracts the process and makes it unclear whether you are going or not.
- 4** Have a goodbye routine. Children like to know where they stand and what is coming next, so a goodbye routine is reassuring. Try "a kiss, and a big hug" to say goodbye and then leave. Remember to let them know when you're coming back too.
- 5** Never sneak away without saying goodbye. Tempting though it may be to avoid a scene it's not a great idea to leave without saying goodbye. Consider how you would feel if you thought your parent was still in the room and discovered they had left without a goodbye.

Finally, please also remember that we are here for you. If you are worried or upset, please talk to us. Let us know how your child is at home during settling in (and anytime), and remember that we will do our very best to accommodate you and your child, and make the settling in period as easy as we can!



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# TOILET TRAINING

**Toilet training can be a difficult skill to master and there is huge variation in the ages when children are ready for toilet training. Some children can be dry at 18 months and other won't master it until three years plus, with girls often being ready before boys. By the age of three, nearly all children are able to control their bladder and bowels during the day – becoming dry at night will often take longer.**

## Are you ready?

Sorting out your child's toilet training requires determination and commitment, so it's also important to think about whether YOU are ready. Think about what it means for you. You have to be prepared for setbacks and you will need to persist. But please don't worry, you are not alone, we will work with you and your child to make the journey as easy as possible. Please be clear though – YOU make the decision to toilet train your child, your child doesn't make the decision!

## Getting Started

The first sign that your child might be ready to start toilet training is when s/he starts to become aware of needing to go to the toilet, or notices that s/he has done a wee-wee or poo-poo in their nappy. Your child may tell you that this has happened.

It helps to introduce your child to the potty, or training seat, BEFORE you intend to start full training. It helps that your child is familiar with the potty and is happy to sit on it. You can encourage your child to sit on the potty at different times of day – at bathtime, while cleaning teeth, and when s/he are having her/his nappy changed for example.

OK, now you are ready to start in earnest! We recommend buying lots of cheap pants that you can just bin if needed, but let your child choose the designs, they will be keener to keep them dry if they like them.

It is key that once you decide to toilet train, you stick to your decision, even when there are setbacks. It will take much longer to get dry if some days are in nappies and some are not, that is very confusing for a child.

Take your child to the toilet every 20 minutes or so, and praise every success, no matter how small. Where your child didn't make it, don't get angry, just remind your child that they need to go to the toilet and up the number of times you take them to try.

You can buy travel potties if you are out and about a lot, a plastic bag over a car seat can be helpful, and working together with us at nursery will mean that it will all happen much faster – we can do this together!

The most important thing to remember is consistency and regularity – once out of nappies, stay out of them, and regular trips to the toilet, especially in the early days.

Between us at Elmwood Montessori School, we have a wealth of knowledge, experience, tips and tricks to make toilet training a little easier, so please ask us and work with us to make this transition as easy for our children, and you, as possible.



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WHY CHOOSE

# MONTESSORI?

**Montessori Early Years education is different to traditional nursery school. Montessori teaching is a particular method of actual teaching that puts your individual child at the very centre of everything that we do.**

Each child spends one-to-one time with their key teacher every day, working on an educational programme unique to them. Children thrive under that personal attention, becoming resilient, strong, inquisitive little learners who want to know more.

The Montessori Method focuses on learning through doing. Children get to experience for themselves what we teach, they don't have to take our word for it – they can investigate and explore for themselves

The Montessori approach is holistic and aims to develop the whole child. Fundamental to the approach is the belief that a child's early years from birth to six are the period when they have the greatest capacity to learn.

Montessori children learn how to be self-motivated and independent, with a sense of respect for themselves, others and their environment. The child's self esteem is central to Montessori education; a positive self-concept is the foundation for learning success.

The Montessori environment is child-centred; it is designed to meet the child's need for self-construction. The environment is responsive to the continually changing needs of the growing child.

The method's emphasis on multi-age grouping benefit children in many ways. Children of differing education levels, abilities, and ages are grouped together and taught to learn from one another. Younger children begin to emulate the older children's attitudes and behavior, and older children learn about caring and mentoring their younger classmates.

Montessori schools inspire confidence, nurture the child's innate desire for learning, discovery, and social interaction skills in an environment where teachers are encouraging, engaging and value the individual child.

At Elmwood Montessori School, children learn how to learn, and this prepares each child for future academic and social excellence.

WE ARE

**'HIGHLY  
RECOMMENDED'**



5 STAR RATING ON FACEBOOK

'Charlotte, Louise, Charanjit and Sara you are doing an absolutely terrific job with the children in moulding them for the future thank you'



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# OUTDOORS

**'Let the children be free; encourage them; let them run outside when it is raining; let them remove their shoes when they find a puddle of water; and when the grass of the meadows is wet with dew; let them run on it and trample it with their bare feet; let them rest peacefully when a tree invites them to sleep beneath its shade; let them shout and laugh when the sun wakes them in the morning.'**

Dr Maria Montessori

It is a sad but true fact that children are spending less and less time outdoors than ever before, and the consequences of this are equally sad; children as young as 2 are afraid of getting dirty, children are heavier and less fit and strong, children are less adventurous and only know about nature through books rather than real life experiences.

But enough of the negative; outdoor time is not just important but ESSENTIAL for good physical and mental health and well-being. Did you know that just five minutes of fresh air can rapidly improve a young child's mental well-being and self esteem? Not bad for AIR!

A key Montessori focus is giving the child the freedom to explore exciting and interesting environments, the great outdoors being a prime environment, with lots and lots of thought provoking, exciting and wonderful things to discover without us adults needing to do anything at all!

Children are more active outside, they get fitter and stronger, they burn off energy, but more than this, they practice their gross motor, or large physical, movements and refine these as they play and explore.

Children learn so much from the outdoor environment, not just motor control and independence, which are the obvious ones, but also identification of natural things – stinging nettles, birds, flowers, different types of leaf.

We develop sophisticated language and sensory skills by exploring and talking about what we are doing; whereas can you experience the squelch of mud, the crunch of autumn leaves, the splash of rain than in the garden? Reading about these sensations is just not the same as actually feeling them for yourself. These rich experiences help children to make sense of their world, to love nature rather than be afraid of it.

With the help of us as adults, children learn how to keep themselves safe whatever the weather – warm clothes in winter, sunhats and long sleeves in summer; it is a cliché but true that there is no such thing as inappropriate weather, just inappropriate clothing!

At Elmwood Montessori School, we strongly believe learning is just as important outside as it is inside. We believe in growing brave and curious little adventurers who are excited to investigate, explore, learn and discover their world and all the beauty that it has to offer.



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# INDEPENDENCE

**'Help me help myself.'**

Dr Maria Montessori

Independence is about learning to do things for oneself, that includes not just skills like eating and toileting, but also making decisions or finding the confidence to try something new. Helping children to become independent is one of the major focus of the Montessori method, in fact a whole work area – 'Practical Life', is dedicated to developing these skills.

It is important, that as parents and educators, that we ensure children are given the opportunity to try things for themselves. We encourage independence by supporting children in, for example, many everyday tasks, such as hanging up clothes, pouring out drinks and tidying away toys. These activities all involve using physical co-ordination and make an excellent foundation for mark making and handwriting. When the children start nursery, they can self-register, and they even help prepare their own snack or help with chopping ingredients for tea. As adults, it is key to be patient.

We need to be encouraging towards children learning new skills and ensure they are given lots of praise for what they have achieved. Children will spill their drinks, put their shoes on the wrong way, or even forget to wash their hands after using the toilet, and this is OK – don't detract from their achievement by pointing out where they have gone wrong. They can take a pretty long time to try and complete tasks, so build that time into your day, these tasks are new skills and a child needs to learn and practice in order to master them and become independent. We can help them by providing child sized dustpan and brushes or tea towels so they can clean up after themselves for example.

The more independent a child grows the more their confidence grows as well. We must remember that praise for a little achievement helps to build a child's self-image and will give them the confidence to try even more new things independently. This confidence and belief in ones own ability is the perfect springboard to the next phases of learning – children can tackle maths, literacy, science and so on, already knowing that they can achieve and enjoy mastering new challenges, which is exactly the right mindset for learning.

A child's home is one of the best places for them to practise becoming more independent. Key areas to work on are independent eating and toileting; please see specific 1 Page Guides on these topics.

What is your child currently able to achieve? If your child can put their coat on, maybe they can try doing up one of the buttons or pulling up the zip once you have started it off. Children learn best by watching and then trying out what you may have shown them.

The kitchen can also be a good place for promoting independent behaviour, as your child might want to choose and wash a few vegetables, lay the table for dinner or get out some items from the fridge.

**'Montessori is an education for independence, preparing not just for school, but for life.'**

Dr Maria Montessori



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