

The Inspection Process

Information for Parents, Carers and Guardians

This leaflet outlines for parents the nature of the inspection process and the ways in which they can be involved.

INSPECTIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES

WHY IS YOUR PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE BEING INSPECTED?

Your centre has been allocated Government funding to provide pre-school education. All new providers are inspected as quickly as possible; most will be inspected within the first year of funding. Thereafter, inspections are carried out approximately every five years. In some circumstances, inspections may take place more frequently.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INSPECTIONS?

To promote the highest possible standards of education. To tell all those who need to know, such as the parents, the Department of Education (DE) and the Government, about the quality of the education being provided and about what needs to be changed if improvements are required.

WHO CARRIES OUT THE INSPECTION?

Inspectors from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) who have qualifications and experience in the education of young children. On most inspections, the ETI will be accompanied by an Associate Assessor.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN INSPECTION?

The inspectors will be evaluating the quality of education being provided for the children in their pre-school year and will assess how well:

- > the children have settled and are learning;
- > the children's individual needs are being met;
- > the working relationships between staff and children are helping to promote learning;
- > the centre ensures the care, welfare and protection of the children;
- > the play opportunities and other activities promote the children's learning and all round development;
- > the programme of activities is planned, organised and evaluated;
- > the children's progress is monitored and assessed;
- > the links and partnerships with external services are contributing to the centre's work;
- > the parents are kept informed of their children's progress; and
- > the centre is led, managed and resourced.

The inspectors will talk to the children about their play and may join with them in their activities. They will also talk to the staff, parents and any other adults in the centre about the provision being made.

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

You can give your views on how well the pre-school centre is doing by:

- > completing and returning the online parents' questionnaire;
- > speaking to an inspector at the start of the play session on the day of the inspection;
- > contacting the reporting inspector through a telephone call or letter to Mrs E Wells in the Inspection Services Branch (telephone number and address are indicated below);
- > writing to the Principal/Leader of the pre-school centre, or the proprietor if the centre is a private day nursery; and
- > writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INSPECTION?

The report will be available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

If the report finds that there are important areas for improvement, the staff and the Management Committee/Proprietor will be asked to prepare an action plan. A follow-up inspection will take place within 18 to 24 months.

Any parent who wishes to comment on any aspect of the inspection or the report, or who wants to receive any further information about the inspection process should write to The Chief Inspector at the Department of Education.

The Chief Inspector, the Reporting Inspector and Inspection Services Branch may be contacted at:

**Department of Education,
Rathgael House,
Rathgill
43 Balloo Road,
BANGOR,
Co Down
BT19 7PR**

Telephone: 028 9127 9726