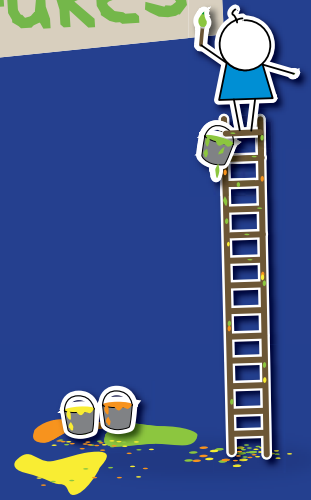
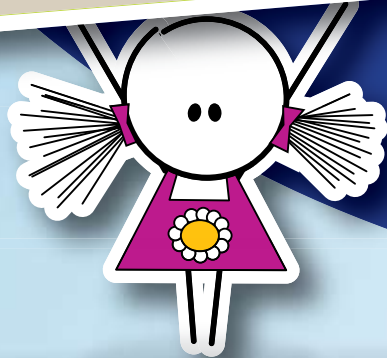


Making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people

**BUILDING
BRIGHTER
FUTURES**

Hertfordshire Quality Standards



How do I know my childcare is high quality?

Choosing childcare and early years education is a big step for families and choosing where to send your child can be a difficult decision. Looking for quality services should be a priority because childcare providers offering a high quality of service and care helps your child's development and progress and gives you peace of mind.

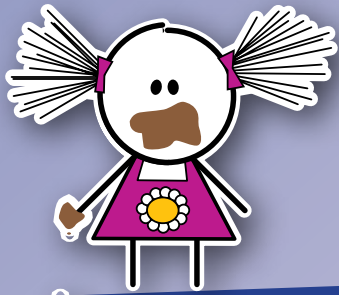
Trust and confidence in your childcare provider are essential factors when making this important decision.

Hertfordshire Quality Standards (HQS) is a county led scheme that ensures childcare providers are constantly improving and developing through a process of self-evaluation. Childcare providers include day nurseries, childminders, pre-schools, early years foundation stage classes in schools, and also include care provided outside of school hours such as in breakfast clubs, after-school clubs or holiday schemes.

How does it work?

- Childcare providers are asked to consider their current practices and look at ways to continue to improve and develop. This can include enabling staff to do additional training
- The scheme is supported by external mentors who help the childcare provider through the HQS process
- Following an external assessment, successful providers are awarded with the HQS blue balloon kitemark. This award lasts for three years and parents are encouraged to look for this quality achievement when selecting childcare.





"How
do I know
I will be
safe and
welcome?"



What does it mean to me as a parent?

Quality services in the early years have been shown to improve achievement for children later in life. Knowing that your child is safe, well looked-after and developing well with the support of their childcare provider gives you essential peace of mind.

What else can I do?

- Read the latest Ofsted report for any childcare provider (available online at www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- Ask staff about their training and qualifications
- Arrange to visit the provider with your child
- Ask if the childcare provider is taking part in a quality improvement scheme
- Ask the questions that matter to your family.

For more information about the Hertfordshire Quality Standards scheme, call the Quality Coordinator on 01438 844796 or email hertsqualitystandards@hertscc.gov.uk

You can also contact the **Family Information Service** on 0300 123 4052 email fis@hertscc.gov.uk

