

Quick Guide – Space required for Parent and Toddlers

Since all of the parents visiting your group will be responsible for their own children, you won't need to be Ofsted registered. However, there are certain safety levels and legislation that need to be met before you open for business, including health and safety, fire regulations, the Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

You should consider the following points when deciding on a venue:

- Is the heating operating properly and is the system safe?
- Is the floor smooth and easy to clean after each session?
- Are the toilets and basins in a good order and who will be appointed to wash them?
- Is there sufficient space to safely store toys and equipment?
- Are the doors, cupboards and latches childproof or will you need to make them safe?
- Is there adequate space for pushchairs?
- Is there any hazardous furniture that can be made safe?
- Where are the fire exits? Are there fire extinguishers? If so, when was the last time they were checked?

Extra safety measures:

- Ensure there are clear ground rules to promote safety at the group - no access to the kitchen for children, a separate space for babies and no hot drinks near the children for example.
- Always secure the external door
- Create different activities in different parts of the room
- Use signs or posters to communicate the safety rules and encourage good etiquette such as sharing and taking turns
- Be aware of allergies and the fact that healthy options will always be preferred.
- When buying toys, check they are safe and carry that all important British Toy & Hobby Association Lion Mark. Toys with small parts are generally best avoided and large activity toys such as slides and climbing frames will need to be safety checked when constructed with mats placed on the floor.
- Set up clear policies governing illness and ensure these are clearly communicated with any parent who attends. If a child has chickenpox for example, you'll need to ensure they are kept at home until they recover to limit spreading the illness to other children. You'll also need to ensure parents sign a consent form before taking any photographs of their children and store private data (with parents contact details) safely.

As parents or carers stay with their children in toddler group, you do not need to have a certain number of adults on your team, just a number that makes the workload acceptable for everyone. But you do need to make sure that your venue is not over-crowded. Current guidelines (The Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012) says:

The premises and equipment must be organised in a way that meets the needs of children. In registered provision, providers must meet the following indoor space requirements

- Children under two years: 3.5 m² per child.
- Two year olds: 2.5 m² per child.
- Children aged three to five years: 2.3 m² per child.