

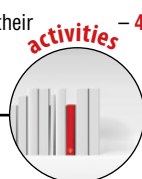
## Early Years Care

There is a wide choice of childcare available today.

- **Day nurseries** look after and educate children from a few months old to 5 years old through play opportunities. They can be private, community, workplace or local authority run, always staffed by qualified and experienced people who can offer either part-time or full-time day care.
- **Preschools**, also known as playgroups, operate in a variety of community venues<sup>1</sup> and provide integrated care and education for children aged 2 to 5 years during term time, with a wide range of activities which offer children the opportunity to learn through play.
- A **childminder** is someone (other than a parent, relative, person with parental responsibility, or foster parent) looking after one or more children under 8 years of age, in their own home for over two hours a day, for reward. This is a very popular professional career in Great Britain and provides consistent high standards of care in partnership with parents. Childminders work from home and can choose the hours that they wish to offer and the ages of the children that they care for. Occasional crèches<sup>2</sup> are provided for events such as training courses or conferences, while regular crèches may be part of a shopping centre, sports facility, or workplace. A childminder's main responsibility is to provide a safe and stimulating environment for children to play in, learn and develop new skills. Some childminders specialise in looking after children with special needs, resulting from physical or learning disabilities. Childminding suits people who can keep calm under pressure as the work can be both physically and mentally demanding.<sup>3</sup> Knowledge of first aid, hygiene and nutrition is useful, and attention to safety is very important.
- **Nursery nurses** (also called child development officers) provide care and education for children aged between 0 and 5 years old. They plan and supervise stimulating play and work activities, like reading, number work, computer activities, outdoor games and trips. Nursery nurses need good communication skills as they work closely with parents, carers, and with other professionals like doctors, health visitors, speech therapists, social workers and child psychologists. Sometimes they have to write reports to monitor each child's progress. Nursery nurses must have a general knowledge of children's physical, intellectual and emotional development, and they may work in council run or private nursery schools, day nurseries, hospitals, private homes, and crèches.
- **Nannies** are nursery nurses who look after babies and very young children in private homes, usually when parents go out to work. They are responsible for dressing, feeding and changing them, but some nannies are also responsible for domestic tasks like cleaning, cooking, tidying up children's rooms, and sometimes washing and ironing their clothes. Nannies use books, toys and other activities to stimulate the child. Their essential qualities are a sense of fun, stamina,<sup>4</sup> and energy, along with patience, tolerance, reliability and the ability to stay calm in emergencies.

### Glossary

<sup>1</sup> places – <sup>2</sup> places where babies are looked after while their parents are at work – <sup>3</sup> needing a lot of effort and skill <sup>4</sup> physical or mental strength



### ↓ READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions.

- |                                                    |                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 What are day nurseries?                          | 4 Where do childminders work?                            |
| 2 How do children learn in preschools?             | 5 What are the main duties of nursery nurses?            |
| 3 Who is a childminder and what are his/her tasks? | 6 What are the most important qualities of a good nanny? |