



WELCOME TO THE CHILDCARE CENTRE



Thank you for your enquiry about Darlington College Childcare Centre.

Darlington College Childcare Centre provides an extensive range of childcare services for children 6 weeks to school age at its modern, purpose built centre at Central Park.

The college has been providing childcare since 1998 and has established a reputation for providing first class childcare, currently graded good with areas of outstanding practice by Ofsted. Feedback from current users is also excellent.

This brochure will give you a small insight into our Centre. If you have not already visited the Centre come and see for yourself what we have to offer, we would be delighted to show you around and answer any questions.

**Andrea Brennan
Childcare Centre Manager**

Our vision

- Excellence in Childcare and Early Learning, where learning is fun!

Our aims

- To maximise every child's potential.
- To respect and value partnership with parents, families and professionals.
- To deliver outstanding care in a safe, healthy and inclusive environment.
- To continue to develop a dynamic professional workforce.



Our values

Commitment - To maintain outstanding care and learning for all children, their families and communities.

Ambition - To support every child to fulfil their potential.

Respect - Respect each and every child and their family's views, needs, cultures and beliefs.

Excellence - To be outstanding in everything we do and share good practice.

What we offer

The Childcare Centre provides professional childcare for parents/carers whether you are accessing a programme of study at Darlington College or working full or part time. The Centre is open to the public; however Darlington College students and staff have priority for places.

- Nursery - full day, half day and sessional care for children aged 6 weeks to 4 years.

Did you know we also offer -

- Free Early Years Entitlement for 3-4 year olds - 15 hours and, if eligible and places available, we offer extended hours up to 30 hours.
- Free Childcare for 2 year olds - 15 hours (if eligible).

Centre opening hours

Monday to Friday 8.00 am – 5.30 pm

Sessions provided

Full day: 8.00 am – 5.30 pm

Half days: 8.00 am – 1.00 pm or 1.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Nursery session: 9.00 am – 12.00 pm or 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm

The Centre is open all year round with the exception of all public bank holidays, 1 staff training day at Easter and the period between Christmas and New Year.

The team

Our dedicated, highly qualified and experienced childcare team are committed to your child's care, learning and development. The team offer a warm, friendly and caring environment that ensures your child gets the best start in life.

The setting is managed by a Centre Manager and two Co-ordinators with Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). Each room is overseen by a Room Leader and supported by Early Years Practitioners.

Working with parents and carers

At the Centre we recognise that parents/carers know their child best. Parents' and carers' views, wishes and values are paramount and we are committed to building open and positive relationships.

'Parents are very happy with the care their children receive and some comment that the nursery go 'above and beyond' to support them.'

(OFSTED 2015)

We work with parents to follow and maintain children's routines through daily information sharing. We encourage families to be involved with planning, home learning and their child's learning journeys. The Childcare Centre encourages parents to be involved in their child's development and we ask for their views on their child's starting points. We hold parents meetings throughout the year to give parents the opportunity to discuss their child's development, and to look at their child's personal Learning Journey which highlights the progress and WOW moments their child has made whilst at the Childcare Centre and the fun they have had along the way!

Key Persons

All children who attend the Centre will be allocated a 'Key Person' who will support the child through transition into Nursery and onto their next stage of development or starting school. The Key Person will also be responsible for looking at how they can help and support their key child to learn and develop.

'Children are well prepared for school.'

OFSTED 2015

'A very strong key -person system that includes daily planned time for staff to spend with individual children supports children to feel secure.'

OFSTED 2015

Feedback from parents/carers

"Everything we have requested gets done to the highest standard."

"Really amazed how well my son has developed in such a short space of time – brilliant work."

"I don't know where you get such wonderful staff from! They are all so lovely and I trust them completely. Nothing is ever too much, excellent nursery."

Feedback from children

"I love to do everything, my favourite things are drawing and colouring" George (Age 3)

"I like to play outside" Isla (Age 3)

"I like play" Freya (Age 2)

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Centre follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework which provides statutory requirements and guidance for practitioners caring for children from birth to five years old. The framework supports practitioners to provide opportunities and experiences for children, to enhance their learning and development, while working in partnership with parents and other professionals.

The ethos of the EYFS and our Centre is to promote a balance of child initiated play and adult led play within all age groups, and build upon children's interests in order to support their individual learning needs.

Our staff ratio is:

- Birth to 2 years: **1 adult to 3 children**
- 2 to 3 years: **1 adult to 4 children**
- 3 to 4 years: **1 adult to 8 children**

'Children throughout the nursery take part in fun and exciting activities that capture their interest and extend their learning.'

OFSTED 2015

'Children's welfare and happiness is at the centre of everything in this nursery. Therefore, children's emotional well-being is supported exceptionally well.'

OFSTED 2015

'The nursery environment is welcoming, dynamic, and fully supports the needs of all children across all areas of learning.'

OFSTED 2015



Nursery rooms

The Centre provides outstanding care and learning opportunities in a safe, secure and modern environment.

Yellow and green room

The team in the 0-2 year old rooms plan to meet all the children's individual care routines and plan around the children's individual interests, ensuring that their developmental needs are encouraged and supported. All children have a Key Person who will support transition from home to nursery ensuring continuity and positive relationships for the children and their families.

Within the children's usual day, we will encourage them to enjoy a wide variety of sensory experiences and activities, from exploring treasure baskets and jelly to investigating fruit and vegetables. We also encourage exploration both indoors and in our outdoor area. We also like to take our children on walks to various places including the shops, the park and to feed the ducks. We offer a range of planned activities including story time, painting and rhyme time where the children can have fun while learning.





Blue Room

The emphasis of the 2-3 year old room is to create a relaxed, inclusive and stimulating environment where children can have fun and learn at their own pace. Each child is treated as an individual ensuring that they are respected and valued. Children have the freedom to make choices and explore a variety of interesting activities.

All the children have the opportunity to access a very stimulating natural outdoor area on a daily basis, ensuring their individual learning needs are met. Practitioners recognise that the children are at a vital stage in learning and developing very important social skills which will help them throughout life, for example developing their language, independence, confidence and friendships. We promote group and sharing activities which teach the children to be considerate of others, helpful and kind and to learn to share from an early age. Children also have the opportunity to go on outings to various places including nature parks, the farm, and the sea-side. This gives children the opportunity to learn about the outside world and their local environment.

Red Room

Within the 3-5 year old room each child is treated as an individual and their views, opinions and ideas are respected and valued. An excellent range of effective learning experiences and play opportunities are provided and are based on children's individual interests. Practitioners effectively support the children's interests and ideas to ensure they make exceptional progress.

All children have the space and freedom to make choices and decisions about what they wish to do, therefore involving the children in planning and carrying out their own activities is a priority. Children are also involved in documenting their own learning through watching video clips of themselves and informing practitioners of what they are doing. This allows the children to take control of their own learning while developing their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Developing healthy practices in young children's play is an important role within the Red Room. All children have direct and daily access to excellent outdoor provision where practitioners encourage children to access the garden area regardless of the unpredictable weather. Children are supported to wear suitable clothing and we provide appropriate clothing to enhance this skill.

Healthy snacks are also provided and we operate a 'snack bar' where children can choose when they would like to eat a snack and are involved in preparing their own snack where possible. Additionally we promote independence and self-help skills in the Red Room to prepare children for school.



Visitors and special events

We have lots of visitors who come to the Centre to support the children. Staff from the library involve the children in rhyme and story time; we also support the children to become aware of the world around them by having visits from the road safety team, the stranger danger team (including dogs Jet and Ben), the fire brigade and the police. We also promote special events to involve parents in our fundraising, celebrations, festivals, cultural days, summer and Christmas fayres, teddy bears picnics and stay and play sessions which are all a lot of fun for everyone!





Healthy meals and snacks

Lynn, our Centre's cook, has been awarded a 5 star rating for excellent standards of hygiene from an Environmental Health Inspection.

Our on-site cook provides freshly prepared healthy meals and snacks. A homemade hot meal is provided at lunchtime including dessert, and healthy snacks are given twice a day. Special dietary needs are catered for and our cook will meet with parents and discuss requirements to ensure individual children's dietary needs are met. The Childcare Centre also supports families with weaning. Drinks of water and milk are provided and are available to the children throughout the day.

Example of the Centre's lunch menu

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Jacket Potato with Beef and Vegetable Chilli Cheese *** Rice Pudding	Crumb Topped Fish New Potatoes Carrots Broccoli Parsley Sauce *** Fruit cake and	Gammon Roast Potatoes Cheese and Leek Sauce Cauliflower Peas *** Fromage Frais	Chicken Curry Rice Poppadum's *** Banana and Custard	Cottage Pie Cabbage Sweetcorn *** Fruit Muffin
Lasagne Garlic Bread *** Fromage Frais	Sweet and Sour Chicken Stir Fry Vegetables Noodles *** Bread and Butter Pudding	Roast Beef Roast Potatoes Baked Red Cabbage Carrots *** Ice Cream	Homemade Fish Cakes Baked Mixed Vegetable *** Rice Pudding	Vegetarian Sausage and Gravy Mixed Vegetable Mashed potato *** Fruit Salad

Example of the Centre's snack menu

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Apples and Milk *Stewed Apple	Bananas and Milk	Melon and Milk	Pears and Milk	Kiwi and Milk
Sultanas and Pears *Soaked Sultanas	Bread Fingers and Jam	Toast	Cheese and Crackers	Bananas and Pears

The Childcare Centre does not provide children with breakfast or tea; however, parents are welcome to bring in breakfast, a packed lunch and other provisions (if preferred) for their child. We do encourage parents/carers to include healthy options within these and are happy to give advice and information regarding this. ***We have a no nut policy within the Childcare Centre.***

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF A CHILDCARE PLACE

Childcare fees

The College Finance Department invoice fees. These are charged monthly in advance and must be paid by the 10th of each month at the Childcare Centre Office or at Central Point at the main College. The fees will be charged according to the childcare fee structure of 51 weeks per year.

Full fees are required for 51 weeks per year including payment for non-attendance, sickness and holidays. The Centre will be closed on Bank Holidays, a staff training day at Easter and the period between Christmas and New Year. There will be no charge for these days or any other days that the college may close.

Annual childcare fee increases

The childcare fees will be reviewed once a year on the 1st of August and prior notice will be given regarding childcare fee increases.

Non-payment of fees

Payment of fees will be monitored by the College Finance Department and non-payment of fees will result in the termination of the childcare place.

Late collection of child

Children who are collected late from the Centre will incur an additional charge. The charge of £5.00 will begin from the end of the pre booked session, half day or full day. An additional charge of £5.00 will apply for every 15 minutes thereafter. Parents are required to arrive at the Centre before our closing time of 5.30pm to allow time for feedback on your child's day. This ensures the childcare staff can leave on time after their shift. If staff are late leaving this incurs a cost to the setting for overtime payments. We would appreciate your support with this.

Absences

Please inform us when your child is absent due to illness or cannot attend due to any other reason, especially if they have an infectious disease or head lice as advice and support can be given to other parents regarding these

Holidays

Full fees are required for non-attendance, sickness and holidays. The Centre will be closed on Bank Holidays, a staff training day at Easter and between the Christmas and New Year period; there will be no charge for these days or any other days that the college may close. Credits are not given for sessions missed due to absence, illness or holidays.

Changes to child's details

Please can you notify the Centre immediately of any changes to your child's/children's details e.g. home address, emergency contacts etc. This is to ensure that records are up to date in the event of an emergency.

Termination of place/intention to decrease childcare place

The Centre requires one month's notice in writing to terminate a childcare place or to decrease a childcare place. Full fees are required for the period of notice, even if the place is not used during this time.

Illness and infectious diseases

The Centre has a sick child policy in line with Early Years OFSTED regulations. If your child is unwell whilst at the Centre a member of team will contact you and consult you regarding what will be the best for your child. If it is deemed that it is not in your child's or other children's best interests to be at the Centre, the Centre Manager will request that your child be picked up as soon as possible by yourself or an emergency contact. If your child has an infectious disease we have set guidelines and exclusion times detailed within the Public Health Agency document - 'Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings' that must be adhered to. This information is displayed on the parent's notice board.

Contracts

All parents will be required to sign a contract stating the terms and conditions of your child's/children's place/ places. Your child's attendance at the nursery is considered to be acceptance of these terms and conditions.

SUPPORT WITH CHILDCARE FEES

Free childcare for 2 year olds

The Centre offers free early education and care places for 15 hours per week during term time only, the term after their second birthday. If your child attends the Centre more than 15 hours per week the funding will be spread out over 51 weeks and deducted from your weekly fees. Please ask the childcare team for more information about availability of free childcare places for two year olds and to check eligibility.

Early Education Funding for 3 and 4 years olds (15 hours)

The Centre is registered to receive funding for three and four year olds. The funding is given for the child the term after their third birthday and will continue until the child enters school. If your child attends the Centre more than 15 hours per week the funding will be spread out over 51 weeks and deducted from your weekly fees. Please ask the childcare team for more information about availability of free childcare places for three and four year olds.

Early Education Funding for 3 and 4 years olds (30 hours)

From September 2017 the government have introduced additional funding for eligible working parents of three and four year olds. If eligible, you will be entitled to up to 30 hours a week of free childcare. All 3 and 4 year old children will still be eligible for the original 15 hours of free childcare per week.

The eligibility criteria for this entitlement is as follows:

You, and any partner, must each expect to earn (on average) at least £120 a week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage). If you, or your partner, are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or you are unable to work because you are disabled or have caring responsibilities, you could still be eligible.

You will not be eligible for the additional hours of free childcare if you, or your partner, expect to earn a joint income of £100,000 or more.

To apply for the additional hours you can go on to the HMRC website which provides an eligibility checking service. If you are eligible you will receive a code which you will need to bring in to us here at the Childcare Centre. The link to this is <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>.

If you are eligible for the additional hours they can be taken term time only over 38 weeks per year or universally over 51 weeks per year. Please could you make an appointment to see me to discuss this and your preferred options.

Tax credits

The Centre can be used as a childcare provider for the Working Families and Childcare Tax Credits. For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk.

Childcare vouchers

We do accept childcare vouchers from employers.

Financial support for students

Financial support may be available to provide help with childcare fees, subject to status. Please contact the Student Finance Team on **01325 503037**.



CHILDCARE SERVICE POLICIES

The Childcare Service team have worked together to produce policies to ensure that the Centre works to current legislation while meeting the needs of all children. Here is a brief outline of some of the main policies; the full policy booklet can be obtained from the Childcare Centre.

Health and safety policy

The Childcare Centre is committed to providing high quality, consistent health and safety practices for children, parents/carers and visitors to the Centre. Included in our Health and safety policy is information stating that children are **not permitted to wear earrings** within the Childcare Centre. This is to ensure the safety of all children and to protect children from injury such as, having earrings pulled out, swallowing earrings or being pierced from the back of the earring. The Childcare Centre staff have the right to ask parents to remove earrings if their child comes in to the Childcare Centre wearing earrings. The Childcare Centre also operates a **NO NUT POLICY**. No-one is permitted to bring into the centre any food or drinks containing nuts.

Equal opportunity policy

The Childcare Centre actively promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and works in accordance with key legislation. We welcome respect and value every child and family treating everyone as an individual regardless of gender, age, race, belief/religion, marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, disability or individual needs.

Inclusion policy

The Childcare Centre is fully committed to providing care and support to children with individual needs and their families. We recognise that positive early intervention leads to the development of a good self-image and to strong foundations for future learning.

Positive behaviour policy

The Childcare Centre is fully committed to promoting good behaviour standards within our setting. We will treat all children as individuals and support children with behavioural needs.

Handover/collection policy

The Childcare Centre staff will ensure safe collection and hand over of all the children in their care. It is essential you inform us of who will be collecting your child and introduce any adults to relevant staff. Alternative arrangements will require designated authority from the parent/carer.

Confidentiality Policy

The Childcare Service aims to maintain confidentiality at all times. Children's details are maintained securely and information regarding children will only be discussed with and given to relevant staff.

Safeguarding

At the Centre we are committed to both the Darlington Safeguarding Board's procedures and guidance and College procedures. All staff have a duty and responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from abuse and neglect.

Parents as Partners

The Childcare Centre promotes positive relationships at all times, recognising the importance of children's relationships with both parents. We believe that good relationships with both parents contribute to children's positive self-esteem, behaviour and also healthy future relationships.

In the event of parental separation - if there is no legal documentation provided and there are no safeguarding concerns regarding a parent - then the Childcare Centre has a legal responsibility to involve both parents in their child's life at nursery. This will include inviting both parents to parents' meetings, parental interaction days and any other special events that we hold at the Centre. Both parents will also receive a Childcare Centre newsletter, copies of their child's Learning Journey and any other information that is shared by the Childcare Centre. No parent will be permitted to remove the other from the emergency contact list and if other contacts are to be added or removed then both parents must be informed and in agreement.

If communication has unfortunately broken down between parents, the Childcare Centre must remain impartial and adopt the same practices as stated above. This is to ensure that the Childcare Centre acts in the best interests of the child/ren. If any safeguarding issues or concerns arise then the normal safeguarding procedures will be adhered to as to ensure the safety of the child/ren.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I apply for a place at the Childcare Centre?

To reserve a place for your child at the Centre please complete a waiting list form (enclosed in pack). If a place is not available your child's details will be submitted onto the Centre's waiting list. Places will be offered according to availability within the Centre, taking into account the following: registration requirements, the child's age, child to adult ratios and admission criteria.

If a childcare place is offered and is not required until a later date the childcare place can be retained for one month only, however half fees will be required during this period to secure the childcare place. At the end of this period the place will either be lost or full fees will be required each month, in advance, to secure the place long term.

Is there a settling in period for my child?

Visits and settling in times are arranged according to each individual child's needs.

When you employ staff are they vetted thoroughly?

Every member of our team have undergone stringent safeguarding checks and hold a Disclosure and Barring Service check (Previously CRB).

Are all your staff members childcare qualified?

All of our team members are childcare qualified and regularly attend professional training to keep up to date with new childcare developments.

Are there any first aiders in the Childcare Centre?

Almost all of our staff members are first aid trained. There is always a first aider in the building and always a first aider included on trips out of the setting.

Contact us

Andrea Brennan (Centre Manager)

Central Park

Haughton Road

Darlington

DL1 1DR

01325 503144

Childcare@darlington.ac.uk