Darlington College Childcare Centre

Thank you for your enquiry into Darlington College Childcare Centre.

We are OFSTED graded **Outstanding!**

“I feel the staff really listen to what we need, take this into account and are incredibly supportive and flexible. Fantastic environment and great staff, would highly recommend the Centre to anyone” – Feedback from Parents

Darlington College Childcare Centre is a modern, purpose built centre that provides an extensive range of childcare services for children from 6 weeks to school age!

Darlington College have been providing childcare since 1998 and has an established reputation for providing first class childcare! Take a look at our most recent OFSTED report January 2019 where we were graded Outstanding.

If you are looking for a childcare place and considering Darlington College Childcare Centre, this brochure will give you an insight into our centre and answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

Why not contact a member of the childcare office team and book a tour of the facilities? We would love to show you what we have to offer! Please call **01325 503144** to book your tour today.

Andrea Brennan,
Childcare Centre Manager
Darlington College Childcare Centre- Our Ethos

At Darlington College Childcare Centre, the whole childcare team have the child at the centre of everything we do! Their safety and care is a high priority to all staff working at Darlington College Childcare Centre.

Our Vision- Is to create excellence in childcare and learning! Ensuring learning is fun.

Our Aims - To ensure we maximise every child’s potential whilst delivering outstanding care. To respect and value partnership with parents, families and professionals. To create a healthy, Safe and Inclusive environment for children to play and develop. To continue to develop a dynamic professional workforce.

Our Values - We are Committed to maintain outstanding care and learning for all the children, their families and communities! We have Ambition to support every child to fulfil their potential. We Respect each and every child and their families’ views, needs, cultures and beliefs. We promote Excellence in everything we do and share good practice.

What we offer …

The Childcare Centre provides professional childcare for parents/carer's either studying at Darlington college / University, or working fulltime/part time. The Centre is open to the public however Darlington College Students and Staff do have priority over nursery places.

Centre opening times

Monday-Thursday 8.00am- 5.30pm

Friday 8.00am-5.00pm

Sessions provided:

Full day: 8.00am-5.30pm (Friday until 5.00pm)

Half day: 8.00am-1.00pm or 1.00pm-530pm (Friday until 5.00pm)

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

The Centre is open all year round with the exception of all public bank holidays, the period between Christmas and new year and 1 staff training day that takes place during the Easter period.

Free childcare funding …

We also offer Free Early Years Entitlement for 3-4 year olds (15 hours), Extended entitlement for working parents (Up to 30 hours) and Free childcare for 2 year olds (15 hours). This depends on eligibility and the spaces available. For more information on funding please visit: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk or refer to our funding information page 8-9 of this document.
The Childcare Centre Team

The Childcare Centre team are dedicated and highly qualified! In our recent OFSTED Report, it was said that ‘The experienced managers and staff demonstrate a wonderful dedication to the families who attend the nursery and have extremely high expectation for all children.’ 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 Childcare Centre Manager, Childcare Centre Deputy Manager and Childcare Centre Co-ordinator with Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). Each room is overseen by an experienced Childcare Room Leader and supported by experienced Early Years Practitioners.

One of the parents commented ‘Staff are always accommodating to requests in supporting routines’ –Feedback from Parents

Working with parents and carers

Play and Stay Session

At the centre we recognise the importance of building a positive relationship with parents and carers. After all you know your child best. When your child starts the nursery we will ask you on your second visit to sit with a member of the team and have a discussion around your child development. This helps to give us a head start in getting to know your child.

In our most recent OFSTED report the inspector noted that ‘Parents speak very highly of the progress their children make at the nursery, particularly in their confidence and speech’ We provide lots of opportunity for parents/carers to become involved in their child’s learning and development at nursery. Why not come to one of our stay and play sessions that are held every term. One child told us ‘I like decorating biscuits the best and playing with the garage with my mummy’. Don’t forget we also hold two parent’s meetings a year to celebrate the development your child has made whilst at nursery.

One parent commented ‘Absolutely my child loves the nursery’ –Feedback from Parents
Key Persons

Each child at the Centre will have a key person. This is usually the member of staff that has formed the most positive relationship with your child during their settling in period. They will support the child through their transition into nursery and continue to promote their development. Our recent OFSTED report noted ‘Key Persons know their children exceptionally well’. The Key Person will be responsible for promoting your child’s outcomes using the statutory document The EYFS framework and will share photos and observations with you from your child’s learning journey.

One parent commented ‘The Childcare staff clearly know the children really well and plan activities for them accordingly’ –Feedback from Parents

Childcare Centre Rooms

‘They strongly motivate children across the age ranges, providing a rich and vibrant learning environment' (OFSTED Jan 2019)

Green/Yellow Room

The team in Green/Yellow room provide a stimulating and safe environment for children ages 0-2 years old to play and learn both indoors and outdoors. The staff engage in a wide variety of sensory activities such as exploring treasure baskets and jelly to promote children’s development. The room follow a daily routine that includes activities such as story time. Tell us all about your child’s routine at home and we will work with you to promote the child’s needs at nursery. The highly qualified staff will tend to all areas of care such as feeding and sleep routine and ensure your child is healthy whilst at the Centre.

‘The caring staff provide a wealth of praise which supports children’s strong sense of belonging’ (OFSTED Jan 2019)

Blue Room

The Blue room team place emphasis on creating a relaxed, inclusive and stimulating environment for the children aged 2-3 years. Each child is treated as an individual ensuring they are respected and valued. The children engage in a wide range of activities that promote their freedom of choice. The children can get very messy in this room as they love playing in the nursery garden and with sensory activities such as water play and paint. The highly experienced staff can advise on potty training and behaviour strategies.
Red Room

The Red room team are committed to promote school readiness for your children aged 3-5 years old. They promote independence and challenge children’s thinking. They have a range of activities to promote children’s outcomes and love to spend lots of time in the nursery garden. Practitioners effectively use the children's interests to plan exciting activities for children.

‘They acquire a superb range of skills in preparation for their future learning, including the eventual move to school’ (OFSTED Jan 2019)

Please take a look at our room brochures for further information on the routines and experiences of a child in the individual Childcare Centre Rooms.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS!

- **Will my child be able to go on trips?**
  Yes. At the Childcare Centre we do plan trips around your children’s interests. We have had trips to the seaside, parks, train stations, our local theatre etc. We also invite visitors such as Jet and Ben, The Firemen, The Road Safety Officer and Suzy from the library to come into the Centre and promote the children’s learning. We are also welcome to ideas too so please feel free to recommend places to us.

   Visitor - Captain Raggy Beard

   One child said ‘They liked the mermaid mirror and going on a treasure hunt’.
• Do we have to pay for lunch?
At the Childcare Centre a hot, healthy 2 course meal at lunch time is included in the full day session and 8.00am-1.00pm session, lovingly prepared by our Centre cook Lynn. She has been awarded a 5-star rating for excellent standards of hygiene from the unannounced environmental health inspections. We also include a Healthy snack for children at 10 am and 2pm. We do not however provide breakfast or Tea. But don’t worry you can bring some in with you.

Please see our Healthy snack ideas Brochure and Nursery menu’s from the website.

One of our parents commented ‘My child doesn’t like to eat and isn’t the best with speech but staff consistently help and make effort to help him improve’ – Feedback from Parents

• Do you cater for children with dietary requirements?
Yes, if your child has an allergy or dietary requirement we can offer an alternative to suit their needs. This will be discussed on the first nursery visit.

One parent commented ‘The staff at the Childcare Centre are excellent. They are great dealing with my child’s medical needs and supporting our dietary choice.’ – Feedback from Parents

• Can anyone attend Darlington College Childcare Centre?
Yes, we do have a waiting list system and prioritise for staff and students of Darlington College, however if spaces are available your child will receive a place. Don’t forget to fill out a waiting list form.

One parent commented ‘I think every minute in the childcare is perfect’ – Feedback from Parents
• **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 (online / enclosed in new starter 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 safer recruitment and safeguarding checks and hold a Disclosure and Barring Service check (Previously CRB).

• **Are all of your staff member’s 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 permanent 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.
Can I get support with my childcare fee's?
Yes, we offer a wide range of free childcare entitlement. Please see below for more information:

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 / TAX FREE CHILDCARE

The Centre can be used as a childcare provider for the Working Families and Childcare Tax Credits / Tax Free childcare. 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.

Contact us

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