

Running a crèche

Information for community groups about providing childcare at a one-off community event.

Why have a crèche?

Providing childcare is an important way to help parents and carers to access community events.

Who will run your crèche?

Have at least one person who is responsible for planning and organising the crèche. You might choose to have a rota of volunteers helping out during the day, but it is important to have someone who knows what's going on and is taking responsibility for making sure that the childcare happens properly.

You need to make sure there are enough adults in your crèche to look after all the children properly. This will depend on the age of the children, and also the environment you are in. The NSPCC recommends the following adult to child ratios as the **minimum** to help keep children safe:

- ♦ 0 – 2 years: 1 adult to 3 children
- ♦ 2 – 3 years: 1 adult to 4 children
- ♦ 4 – 8 years: 1 adult to 6 children
- ♦ 9 – 12 years: 1 adult to 8 children
- ♦ 13 – 18 years: 1 adult to 10 children

In an environment that is unfamiliar to the children, and when the children don't know the volunteers, you should have a higher number of adults to make sure there are enough people around to help every child feel safe and secure.

Babies and young toddlers need constant care and supervision, so aim for a one-to-one ratio for children who are under 3. The NSPCC also recommends that there should always be at least 2 adults present, even with very small groups.

Where will your crèche be?

Choose a suitable space for your crèche.

If your event is outdoors, you may want to set up a specific tent or marquee. If it is an indoor event, you should designate a room. This needs to be big enough to allow the children to play. It also needs to be close to toilets and hand-washing facilities, and there should be drinking water available.

Think about how to make the space as pleasant and as safe as possible. This includes making sure it is clean and warm. It is useful to separate the space a bit, so that children have a choice to do different things. For example, have a cosy corner with blankets and cushions for quiet play and reading, and an area for noisy or messy play.

Information about the children in your care

Keep track of which children have been left in the care of the crèche. You should:

- ♦ Know when a child is dropped off, and when they are collected
- ♦ Have the name and contact details of the child's parent/carer, and know who will be collecting the child
- ♦ Know if the child has any medical conditions or allergies that you need to be aware of
- ♦ Get parental consent for emergency medical treatment.

Ask parents to complete a short form when they leave their child with you, to give you the information you need. There is a sample child registration form on p.5, which you can adapt to suit your needs.

Keep a list of the children who are in the crèche, and tick them off when they are collected. This way, you know which children the crèche is responsible for at any given moment. If a different person than the person you were expecting arrives to collect a child, phone their parent/carer to check this is okay.

Toys and other equipment

Think about the ages of the children who will attend your crèche, and how you can create a relaxing environment for children to play.

It's a good idea to have some organised activities, such as a game or a craft activity. Try to think of activities that are fun but not too complicated, that children can drop in and out of.

Also offer the children the opportunity to do their own thing. Provide toys and books that are suitable for the ages of children you are expecting, and make sure there is enough space for the children to use these.

It is important to provide enough equipment, but it can also create a stressful environment if there is too much equipment. It can create a lot of mess and chaos. Think about what you actually need, rather than just putting out every toy you can find!

The Resource Centre has items of indoor and outdoor play equipment for hire.¹ We also have information about where to get artwork materials,² and places where you can borrow toys.³ You can borrow children's books from local libraries.

¹ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/equipment/>

² <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/equipment-types/art-materials/>

³ <http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/equipment-types/toys/>

Food and drink

Be clear with parents about whether you will be providing food or not. If you are providing food, take care and make sure you are careful about food hygiene. Also remember that some children may be allergic to some foods, and you should find out before giving children anything to eat.

If you are not providing food, ensure that parents know that they need to make sure that their children have had enough to eat.

Whether you are providing food or not, make sure there is fresh drinking water available for the children and volunteers.

First aid

You should have a well-stocked first aid kit, and a named first-aider who has been trained in emergency first aid.

Keeping children safe

Think about how you will keep children safe while they are in your crèche.

Think about possible dangers, and how to reduce the risk of accidents. Some things that could be hazardous are:

- ♦ power points
- ♦ steps and stairs
- ♦ unsteady furniture
- ♦ loose carpets and uneven floors
- ♦ electric or gas fires
- ♦ swinging doors
- ♦ substances such as cleaning products.

Have a look at our information on Risk Assessments for more advice about reducing the risk of accidents.

Also think about how to keep the space secure throughout the day. If possible, make sure the room is shut so that the children cannot leave by themselves. If this is not possible (e.g. at an outdoor event), you need a system to make sure each child is accounted for at all times. The easiest way to do this is for each volunteer to have a small group of children that they are responsible for, and they should know where the children are all the time. This requires a high adult-to-child ratio, even for older children.

It is a good idea for the volunteers to have an understanding of safeguarding. Small community groups in Brighton & Hove can access free safeguarding training from Safety Net.⁴

There are some types of work with children that may only be done by somebody who has had an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Generally, volunteers in a one-off crèche are not required by law to have DBS checks, but you

⁴ <https://www.safety-net.org.uk/>

may choose to request them. See our information sheet on Using the Disclosure and Barring Service for more information about whether your volunteers should have DBS checks.

Informing Ofsted

Some childcare facilities need to be registered with Ofsted, but any crèche that operates for 14 days or less in a year is exempt.

However, you **do** have to **inform** Ofsted 14 days in advance if you are planning a crèche in which:

- ♦ Any individual child aged 7 or younger will be there for more than 4 hours (if parents are on the premises), or
- ♦ Any individual child aged 7 or younger will be there for more than 2 hours (if parents are not on the premises).

You don't have to inform Ofsted if your crèche is for children aged 8 or over only.

Running an ongoing crèche or playgroup

If you are a community group planning to set up a regular crèche or childcare facility, contact the Brighton & Hove City Council Early Years and Childcare team⁵ for help and information.

⁵ <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/a-z/a-z-pages/working-childcare>

Sample child registration form

This is a sample form for a one-off crèche at a one day community event. You should think about what particular information you will need, and change the form to suit your needs.

Child's name	
Child's date of birth	
Your name and mobile phone number	
Your relationship to the child	
Your address	
Where will you be while your child is with us? (Where can we find you if we need to?)	
What time will you be returning to collect your child?	
Does your child have any medical conditions that we should know about? Please explain.	
Is your child allergic to anything? Please list.	

In the event that I cannot be reached in an emergency, I agree to medical treatment being given to my child

Signature of parent/guardian _____

Name of parent/guardian _____

Date: _____