

QUALITY ASSURANCE ACCREDITATION

Improving the quality of childcare provision is one of the key aims of the Government's National Childcare Strategy. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has set a target of having four out of every ten childcare providers accredited by 2004.

Quality assurance accreditation builds on the care that is regulated through OfSTED and the Children Act 1989. Going through an accreditation scheme can, if done properly, improve quality beyond the minimum standards enforced by OfSTED. Accreditation schemes set clear standards of quality for all aspects of a childcare setting, from staffing, premises, health and safety, to relationships with children, parents and the community.

All children and their parents deserve top quality care from their childcare setting. This means giving children an environment that is safe, supportive, stimulating and challenging, a place to be with friends, try out new activities, relax and have fun.

Quality assurance accreditation enables providers to show that they provide a high quality service. It also offers them a focus for the management and development of their staff and setting.

Parents can feel confident that a childcare provider who is accredited has met nationally set, high standards regarding the management of the setting and the services and facilities provided. A parent who has the choice is more likely to opt for such an accredited setting, giving the provider a distinct marketing advantage over non-accredited providers.

Barnsley Choices and the Barnsley EYDCP is committed to supporting its providers through quality assurance accreditation with the following nationally recognised schemes:

- for day nurseries - NDNA Quality Counts (www.ndna.org.uk)
- for pre-school groups – PLA Aiming for Quality (www.pre-school.org.uk)
- for out of school clubs – 4Children Aiming High 4 – 14, 8 – 14 (www.4children.org.uk)
- for childminders who are not part of a Network – NCMA Quality First (www.ncma.org.uk)

Network childminders are currently assessed against NCMA quality standards and the Children Come First standards.

For further information about any of these schemes or how to register for quality assurance accreditation, contact the Barnsley Choices Development Team on 01226 775977.