The University of Oxford nurseries are popular, and we have many happy parents and children who use our services. This article presents extracts of the most important information from the University of Oxford Childcare Services webpages https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/.

How many nurseries and nursery places are available?

We offer a total of 450 FTE places for eligible University of Oxford staff and students, 332 of which are in the University's own nurseries. There are 5 University nurseries, 2 of which are in Headington. These nurseries are open from 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday and offer childcare for fifty weeks of the year. Two, three, four and five day attendance patterns are available.

There are also 118 spaces in 10 community nurseries across the city of Oxford. Our ratio of 1 nursery place per 30 members of University staff is significantly better than most other HEIs within the UK (the sector average for the Russell group is 1 place per 61 members of staff*).

Are there also college nurseries?

There are also 5 college nurseries, but these are separate from University Childcare Services and you need to apply to them directly.

I am on a short-term contract. Can I still apply for a place?

When you apply online your start and end of contract dates are relevant to your application. Generally you cannot keep a nursery space beyond the end of your contract, but please contact the team and they will do their best to take personal circumstances on a case-by-case basis e.g. if you are waiting to hear about future funding or if it is a short time until your child will start at school.

If you expect your contract to be extended and need a nursery place after your current contract is due to end, please contact the Childcare Services team who will assist you with your application.

I have heard there are waiting lists for places. How long may I have to wait?

There is a waiting list and it is prioritised e.g. parents with disabilities, single parents, those who have a child already in a nursery. Places for babies are more in demand. However, you can apply for a place when you are pregnant or when you have an offer letter to become a staff or student at the University.

How would I pay for a nursery place?

There are a number of ways to pay for a nursery place and the most popular is by using the University’s pre-tax Salary Sacrifice Scheme. Under this scheme, the employee agrees to reduce their salary by the amount of their nursery fee and in return benefits from lower tax and national insurance deductions on the reduced salary.
The salary sacrifice scheme is only available if the deduction does not take you below the minimum wage. The salary deduction is paid direct by the University to the nursery provider. There are also government schemes such as the Tax-Free Childcare scheme and free childcare hours for 3-4 year olds, more information can be found here: https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

Before applying for a place can I visit a nursery?

We encourage you to visit the nurseries before you make your application if at all possible as this will help you make a quick decision when a nursery place is offered to you. Some parents choose a nursery close to their home and others choose a nursery close to their workplace. Please contact the nurseries directly to arrange a visit, contact details can be found on our webpages.

How do I apply for a place?

You need to apply on-line from our webpages (link at top). You need to have your Single Sign On (SSO) log in details to hand and create individual applications for each of your children. You are able to nominate up to three nursery choices as part of your application. If you are applying for a place in one of our community nurseries, you will also need to apply using that nursery’s own application form. If you do not have your SSO please contact Childcare Services who will be happy to make a manual application on your behalf.

I have heard that departments have a certain number of sponsored places. Can I make use of this?

All departments and colleges are able to buy a certain number of priority nursery spaces on the waiting list. It is up to those departments and colleges to nominate people to receive these spaces each year. Please contact HR within your department to find out more.

What if I need additional childcare support?

The University has links with a number of organisations across the city, from babysitting services to school holiday and sport camps. Please see our webpages for more information.

I have other questions. Who should I contact?

Please see full information on our webpages (link at top of article) and then please don’t hesitate to contact us with your specific requirements by telephone: 01865 613935 or send an email to: childcare@admin.ox.ac.uk