# Preschool visit checklist

Tick as you go and write notes in the margins. Ask the same questions at every centre so you can compare fairly.

## Before you visit

- [ ] Check vacancies for your child's level and the months you need. Look at the next six months, not just this month.
- [ ] Confirm the centre is licensed by ECDA, and note its scheme (Anchor or Partner Operator) and whether it is SPARK-certified.
- [ ] Ask for the full list of fees, deposits and optional charges in writing, before you visit.
- [ ] Check the journey from home and from work, including pick-up and drop-off at your usual times.
- [ ] Book a visit on an ordinary day, and ask to see the class your child would actually join.

## Safety and health

- [ ] How are children signed in and out, and who is allowed to collect them?
- [ ] Are entrances secured, and how are visitors checked?
- [ ] Are rooms clean, furniture safe, sockets covered and outdoor areas secure?
- [ ] How are illness, medication and allergies handled? When must a sick child stay home?
- [ ] What happens in an emergency, such as a fire drill or an accident? How are parents told?
- [ ] Is there CCTV, and who can view the recordings?

## Teachers and class size

- [ ] What is the teacher-to-child ratio in the class my child would join? ECDA sets minimum ratios by age, so ask how the centre meets them.
- [ ] What are the teachers' qualifications, and how long have they worked here? How often do teachers leave?
- [ ] Who would be my child's main caregiver? Is there a key-person system?
- [ ] Who covers when a teacher is away?

## Learning and the daily routine

- [ ] Can I see a typical daily schedule, including play, meals, naps, outdoor time and screen time?
- [ ] How much of the day is play-based, and how much is structured learning?
- [ ] How are second languages (Chinese, Malay, Tamil) taught? Are they compulsory?
- [ ] How does the centre help a child who is shy, new or has additional needs?
- [ ] How does the centre handle settling in, separation anxiety and toilet training?

## Food

- [ ] Who prepares the meals? Can I see a sample menu?
- [ ] Are halal, vegetarian or allergy-friendly options available? If MUIS-certified halal matters to you, ask to see the certificate.
- [ ] What do I need to bring each day (milk, bottles, nappies, change of clothes)?

## Communication with parents

- [ ] How will I hear about my child's day: an app, photos, a daily report, a communication book?
- [ ] How do I reach teachers or the principal, and how quickly do they usually reply?
- [ ] How often are there parent-teacher meetings or progress updates?
- [ ] How are invoices sent, and which payment methods are accepted (PayNow, GIRO, card)?

## Fees and contracts

- [ ] What is the monthly fee after subsidies for my child's category, and what does it include? Is GST charged?
- [ ] Which charges are one-off (registration, deposit) and which are optional (insurance, uniform, enrichment, field trips, concerts)?
- [ ] Is the deposit refundable, and when? What is the notice period if I withdraw?
- [ ] How are fee increases announced? What happens to fees on school-closure days and public holidays?
- [ ] Does the centre help apply for subsidies, and what documents are needed?

## Your gut check

- [ ] Did the children seem happy, busy and comfortable with their teachers?
- [ ] Were staff warm and open when answering your questions, including the difficult ones?
- [ ] Can you picture your child here on a bad day, not just a good one?

# Compare your shortlist

Score each centre from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) straight after your visit.

| Area | Centre A: _____ | Centre B: _____ | Centre C: _____ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Safety and cleanliness | | | |
| Teachers and ratio | | | |
| Learning and routine | | | |
| Food | | | |
| Communication | | | |
| Fees and terms | | | |
| Location and hours | | | |
| Gut feeling | | | |
| **Total** | | | |

## Notes

Find preschools with vacancies near you at **schoolmatters.app/preschools/map/**, and see typical registration fees and deposits at **schoolmatters.app/preschools/fees-and-charges/**.