



Netherlands

Early Education & Childcare

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Daycare, Childminders & Nannies

Daycare facilities and childminders are available for children between 6 weeks until 4 years of age:

Daycare Centres

Dutch daycare centres are usually open from 7.30 - 8am through to 6:00 - 6.30 pm on weekdays and offer care for babies as young as three months to children up to four years. Some centres have special groups for babies and toddlers, while others combine the two (vertical versus horizontal groups). Childcare centres typically charge an hourly rate of max. € 8.17 per hour (in 2020).

The Dutch government reimburses a substantial portion of the cost of the daycare if both parents are working (see further below, childcare allowance).

Most of the daycares use Dutch as their primary language for day to day communications with the children. The teachers do speak English, so there are no issues for parents wanting to communicate, however during the day the main language at the daycare is Dutch.

There are of course exceptions, one example is Hestia (a bilingual daycare- which speaks both English and Dutch to the children):

<https://hestiakinderopvang.nl/en/> .

Childminders

Another popular option as an alternative to daycare, is the childminder (or 'in home care'), providing a safe and comfortable environment within the childminders home. Childminder care is available for all children from 6 weeks until leaving primary school.

The fee for childminder care is max. €6.27 per hour. Childminders must also be registered in the Landelijk Register Kinderopvang (National Childcare Register) and the parents are entitled to receive the childcare allowance (see further below) if they make use of the childminder, provided both parents are working.

Nannies & Au Pairs

Nannies are experienced and often qualified child-minders who live in your home and receive a monthly salary. An au pair is typically a young (from 18 to 31 years old) woman or man from another country who is hired to help look after the children of a host family in the Netherlands.

Au pairs are given room and board, paid a small monthly salary and typically are in search of a cultural experience in the Netherlands, while also serving as a child-minder. It would also be typical for the aupair to be expected to undertake some light housework. You may be eligible for the childcare benefit for having a nanny or an au pair if you use a childcare service to officially qualify and certify the applicants.

Both the minimum hourly rates of daycares, childminders, nannies are pre-defined by the government on an hourly basis and reviewed each year. For daycares, parents have to pay the full day (i.e. 12 hours * hourly rate) even if the child is attending the daycare for less. With the childminders, the parents are paying for the actual hours which the child spends with the childminder.

Pre-educational assistance

Pre-school prepares children for primary school so that they get a good start. Pre-school is a playschool (peuterspeelzaal)/daycare where children between 2.5 and 4 years old learn through play. A great deal of focus and time is devoted to language games, reading, drawing, listening, singing and movement.

Pre school is highly recommended for children who will be attending a local Dutch school from age 4.

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Since 1st of January 2018 Peuterspeelzaal has the same form as day care and therefore, any governmental allowance which is applicable for daycare, is applicable for peuterspeelzaal. However, there are still some minor differences between peuterspeelzaal and daycare.

Peuterspeelzaal is usually only for the children between the age of 2 and 4, while daycare is starting from 0 years until the age of 4. Also, peuterspeelzaal has more limited and fixed hours (for instance only between 09.00-12.00), while daycare is focused on the whole day and less fixed times. Based on this, peuterspeelzaal is popular amongst parents where one of the parents is not working, often peuterspeelzaal is a far more social environment so has the added advantage of networking opportunities for parents.

Daycare, being more flexible time wise, is popular amongst fulltime working parents.

Generally speaking, both daycares and peuterspeelzaal offer a great preparation for the elementary school and the level of care doesn't differ a lot. Parents generally make their choice based on the location, philosophy and the approach.

Preschools cooperate with a particular primary school, meaning their programme and approach is specifically geared to the curriculum and way of working in year groups 1 and 2 at that primary school.

Preschool is not compulsory.

The fees for the pre-school depend on the daycare/peuterspeelzaal, however, the maximum fee per hour for the preschool is €8.17.

Please note that waiting lists for daycares, childminder care and pre-school (playschool) are applicable and vary between 1 month to 1 year.

Agreements for childcare facilities are based on days – i.e. parents can choose the fixed days of the week during which the child(ren) will attend the facility on an annual basis. Some facilities provide greater flexibility with ½ day services. Generally, the days most in demand are Tuesdays and Thursdays as those are the 2 days when most of the parents work in The Netherlands. Mondays and Fridays are less busy due to people working part-time, as well as planned long-weekends. Wednesdays is the least busy day at the daycares, childminders and playschools as it's common for one parent to be available on Wednesday, as older children attending school have a shorter school day.

All of the aforementioned information for daycares/ childminders and pre-educational assistance is based on the regular Dutch system. Some international schools also offer pre-school/ nursery education.

A good example is the International School of Amsterdam (ISA) which has a group for children starting from the age of 2 to 4 (<https://www.isa.nl/learningat-isa/nursery/>).

Other international schools like Amity (<https://www.amityschool.nl/learning/early-years>) and British School of Amsterdam (<https://www.britams.nl/our-schools/early-years>) offer pre-school education as of the age of 3 in English.

After school care (buitenschoolse / naschoolse opvang)

After school care (buitenschoolse opvang) and outside-school care (naschoolse opvang) organizations provide care and activities for children aged 4 to 12 years from 7.30am until 6.30pm on school days (depending on the time when children finish school every day) and school holidays (then the care is a full day). They usually work with one or several primary schools - so both local and international schools and children are collected after school from each school.

Food and drink is usually provided, and children are able to play outside, do crafts, read or get help with their homework. Some centres are aligned with a sports club, community centre or music school, so there are many options for activities.

For example, the International School of Amsterdam (ISA) collect children from are the following BSOs (the list is not complete, its just for illustrative purposes and more BSOs might be collecting children from the ISA):

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<https://www.partou.nl/en/after-school-care>

<https://www.majest.nl/en/after-school-care>

<https://www.bambinikids.nl/en/>

Childcare Allowance

Parents can apply for a childcare allowance (kinderopvangtoeslag) for children under 12. This is a contribution to the cost of childcare for daycare/ childminder/ afterschool care and the percentage received from the government will depend on the personal situation (i.e. income).

In addition, it is important to know that everyone who has a child in The Netherlands (until the age of 18) is entitled receive the child benefit. The Dutch child benefit is paid by SVB ((Social Insurance Bank) and is not income dependent.

For children who are born in The Netherlands, the parents will receive this form automatically after the new born is registered. However, if the parents are relocating from another country, together with the child(ren) they will need to complete an application.

There are two ways parents can complete the application:

- If they already have a DigiD (this is a digital method of identification which is connected to the BSN Number and allows you to manage a lot of your affairs with the Dutch government) – you can directly request the child case benefit;
- If not – parents would either need to first obtain a DigiD or contact the SVB and they would send the forms that need to be completed;

Important:

The childcare allowance is income based, and is only received if the child is making use of childcare facilities in The Netherlands. The child benefit is non-income related and every child is entitled to receive it irrespective of the income of the parents.