

8 Ways in which Children can Benefit from a Children's Center and Preschool Environment



As a parent there are many decisions you need to make for your child, and one of these is whether and when to send them to daycare, and what the right time would be for you and your child.

If your child isn't already attending a children's center but is beginning to show signs that they may be ready to spread their wings a little, you may want to consider what a center setting has to offer. Of course feeling a little uneasy about being apart from them is natural, especially if they are very young, but the transition can be a very positive experience for your little one and have multiple benefits.

Our early years experts explain eight key ways that daycare environments can help children's confidence and development.

1. Get Social

There are many benefits from social interaction with other children of a similar age, including:

- Making friends and learning to establish connections
- Learning to share
- Taking turns
- Listening to others
- Playing together with others in groups, as well as independently
- Learning from their peers, copying and helping each other

2. Developing Communications Skills

By becoming more socialised and interacting with their peers and center practitioners, your child will also develop their communications skills, increase their vocabulary and language through a wide range of different contexts.

Learning how to communicate their feelings and opinions, and interacting with their peers and adults other than their parents, is a vital part of their development. Playing with other children

at daycare also provides an ideal opportunity for them to gain a greater understanding of other people's feelings and empathy.

3. Increased Independence and Confidence

The setting may be the first time your child has been away from you for a short period of time, which can be daunting for you both at first. However, it gives your child the opportunity to be independent, have freedom to explore and to make other relationships, which is critical for their long-term wellbeing.

That added independence can nurture your child's self-confidence, help to develop their own personality, disposition, thoughts and ideas, and encourage them as they discover more about life outside of their family unit. Learning to complete basic tasks by themselves, taking part in activities and spending time with others, will help develop their confidence and build a foundation, which prepares them for school and life in the outside world.

4. Learning New Skills

Center care offers a wide range of activities, resources and experiences to stimulate and engage your little one. Having so many different things for your child to discover and explore, helps to develop their interests and encourages them to try new things out for themselves. It's an exciting new adventure and the bonus is, you can leave the messy play to daycare!

Both academically, socially and emotionally, your little one will be learning new skills every day – for example learning how to hold mark-making tools, putting on their own coat, learning mathematical concepts and helping tidy up, these are all valuable life skills and build the foundations for the future in preparing your child for adulthood.

5. Routine and Structure

Daycare provides a routine and structure to your child's day, which can include meal times, naps, indoor and outdoor activities. This routine helps them to feel more confident and secure, in control of their feelings and is great preparation for school. When a child knows what to expect and when to expect it, this enables them to play more of an active role in tasks, for example before lunch they need to wash their hands and before going home, they need to help tidy up (hopefully a routine they will also continue with at home!)

At daycare, your child will be participating in activities, constantly learning new things and exploring the outside space. By keeping children busily engaged in play opportunities, it helps to build their physical stamina and supports large motor skills development, which will certainly be needed for school and beyond!

6. Building Immunity

Interaction at daycare with other children and adults supports developing their immunity to common infections such as colds. Being outdoors in the fresh air and getting daily exercise is good for wellbeing, and will help keep your little one fit and healthy.

7. Become 'School Ready'

Many of the activities, routines and skills your child learns at the children's center will help to prepare them for school and ease their transition. In preparation for school, preschool helps to extend your little one's social development by forming key attachments outside the family unit.

8. Preparing to be Life-Long Learners

Many of the benefits above help to build the foundations of your child's future. Daycare encourages critical thinking, positive dispositions to learn, tenacity and confidence. Preschool prepares children for the outside world and their journey into adulthood.

A few benefits for you!

'Me' Time

It's not just your children that can take positives from daycare. From a parent's perspective, looking after an energetic pre-schooler can be pretty full on, so even for just a few hours a week, it can provide some much needed 'me-time'. Raising a child is tremendous work, and while they are your everything, you need time and space to be yourself, even if it's to catch up on chores (or have time with friends!)

Work-Life Balance

Creating the perfect work-life balance is what most of us strive for, don't we? Whilst nothing is truly perfect however, daycare time for your child can help you begin to build a comfortable balance between the two.

More Quality Time Together

With your child keeping busy and active at daycare, it takes the pressure off you to *do* things, to think up educational, fun activities or to keep them entertained. Without this added pressure, you can relax more and enjoy your quality time, just being together.

Less Chores

Toys everywhere, messy play activities, crafts and meal times to clear up after – let The Children's Center worry about some of it! Even if your child only attends for a few hours a week, this will benefit you both equally and make your time together even more special.