The new Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre has an innovative twist, having been partly designed by the staff that will work there. Staff input will ensure this state-of-the-art centre provides an exciting and inspiring environment where the needs of the children are paramount.

Covered play areas on the first floor open to the outdoors, multiple levels in the play rooms and a purpose-built sensory room are some of the special features of this £3.6m development on the University campus.

The centre will provide a first-rate start for the children of the University’s staff and students, and be an important feature in recruiting and retaining the best of both. This state-of-the-art building will include 144 places and provide a permanent home for the University’s 48-place play scheme during the school holidays.

Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre
With its places currently filled and a long waiting list, the Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre is in high demand before it is even built. The existing University childcare centre, which has 78 places catering to 110 children, will be dismantled and removed following completion of the new building which will be constructed a short distance away, close to the junction of Cromer Terrace and Mount Preston Street.

Many special features will be included. Covered ‘outdoor’ play areas on the first floor will be enclosed to ensure children can play safely in the fresh air, while all play rooms except the baby areas will include mezzanine floors which will provide different areas for children to play in throughout the day. A dedicated heuristic play room will include lighting effects and areas for the children to touch and explore to develop sensory skills, while a garden will also be featured.

Around a third of the centre’s places will be taken by students’ children. Childcare is an essential part of the University's policy of widening participation by enabling students who might be deterred from entering Higher Education by the lack of provision for their children to do so. The centre also helps the University’s work to promote gender equality by ensuring women are not held back in their careers through lack of available childcare.

The new building will help the centre’s stay and play scheme, which allows student parents to meet others with children of the same age. The development will also include a parents’ room for consultations with midwives and health visitors or parenting courses.

When it opens, the Childcare Centre will be on a more sustainable footing as a charitable subsidiary of the University. The new building will enable the centre to develop other ways of raising income to ensure it can be financially secure for the long term.