



## Leapfrog Hops to Take Picnics on Board

29 July 1999

Toyota Picnic seven-seaters have been chosen by new venture company Leapfrog Day Nurseries to provide safe and spacious transport for the youngsters in its care.

Leapfrog is a Burton-on-Trent-based company which runs a network of day-care centres for pre-school children in the Midlands and Yorkshire. Eleven nurseries have already been opened, and the plan is for rapid expansion, with 60 more to start up over the next three years.

Each nursery has around 25 staff and capacity for 100 children, and one or more Toyota Picnic GS turbo-diesels will be based at each centre. The smartly liveried vehicles, with their distinctive green frog logo and 'Hop on board' message on the sides, will be used by nursery managers and senior staff to carry children to and from the nursery and on outings.

Leapfrog provides an extensive before- and after-school service for families who can't drop off or collect their children every day, and also runs holiday clubs. Emphasis is placed on stimulating outside activities, including frequent trips to theatres, swimming pools, libraries and other places of interest.

"We needed economical and reliable people-carriers for our vehicle fleet," says Leapfrog's Accounts Manager Linda Elks. The company asked Corporate & Business Vehicle Contracts of Burton for guidance, and the 2.2-litre Toyota Picnic was one of two options it came up with.

"Leapfrog really needed seven-seaters, and diesel power for economy," says CBVC director and contract manager Richard Wileman. "Reliability and the quality of the warranty were also important - and so was the image."

"We tried a demo vehicle and decided that the Picnic would be a very practical choice," says Linda Elks. "We particularly liked the smart interior, and were impressed by the airy design. Space is important - we had to be able to carry not only seven passengers but all their baggage." The Picnic, designed to fill the gap between an estate car and a bulky MPV, offers 17 seating configurations.

Safety was another vital consideration. All Picnics are fitted with twin airbags and three-point emergency locking retractor safety belts as standard. The rigid body structure is designed to absorb energy in a collision and deflect forces away from the cabin. Also standard are side impact beams, reinforced pillars, a collapsible steering column and high-mounted rear stop lamps.

The first 11 Picnics have now been supplied on a full contract hire agreement through CBVC and local dealer Hamer Toyota. Seventeen more are to be supplied by March 2000, with as many as 100 in prospect. The replacement cycle is two years.

"This is another example of the adaptability of Toyota's line-up," says Toyota Fleet's General Manager Mark Hall. "Picnics are providing a solution for Leapfrog Day Nurseries' exciting venture and can do the same in similar situations elsewhere. Let's hope they prove as popular with the children as they do with the drivers!"

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