

3. Childminders

What is a registered childminder?

A registered childminder provides flexible care in their own home for other people's children. Many work early in the morning and late in the evening; some offer overnight and weekend care.

Childminders are self employed so they collect their own fees and pay tax and national insurance. They must have insurance cover in case a child they caring for has an accident or damages someone else's property.

Do childminders have to be registered?

Anyone who provides care in their own home for someone else's children under the age of 8, for 2 hours or more a day and who gets paid for this service, must be registered and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

An Ofsted Inspector visits the childminder's home to make sure it is suitable for children; checks are carried out and questions asked to ensure that the childminder is a 'fit person' for the job; a criminal records check is required for every person living in the house over the age of 16.

A childminder accepted for registration is given a certificate and visited at least once every 36 months for an inspection.

Are childminders trained?

They must attend an initial briefing session, introductory training and a first aid course before they apply to be registered. Many will have childcare qualifications.



Can childminders provide free early years provision?

Accredited childminders who are part of an approved childminding network can offer free early years provision. Ring the Children and Families Information Service to find out if there is a network in your area.

How many children do childminders look after?

It depends on the number and age of the childminder's own children and the amount of space that's available. As a guide, a childminder can look after no more than six children under 8. Only three of these can be under 5 and only one can be under 12 months (there may be an exception if twins are cared for). If they employ an assistant they may be able to look after more children.

Should there be a contract of employment?

Yes, the childminder should provide a contract and it should state the agreed working hours, rate of pay, holiday entitlement, procedures if the child or childminder is ill, overtime and length of notice to end the agreement.

How do I find a registered childminder?

Contact the Children and Families Information Service.

How do I choose?

Visit several childminders if you can. Take your child with you, look around the home and ask questions such as:

- How long have you been childminding?
- What do you enjoy about their work?
- How many other children do you care for?
- How many other adults will be in the house?
- What do the children do during the day?
- What is the discipline policy?
- What do the children eat and drink?
- Do you have facilities for outdoor play?
- If you take the children out, where do you go? How do you get there?
- Can you arrange for me to speak to some other parents that you work for?

Some childminders will agree to a 'trial run' of say, a couple of mornings, to let you see how it will work and if your child will be happy there. Remember, the best childminder for your family is the one with the same approach to raising children as you have and with whom you feel you can develop a good, working relationship.



For more information please contact:

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Contact us if you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, spoken word or in a different language.