

*Childcare***Link**

www.childcarelink.gov.uk

0800 0 96 02 96

**Lines open 8am - 8pm weekdays,
9am - 12pm Saturdays**

Choosing a Childminder

department for
education and skills

Childminders look after children on domestic premises usually in the childminder's own home. They are registered with OFSTED and inspected every year.

Childminders can often be flexible about the hours that they work and they should provide your child with lots of care, fun and learning.

Childminders can make the most of local parks, playgrounds, toy libraries, drop-in groups and community centres. Often children have the chance to make good friends with the other children who go to their childminder.

Every childminder is different so look for someone who will suit your family.

Some childminders are part of a network; these childminders have agreed to meet set quality standards and some may be accredited to offer Early Years Education.

Plus points

- Your child will be in a home environment.
- Childminders can support families for years as children grow up.
- Can be flexible hours.

How do I know my child will be safe and secure?

First of all you know your child best – look for a childminder you feel will be suitable for your child.

Childminders must be registered before they begin to work with children. This means checks are carried out to make sure they are suitable to care for children. People over 16 years living in the childminder's household are also police checked to make sure they have not carried out any offence against a child. A check on the childminder's home is carried out as well to make sure it is safe and suitable for children.

After a childminder is registered, every year an inspection is carried out to make sure the childminder is continuing to provide a safe and suitable service.

You can ask to see a childminder's registration certificate and latest inspection report. It is illegal for an unregistered person to look after children for reward.

An unregistered person who is a close relative of the child is not officially a childminder.

How many children will there be with a childminder?

Childminders can care for up to six children aged under eight, of whom no more than three must be aged under 5, at any one time. Most childminders are registered for three children under five and three children under eight at any one time. Only one child may be under one year, unless an exception is made by OFSTED, twins for example.

The childminder's own children are taken into account and counted in these numbers.

Childminders who work with an assistant may look after larger groups of children.

What age range are the children with a childminder?

Children can go to a childminder from a few months old right through until they reach secondary school, although childminders are only registered to look after children aged under 8.

Childminders may also care for children between 8 and 14, as long as the number of older children looked after does not adversely affect the care provided for children under 8.

When are childminders open?

Childminders are self employed and so they decide on their working hours.

Most childminders will provide you with childcare between the hours of 8am and 6pm. Some childminders will work early mornings, evenings and weekends as well. You will need to negotiate hours, terms and conditions with the childminder.

What about part-time childcare?

Many childminders are happy to provide families with part-time places for children. They often drop children off at school and pick them up.

Childminders can also take your child to a playgroup or pre-school as part of the routine.

How much does a childminder cost?

Childminders set their charges themselves. Charges vary in different areas.

There is no national rate but most childminders will charge between £68 and £160 per child per week for full-time care.

How do I find a childminder?

Ask your local Children's Information Service (CIS) for advice about childminders in your area. The ChildcareLink freephone service will provide details of your local CIS on 0800 0 96 02 96.

Copies of this factsheet can be obtained from:

DfES Publications

PO Box 5050

Annesley

Nottingham NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60

Fax: 0845 60 333 60

Textphone: 0845 60 555 60

E-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Please quote ref: CCL1R

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