

Becoming a Childminder

A Childminder is self employed and like any small business there is a need to market your service. In considering a Childminding career it is advisable that you consider:

The service you can offer to your community and its needs for childcare.

The flexibility of your service to meet the needs of parents and their families.

What already exists as childcare in your area and how your service will complement or enhance that existing provision.

.What is a childminder?

‘A childminder is a person who looks after one or more children under the age of eight for more than two hours a day on domestic premises (other than the child’s own home), for reward’. ‘Domestic premises’ normally means your home. ‘Reward’ can be money or payment in kind. Childminders need to be registered with Ofsted.

Does everyone who looks after children need to be on the register?

No [†] You do not need to register as a childminder if you:

- Are the parent or relative of the child you are looking after: or you
- Have parental responsibility for the child
- Are a local authority foster parent [‡] in relation to a child
- Are a foster parent with whom a child has been placed by a voluntary organisation
- Foster a child privately
- Only look after the child between the hours of 6pm and 2am
- Look after the child wholly or mainly in the child’s own home
- Look after children for two sets of parents wholly or mainly in the home of either or both sets of parents.

[†]*Part XA of the Children Act 1989 (as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000) obtainable from The Stationery Office contains complete details.*

[‡]*If you are interested in providing foster care, you will need to contact your local authority.*

How do I find out more?

You should contact your local Children’s Information Service for an enquiry pack **Tel: 08452 26 26 36. Website: www.oxoncis.org.uk. Email: enquiries@oxoncis.org.uk** The local authority will also tell you about the information, advice and training it makes available and about its Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Your local Children’s Information Service (CIS) can give you information about other childcare provision in your area [±].

Some of the questions you should ask yourself before contacting your local authority are:

- Do I enjoy looking after children?
- Can I offer children a happy and stimulating environment, with sufficient toys and equipment to meet their needs?
- What hours am I prepared to work? What effect will this have on my own family?
- How do my spouse/partner and my own children feel about me looking after other children?
- Do I feel capable of respecting the individual needs of children who have different family, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to my own?
- Will I be able to get on with parents and share information about their children?
- Will I be able to talk to them about any problems or concerns in our agreements or about their children?

What must I do to become a childminder?

You need to apply to OFSTED to be registered. If you act as a childminder without being registered, it could lead to prosecution.

All registered childminders are required to undertake a 12 hour introductory course and a relevant First Aid course.

Your local authority will provide information on these courses. Many local authorities and their Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships offer further training opportunities. Through these, you can meet other childminders to share ideas and to improve the quality of your childminding.

±You can get details of your local CIS from Childcare Link by calling 08000 960 296 or by looking at www.childcarelink.gov.uk

What happens once I apply?

Once you have sent in the forms, OFSTED will carry out some checks to help establish whether you, and any assistant that you may wish to employ, are suitable to look after children. These checks include ones about your health and any criminal record. All checks must be completed before you and any assistant can begin to look after children.

OFSTED will also carry out similar checks on any member of your household over the age of 16 to establish whether they are suitable to be in regular contact with the children you look after.

As well as these checks, an OFSTED childcare inspector will visit your home to check whether it is suitable, safe and ready for children to be looked after. The inspector will also talk to you about how you will meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and Childminding.

Where can I get further information?

You can obtain more information about the registration and inspection of childminding from:

- OFSTED's helpline: 0845 601 4771

- OFSTED's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/about/childcare
- [Oxfordshire Children's Information Service](#) - 08452 26 26 36