

Co-Childminding

What is the difference between a childminder taking on an assistant or working with a co-childminder?

A co-childminder can be left with children for an unlimited period of time under their own Ofsted registration.

- A co-childminder will be separately inspected by Ofsted under their own registration and will need to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the Early Years or Childcare Register.
- A co-childminder may share the responsibility of the business and establishing the provision.

When deciding whether to co-childmind, the decision is very much a personal one.

There are many benefits to co-childminding:

- Adult conversation and company.
- Ability to walk away for a short reflective break.
- Able to take a bathroom break.
- Able to moderate practice.
- Experience of different teaching styles.
- Increased variety in individual strengths and interests.
- Ability to let off steam.
- Increased adults to speak to parents at collection / dropping off times.
- Not an employer so less financial responsibility
- Reduces vulnerability.
- Shared responsibility for tasks, i.e. cooking.
- Quality not impacted while completing tasks.
- Cover when ill health occurs.
- Don't need to work together 24/7

Legal requirements

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- Up to 4 Childminders can work together on either domestic or non-domestic premises. Any more than 4 childminders is then classed as a small daycare and must be registered as Childcare on domestic premises or Childcare without domestic premises. You will need to ensure that the floor space requirements are met regardless of the venue as laid out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage for childminders 2024](#).

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employer Liability insurance if employing an assistant
- Vehicle class 2 insurance if they intend driving childminded children.
- It is strongly advised that you have a 'Partnership Agreement' drawn up by a solicitor that formally outlines the details of your partnership.
- Co-childminders must work together to decide how they will comply with EYFS and statutory requirements.

Co-Childminding with domestic premises only

If you are currently or are considering co-childminding then this changes the use of your home and a [Lawful Development Certificate](#) may be required. You must apply to your local district planning department for this. Unfortunately, there will be a cost to this (each district is different) we advise that you contact your local department to inform them of your intentions/current situation and they will inform you of what the next steps are.

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Where does this fit?

Providers by law must inform either Ofsted or their Childminder Agency of anyone aged 16 years or over who lives or works on the premises where childminding or childcare on domestic premises takes place so that they can check to see if they are suitable to be in contact with children. Ofsted require childminders to [report new adults in the home](#). If they are with a Childminder Agency, then they would need to contact them directly to inform them.

Childminder without domestic premises

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You do not need to tell Ofsted about:

- people working on your premises who are not providing childcare (such as cooks or cleaners)
- anyone else providing childcare that is not part of your registration
- visitors or anyone working temporarily on the premises (for example, builders)

Note: These are all checks you should make yourself as a childminder to ensure the safety of the children you are looking after SF 3.3

Ofsted

If the co-childminder is new to childminding, they may need to complete a pre-registration course such as 'Home Based Childcare Award (HBCA) and will need to make an online application to Ofsted. Once the application has been received, they will be given a pre-registration visit from Ofsted, where they will determine whether they are suitable to be registered as a childminder on the Early Years Register or childcare register. However, if the co-childminder has minded before, they will just need to inform Ofsted they have changed the premises from which they childmind. Ofsted should then link the 2 registrations together, so no pre-registration visit is required.

EYFS

It is essential for co-childminders to collaborate to determine how they will comply with EYFS and statutory requirements. As you are separately inspected do you amalgamate your policies and procedures, or do you have different policies and procedures? In reality, any disparities are likely to cause confusion among parents and cause a lack of cohesiveness to the provision. Working together to decide to co-ordinate policies and procedures is a good idea, as well as preparing an Information Pack / Operational Plan to set out how your provision will operate. You may choose to split the workload by key children, with each responsible for meeting the individual needs of these children. However, you may feel that one childminder is better qualified or has more relevant experience in completing certain tasks, i.e. development tracking, creative activities, outdoor play, and therefore allocate tasks accordingly.

Key Training and Support Considerations Training

As co-childminders are inspected separately, they should be responsible for their own training plan, with a feedback system to cascade learning. Training can be conducted individually based on specific interests or gaps in knowledge. You may define this in your Partnership Agreement. You may be aware that in relation to mandatory training, one person is responsible for monitoring this. It can cause major issues if any mandatory training expires for the business as a whole.

Important considerations

One of the major challenges for conflict in a co-childminding partnership is different approaches to continuing professional development and varying skills set. If one partner attends a lot of training and the other does not, this could indicate a different ethos and could impact on different quality standards. There is also the consideration of differing Ofsted outcomes. If one co-childminder successfully achieves an Outstanding outcome, that puts more pressure on the other partner. Think about what might happen if they were to get a lower grading.

Key Financial Considerations

Occupancy

Co-childminding can have a positive impact on occupancy and support changing parental demand due to the wide offer in place. However, you must consider the impact on the quality of the provision when determining how to expand. For each childminder on the premises, you may care for up to 3 children under 5 years of age. So, for 3 childminders this would mean up to 9 children under 5 years of age. You cannot look after more than 6 children under 8 years of age per childminder, so this gives a potential total of 18 children under 8 where 3 childminders or assistants work together. Therefore, available square footage is an important consideration. The positive financial impact of increasing occupancy on income levels is considerable as your overheads and costs do not also significantly increase.

A co-childminder partnership also allows your provision to claim [FEEE Funding](#) for your own child under the other's registration, where the co-childminder is not a close family member.

Financial Arrangements

It is important that your Partnership Agreement sets out all financial arrangements at the start of the partnership. We have provided several options for you to consider but would always advise consulting an accountant.

Option 1

You may decide to "contract" the co-childminder's services to provide assistance in your home. In this case, you would incur all expenses and receive all income, and the co-childminder would charge you an agreed fee for their services. You would each have to submit either a self-assessment tax return or limited company accounts.

Option 2

You may decide to 'employ' the co-childminder and maintain overall control of the provision. In this case, you would provide the co-childminder with a contract of employment and pay an agreed salary, based on experience and responsibility, and

not enter into a Partnership Agreement. The co-childminder would be entitled to all statutory employment rights and you would have employer responsibilities. You would be accountable for their practice and should conduct all the responsibilities detailed in our childminding assistant and apprentice guidance. However, they will still be subject to their own Ofsted inspections, and you will incur all costs in relation to insurances and registration fees etc. The main advantage of this model is that you would regularly be able to split provision, without complying with the 2 hours rule. It also allows for greater continuity during periods of illness or holidays. This model is suitable for a limited company, due to the possibility of reducing certain costs against Corporation Tax.

Option 3

The most efficient way to operate a co-childminder partnership is to open a joint bank account together and employ the services of an accountant. The amount of money from parents and FEEE funding will be paid into this account and all expenses related to business expenses will also be included in this account. You should also determine how much you will pay each month and pay you an income / salary from that account.

If registering as a childminder with domestic premises, the homeowner will pay all utilities personally and will be reimbursed the appropriate amount from the business account. You may decide that due to the wear and tear the homeowner will experience at their house due to the increased number of children being cared for, that the other co-childminder may pay an element of rent to compensate for this. Alternatively, you may decide to apportion the assets of the business and profits so that the homeowner gets a larger proportion. This should all be clearly set out in your Partnership Agreement. Where your co-childminder is also a key holder at your home you should discuss this with your domestic insurance provider. You may also wish to consider critical illness cover, if this is not already in place, especially where you are co-childminding with family members with whom you live.

You should set out how surplus profits (dividends) will be split and pay these accordingly either monthly, termly or at the year end.

Each co-childminder will be responsible for submitting their own self-assessment tax return and paying any tax owed.

Recruiting a Co-childminder

Most childminders recruit someone they know such as a family member, friend or people who have been recommended to them. This was largely due to knowing you had the same principles and values as the person you would be co-childminding with. Care needs to be taken to ensure you work with the right person as a poor atmosphere could impact on the children.

It is essential to have frank conversations at the start of the partnership while preparing your Partnership Agreement. Going through this process may be a good indicator if the partnership is going to work and should reduce conflict in the longer term.

Questions to ask

If the person has childminded before you should consider asking to see a copy of their previous Ofsted Inspection, along with evidence that actions have been completed or are being worked towards. You should also ask for evidence of continuous professional development and self-improvement. Discussions around their practice, ethos, strengths and weaknesses would enable you to determine how you may work together; differing strengths may complement each other. Obtaining references is important in addition to feedback from other parents. You may also wish to check their driving licence to establish there are no driving convictions and see evidence of a recent DBS check.

If you were looking to recruit someone that you didn't know then Leicestershire county council have a [Submit a Childcare Vacancy](#) which you can advertise your vacancy for free.