

Becoming a Childminder: Myth Busting the Most Common Misunderstandings

Thinking about becoming a childminder? We often speak to people who are interested but feel unsure because of things they've heard. Below we tackle some of the most common myths and explain what the reality really is.

✗ Myth 1: "Only women can be childminders"

✓ **The truth:** Anyone **can** become a childminder — men and women are equally welcome. Childminding is a professional role open to anyone aged 18 or over who meets the suitability requirements. We actively encourage diversity in the childcare workforce.

✗ Myth 2: "My own children will prevent me from becoming a childminder"

✓ **The truth:** Having your own children **does not** stop you becoming a childminder. Your own children are taken into account when looking at ratios, depending on their ages, but many childminders successfully work around family life. Ofsted will consider how you manage everyone's safety and wellbeing.

✗ Myth 3: "If you rent or live in a flat, you can't be a childminder"

✓ **The truth:** You **can** be a childminder in rented accommodation or a flat.

Ofsted will assess whether the space you use is safe and suitable for children. In some cases, you may need permission from your landlord, but the type of home you live in does not automatically prevent you from registering.

✗ Myth 4: "You must have a large home, dedicated playroom & a garden to be a childminder"

✓ **The truth:** What Ofsted requires is that your home is safe, suitable, and has enough usable space for the children you care for, rather than a specific layout or size.

- **Space:** You **must** have enough clear indoor space for children to play safely, based on the number and ages of children.
- **Rooms:** You **can** use shared family spaces (e.g. living room or dining room) – a separate playroom is not required.
- **Outdoor access:** A garden is helpful but **not** essential. If you don't have one, you can provide outdoor play through parks, walks, or trips out.





In simple terms, Ofsted looks at how you use your home, not how big it is or whether it looks like a nursery.

✗ Myth 5: “Only certain types of homes are suitable for childminding”

✓ The truth: Most homes **can** be suitable. All homes **can** potentially be used, but you should check your property deeds for any restrictions (covenants) about running a business from home.

✗ Myth 6: “Do I need planning permission to become a childminder”

✓ The truth: In England, you usually **do not** need planning permission to become a childminder — but there are some important exceptions.

✓ You generally **don’t** need planning permission if:

- You look after a small number of children (typically up to 6 under age 8).
- Your home is still mainly used as a private residence.
- The childcare activity doesn’t significantly change the character of your home.

This is because childminding is normally considered a residential use, not a business use requiring a change of use.

⚠ You **might** need planning permission if:

- You care for a large number of children (especially beyond EYFS ratios).
- There’s a noticeable increase in traffic, parking issues, or noise.
- You make significant alterations to your property for childcare (e.g. extensions, outdoor structures).
- The council decides the activity amounts to a “material change of use” (i.e. more like a nursery than a home).

👍 Practical tip

We would strongly recommend that you contact your local council’s planning department for informal advice (often free) & advise that you let your neighbours know early if there could be disruption





✗ Myth 7: “You can’t be a childminder if you have pets”

✓ **The truth:** Having pets **does not** prevent you from childminding. Pets are allowed, but they must always be controlled and never left alone with children in your care. From 1st September 2026, the decision has been made to change regulatory requirements to prohibit the provision of registered childcare from any premises where a banned dog breed is present or kept (banned dog breeds are those to which section 1 of the [Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#) applies and includes the [XL Bully type](#)).

✗ Myth 8: “Childminding can only take place in your home”

✓ **The truth:** You **can** also childmind from approved non-domestic premises. For example, this could be a church hall, school, office building, or outdoor setting. You would need to register as a “[childminder without domestic premises](#).”

✗ Myth 9: “You need a childcare qualification to become a childminder”

✓ **The truth:** You **do not** need a childcare qualification to register as a childminder.

Many childminders start with no formal childcare qualifications. Before registration, you do need to complete Paediatric First Aid and show that you understand safeguarding and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) if you plan to care for children aged 0–5. Experience, confidence and willingness to learn are just as important.

✗ Myth 10: “You must have experience working with children before becoming a childminder”

✓ **The truth:** You **do not** need previous experience. While experience can be helpful, it is not required. A good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is important, and further training is strongly recommended.

✗ Myth 11: “Do I get any on-going support once registered with Ofsted as a childminder”

✓ **The truth:** Support **does not** stop after registration. Leicestershire County Council offer free ongoing support & guidance, training opportunities, briefings and advice around inspections and funded places. There are a number of childminder networks across the county where practitioners support one another.

✗ Myth 12: “There are no checks required before registration”

✓ **The truth:** Several important checks **are** required. You **must** complete a DBS check (for everyone living or working in your home), a health declaration, and meet safeguarding requirements.





✗ Myth 13: “It takes a very long time to become registered”

✓ The truth: From the date that Ofsted accepts your application, the registration process **can** take up to 12 weeks, depending on checks and preparation.

✗ Myth 14: “You have to register with Ofsted immediately”

✓ The truth: You **can** take time to decide whether childminding is right for you.

Many people have attended our information sessions, please contact the 0116 3057136 (Duty desk) to express your interest in becoming a childminder before applying. Support is available before, during and after the registration process.

✗ Myth 15: “If you were registered in the past, you can’t do it again”

✓ The truth: Being previously registered **does not** prevent you from reapplying.

You will still need to go through the registration process again, including checks and training, but previous experience can be very helpful.

✗ Myth 16: “You can employ as many assistants as you like”

✓ The truth: There **are** limits on the number of people you can work with. When taking on a [childminder assistant](#), you **must** apply to your planning department for a certificate of lawful development. You **can** work with up to three other people. Beyond this, you **must** register as childcare on domestic premises.

✗ Myth 17: “Assistants manage themselves”

✓ The truth: You **are** responsible for your assistants. As the main childminder, you hold full responsibility for their practice and **must** meet employer obligations.

✗ Myth 18: “You cannot work with another registered childminder”

✓ The truth: You **can** work with a [co-childminder](#). Each childminder **must** be individually registered with Ofsted and will be inspected separately, but responsibilities **can** be shared within the business.

