

# Becoming a childminder





# Becoming a childminder

Childminders come from many different backgrounds and are of all ages. Some may be graduates looking for a career change, some may never have gained any previous formal qualifications.

All have lots of energy and want to become part of a professional workforce. They can provide the best possible care and opportunities so that children reach their full potential.

## Why be a childminder?

Imagine a job that makes a real, positive difference to children – one that builds their confidence, and helps them develop into well adjusted, sociable young people. Then imagine the flexibility to do this job in your own home, fitting in with your other commitments.

### Can you give your time, energy and enthusiasm to:

- ✿ inspire young minds?
- ✿ help children to develop socially?
- ✿ provide a safe and stimulating environment?

Are you committed to giving children the best start in life?

Are you motivated by the idea of being your own boss and working flexibly?

### If the answer is **Yes!**

– then becoming a registered childminder could be the career for you.

**Leicestershire's Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service can help you get started!**

## What is a childminder?

### A registered childminder:

- ✿ looks after one or more children under the age of eight for more than a total of two hours a day for reward works solely on domestic premises (normally a childminder's own home) or a combination of domestic premises and up to 50% of their time on non-domestic premises (such as school or community buildings)
- ✿ offers before and after school care to children aged over four
- ✿ is self-employed, runs their own business and provides a service to the families whose children they care for is registered and inspected by Ofsted or a registered agency – demonstrating the quality and standards of their care and teaching

### Although every day is different a typical day may include:

- arranging fun and stimulating learning activities through play, tailored to individual children's needs, such as
- ✿ dressing up, creative play, reading stories and exploring cultural events
- ✿ visiting a park, museum, library, parent and toddler groups or a stay and play session
- ✿ providing healthy meals and snacks for the children, involving children in food preparation and menu choices
- ✿ taking children to and from school, play groups or activity clubs
- working with other local childminders and childcare settings

# Easy as child's play?

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Before committing to a career in childminding you need to consider how this may affect you and those around you:



## Your own family

As with all career moves you need to make sure that childminding fits in with your current commitments. There will be a number of adjustments to make to your daily routine and these need to be considered before you take on the responsibility of childminding.

You'll need to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and register on the DBS update service.

It is also important to realise that anyone in your household over the age of 16, i.e. partners, children or lodgers, will also have to obtain a satisfactory DBS check.

## The cost

There will be some initial costs – such as buying safety equipment, toys, documentation and insurance. There will also be some associated costs towards training such as Paediatric First Aid, a course to help you understand and implement the Early Years foundation stage, and also Ofsted or agency-related registration costs.

## Running a business

**Firstly, you'll need to start thinking about your business plan. Ask yourself:**

- what childcare is already available in my area – is
- \* there a real need for anything extra?
- \* what can I offer to parents?
- \* how will I promote my services?
- how can I work with local
- \* pre-schools and schools?
- what would be the ongoing costs?

Our website can give ideas and information on your [business planning](#).

To succeed as a childminder, you'll need to be organised and be able to plan your work. You will need to have a clear business relationship with parents and you will have a written contract with each family.

You will be classed as self-employed and will have to keep records of your income and expenditure. Please visit [Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\)](#)

## What about finances?

Childminding is a valuable self-employment option for people who want to set up in a business that will give them a flexible, fulfilling, varied and challenging profession. The amount you earn will depend on how many children you look after, for how long and for how much.

A childminder, like any self-employed person, can deduct business-related expenses from their income before paying tax. Expenses can include toys, play materials, the cost of outings, food and drink, together with a proportion of the childminder's housing, heating and telephone costs.

## Your neighbours

You will need to think about whether your neighbours will object if you take up childminding. If you think that they might complain about families arriving and leaving from your home, or about the noise of having children next door, you should try to discuss this with them before you go ahead. You will also need to contact your district council to enquire if planning permission is needed.

## Your pets

Any pets must be kept under control and must not be left alone with children in your care.



## A place to play outside

Children need to play outdoors. If you don't have a garden, you must be prepared to take children out to local parks and playgrounds for fresh air and exercise on a daily basis.

## Working long hours

Although working with children can be rewarding it can also be very tiring and you may need to consider working long hours if you wish to provide a professional service to working parents. Working hours and patterns vary considerably but generally parents may need childcare from 8am to 6pm.

## Make a commitment

Parents need reliable childcare arrangements that will last. Children suffer from the disruption of moving from one childcare situation to another. So, you should only become a childminder if you are prepared to commit yourself to providing a reliable and flexible service over a reasonable period of time. Looking after other people's children is a position of great trust.

## Yourself

Most people who have paid jobs sometimes find it difficult to keep a balance with the demands of their personal and family life. This is especially difficult for childminders because they work in their own homes and their job and family life are so closely interwoven, particularly if they have their own children.



# Is childminding for me?

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- do you like looking after children?
- ✿ are you interested in a rewarding career that allows you to take control of your own personal development?
- ✿ would you enjoy caring for children from a variety of different cultures, backgrounds or those with special needs – such as a disability?
- would you describe yourself as energetic, enthusiastic and caring?
- would you enjoy working with parents ensuring you deliver a good service?
- would you enjoy working in your own home and being your own boss?
- ✿ would you enjoy working in your own home, or in your home and up to half your time in non-domestic premises?
- ✿ would you enjoy being your own boss?

## Be flexible

You set your own hours. You could decide, for instance, to look after just one child – or a baby for a morning a week. You may even decide to make your childminding into a thriving business and care for several children full-time, maybe with an 'assistant' – a partner, family member or friend (provided they are registered). Childminders can work with up to two other people; making a total of three childminders on the premises.

## And you're your own boss:

You have the satisfaction of running your own small business, from your own home. Some childminders enjoy the flexibility of contributing to the family income whilst still being able to be at home with their family.

## You're a childcare professional:

You work in partnership with the parents and other partners to make a real impact on a child's progress. You can progress in your career through training and qualifications right up to degree level and beyond.



# What does a childminder have to do?

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## Plan the routine of the childminding day

This means organising your day so that you can fit in regular events such as taking children to and from school, meals, naps, exercise and play, as well as time for individual children to explore their interests. A daily routine is especially important for young children who feel more secure when they know what to expect.

You must put the child's needs and interests first. This means that your own family tasks such as gardening, shopping, washing and ironing have to be fitted around the children in your care.

If you look after children aged 0-5, you will follow the [Early Years Foundation Stage framework](#)

If you look after children 5-8 years you follow the requirements of the [Childcare Register](#). Further information is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) and the [Early Years Childcare Practice website page](#)

## Provide play activities which respond to the child's interests

Play is a serious business for children – it's how they learn. Through play, children learn to understand the world and how they fit in it. Play activities should promote an individual child's development – as set out in the [development matters document](#)

Each child will have different needs and interests and you will need to be able to plan activities accordingly based on children in your care.

The Early Years Foundation Stage promotes teaching and learning to help prepare young children for school, based upon an environment that helps children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

## Keep children safe

As a childminder it's your responsibility to make your home safe and prevent accidents, as well as keeping children safe when you are out and about. You should ensure high standards of hygiene and be prepared for an emergency. This will include having a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate.



## Managing children's behaviour

You will need to be able to manage children's behaviour, encouraging positive behaviour and discouraging unwanted behaviour. Although you may have some experience of doing this if you have your own children, the way in which you manage behaviour may be different for other people's children. You will need to put policies in place and discuss this with parents to make sure they are happy with your views and methods.

## Working with parents and other carers

You will need to be able to work closely with parents, exchanging information with them about their child's development, and making sure that you are both providing consistent care for the child. Parents are a child's first and most important educator. You must be able to show you respect parents' views, values and ways of doing things.

You will also need to work with other carers and professionals – such as the local pre-school and school. This will ensure consistent, continuity of care and the best possible environment for a child's growth and achievement.

## Protect children from abuse

All adults have to take responsibility for protecting children from abuse. Children, especially young children, can't seek help for themselves and rely on those caring for them to do so, on their behalf. Childminders must be able to spot signs of abuse and know who to tell and how. These responsibilities will be outlined in your training. Further information is available from an Advisor who offers support and guidance to childminders throughout their careers.

## Insurance

You will need to take out Public Liability Insurance to cover any accidents that children in your care may have, and any legal costs that you may face as a consequence. There are a variety of organisations who offer insurance. More information about this can be found in the [pathway to childminder registration e learning](#)

## How many children can I look after?

This is covered within the EYFS, and you can usually look after up to six children under eight, including your own. Normally no more than three of the six children should be under five and no more than one child can be under one. Although in certain circumstances such as looking after siblings or twins or to provide continuity of care, an exemption can be made, subject to approval by Ofsted.

You can also care for children over eight without affecting your registration, providing this does not adversely affect the younger children's care. You are advised to check with your district council to enquire if planning permission is required; and if so, establish if there is likely to be any restrictions applied in relation to your business. For more information visit [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

Ofsted requires registered childminders (and anyone over the age of 16 years, living and/or working on the premises) to obtain an enhanced [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) disclosure and register on the DBS update service.

# Ofsted Childminder and agencies

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Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) registers and regulates childminders. As a childminder you will be inspected every 3-4 years to ensure you meet the minimum standards required by law, these include:

- ✿ your responsibilities in safeguarding children
- ✿ ensuring you're suitable to be with children
  - checking that you provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment, enabling children in your care,
- ✿ opportunities to play and learn
  - making sure that you'll work in partnership with parents and carers

Childminder agencies are organisations that provide childminders with a range of services including continuous professional development, training, quality assurance checks, brokerage with parents and business support.

- ✿ Ofsted will inspect the agency and visit a sample of its registered childminders
- ✿ These childminders will not be graded by Ofsted or receive separate inspection reports

Childminders can register with Ofsted or register with an Ofsted registered agency

Ofsted hold two registers, the Early Years Register and also the Childcare Register which has two parts, a compulsory part and a voluntary part.

**The Early Years Register:** is for providers who care for children from birth to five (up to 31st August following their fifth birthday) and will be required to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

**The Childcare Register:** The compulsory part of this register is for providers who care for children from 1st September following their fifth birthday up to the age of eight. Whereas, the voluntary part of this register, is for providers whose service does not come under the compulsory requirements i.e. the child care provision is for children over the age of eight or if you want to care for the child within their own home.

So, as a prospective childminder you can apply to join one register or both registers. Deciding which register to apply to depends on:

- ✿ the ages of the children that will be cared for
- ✿ the premises in which you will be providing care
- ✿ the type of care that you will be providing.

You will need to register with Ofsted, or an agency, if you are looking after children under the age of eight in your own home for a total of two or more hours a day for reward. Some childminders may be exempt from registration. For more information regarding exemptions to registrations and the voluntary and compulsory elements of the Childcare Register please visit the [Ofsted website](#)



# How do I set up as a childminder?

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## Becoming a childminder

As a prospective childminder you must have completed training which helps you to understand and implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) before you can register with Ofsted or agency.

The EYFS sets the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to 5. All registered early year's providers are required to use the EYFS.

Although you can go through the registration process by yourself, we recommend that prospective childminders use the support and funding for training available from the local authority. Alternatively, a childminding agency will support you with this.

Please see our [becoming a childminder webpage](#) to view our flowchart to becoming a childminder through the local authority's process and read the information and details for the Pathways to Childminder Registration sessions.

Information on required training to become registered is given at the Pathways to Childminder Registration sessions, alongside the funding application details.

Our [Early Years Inclusion and Childcare website](#) also has details of childminder agencies operating in Leicestershire.

## Paediatric First Aid

As part of the EYFS criteria it is a requirement that all registered childminders hold a Paediatric First Aid Certificate. Leicestershire County Council has a list of preferred training suppliers who deliver [First Aid Courses](#) around the county. You will need to book and pay for these direct with the training companies offering this course.

## Funding

Once you have completed the [Pathways E learning](#) and booked onto your Paediatric First Aid course, funding is available to undertake the 'Preparing to work in home-based childcare' course or other training to help you understand and implement the EYFS.

Due to the level of expectations involved in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the necessary communication skills required, it is a requirement of funding that, before you proceed with registrations, you are able to evidence that you hold a minimum of Level 2 in English (English Language/literacy GCSE A\*-C or 9-4).

English Literacy/language qualifications can be accessed free of charge. For more information call the Adult Learning Service on 0800 988 0308 or visit [The Adult Learning website](#). Alternatively, you can also visit [Train Together](#).

A £50 payment is required to access funding to undertake the 'Homebased Childcare Award (HBCA)' training.



The Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service offer many other courses, on various dates across the county, all training courses are approved and offered free or at low cost. You should also undertake Safeguarding Children training and we would also recommend you complete Equal Opportunities training too. Due to frequent changes in legislation, policies and procedures, we would recommend that you update your learning on a regular basis. For information on early years training available please visit [our Training and Professional Development webpage](#).

Other organisations also offer tailored training to childminders.

## Caring for children with Special Educational Needs – what support is available?

Leicestershire's Specialist Teaching Services provide advice and support to childminders caring for [children with SEND](#)

## Childminder Progression

### Register for FEEE

Once you have been registered by Ofsted or Childminder agency you may want to consider applying to deliver the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for eligible 3 and 4 year old children. If your Ofsted grading is good or outstanding you will be able to offer FEEE funding to eligible 2 year olds.

Funding is available from the DfE to enable every 3 and 4-year-old to receive a free part-time place of up to 15 hours per week (or 30 hours for eligible working parents). Every 2-year-old whose parents meet a certain criteria can receive a part-time place of up to 15 hours per week. This can be accessed over a minimum of 38 weeks per year until they reach statutory school age (i.e. the term after a child's 5th birthday).

For more information visit <http://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/feee>.

## Where can I go for support?

Leicestershire County Council's Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service can offer you valuable advice and support; you can either email [childcare@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@leics.gov.uk) or phone 0116 305 7136.

Many working parents, including those whose children you are caring for may also be eligible to claim child tax credits.

For more information about Tax Credits visit

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

## Financial Benefits Available

As a registered childminder, even though you'll be self-employed, you may be able to claim some financial benefits such as Working Tax Credit. Your local Citizens Advice

Bureau may be able to assist you or visit the [CAB Advice](#)

[Guide](#) Website.



# Useful Information

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The Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service (Work Force Development Team) is proud to offer a range of support to all our providers. Please visit our website [Early Years Inclusion and Childcare website](#) or email [childcare@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@leics.gov.uk) to request information regarding latest training opportunities, funding available and information regarding career progression. Alternatively, here is a list of web pages you may find useful.

## [Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

Advice, Information and Guidance for child carers of children aged 0-5.  
0116 305 7136 or email [childcare@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@leics.gov.uk)

## [EYFS 3i Events \(Information, inspiration, interaction\)](#)

These support sessions are suitable for all practitioners including childminders, and will provide you with information and training to keep you up-to-date with all the national and local initiatives. Attendance at these sessions will provide you with the opportunity to network with other practitioners and receive all the latest information.

## [Business Support](#)

These pages offer advice and templates to help you develop and grow your business. This includes support on business planning, marketing and financial planning.

## [Ofsted](#)

Responsible for the registration and inspection of childminders.  
0300 123 1231

## [Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years \(PACEY\)](#)

A national support network for childminders, nursery workers and nannies.  
0845 880 0044

## [HM Revenue and Customs](#)

For tax advice for Childminders in association with PACEY

Leicestershire's Information and [Support Directory](#) is an extensive online directory offering parents the ability to search for information about childcare and services for families with children aged 0-20 years in their local community.