

# Childminding, Is it for you?

How to become a childminder  
in Sunderland

**Sunderland Families Information Service**

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This leaflet tells you about the steps you need to take to become a registered childminder.

### What is a childminder?

A childminder is a person who looks after one or more children under the age of eight to whom they are not related, on domestic premises for reward for a total of more than 2 hours in one day. "Domestic Premises" is usually the childminders own home and "reward" can be money or payment in kind. Childminders must 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 responsibility for the child
- Are a local authority 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 (babysitting)

You also do not need to register as a childminder if you look after children on the following basis, although you may wish to consider registering on the Voluntary Childcare Register.

- Look after the child wholly or mainly in the child's own home
- Look after the children for two sets of parents wholly or mainly in the home of either both sets of parents
- Only look after children who are aged 8 or over

**Please note that if you act as a childminder without being registered, it could lead to prosecution.**

### What is it like being a childminder?

Childminding can be a rewarding and fulfilling career. However, it can also be challenging. A childminder is self employed; it is your own business and therefore your own responsibility to comply with all legal requirements e.g. tax returns. However, as it is your own business, you can choose when to work, how many children to look after (within Ofsted regulations) and what prices to charge. As you work from home, you can work at the same time as looking after your own family.

You need to be able to plan your day well to ensure you have appropriate activities organised to support children's learning and development.

You may have children from a wide range of ages, and therefore you will need a variety of activities planned.

However, as you could look after a child from birth, right up to 14 years old, you can build strong long term relationships with families.

### How many children can I look after?

You can look after up to six children under the age of eight (including your own). Of these, no more than three children can be under the age of five. Normally no more than one child can be under one year. The space available in your home will affect the number of children you are registered for. You may be able to look after more children if you employ an assistant or work with another childminder. You can also look after children over eight years, as long as their care doesn't affect your care of younger children.

## Things to consider

Before taking the next step, you might want to consider:

- 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 family?
- How does 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 parents regarding any problems or concerns about their children or concerns about financial and other agreements?

## What must I do to become a childminder?

You must first attend a Pre – registration Briefing Session organised by the Extended Services Team in Sunderland City Council. At this session you will find out more about what it is like being a childminder, what you must do to become a childminder and what training you must undertake. You will also find out more about what support services are offered to new childminders in your local area.

As part of the registration process you will be required to complete specific training courses. These include the Introduction to Childcare Practice (Home-based) (ICP), a first aid course, Child Protection and an overview of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In addition to other training providers, members of the Extended Services Team deliver this training and you can book onto it at the pre-registration session.

Once you are registered there are further opportunities to increase your skills and update your knowledge through accessing training offered through the termly training programme.

## 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 requirements for providing childcare on domestic premises.

## What are the Requirements?

Childminders providing care for children from birth to the 31st August following the child's fifth birthday must meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The requirements are for the child's learning and development and also their welfare. You will need to demonstrate to Ofsted how you will meet these standards before you can be registered.

### **How long will it take me to get registered?**

You should be registered within three months from when Ofsted receives your application. Ofsted will ask you to pay a **registration fee**. This fee will be reimbursed by the Extended Services and Attendance Team, as part of the Start up Grant (see opposite).

### **What if Ofsted refuses to register me?**

You have the right to object to this decision. If Ofsted still refuses to register you, you can appeal against the decision to an independent body, the Care Standards Tribunal.

### **What happens once I am registered?**

After you are registered, an Ofsted childcare inspector will check the quality of your childminding at regular intervals.

During the inspection, they will look at how you interact and care for the children you childmind and ensure your premises still meet the standards. The inspector will write a report on your childminding and send a copy to you, so that you can make it available to parents. You will have to pay an **annual fee** on the anniversary of your registration.

You will also be contacted by the Families Information Service (FIS). The FIS is a service for parents providing a range of information to help with the practical side of raising a family. An important part of this is to provide information about registered childcare. Ofsted inform them of all new applicants. You will then receive information from the FIS about the criteria for a Start up Grant and be asked to fill a form in about your business. The FIS would then give out your information to parents who contact them.

### **What help will I get when I become a childminder?**

All newly registered childminders in Sunderland are eligible for a Childminder Start – up Grant. You will receive your application form from the FIS when you are registered with Ofsted. This will cover your registration fee, your doctor’s fee, and membership with a local Toy Library for your first year, a National Childminders Association (NCMA) Business Pack and some equipment or toys to get you started.

There are also other forms of support for new childminders in Sunderland. There is a Support Childminder Scheme which you can choose to opt in to.

This links you with a local childminder who will be able to offer practical advice and support during your first year as a childminder. There are also local Support Groups which you can join in, whereby childminders meet

regularly to support each other and share information.

### **Where can I get further information?**

To book onto a Briefing Session or talk to someone about childminding, please contact the Families Information Service Sunderland:

**Families Information Service,  
1st Floor, City Library and Arts  
Centre, Fawcett Street,  
Sunderland, SR1 1RE.**

**Telephone: 0191 520 5505**

You can view the Early Years Foundation Stage at **[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs)**

Additional information about registering on the Voluntary register can be found on the Ofsted website: **[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**