



Childminding

A Guide for Parents



Introduction

The County Childcare Committee seeks to promote quality childcare services. A safe and stimulating environment is vital for children so that parents have confidence that their children are well cared for.

This publication is intended as a guide to provide parents with clear and concise information about Childminding.

When you are choosing a childminder

- Take time
- Ask questions
- Check it out
- Communicate your needs

How do I find a childminder?

- Contact the Childminding Advisory Officer for a list of Voluntary Notified Childminders
- By contacting the HSE Pre-school Inspection Team
- Through your local Parent and Toddler Group or Pre-School
- Through your local Public Health Nurse
- By word of mouth
- Through your local newspapers
- Through Childminding Ireland



Steps to choosing a childminder

- Arrange to meet with a few childminders in your area in their own homes
- Prepare a list of questions and issues you want to bring up beforehand and make notes
- Talk to friends, neighbours, other parents and the Childminding Advisory Officer with the County Childcare committee
- Ensure you check out two references from the Childminder
- Enquire if the Childminder is Voluntary Notified to the County Childcare Committee or Notified to the HSE Pre-school Inspection team





Questions to be asked

1. How many children do you care for?
2. What are the ages of the children in your care?
3. What hours of childcare do you provide?
4. What is your daily routine?
5. What type of activities do you provide?
6. Is outdoor play part of your daily routine?
7. Will other people be in your home while my child is here?
8. What emergency arrangements do you have in place, e.g. Sickness of child/yourself, fire prevention, accident etc...?
9. How will the children be disciplined?
10. What type of food do you offer to children in your care?
11. Is the Childminder insured to mind children?
12. Do you have adequate car insurance?
13. Are you working unknown to Childminding Advisory Officer in the CCC?
14. Are you notified to the HSE?
15. Do you have Childcare training and first aid training?
16. Have you been Garda Vetted?
17. How long have you been a Childminder?
18. Do you have Policies and Procedures for your service?
19. Issues for further discussion?
 - Fees
 - Outings
 - Rest/sleeping facilities
 - Toilet training



What to look for

The skills of a Childminder and suitable person is someone who:

- Likes and relates well to children, who will be gentle and kind and keep your child safe
- Has the ability to listen
- Is sympathetic/tolerant and kind
- Is fair with the children and with their own children
- Is clear thinking
- Understands their own child's feelings
- Is the Childminder professional in their approach to parents and business like in their childminding service e.g. provides a working agreement for parents and policies & procedures
- Is self confident
- Has the ability to think of others
- Has a good relationships with children in their care
- Has plenty of energy
- Is in good health
- Uses appropriate language
- Has a sense of humour





Childminder's Home:

- Visit the home and meet the Childminder there
- Is the home caring and friendly, yet stimulating?
- Are the premises safe?
- Make sure there are childproof locks on windows and doors, guards on fires and stairs and smoke alarms. There should be no trailing flexes and low-level glass should be protected.
- Is it a homely environment?
- Is it cosy and warm?
- Is there enough space for your child to be cared for and to play freely and safely?
- Are there a variety of age and stage appropriate toys to play with? Look for crayons, books, play kitchens, building blocks, jigsaws and a good variety of outdoor toys etc.
- Are the kitchen, toilets and other rooms clean?
- Outdoors, is this safe, check for hazards? Is there a securely fenced off area?
- Are there any pets?
- Trust your first impression and gut feeling.





Your childminder will require the following information from you

1. The child's name and address
2. The child's date of birth
3. Details of parents' places of work
4. Telephone numbers-home and work
5. The name and telephone number of the person to be contacted in an emergency.
6. Name of at least two adults who are authorised to collect your child
7. The name, address and telephone number of the child's doctor
8. Necessary medical and dietary information
9. A signed agreement for medical treatment
10. Consent for medication to be given
11. Consent for outings
12. The child's likes dislikes, fears and comforts

The childminder should ask you to complete a working agreement, which will cover all these matters.





Settling in your child

- Introduce your child with short visits initially so that your child is used to saying goodbye, knowing that you will return
- Make sure your child has a favourite toy or comfort as a link with home
- Ensure the childminder understands the child's special words and routines
- Talk things over with your childminder about how you want your child cared for
- If possible, leave time to exchange information each day about how your child is getting on
- Phone during the day or turn up unexpectedly occasionally, if you need to reassure yourself that your child is happy
- If you are concerned about certain issues talk to your childminder

Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 p.46 - 47states:

A Childminder (a person who provides a childminding service) should look after not more than 5 pre-school children including her own pre-school children. No more than two children should be less than 15 months. Exceptions in relation to numbers under 15 months can be made for multiple births and siblings. A childminder should have a telephone and a second person must be available to cope with emergencies.





General information (the following information should be referred to in the Policies and Procedures of the Childminding Service)

Working Agreement

A working agreement is recommended between parent and childminder. It should include collection and pick up times, payments, holidays, illness, food, outings etc it should also including the relevant information as out lines on page 5.

Parents/childminder relationship, Partnership with Parents

As a parent it is important to recognise that the childminder you have chosen is providing a professional service.

The childminder is a very important part of your child's life and therefore mutual respect and courtesy should be paramount at all times.

Medicine administration

It is recommended that written consent be given by parents to the child minder for medicine administration

Behaviour management

Discuss positive behaviour management with the childminder. Ensure agreement is reached on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.



Collection time

Often collecting time can cause a difficulty. In order to get attention from the parent the child may display signs of unwanted behaviour. This can be common behaviour for a child who is just glad to see the parent and wants some attention. Talk about this with your childminder so that it does not become a problem and two adults do not get played off against each other.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the information brochure can help to minimise the anxieties experienced by parents leaving their child with a childminder. As this information is a guide only, parents may wish to receive more advice on childminding. If you wish to do so.....

Please Contact:

Your Childminding Advisory Officer.

DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. No responsibility for loss or distress occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by the County Childcare Committee.



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