



becoming a registered childminder

Early years and childcare is an expanding and dynamic sector. It's also an important career, as those who work in it play an incredibly valuable role in shaping the lives of future generations. If you have passion, enthusiasm and love working with children then this could be the career for you.

There is an increasing demand for staff at all levels whether you want to work full-time, part-time or term-time only. There are plenty of opportunities for you to gain funded qualifications and further your training.

What is a registered childminder?

Registered childminders are self-employed professionals who care for children within the childminder's own home. To care for children under the age of eight, childminders must be registered with Ofsted.



www.childcarejobsdorset.co.uk

What does being a childminder involve?

Being a registered childminder is a professional and rewarding career. Working in your own home you will have the flexibility to decide your own working hours and how you plan your working day. Being a childminder also has the advantage of allowing you to look after your own children at the same time, if required.

You will need to have a flexible approach to working with children and support each child's unique learning and development whilst also caring for their personal needs, such as feeding and changing.

You will be responsible for creating a safe and stimulating home environment which allows each individual child to reach their full potential. Parents often choose childminding as it allows their child to be cared for in an environment following similar routines and activities as they have at home.

You should take full advantage of using the wider outdoor environment which helps children play, learn and develop in the world around them. As a childminder, you are able to regularly encourage children to enjoy outdoor activities and events. Going to the local shop or beach should be used as an opportunity to extend children's learning and development.

All childminders caring for children under the age of five must be working within the statutory framework and practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This sets the standards for learning, development and care from birth to five.

You will find a number of useful websites by typing EYFS into your search engine.

What hours do childminders work?

As childminders are self-employed, you can set your own working hours, however, to meet the needs of working parents it's advisable to be able to offer flexible hours to give families choice.

As a guide the majority of childminders tend to work between 8am and 6pm.

How many children can childminders care for?

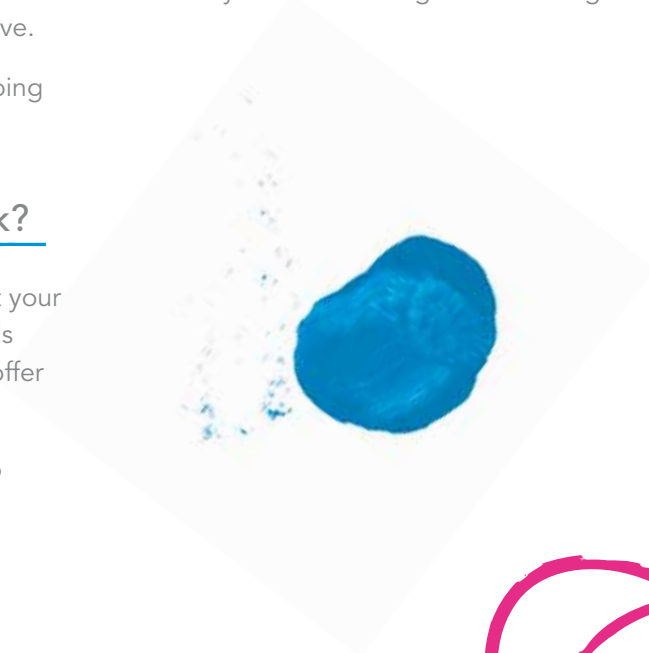
Registered childminders may care for up to six children under the age of eight years, this includes your own children or grandchildren. Only three of the children may be under the age of five and normally only one child under the age of one. When you register as a childminder, Ofsted prescribe the number of children you will be registered to care for as this can vary (i.e. due to the space available within your home).

Childminders, who work with a partner or an assistant, may be able to look after larger groups of children.

You can also care for children aged eight to fourteen years as long as the number of older children does not adversely affect the care provided for the younger children.

If you only want to care for children over the age of eight, then it is not mandatory to be registered with Ofsted, however, it is recommended that you join the Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR) as a childminder to demonstrate to parents that you are approved and assessed as suitable to look after children.

If you wish to care for a child in the family's own home (for example as a nanny or au pair), then you have the option of joining Ofsted's Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR) and becoming a Home Childcarer. This has the benefit of enabling parents to access funding to help with their childcare costs, like they can in other registered settings.



Step-by-step guide to registration

You will be supported by a dedicated team from the local authority that you live within. They will guide you through the registration process and offer continued support and professional development once you are registered.

1. Careers in Childcare Information Session (Optional)

To ensure that childminding is the right career for you, it is advisable to first attend a free Careers in Childcare Information Session which will give an overview of all childcare careers. These sessions are held regularly across Dorset and cover:

- What working in childcare is really like
- The different types of childcare provision available
- Specific job roles and the age ranges of children you can work with
- Details on what the next steps are to begin your career in childcare
- Training and gaining qualifications
- Individual one-to-one advice on how to start your career in childcare

These short sessions are provided free of charge by your local authority.

Further details can be found within this pack or to book onto a session, please visit:

www.childcarejobsdorset.co.uk

2. Childminding Briefing Session

Book onto your local authority's free Childminding Briefing Session which will give an overview of the childminding registration process and more. Further details can be found within this pack or book online at:

www.childcarejobsdorset.co.uk

3. Research

It is recommended that you assess if there is demand for childminders within your local area. This will determine whether a new childminding business is viable. The local authority will be able to provide further support to help you conduct this research.

4. Childminding Registration Course

The Childminding Registration Course is only for when you decide you definitely want to register as a childminder. The course is run over a number of weeks covering all the details to ensure you provide a good quality childminding service. You will also require a Paediatric First Aid certificate and Safeguarding Children training. These may be included within the Registration Course or you may have to access these separately. Course inclusions will be explained at the briefing session (see step 2).

Completion of your Ofsted registration forms and a home visit by your local authority is covered within the Childminding Registration Course.

5. Ofsted inspection

An Ofsted Inspector will arrange to visit you in your home to ensure that you and your home are ready and suitable to start working with children. They will also want to see the resources and activities you will provide to support children's learning and development, including how you will meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

If Ofsted propose you for registration they will take up references and carry out all the necessary checks including health and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all household members over 16 years of age. If successful you will be issued with a registration certificate and can begin childminding (step 5 can take up to 12 weeks).

How do I set my fees?

Childminders set their own fees depending on the hours offered and services provided. Most childminders will have a set hourly rate which varies depending on the age of the children. Some childminders will make an additional charge for extras such as providing food, nappies and special day trips. You may wish to check other local childminder's fees as a guide.



Financial support for childcare costs

To run a successful childminding business it is useful to advise parents on the financial support available to help make childcare costs more affordable for them:

Childcare Element of Working Tax Credits

Depending on their income, parents working 16 hours or more per week can claim this funding towards their childcare costs.

Childcare Vouchers

If their employers offer this scheme, childcare vouchers can be given in the place of a proportion of their salary and are exempt from tax and national insurance contributions.

Early Learning & Childcare Funding

For all three and four year olds, but only available for parents to use with childminders if they are accredited. If you are not accredited then you might provide a drop off and pick up service to nurseries and pre-schools where the funding can be accessed.

Your local Family or Children's Information Service can provide more detail to you and parents on all funding available or search:

www.direct.gov.uk

How can I promote my business?

Once registered, Ofsted will notify the local authority's Family or Children's Information Service. This service provides parents and carers with impartial support in choosing childcare. Parents can access this information through a variety of ways including telephone, email, face to face visits and online. It is your responsibility to give permission for your information to be shared and also to ensure that it is accurate.

To ensure your success, particularly in the early days of starting up, it is worth promoting your business wider within your local community through schools, children's centres, doctors surgeries, shops, employers and parent and toddler groups to name but a few.

What training and qualifications will I need?

The Introduction, Safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid courses offered at Step 4 (overleaf) are the

minimum requirement to register as a childminder with Ofsted. You should also continue your own professional development through a range of courses and workshops offered by your local authority. In addition, there is an expectation that quality childminders will hold a level 3 childcare qualification (see the Training and Qualifications factsheet for further details).

Quality Improvement Schemes

Each local authority manages a quality improvement scheme for registered childminders. These schemes exist to help childminders evaluate and improve their service to ensure they continue to provide the best possible care and education for all children in their care. All childminders are fully supported and mentored to adopt this process of continuous development. These schemes are compulsory for all new childminders. More details will be provided at the introductory course.

How frequently will I be inspected

Within six months of registration, Ofsted will visit you to carry out an inspection and award a grade for the quality of learning, development and care provided. After this, Ofsted will repeat the inspection at least once every three years.

Ofsted reports can be obtained from:
www.ofsted.gov.uk

What shall I do next?

Contact your local authority's workforce development team by phone, email or online to book onto either a Careers in Childcare Information Session or a Childminding Briefing Session.
www.childcarejobsdorset.co.uk

Bournemouth

01202 456393

childcare.jobs@bournemouth.gov.uk

Dorset

01305 228428

childcarejobs@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Poole

01202 261999

familyinformation@poole.gov.uk