

Become a **registered childminder**



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If you would like to have a rewarding career, be your own boss and run your business from your own home, then childminding could be an ideal career for you. As a registered childminder you will:

- care for your own children at the same time if you have a family
- offer the children you care for a happy and stimulating environment
- provide early years education and see the children develop
- work in your home, choosing the hours you work and the services you provide
- have a career where no two days are the same
- meet other childminders in your area and get to know your local community
- join around 75,000 childminders in England and Wales providing quality childcare.



"Childminding is so rewarding"

"I have been childminding for nearly five years. Before that I used to work long hours as a motorway services manager, but I decided on a change after my second son was born. I'm certain that I have made the right career choice as these have been the best three years. I absolutely love childminding.

I have taken advantage of training opportunities and, as well as caring for a number of children, I also work as a support childminder giving new childminders help and advice. I find that childminding is so rewarding – I can't stop telling people how good it is."

Fiona, registered childminder, Doncaster

“Childminders are true professionals”

“When I gave up my job to look after my daughter, I decided that childminding could be the career for me. I already had some experience in childcare from volunteering at my daughter’s playgroup, and this helped me to get my first childcare placements.

I have found working as a childminder a positive experience, and generally parents are not surprised to see a male childminder. My area has a lot of single parents, so I may provide a consistent male influence in that child’s life. I have found childminding to be a great career, and it fits in with my family life. Childminders are true professionals that provide care and early education, as well as being a business. It can be a truly rewarding career.”

Tim, registered childminder, Medway



* What does a **registered childminder** do?

As a registered childminder you will look after one or more children under the age of 8 for more than a total of two hours a day, usually in your own home, for payment. As a registered childminder you will work to a national standard, and be inspected by Ofsted to ensure you provide a safe and stimulating environment for the children that you care for. You will usually be self-employed and running your own business. Although every day will be different, a typical day may include:

- visiting a park, museum, library or playgroup
- arranging fun and stimulating learning activities, such as dressing-up, creative play, reading and exploring cultural events
- providing meals and snacks for the children, involving them in food preparation and menu choices
- taking children to and from school or clubs
- working with other local childminders to organise group activities.



* Getting started

Before you can start working as a childminder caring for children under 8 years old in your home, you will need to be registered by Ofsted*.

Registration – a step-by-step guide

- 1** Attend childminding pre-registration briefing sessions to learn more about becoming a childminder. These are arranged by your local authority or NCMA, and ChildcareLink can give you details of your local contacts (see page 8). Ask at your pre-registration session whether it is possible to be put in touch with a support childminder – an experienced childminder who can help you with all your questions and queries about your new career.
- 2** Read all the information you're given at the session, including the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, as you will have to explain to an Ofsted Inspector how you intend to meet the requirements before you can start childminding.
- 3** Complete and return an Ofsted application pack. Ofsted will then give you information on how to apply for a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure for yourself and anyone else in your home aged over 16.
- 4** Ofsted will contact you to arrange for an inspector to visit your home. They will need to make sure that you are suitable to care for children and that your home is safe and child-friendly.
- 5** Take an introductory childminding training course and first-aid course (see page 6) to prepare for your first childcare placements.
- 6** Pay your Ofsted registration fee. You will receive your registration certificate and can start work as a registered childminder.

Congratulations!

* It's illegal to care for children under the age of 8 in your own home for more than two hours a day without being registered (unless you are a blood relative of the child).

“Don't worry about the introductory course or paperwork – it's easy to register and I had good fun on the way.”

James, registered childminder, Medway

“It’s great to see the children progress”

“I have been childminding for 25 years and now, and I belong to a local network that recruits and trains childminders to care for children with additional requirements. I fell into childminding because it suited my family life. As my children got older I felt I needed a challenge, so I joined the network to look after disabled children. I really enjoy the work, and it’s great to see the children progress.”

Brenda, registered childminder, Bromley

* Some frequently asked questions

Do I have to be registered? If you care for children under the age of 8 in your own home and the children aren’t your blood relatives, you are required by law to be registered and inspected by Ofsted*.

Is it expensive to get started? As a newly registered childminder in England, you may be able to apply for a grant to help cover the costs of setting-up your childminding business. Childminder start-up grants are managed by your local authority, contact NCMA or ChildcareLink for the contact in your area (see page 8).

How many children can I look after? Ofsted will set a number of children you can care for, up to a maximum of six children under 8 years old, of which usually no more than three may be under the age of 5. These numbers will include any children of your own.

Do I have to live in a big house? You don’t need to have a big house and garden to become a childminder. You don’t even need to own your own home.

How much will I earn? It will be up to you to set your fees, and how much you earn will depend on the number of children you look after and the hours you work. Find out what local childminders charge by contacting NCMA or ChildcareLink (see page 8).



* What does the future hold?

Childminding is a dynamic and evolving career so, once you've got your new business up and running, there are plenty of courses and training opportunities that will help you develop your knowledge and confidence. Here are just some of the options available to you:



Qualifications There are lots of childcare qualifications you can work towards, from basic introductory training right up to degree level!

When you start out, you will need to attend an introductory course as part of your registration. It is likely that this will be Introduction to Childcare Practice (Home-based). This is the first unit of the nationally accredited Diploma in Home-based Childcare (DHC), specifically written for childminders and nannies. There are four further units which form the level 3 Diploma in Home-based Childcare.

Community involvement There are a vast number of local projects where childminders help local families. These include childminders offering respite care to families with disabled children; and caring for the children of teenage parents to allow them to return to education, training or employment. Involvement in a community project will allow you to add a new dimension to your career and learn something new.

Quality Start

As a new childminder you may be able to take advantage of a special NCMA membership package that includes:

- A year's NCMA membership
- 12 months' public liability insurance
- A complete set of business paperwork, including contracts
- A lockable case to keep your paperwork secure.

If you are eligible for a start-up grant from your local authority then the Quality Start package can be paid for directly by the grant. Your local authority will be able to tell you if you are eligible. You can find its number by calling NCMA on 0800 169 4486.

* Join NCMA

Almost 50,000 registered childminders in England and Wales belong to the National Childminding Association (NCMA), which has been supporting childminders since 1977. NCMA is a membership organisation, and as a member you'll get the following benefits:

Specialist advice and legal representation NCMA will provide you with regularly updated information and advice on all aspects of being a registered childminder, whether you need help with working out your tax allowances or negotiating a childminding contract. For peace of mind, as an NCMA member you may be entitled to free legal representation on childminding matters and to free advice on professional and legal matters.

Who Minds? magazine NCMA's colourful magazine will keep you up-to-date with news and issues affecting childminders, useful features, offers and giveaways.

Money off products As a NCMA member you will get money off NCMA's range of publications and products, specifically developed for childminders. Plus you'll be able to buy exclusive products available only to members, such as car and home insurance designed for childminders.

Public liability insurance As a registered childminder you must hold public liability insurance. NCMA's insurance policy has been designed by people who understand childminding, and is only available to NCMA members.

Vacancy scheme NCMA members can join an online vacancy scheme and advertise their vacancies to parents.



* Where next?

Registered childminders work in their own homes, caring for children and young people, and NCMA offers support throughout your childminding career, whether you are starting out or have been childminding for several years.

If you know that childminding is the career for you, you can contact the following for help and information.

National Childminding Association

NCMA is the professional association for registered childminders and can give you lots of help and information as you start out.

Tel: 0800 169 4486

Web: www.ncma.org.uk

NCMA, Royal Court, 81 Tweedy Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 1TG

ChildcareLink

ChildcareLink can give you details of your local early years team and family information service, both of which can help you as you start your childminding career.

Tel: 0800 096 0296

Web: www.childcarelink.gov.uk

Ofsted

Ofsted is the national government body responsible for registering and inspecting childminders in England.

Tel: 0845 601 4771

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The information contained in this leaflet applies to England only. For more information on childminding in Wales call NCMA's Wales office on 0845 880 1299. Please note all information is correct at time of going to press (July 2008) but is subject to change.

