

What is a Childminder?

Childminder Job Description

The legal definition of a childminder is a person who works with children for more than 2 hours a day in their own home for reward.

Are childminders registered?

Yes, in England, most childminders are registered with [Ofsted](#); some English childminders are registered with childminder agencies. In Wales childminders are registered with CSSIW; in Scotland childminders are registered with the Care Commission. Registration with the governing body of the country in which the childminder lives means ensuring childminders attain a certain level of skills, knowledge and competency to fulfil their many roles.

For example, all childminders in England must be suitable to work with children, have paediatric first aid training (renewed every 3 years) and further training to fulfil their role, including undertaking a safeguarding / child protection course and regular continued professional development.

Legal requirements for childminders

All childminders must have public liability insurance and business insurance to drive with childminded children in their cars (if relevant). They will also usually have completed an introduction to childminding training course (some childminders have experience in other early years fields). Ofsted carry out a rigorous pre-registration visit to check the childminder's house and knowledge before registering them as well.

All childminders in England must comply with the requirements of the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) (EYFS – for children from birth to age 5) which is the statutory framework and the [Childcare Register](#) (legislation which covers the care of children from age 5 upwards). Further legislation might apply from the Local Authority planning department, fire and food hygiene

laws, health and safety legislation, the Information Commissioners Office (data protection legislation) and the Equality Act 2010.

Childminder responsibilities

Childminding is not the 'easy' working from home option. All childminders are regularly monitored by Ofsted - and often by their Local Authority - and must, by law (see the Childcare Register legislation), undertake regular safeguarding training and inform parents about how they can make a complaint against them.

Some of the responsibilities of a childminder include -

Advertising - childminders must market and advertise their own businesses;

Business administration - much of a childminder's free time is taken up with ensuring ongoing records such as attendance registers, accounts, policies and procedures (Safeguarding / Child Protection and Complaints are statutory and must be shared with parents), record keeping such as 2 year progress checks, risk assessments etc. All documentation must comply with the EYFS and Childcare Registers and be regularly updated;

Health and safety - a safe and healthy environment must be provided for children. this includes compliance with Safer Food Better Business for Childminders and EU allergy legislation, doing regular risk assessments and understanding the hazards children face at different stages of their lives;

Nutrition - children must be offered a good nutritional balance through the day. Most childminders will offer parents information about their healthy eating ethos and provide a

copy of their menu (if food is offered);

Training - to ensure their continued professional development, childminders attend regular training in the evenings or at weekends – work does not stop when the last child leaves the setting;

Working with others - childminders should not work in isolation. They are advised to build positive and rewarding working relationships with parents, other settings children attend and the local community to ensure children's early years experiences are complemented.

Childminding is not just about minding the babies!

Childminders must, of course, provide high quality childcare – but childminding is far more than that! Childminders are inspected by Ofsted and must demonstrate how they provide a high-quality learning environment for early years children, including teaching them new things and supporting their ongoing interests. Most childminders have a play-based curriculum which aims to ensure children are making excellent progress towards the statutory Early Learning Goals.

School reception class

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Reception class is the first year at primary school, but unlike every other school year, it is not compulsory for your child to attend, but it is a good way to introduce your child to life at school.

If your child is four years old before September, you can apply for a place in a reception class in the same way as you would for any school place. Your child must attend school from the beginning of the school year following their 5th birthday.

What is a nursery?

The term "nursery" is often used to cover a wide range of group settings for early years childcare. There are differences between settings, in terms of the services they provide, but all nursery settings offer professional, registered childcare for children under 5.

Nursery schools, maintained nurseries and pre-schools tend to cater for children aged between 3 and 5, offering early education in the couple of years before they begin "big school". Many of these settings are purpose-built and are sometimes part of the larger school building.

Day nurseries tend to provide childcare for children from the ages of six weeks to 5 years. Opening hours vary but an average day nursery is likely to open between 7am and 8am to accommodate working parents and close between 6pm and 7pm. This means that nursery staff will often work shifts.

Nursery schools and day nurseries can be run by private businesses, local authorities, voluntary or community groups, schools, colleges or employers. Settings can range in size from the very small with just 15 or so children in the nursery to large, with up to 150 children in the setting.

In England, nurseries work within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework. In Wales, nurseries work to CIW's requirements and the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Playgroups and pre-schools offer care and education to children aged 2 to 5 years, with sessions lasting from two to four hours. These operate during term time, tend to be smaller settings and may have morning and afternoon sessions.

Nurseries tend to be organised around the ages of children, and will often be split into rooms for different aged children. Each room will have a lead staff member, and the staff team will tend to remain with the same children. The nursery management team must ensure that each room in the nursery is has the right number of qualified staff, depending on the number of children. The ratios all nurseries must work to are outlined in the regulation frameworks.

What are parent & toddler groups?

Parent and toddler groups are informal sessions where parents, carers, childminders and their children can go to have fun and meet new people. Parents and carers stay with and are responsible for their children, throughout the session. Most groups meet once a week for between one and two hours and welcome children from birth to 3 or up to school age.

Every group is different and it may take a few visits before you get to know the group and feel part of it. Sometimes the best way to get to know people is to get involved and offer to help. Local Children's Centres also provide parent and toddler groups for families who have children 0 to 3 years.

What happens at parent and toddler group?

Although this will vary, most toddler groups will provide opportunities for:

- Babies to play and explore in a safe area with appropriate toys and equipment
- Free play with a good range of toys including larger equipment that is suitable for all ages
- Craft activities that may involve cutting, sticking or painting and on occasions cooking
- Singing time often at the end of a session to allow for clearing away of toys
- Refreshment break for adults and children which may include tea and coffee for the adults and water/soft drinks, healthy snack or biscuit for the children