

FACTSHEET 11

Choosing a Childminder

Childminders are registered with The Care Inspectorate and are required to adhere to National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Childminders look after children in the childminder's own home.

Childminders can often be flexible about the hours that they work and they should provide your child with lots of care, fun and learning.

Childminders can make the most of local parks, playgrounds, toy libraries, drop-in groups and community centres. Often children have the chance to make good friends with the other children who go to their childminder.

Every childminder is different so look for someone who will suit your family.

Plus points

- Your child will be cared for in a home environment
- Your child will benefit from the care offered from one person, who will get to know them as an individual.
- Childminders care for small numbers of children, therefore increasing the opportunity for your child to have one-to-one time with the childminder
- Childminders can support families for years as children grow up - children can go to the childminder from a few months old until they reach secondary school
- Childminders may offer a pick up and drop off service, from home, nursery and school
- Childminders can offer flexible hours

How do I know my child will be safe and secure?

First of all, you know your child best – look for a childminder you feel will be suitable for your child. Help in making this decision is provided in a separate factsheet “Choosing High Quality Childcare” and a list of possible questions you might want to ask the childminder is listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Childminders who look after children for more than 2 hours a day must be registered with The Care Inspectorate before they begin to work with children. This means checks are carried out to make sure they are suitable to care for children. Other adults living in the childminders' household are also checked to make sure they have not carried out any offence against a child. A check on the childminder's home is carried out as well to make sure it is safe and suitable for children.

Childminders must adhere to the National Care Standards for children up to the age of 16. You can view these standards on the internet at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Regulate/Standards>

After a childminder is registered, inspections are carried out either annually or every 48 months depending on requirements, to make sure the childminder is continuing to provide a safe & suitable service. For more information about the inspection process go to www.careinspectorate.com

You can ask to see a childminder's registration certificate and latest inspection report. Inspection reports are also available to view online on the Care Inspectorate website: www.careinspectorate.com by searching individual service providers on the care services list.

It is illegal for an unregistered person to look after children under 16 for reward. An unregistered person who is a close relative of the child is not officially a childminder and is not required to register to look after a related child.

How many children will there be with the childminder?

Childminders can normally care for up to six children aged under twelve at any one time of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of

whom no more than one is under one year old. The childminder's own children are counted in these numbers.

Childminders who work with an assistant may look after larger groups of children.

The Care Inspectorate will have regard to the number of children aged 12-16 who are likely to be in the house regularly and will have discretion to vary the ratios to take account of special circumstances such as special needs, awkward premises etc.

What about Qualifications?

Childminders do not have to hold any childcare qualifications at this time however most childminders will have undertaken a Pre Registration Course before they are registered with The Care Inspectorate. They can undertake other relevant training such as First Aid and most childminders will go on to do further training and professional development. When choosing a childminder you might want to ask whether they have undertaken any training.

What age range are the children with a childminder?

Children can go to a childminder from a few months old right through until they reach secondary school.

When are childminders open?

Childminders are self-employed so they decide on their working hours. Most childminders will provide you with childcare between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm. Some childminders will work early mornings, evenings and weekends as well. You will need to negotiate hours, terms and conditions with the childminder. Your childcare/family information service should be able to advise you of childminders offering flexible hours in your area.

What about part-time childcare?

Many childminders are happy to provide families with part-time places for children. They often drop children off at school and pick them up. Childminders can also take your children to a playgroup or pre-school as part of the routine.

How much does a childminder cost?

Childminders set their charges themselves. Charges vary in different areas. There is no national rate but the average charges in Dundee are £3.50 - £5.50 per hour and £140 - £225 per week for full-time care. Fees charged take into consideration, pick ups, drop offs, meals, and individual needs. Many childminders will offer a discount for a second child from the same family.

How do I find a childminder?

Ask your local Childcare/Family Information Service for advice about childminders in your area. The Dundee Children & Families Information Service can provide you with vacancy and availability information for childminders in Dundee. You can also look at our local Dundee pages on the national website www.families.scot where this information is also available for those childminders who have given authorisation for their details to be displayed.

More information about choosing a childminder is also available on the Scottish Childminding Association website at www.childminding.org

Questions you might want to ask the Childminder?

How long have you been childminding?
What extra training have you done?
Why do you like this job?

How long do you intend to do it for?
What other children will be with my child, and how old are they?
Do you have references from other parents?
Do you belong to a childminder network?
Do you charge for sick days and holidays?
Ask to see the rooms that the children will use?
Where will your child sleep?
How do you spend the day and how do the other children's schedules fit in with my child?
Find out simple things, such as when she or he does shopping/banking/chores.
Do you go out on day trips? Where to?
Do you have properly fitted car seats?
What kind of meals and drinks do you give the children?
Do you keep a file about a child's progress?
Will you agree to a trial run (say a couple of mornings) to see how it's going to work out?

Parents should discuss their needs fully with the childminder, and we would recommend that you contact and visit more than one childminder to ensure you make the best choice for you and your family. You may also wish to visit on more than one occasion.

For more information about childcare services available in Dundee City please go to www.families.scot or contact DUNDEE CHILDREN & FAMILIES INFORMATION SERVICE at cis@dundeecity.gov.uk or telephone (01382) 433900

Information is available at our Dundee pages of the national website where alongside details about childcare services you can also access our online Directory for further advice, groups, activities and other services for families available locally and nationally

www.families.scot

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