



## The facts

- Registered childminders look after your child along with other children, usually in their own home.
- They are allowed to care for up to six children under the age of eight, including their own – but only three of them can be aged under five.
- Self-employed, they decide on working hours. Most are willing to work early mornings, evenings and weekends as well as part-time – perfect, say, for school drop off/collection, and holidays.
- All childminders are required to have completed a basic training course, including first aid, and most go on to do further training and professional development.

### HOW CAN I BE SURE OF GOOD QUALITY CARE?

Childminders must be registered and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, see [page 50](#)), who carry out regular checks on the home and childminder. What's more, all adults (16+) living and working in the childminder's home will be police and health checked. Not all have childcare qualifications. Once you've met and interviewed a childminder, you will get a feel for whether they are suitable for your children (see [page 42](#) for what to look out for).

### WHAT WILL IT COST ME?

You will need to negotiate hours, terms and conditions with your childminder (see [page 43](#)). Rates vary from area to area and can cost you on average £2.50 an hour (£3 in London) per child. See [page 60](#) for comparative costs.

## Is it for me?

- ▶ I need flexible care because I work irregular hours which don't correspond to a normal 8am-6pm nursery day
- ▶ I want my child to be cared for in a family home
- ▶ I want my child to have one carer
- ▶ I have children of different ages and it's important they're cared for together
- ▶ I'm good at saying what I want
- ▶ Mixing with large groups of children isn't a priority right now

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR 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?
- ? Can I have the phone numbers of other parents you work for so I can follow up references?
- ? Have you undertaken any quality assurance schemes?
- ? Do you belong to a childminder network?
- ? Do you charge for sick days?
- ? Ask to see if all the rooms in the house are clean and tidy.
- ? Where will your child sleep? Make sure it is quiet.
- ? 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? Most childminders will agree to this.



## Also remember...

- Ask for the childcarer's up-to-date registration, public liability and first aid certificates.
- Check all rooms and garden are insured, otherwise your child will be excluded from those areas.
- Who is coming and going? Ask how many other adults will be in the house.
- Agree on feeding, learning, TV watching and discipline policies.
- Any contract should cover hours, pay, sickness and holiday pay (see **page 43**).

**Your childminder can provide free part-time early education if they are part of a childminder network.**

## For more info...

Call Childcarelink on **0800 096 02 96** or [www.childcarelink.gov.uk](http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk) for your local Children's Information Service (CIS) who will have a list of childminders in your area

Or call the National Childminding Association on **0800 169 4486**

Or [www.ncma.org.uk](http://www.ncma.org.uk) – for more information on childminder networks