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# Choosing a childminder

A guide for parents and carers




THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## What is a registered childminder?

- Registered childminders are self-employed people who work in their own homes and for other peoples' children.
- Childminders have to be registered with Ofsted if they look after children under the age of eight for more than two hours a day. Every registered childminder has an Ofsted registration certificate which indicates the maximum number of children that can be cared for on the premises.
- All childminders and all members of the childminder's household over the age of 16 must have received a satisfactory police check – the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure – before becoming registered. Please note that whilst all registered childminders will have been checked, not all will have a copy of their disclosure as these were not issued prior to 2003.
- Childminders are expected to work in accordance with The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and receive an inspection from Ofsted every one to three years. An inspection report is issued which should be available to parents. Childminders are not inspected until they have been registered for at least six months, so a newly registered childminder may not have a report to show you.
- Inspections carried out since April 2005 include a grading system which judges whether the quality of care being provided is outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate. These inspection reports can be viewed on the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Parents are advised to read the inspection report carefully and discuss any queries or concerns with the childminder – circumstances may have changed since the inspection was carried out.
- Childminders in the Royal Borough are supported by the Early Years Service. They are encouraged to undertake training and to become members of the Childminding Network.

## Why choose a childminder?

- Childminding is a flexible service which can accommodate unsocial working hours, out of school care and siblings of different ages.
  - Childminders are part of the local community and can take children out and about on a regular basis.
  - Childminding offers a secure, homely environment and continuity of care by one familiar adult. Parents value it as a personal service.
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## How can I choose the right childminder?

- You know your child best; look for a childminder you feel comfortable with and who will be suitable for your child.
- Consult the vacancy list and identify those childminders who can offer the care you need at a price you can afford. As childminders are self-employed, they set their own rates for the service they provide. Information about help with childcare costs can be obtained from the Family Information Service (FIS).
- It is a good idea to select several childminders and then contact them to arrange a visit. This will enable you to make an informed decision as to whether a particular childminder is right for you and your child.
- Once you have made your choice, tell all the childminders you have visited as soon as possible so that any vacant places can be offered to other parents.

## Some questions to ask when choosing a childminder.

- Ask to look around the home and garden. You will need to be shown all the areas that your child will have access to. Where do the children eat, sleep and play? Is hygiene and safety in the home what you would expect? Is there a suitable range of toys, books and equipment for your child? Is it in good condition?
- Ask how the childminder organises their day. What activities and outings are provided?
- Ask how many children are cared for (including the minder's own children). What are their ages? If other children are present, how does the childminder relate to them? Do they seem happy, calm and well occupied?
- Ask how the childminder manages children's behaviour.
- Ask to see the childminder's registration certificate, latest inspection report and current public liability insurance certificate. Weigh up your own observations and discuss the inspection report with the childminder to get a full picture of the quality of service being provided.



- Ask what training or experience the childminder has had. Can the childminder show you training certificates and/or references? Nationally recognised qualifications for childminders include: the ICP, DCP and ECP certificates (Introducing, Developing and Extending Childminding Practice); the Diploma in Home Based Childcare; the NVQ Level 3 in Early Years Care and Education; the BTEC Diploma in Nursery Nursing; and the NNEB. Childminders are also expected to hold a current first aid certificate.
- Ask about the practical details. What do the fees include and what meals are provided?

## Agreeing the care – what the childminder will expect of you

- The childminder will need some information about you and your child. You will probably want to ask some general questions about their family too. The childminder will expect this, and an informal chat is often the best way to exchange information and get to know each other.
- Your childminder should ask you to complete a contract to agree things like fees, hours and arrangements for holidays and sickness. This provides a safeguard for you and the childminder. It is important that you read over and agree the terms of the contract in advance, as these are the guidelines by which you and the childminder will work in future.
- Childminders negotiate their own terms and conditions, but most will expect payment in advance and will charge a retainer fee for times when the contracted hours are not used.
- Childminders are required to keep simple records on the children in their care and will need your cooperation in this. It is your responsibility to ensure that the childminder has accurate, up-to-date information about you and your child.
- Childminders cannot normally care for children who are unwell. The needs of all the children being cared for and the health of the childminder's own family must be respected in this.
- You will need to consider back-up care for your child to cover emergency situations and holidays. Discuss the possible alternatives with your childminder.
- A settling in period is advised, during which time your child can become gradually accustomed to being in the care of the childminder. This is also an opportunity for everyone involved to try out the arrangement and decide whether it is going to work. The normal conditions of notice do not usually apply during the trial period of the contract.



- Childminders are expected to treat all children and families with equal concern and should respect a child's religious and cultural background. They will expect a similar respect from parents using their service.
- It is important that parents abide by the conditions agreed. They should bring and collect their child on time, and make sure their child has everything they need. Any changes to normal routine or problems arising should be discussed as soon as possible. Regular communication and mutual respect is the key to a successful and happy arrangement.

## The Kensington and Chelsea Childminding Network

- The Kensington and Chelsea Childminding Network is part of a nationally recognised scheme that is externally validated by the National Childminding Association (NCMA). It supports the professional development of registered childminders and helps them to maintain a quality childminding service. A Royal Borough Childcare Development Officer is in regular contact with all Network childminders and visits them in their home every term. One of these visits will be unannounced.
- A separate leaflet giving more information about the network scheme and the childminders who are members of it is enclosed with this pack.

For further information, or if you have any other queries about childminding in the Royal Borough, please contact the **Early Years Service** on **020 7598 4774**.

## The Family Information Service

The FIS provides information for parents about a range of childcare and children's services in the Royal Borough.

**Tel:** 020 7361 3302  
9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.  
(Answering machine is available at all other times.)

**Web:** [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)



This information is available in the following languages, as well as braille, very large print and on tape. If you would like more copies of this leaflet in English or an alternative format, please contact the Family Information Service on **020 7361 3302**.

#### Arabic

إذا كنت تحتاجُ بان تُترجمُ هذه الوثيقة إلى لغةٍ أُخرى، رجاءً تكلمْ مع احد الموظفين.

#### Farsi

اگر مایل هستید که این مدرک به زبان دیگری ترجمه شود، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان ما تماس بگیرید.

#### French

Si vous avez besoin d'une traduction de ce document, veuillez vous adresser à un membre du personnel

#### Portuguese

Se precisar deste documento traduzido para outra língua, por favor fale com um funcionário

#### Somali

Haddii aad u baahantahay in qoraalkan laguugu turjumo luuqad kale fadlan la xiriiir qof kamid ah shaqaalaha

#### Español

Si necesita este documento traducido a otro idioma, por favor hable con un miembro del personal



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