



Early Education & Childcare Strategy Team



Becoming a Childminder

Your Questions Answered

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Perth & Kinross Council's Childcare Strategy Team have designed this booklet to give the answers to some common questions about childminding. We hope this will help you decide whether childminding is the career opportunity you have been looking for.

What is a childminder?

Childminders look after children in the childminder's home. Most full-time work is with babies and children under five but many childminders also care for school age children before school, after school and during the holidays. This means that they may look after a child from babyhood through to secondary school, providing a long-term, stable and caring environment for the child.

Childminding is a professional career providing consistent high standards of care in partnership with parents.

In legal terms, a childminder is someone (*other than a parent, relative, person with parental responsibility, or foster parent*) looking after one or more children under 12 years of age, in the childminder's own home for over two hours a day, for reward (*money or payment in kind*). It is an offence to act as a childminder without being registered.

If you are not sure whether the work you are planning to undertake requires you to register as a childminder then you should contact the Care Inspectorate for advice, see page 10 for details.

Why should I consider becoming a childminder?

Childminding is a rewarding career which provides opportunities for developing new skills and working towards qualifications. Becoming a childminder would give you a chance to:

- *contribute to children's development and learning;*
- *become self-employed and run your own home-based business;*
- *provide a valuable service for your local community.*

What does childminding involve?

Childminders cater for children's physical, educational, social and emotional needs by providing a warm, caring environment. They aim to



encourage learning and development through stimulating play activities such as painting and drawing, creative activities, reading stories and outdoor play.

With babies and younger children, childminders are responsible for meeting their basic care needs such as changing nappies and clothes and preparing meals.

Some childminders look after children with additional support needs. It is vital that childminders see each child as an individual, and plan the use of books, toys and activities to meet their different physical and emotional needs.

While childminders are based in their own homes, the work can also involve taking children to and from school, pre-school nursery class or playgroup.

Why would parents choose a childminder?

Registered childminding offers a flexibility of service that is difficult to find in other provision. Their daily routine is very adaptable because they look after only small groups of children. Being cared for by a childminder gives youngsters the opportunity to learn from real life experiences. Everyday activities, like shopping trips, school runs, mealtimes and visits to the park, teach children valuable life skills that they might not acquire so readily in centre-based care. These activities also educate children about their local environment.

What about relationships with parents?

Establishing a good relationship with parents is very important. Childminders should be able to offer a personal and flexible service. They must talk with parents regularly, to make sure the child is happy and stimulated, to agree what standard of behaviour from the child is acceptable, and perhaps to plan the child's diet or any specific care needs. A written contract must be negotiated to make sure that everyone is clear about the arrangements right from the start.



What difference would working as a childminder make to my family?

Childminding can have a big impact on home life. The understanding and support of your family is essential.

You must consider:

- ⦿ *your own family's needs - because you will be caring for someone else's children in your family home, there will be some disruption to your established normal routine. Your own children may seek extra attention when your time is taken up with the care of another child;*
- ⦿ *your own commitment - taking care of other people's children is an enormous responsibility. Young children need stability, routine, individual attention, warmth and care and you must be able to provide them with this as well as doing activities that contribute to their development and learning.*

What personal qualities should a childminder have?

To be a childminder you will need:

- ⦿ *a love of children and a commitment to providing long-term care;*
- ⦿ *an open mind about different ways of bringing up children;*
- ⦿ *a caring nature, patience, a sense of humour and flexibility;*
- ⦿ *good communication skills;*
- ⦿ *to be open to scrutiny, both personally and in your own home;*
- ⦿ *an awareness of health, safety, hygiene, equal opportunity and child protection issues;*
- ⦿ *to be able to show parents that you are reliable, responsible and trustworthy;*
- ⦿ *good health, fitness and stamina.*

What about the business side of childminding?

Childminders are self-employed, so they must manage their own business and keep written records. This includes setting and collecting their own fees, logging their overheads and paying tax and national



insurance. They must also take out public liability insurance. The Scottish Childminding Association can supply standard paperwork, eg contracts, cash books and registers.

Childminders can let people know about their service by word of mouth and through local adverts. Most also use the local Childcare and Family Information Service and the national website www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk to advertise more widely. See page 10 for contact details.

What qualifications are required?

You do not need any formal qualifications in order to work as a childminder. It is important, however, that you have a suitable personality and experience with children, for example as a parent or childcare worker. Prospective childminders are strongly encouraged to complete a pre-registration training course. There is no charge for the courses which are informal and involve quite a lot of group discussion. Topics covered include the Care Inspectorate Registration process; Policies and Procedures; Risk Assessment; Health and Safety; Play and Planning; Behaviour Management and Child Protection. Details are available from the Childcare Strategy Team and on the Council website www.pkc.gov.uk/families

What career opportunities are there?

There is little opportunity for career progression within childminding itself, but with relevant qualifications childminders can move into related areas such as working in a nursery or family centre, playwork, working as a classroom assistant, running an after-school or holiday club.

What checks are carried out?

All childminders must, by law, register with the Care Inspectorate - Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. There are various requirements which must be met before a service can be registered.



The Care Inspectorate will:

- 貴 *carry out Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme checks on the childminder and Disclosure Scotland checks on anyone else over 16 years old who lives in the same house;*
- 貴 *visit the house to make sure that this is safe and suitable for providing a service;*
- 貴 *interview applicants to make sure that the person understands what is involved in minding other people's children as a business.*

The time taken for the registration process varies, but should normally be between three and six months from the date the Care Inspectorate receives the completed application form.

How many children can a childminder care for?

Childminders are usually registered to care for up to six children under 12 at any one time, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and no more than one is aged under 1 year old.

The childminder's own children who are aged under 12 are taken into account and counted in these numbers. Consideration will also be given to the number of children aged 12 to 16 who are likely to be in the house regularly.

Can I work with anyone else?

Yes, it may be possible to have an assistant - but they would have to undergo the same checks as yourself in order to become registered. Childminders who work with an assistant may be registered to look after larger groups of children, depending on the space available.

What hours do childminders work?

Working hours are decided in agreement with parents. Usually, pre-school age children are looked after from about 8.00 am or 8.30 am until 6.00 pm or 6.30 pm. School age children may need to be cared for before school starts in the morning and after school in the afternoon as well as during school holidays.



Childminders are able to provide a variety of flexible hours, offering anything from all day care, early mornings/late evenings, overnight or weekend care, and often care for children of shift workers or those who work unsocial hours.

How much could I earn as a childminder?

There are no maximum or minimum rates set, childminders are self-employed people who run their own business and set their own scale of charges. Charges are per child and hourly, daily and weekly rates can be set. Hourly rates in the Perth and Kinross area average around £3.80 per child, as at February 2014.

Earnings will vary depending on the number of children cared for and the number of hours worked. The number of the childminder's own children who are aged under 12 will also limit their earning potential.

How much does it cost to become a childminder?

There will be a number of things to pay for in setting up a childminding business, including:

- ⌘ *a fee for registration with the Care Inspectorate, currently £28.00;*
- ⌘ *Public Liability Insurance;*
- ⌘ *business paperwork, such as cash book and contracts.*

Other expenses may include:

- ⌘ *cost of any equipment required eg smoke alarms, fireguards, fire blankets etc;*
- ⌘ *possible alterations to property such as additional fencing and gates.*

These start-up costs will vary depending on individual circumstances and could start from around £80.00 for registration, insurance etc and stretch to over £500.00 if large items of equipment or significant alterations to property are required.



Are there any grants available?

Childminders can make an application to the Childcare Strategy Team for a Start-Up Grant.

Applications for Part 1 of the Start-Up Grant should be made during the Pre-Registration process. This gives assistance with basic start-up costs including the cost of registration with the Care Inspectorate and first year Public Liability Insurance Cover. A resource pack with basic start-up paperwork, fire blanket, home-safety pack (socket covers, door guards, thermometer etc) is also provided.

If the Care Inspectorate Registration Officer identifies work that needs to be undertaken in order to meet the requirements of Registration eg mains smoke alarms or secure garden fence then funding of up to 50% of the costs involved can be applied for through Part 2 of the Start-Up Grant. The maximum payable to a single childminding service from this grant will be £200.

Please contact the Childcare Strategy Team for a copy of the guidance notes and application form.

You can also find out more about grants through the Business Information Service at the local Business Gateway:

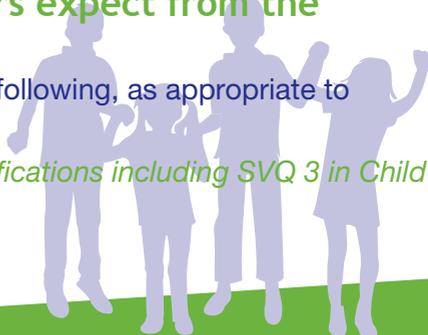
Business Gateway - Perth
Saltire House,
3 Whitefriars Crescent,
PERTH
PH2 0PA

Tel 01738 657399 Email info@bgateway.com

What support can childminders expect from the Childcare Strategy Team?

Childminders can expect to access the following, as appropriate to them and their needs:

- *support to access a range of qualifications including SVQ 3 in Child Care, Learning and Development;*



- *a range of certificated courses including First Aid and Elementary Food Hygiene;*
- *support and advice on Child Protection Issues;*
- *newsletters with information specific to childminding both locally and nationally;*
- *training and Development Resource Library;*
- *representation/discussion with Care Inspectorate;*
- *advice on use of Childcare Vouchers and the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit;*
- *Childcare and Family Information Service;*
- *Information updates by email or post.*

The Childcare Strategy Team will also act as advocates for childminders and the childcare sector ensuring issues are raised strategically within the authority and nationally through our partnership working with other Councils and the Scottish Government.

What should I do next?

If you require further information you can contact:

- *the Childcare Strategy Team;*
- *the local Care Inspectorate office;*
- *the Scottish Childminding Association.*

When you have decided you want to proceed with the registration process, contact the Childcare Strategy Team to put your name down to attend a Pre-Registration course.

If you decide not to go forward with becoming a childminder just now, but would like to be kept informed of developments in the childcare sector through newsletters etc, then please get in touch to add your name to the Childcare Strategy Team mailing list.



Childcare Strategy Team

Education & Children's Services
Perth & Kinross Council
Community Wing
Perth Grammar School
Gowans Terrace
PERTH
PH1 5AZ

Tel 0345 601 4477

Email childcare@pkc.gov.uk

www.pkc.gov.uk/families

www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk

Care Inspectorate

Central and East Region Office
Quadrant House
11 Riverside Drive
DUNDEE
DD1 4NY

Tel 01382 207200

www.careinspectorate.com

Disclosure Scotland

PO Box 250
GLASGOW
G51 1YU

Tel 0870 609 6006

www.disclosurescotland.co.uk

Scottish Childminding Association

Suite 3
7 Melville Terrace
STIRLING
FK8 2ND
Tel 01786 445377

Advice Line Tel 01786 449063, Monday-Friday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

www.childminding.org





Getting it Right in Perth and Kinross

Helping children be the best they can be

0345 601 4477
childcare@pkc.gov.uk
www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

www.pkc.gov.uk

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