

Childminder checklist

You can use this tear-out checklist when you visit a childminder. If you're visiting more than one, we suggest that you stick to the same questions so you can compare their answers.

About the childminder

- How do they interact with the children?
- What training and experience do they have?
- Do they have experience of caring for children with a special educational need or disability?
- Can you have the phone numbers of other parents for references?
- Why do they like their job? How long do they intend to do it?
- How old are their own children and the other children that they look after? (Childminders can look after six children under eight years old, but no more than three under five years old, including their own).
- Do they have back up arrangements with another childminder to cover them if they are ill or need to take leave?
- Have they, their assistants and others in the house including family, got up to date enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks?

Registration and paperwork

- Can you see their Ofsted registration certificate?
- What records do they keep and how do they record accidents?
- Can you see a current public liability insurance certificate?
- Do they work with an assistant?

Money

- How much are the fees, what do they include and when and how should you pay?
- Do you have to pay for settling in time, when your child can get to know them before they start?
- Do you have to pay a deposit or retainer fee to secure the place?
- What charges are made for bank holidays, holidays and sickness?
- Who will need to supply things like nappies, baby food and milk?
- Do they offer Free Early Education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds? If you want extra hours how much will it cost?
- Do they accept payments from the Tax-Free Childcare scheme?

Caring for your child

- Do children take part in daily indoor and outdoor activities?
- Do they go to local childminding groups?
- If they will be using a car, do they have childminding insurance in place?
- Do they have car seats suitable for your child's height and weight?
- Do the children they are looking after seem to be happy and engaged in play?
- Will your child be offered varied and nutritious food? Can they provide for special diets?
- How do they discipline the children and how do they manage children's behaviour?
- How do they help the children when they are toilet training?
- What will your child need to bring every day?
- Do they undertake risk assessments on their premises and on outings?
- What would a typical day involve and how do the other children's routines fit in with your child's?
- Will they agree to a trial run (say a couple of mornings) to see how your child gets on?

The home

- Can they show you around their home and garden and tell you about hygiene and safety?
- How often do their family and friends visit?
- What is their pet policy around children?
- Does the childminder or another family member smoke?
- Ask to see where your child will sleep if they're tired and make sure it's quiet.