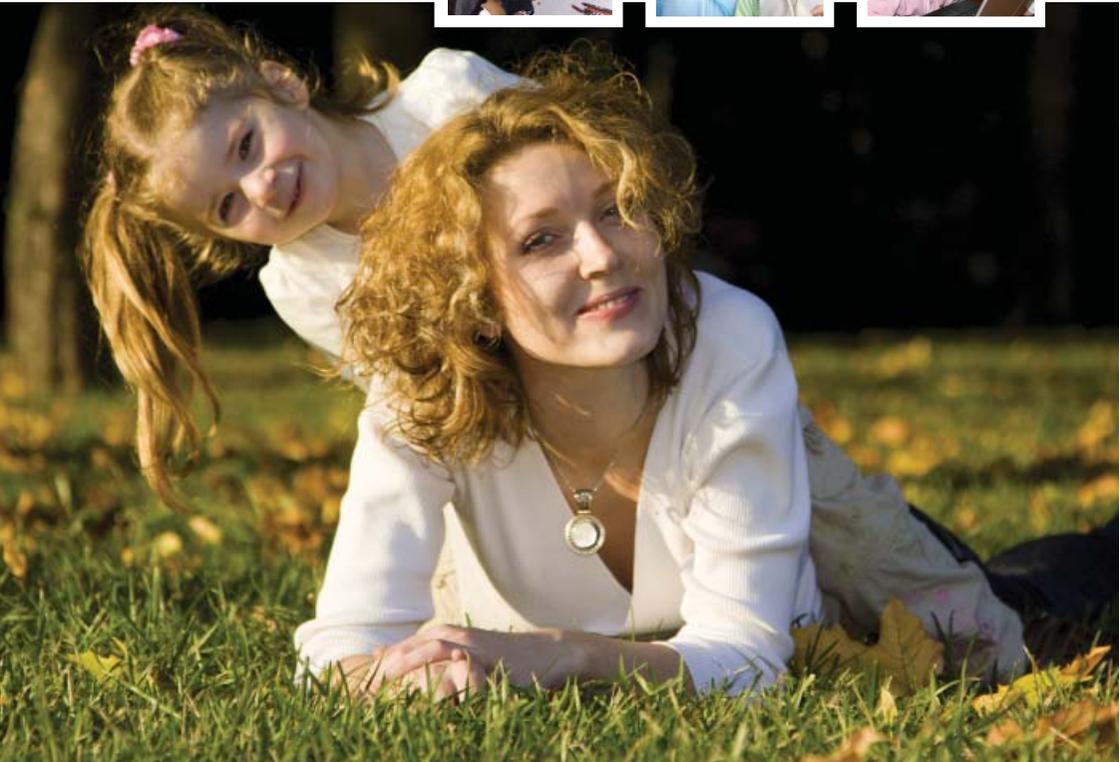




Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown  
County Childcare Committee

# *Childminding*

## A Parent's Guide



Childminders are recognised as an important part of childcare in Ireland and the preferred choice for many parents. Childminders provide care for children in a home-from-home setting, often local to the Childs home. It is important that you take time in choosing the right childminder for your child.

The following information is designed to give parents information and assistance on choosing a childminder.

# What is A Childminder?

A childminder is an individual who single-handedly cares for a small group of children of different ages in the childminders family home, negotiating their own terms for the childminding arrangements with parents.

The hours can be full-time, part-time or flexible to suit the needs of the parent and the childminder. A childminding arrangement may also be tailored, in agreement with the parent and childminder, to include dropping children off to school or pre-school.

# What Legislation applies to Childminders?

Certain categories of childminders come under the remit of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006\*, and as such are legally obliged to notify the Health Service Executive (HSE) as a pre-school service. This legislation in practice means that:

- Childminders who care for 4 or more unrelated pre-school children must notify their local HSE Pre-School Officer of the service and must comply with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006– this is Statutory Notification. Statutory Notification means that the childminders are subject to an annual inspection by the Pre-School Officer in order ensure their compliance with the Regulations.
- “A ‘childminding service’ means a pre-school service, which may include an overnight service, offered by a person who single-handedly takes care of pre-school children, including the childminder’s own children, in the childminder’s home for a total of more than 2 hours per day”, Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.
- “A childminder (a person who provides a childminding service) should look after not more than 5 pre-school children including her own pre-school children. No more than two children should be less than 15 months. Exceptions in relation to numbers under 15 months can be made for multiple births or siblings”, Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.
- A pre-school child is considered a child who is under six years of age and who is not attending a national school or a school providing education similar to a national school.

**The following categories of childminders are currently exempt from Statutory Notification, and as such do not come under the legislation of the Pre-School Regulations 2006:**

- Those who care for school-age children.
- Those who care for 3 or less unrelated pre-school children.
- Those who care for pre-school children from the same family, and no other children (other than the minders own children).
- Those who care for relatives.



This category of childminder is unregulated. However, they may avail of Voluntary Notification, a support system put in place by City/County Childcare Committee's and the HSE to assist in promoting quality childminding services and to enable childminders have the opportunity to have their service recognised as a valuable childcare service.

Voluntary Notification is done in line with criteria set out in the National Guidelines for Childminders 2006\*. Childminders who Voluntary Notify receive an advisory home visit from the local Childminding

Advisory Officer. Once the Voluntary Notification is complete, the childminder has the option for their details to be circulated on a public list for those seeking childcare.

An important point to remember is that many childminders remain outside the pre-school regulations and as such, are not required to comply with any legislation. It is the responsibility of you, the parents, to identify what you consider good quality childminding. The onus is on you, the parent, to check out individual childminders and to decide what is the best childminding arrangement for your child.

## How to Find a Childminder

- Contact your Childminding Advisory Officer for information on Voluntary Notified childminders.
- Contact your local Pre-School Officer\*.
- Place advertisements locally on shop notice boards. Childminders also tend to advertise this way if they have any vacancies.
- Look for or post messages on the childcare forum of our website – [www.dlrcountychildcare.ie](http://www.dlrcountychildcare.ie)
- You can also post messages on parenting websites such as [www.rollercoaster.ie](http://www.rollercoaster.ie)
- Childminding Ireland, the association for childminders, may have a list of childminders who are registered with them.\*
- Ask at local playschools, schools, parent & toddler groups.



\* See Useful Information at the back of this Leaflet.

# What to Look for when Choosing a Childminder

The childminder should provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment for your child, where all their developmental needs are met. To assist you in making this choice, the following points should be considered:

- The childminder should be warm and friendly and be able to relate well to the child and to you in a confident and competent manner.
- The childminders home should be clean and safe with a good range of age appropriate books, toys and other activities for your child.

**When meeting with a prospective minder for your children, you should have a list of questions prepared to help inform your decision. The following are sample questions to ask:**

- Does the childminder have any experience and/or training in childminding or childcare?
- How many, if any, other children does the minder care for?
- Is the childminder Statutory Notified to the HSE or Voluntary Notified to the Childminding Advisory Officer?
- What rooms in the home are used for the childminding?
- In the case of younger children, what are the arrangements for nappy changing, sleep times and mealtimes?
- What do I have to provide? What does the childminder provide?
- What are the outdoor play opportunities? Are they safe?
- Does the childminder have adequate insurance for the childminding?



- Will the childminder be taking the children on outings?  
Is there adequate insurance/car insurance cover for this?
- Will there be other adults in the home while you are childminding?
- What does the childminder do in the case of an emergency?  
Is there emergency backup?
- Does the childminder have policies and procedures in place, which may help address issues such as behaviour management, child protection, health and hygiene (including the sick child), partnership with parents and safety (including fire-safety)?
- Does the childminders have references?
- Have you been asked for relevant information on your child such contact details, medical and dietary information?
- Is it clear what service is being offered – times, fees, agreed arrangements for leave, payment arrangements?

## Other Points to Consider

- Arrange to meet with the childminder in their home.  
Organise a visit along with your child.
- Make sure you communicate your needs to the childminder.  
Clarify any agreed arrangements through a written Working Agreement, e.g. costs, review of costs date, sick days and holiday arrangements.
- By respecting the terms of the Working Agreement, difficulties can be avoided in the childminding arrangement.
- Be happy and confident when leaving your child with the childminder.
- When settling your child in, introduce them gradually through short sessions initially.
- Be sure the child has a toy/comforter from home.  
Make sure the minder knows your Childs likes/dislikes etc.
- Drop off and collection times can be busy for the childminder and stressful for children. Allow time to establish a routine.  
If you need time to discuss your Childs progress, phone in advance to arrange this.
- Your relationship with the childminder must be one based on trust, good communication and an acknowledgement of the important role of the childminder.

### For further information contact:

Tracey Nelson  
Childminding Advisory Officer  
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee  
5A Woodpark, Sallynoggin, Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2368030 Fax: (01) 2368012  
Email: [tracey@dlrcountychildcare.ie](mailto:tracey@dlrcountychildcare.ie)  
Website: [www.dlrcountychildcare.ie](http://www.dlrcountychildcare.ie)

### Useful Information

**Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulation 2006** – available online from the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown CCC website at:  
<http://www.dlrcountychildcare.ie/index.php?page=news#regs>  
Also available for the Department of Health and Children website at:  
<http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/si20060505.pdf?direct=1>

**National Guidelines for Childminders** – available from Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee office, ph: 2368030 or online from the Office of Minister for Children website at:  
[http://www.omc.gov.ie/documents/childcare/guidelines\\_for\\_childminders.pdf](http://www.omc.gov.ie/documents/childcare/guidelines_for_childminders.pdf)

### Pre-School Officers in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Area:

Deirdre Kelleher  
Pre-School Officer  
The Maltings Business Park  
Marrowbone Lane  
Dublin 8  
Ph: 4544 733  
**Childminding Ireland**  
9 Bulford Business Campus  
Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow  
Tel: (01) 2878466  
Email: [info@childminding.ie](mailto:info@childminding.ie)  
Website: [www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)

Catherine Fenton  
Pre-School Officer  
Loughlinstown Health Centre  
Loughlinstown Drive  
Loughlinstown  
Co. Dublin  
Ph: 2822 122

## Transforming Ireland

The NCIP 2006-2010 is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013  
The EOCF 2000-2006 is funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union  
Structural Funds under the National Development Plan 2000-2006

