

Your guide to being a childminder

“ Islington is a great place to be a childminder. There are lots of activities where I can take the children - I can be out every day, doing a different activity. ”

Claire, Islington childminder

What is involved?

Registered childminders are childcare professionals who work in their own homes to provide a safe and stimulating environment for children to play in, learn, and develop new skills. They take children to stay and plays, parks and provide lots of fun activities. Some childminders pick up or drop off children at schools or after-school clubs.

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

An important aspect of a childminder's job is sharing information about the child's well-being with parents and carers.

Childminders have to be registered with the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). You can be registered for up to six children under eight years old of which not more than three may be under the age of five and usually not more than one child may be under one.

Is childminding right for me?

You need to have:

- a genuine liking for children and interest in their development
- a caring and understanding nature, with the ability to give encouragement
- patience and the imagination to provide stimulating play and learning
- organisational skills and the ability to manage your own tax and National Insurance payments, as you will be self-employed
- a professional approach including keeping up-to-date with training in order to develop your skills and extend your knowledge
- the ability to respect the individual needs of children and families from various backgrounds.



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What experience/qualifications do I need?

At present, no formal qualifications are needed to become a childminder, but you must have a current first aid certificate and complete an introductory training course approved by the local authority.

It is important that you have a friendly, cheerful personality and some experience of working with children; for example, experience of being a parent or childcare worker is highly valued. You have to be able to plan and organise regular routines for the children you look after.

All childminders are registered and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and must show that they meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

You have to demonstrate to Ofsted that you have a sufficient grasp of English, for example, to be able to summon emergency help where necessary, keep certain records, read and understand instructions. As part of the learning and development requirements, you should also be able to support children to develop their Communication, Language and Literacy skills in English. (Competency in English, EYFS Statutory Framework 4.2.).

How much could I earn?

Childminders are self-employed and set their own fees. Pay rates vary depending on services offered, experience and qualifications, and the number of children they look after.

If you are a lone parent on benefits, then only a portion of your earnings as a childminder is taken into account when calculating your benefits. For further clarification, talk to your JobCentre Plus Lone Parent Advisor.

What are the working hours?

Childminders are self-employed and choose the hours that they work, but it pays to be flexible. Pre-school aged children are often looked after from 8 or 8.30am in the morning until 6 or 6.30pm in the evening. School aged children may need to be looked after before or after school hours and during school holidays. You can work full time, part time or during weekends. Childminders can also be registered for overnight care.

What is the next step?

- Contact Islington's Family Information Service on 020 7527 5959 to book a place for the next childminding information session.
- Attend a pre-registration briefing session on becoming a childminder. You will receive information about the Ofsted application process and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Read the relevant documents and return your completed application to Ofsted.
- After Ofsted receives your application, a home inspection and personal interview will be scheduled. You have to show to the inspector that you meet the requirements of the EYFS.
- You must have a current paediatric first aid certificate (before you are registered by Ofsted) and complete an introductory training course (within 6 months of registration).
- You must undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

How do I attract business?

You can advertise free through Islington Family Information Service (FIS). The FIS produces a list of all registered childminders within the borough who have vacancies.

Childminding vacancies are also advertised on Islington Council's website.

You can also advertise your business by word of mouth - tell your friends, family, other childminders that you may know, and visit your local children's centre. It is a good idea to put up notices in local schools, supermarkets, local newsagents, community centres, libraries, GPs' surgeries and health centres. Visit stay and plays and children's centres to make yourself known.

Find out about services available in your area and think about what services you can offer.

Training and support

It is a requirement that new childminders complete an introductory training course. In Islington you can book on a training course organised by the Early Years Foundation Stage Team who support learners working as home-based childcarers. The course is called 'Understand how to set up a home-based childcare service' and is an optional unit (Unit CYPOP5) of the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce.

The course includes 3 days classroom study with a tutor, personal study time and written tasks. The cost of the course is £168 and you will receive more information about course content and dates when you attend the pre-registration briefing.

Childminders are fundamental to the Islington childcare workforce and there are a number of accredited courses and training opportunities that are available to support you in developing a professional career in childcare.

Useful contacts:

Islington Family Information Service

020 7527 5959

www.islington.gov.uk/fis

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**Office for Standards in Education,
Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)**

0300 123 1231

www.ofsted.gov.uk

National Childminding Association (NCMA)

0845 880 0044

www.ncma.org.uk

Islington Childminder's Association (ICMA)

020 7263 3076

Marie Doogan, ICMA Chairperson

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