



# Dublin City

Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee

*Coiste Cúraim Leanaí Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Cuideachta faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta*

# Parents' Guide to Choosing Childminding Services



Our children

Our responsibility

Our future

[www.childcareonline.ie](http://www.childcareonline.ie)

# What is a Childminder?

A Childminder cares for a small group of children of mixed ages in a “home- from home” setting. Childminders offer a flexible service, tailored to each child, thereby helping parents and guardians to balance their work and family commitments. Childminders have sole responsibility at all times for the health, safety, and well-being of each child entrusted to their care.

*(National Guidelines for Childminders, rev. edition: August 2008)*

## Childminding: Statutory and Voluntary Notification

### What Is Statutory Notification?

Statutory Notification is obligatory notification required by law. The conditions for Statutory Notification are determined by the following legislation: Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. These Regulations state that *“a Childminder should look after not more than five pre-school children including her own pre-school children. No more than two children should be less than 15 months”*. Some exceptions may apply.

Statutory Notification is carried out through the Child and Family Agency (Tusla). Once a Childminder has statutorily notified Tusla, she/he is inspected annually by an Early Year's Inspector/Pre-school Officer under the Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. This means that the Childminder must have appropriate insurance and meet the standards required by the above mentioned regulations.

### What Is Voluntary Notification?

Voluntary Notification is a system allowing Childminders, who are not statutorily obliged to notify the Tusla, to contact Dublin City Childcare Committee (DCCC) to notify them of their childminding service on a voluntary basis. By participating in the Voluntary Notification process Childminders agree to follow the National Guidelines for Childminders (rev. edition August 2008) and avail of support services from DCCC. Childminders who are not statutorily obliged to notify the Tusla and who are exempt from Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, are those taking care of three or fewer pre-school children in the childminder's own home.

Voluntary notification benefits childminders by allowing them full access to information, networking, and training supports offered by DCCC as well as provision of financial supports, including the Childminding Development Grant and the Tax Exemption.

## Participation in ECCE Scheme

In certain cases Childminders may choose to participate in the Early Childcare Education Scheme (ECCE). However they are subject to very specific eligibility criteria. For further information on Childminder approval for the ECCE scheme please contact DCCC at 01 873 3696.

# Five Steps to Choosing a Quality Childminder

## ✓ STEP 1: Start Early:

Start looking for a suitable Childminder as far in advance as you can. Finding the right home setting and suitable person to care for your child can take some time.

- Tusla Early Years Inspectors will provide listings of Childminders who have completed Statutory Notification
- Childminding advice is available through Dublin City Childcare Committee (Tel: 01 873 3696).
- Childminding Ireland, the National Voluntary Childcare Organization, will have a list of Childminders that are registered with them (Tel: 01 287 8466)
- Word of mouth – talk to your family, friends, and neighbors
- Ask at local playschools, schools and parent & toddler groups
- Answer or place advertisement in local papers, post office, shops, etc.
- Check out some relevant websites and join parent forums. For example, [www.rollercoaster.ie](http://www.rollercoaster.ie); [www.eumom.com](http://www.eumom.com); [www.schooldays.ie](http://www.schooldays.ie)
- More information on Childminding is available on the following websites:  
[www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)  
[www.childcareonline.ie](http://www.childcareonline.ie)  
[www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)

## ✓ STEP 2: Make a Call:

Begin your search by contacting Dublin City Childcare Committee or Early Years Inspectors. When you have contact details for a number of Childminders, narrow your search for the most suitable by contacting them by phone and conducting a brief phone interview. To get the best response, time your calls for the times of the day that are least busy for the Childminder. Avoid arrival, departure or meal times.

## ✓ STEP 3: Visit and Ask Questions:

It is best to pre-arrange visits to a few Childminders. Before you go, make a list of questions you want to ask then check them off when you are talking to the Childminder. During your visit pay attention and make notes about the following key indicators of quality service: Adult-to-Child Ratio, Childminder's Qualifications, Safety of Childminder's Home Environment and Educational/Play Activities.

**When choosing a Childminder, look for the following:**

### The Childminder:

- Is the Childminder 18 years of age or more?
- Is the childminder friendly and genuinely interested in caring for your child(ren): is he/she able to relate and connect (make eye contact, listen, and engage) with you and children?

- Has the Childminder statutorily notified to the Tusla (only applicable if caring for four or more children)?
- Has the Childminder voluntarily notified to DCCC (only applicable if caring for three or fewer children)?
- Does the Childminder have any childcare experience/training/qualifications?
- Is she/he willing to participate in childcare-related trainings?
- Can the Childminder provide references, e.g. past employer, parents of previously minded children, General Practitioner?
- Is the Childminder approachable and someone you can work closely with?

### **The Childminder's Home:**

- Does the Childminder have adequate insurance to mind children in the home?
- Is the house in good state of repair and clean?
- Is the house safe? Are there basic Safety measures (telephone, socket covers, fire alarms, fire extinguisher, safety gates, fire guards, first aid kit, etc.) in place?
- Are hazardous materials stored out of reach of children?
- Are emergency contact numbers posted in easily accessible and visible location?
- Are the toys and play materials safe and developmentally suitable? Will they encourage children to explore and learn?
- Does the house have adequate work and play areas for all children and adults?
- Is there a designated area for child's rest?
- Is there a safe and enclosed area for outdoor play?
- Is there health and safety practice in place in relation to household pets?

### **What You Need to Discuss With Your Childminder:**

- What are the Childminder's hours of work? Rates of pay? Holiday leave?
- Does the Childminder have a Contract/Working Agreement between Parent and Childminder in place?
- Does the Childminder have a substitute or back-up person in case of an emergency?
- How many children are in the Childminder's care and what are their ages?
- What is daily routine for the children in care?
- Does the Childminder take children on trips and outings?
- If a car is used, does the Childminder have appropriate car insurance? Are there child seats and safety belts in place?
- Can you visit your child at any time?
- Will other adults/older children be present and in contact with your child?
- Have the Childminder and other adults in the house been or are they willing to undergo Garda Vetting?
- What is the Childminder's policy on the following: managing children's behaviour; child protection; emergency procedures; sick child; administering medication; recording and reporting injuries; smoking; toilet training; watching TV; other issues of your concern?
- Items to be provided by parent (e. g. nappies, toiletries, etc.)?

#### ✓ **STEP 4: Make a Choice:**

Think about what you saw at each visit, read through your notes, compare pros and cons, and make the choice that best suits the needs of your family. Remember, selecting a Childminder to share the care of your child is one of the most important things you will ever do. Good quality childminding service will have long-lasting benefits to your child and your family.

#### ✓ **STEP 5: Stay Involved:**

By finding a suitable Childminder for your child, you have entered a new working relationship - you and your Childminder became partners in caring for your child. Here are some ways to stay involved:

- Have regular meetings and ask questions.
- Offer some volunteer time when needed, e.g. assisting with fixing broken toys, helping to create a marketing leaflet or helping out with outings/special events.
- Share your talents and particular knowledge of different cultures.
- Be there for your child's Birthday Party or any other organized events.
- Visit your child during caring hours and read a book aloud.

Visiting and participating sends a strong message - it tells your child and your Childminder that you are interested and that you think what your child is doing and learning is of the utmost importance to you.

**The information provided in this leaflet is intended as a guide only. Ultimately you, as a parent, and your chosen Childminder will make the choices and arrangements that meet the needs of your child and your family.**



# Our children

The best start in life for your child is to learn and develop in a warm, welcoming, and home-like setting. Childminding offers the safety and comfort of a home environment along with consistent caregiving throughout the childhood years.

# Our responsibility

Children come into this world with a set of crucial physical and emotional needs that must be met. A joint and proactive partnership between parents and Childminders is essential to the well-being, learning and development of the young child. Childminding offers a responsive and dependable service and commitment to children and their families.

# Our future

What happens to children in their first months and years of life affects their development, the development of our society, and the development of our world. Provision of high-quality childcare depends on both Parent and the Childminder. We are here to support you through this process and assist you in making an informed choice.

If you have any further queries about childminding, please contact Dublin City Childcare Committee:

## Dublin City Childcare Committee

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E-mail: [info@dccc.ie](mailto:info@dccc.ie)

Website: [childcareonline.ie](http://childcareonline.ie)



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