

Family Information Service

What to look for when choosing a childminder and some key questions to ask

Are you Ofsted Registered?

- Childminders **must** be registered with Ofsted and **must** display their certificate of registration where parents and carers can see it.
- Ofsted inspect and regulate all childminders, producing a report that will give you an idea of the childminder's strengths and areas for development. Reports can be seen on the Ofsted website <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report>, or ask to see the childminder's copy.

Ofsted check the suitability of childminders to work with children. In addition, we recommend you ask the childminder to provide contact details for references from previous parents/ employers to help you make your decision.

How do you keep children safe?

- All people aged 16 and over, living or working in a childminder's household and any people aged 16 and over who have regular contact with minded children **must** have an enhanced disclosure and barring (DBS) check
- The childminder **must** have a safeguarding policy.
- Has the childminder attended child protection training? This should be updated every three years.
- What safety procedures does the childminder have in place, for example do they risk assess the house, garden, trips, does the childminder ask for a named person who will be collecting the child?

Some childminders work with assistants and students. Things to consider are: staff qualifications, recruitment processes, key worker system, and unsupervised contact –for example, will your child be left with the assistant while the childminder goes on school pick ups. Is there anyone else who will have regular contact with your child? For example, other family members- what will this contact be?

Do you have a valid paediatric first-aid certificate?

- Childminders must attend a 12 hour paediatric first aid course every 3 years.

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Have you got Public liability Insurance?

- This is a legal requirement. Also, if the childminder takes minded children in a car, this must be correctly insured.

What training and experience do you have?

- What is the childminder's experience of working with young children?
- Do they have a relevant childcare qualification and/or continually develop their skills and knowledge through ongoing training?
- Childminders in North Somerset are supported by the Early Years Team. They are encouraged to attend regular training and cluster meetings.

How will you support my child's care, learning and development?

- Childminders should have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage which covers the requirements they need to meet young children's care, learning and development.
- Find out about the childminder's policy on behaviour management
- Is the environment creative and stimulating; are there opportunities for outside play?
- Does the home feel welcoming to both you and your child; is there a wide representation of children's differing backgrounds and experience?
- Do you feel valued as the expert on your child and welcomed to play a key role in enabling your child to take full part in the setting?
- Make sure the childminder will meet any special needs your child may have, and takes into account your child's cultural background.

What are your policies and procedures?

- Childminders will share their policies and procedures with you. Ensure you have read and understood these to help inform your decision

What will the fees be?

- Find out the hourly charge, holiday charges for you and the childminder, late pick-up rates and /or late payment penalties
- What will you get for your money? Are snacks/meals/trips/nappies, etc included?
- What are the arrangements for paying fees?
- Can I use my Free Early Education hours? For more information visit http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Education/childcare_and_early_years/Pages/Childcare-and-early-years.aspx