Childminders offer a flexible childcare service, which can accommodate unsociable working hours and out of school care in a home environment. They offer continuity of care by one familiar adult, and if you have siblings of different ages the childminder may be able to care for them all together. Childminders are often able to collect and drop-off at pre-school/ school. You may be able to use your Free Early Education hours with your childminder. See http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/ for more information.

What is a registered childminder?

- Registered childminders are self employed people who work in their own homes looking after other people’s children
- Childminders must be registered with Ofsted if they look after children under eight for more than two hours a day. They must display their certificate of registration where parents and carers can see it.
- The childminder and any other adults (16+) in their home are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check (formerly known as a CRB check)
- Childminders are expected to work in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Ofsted inspect childminders regularly, and produce a report which will tell you about the standard of childcare provided. The report will grade the childminder outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. Ask the childminder to see a copy of their report, or look on the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk (You will need to know the childminder’s registration number) Newly registered childminders are not inspected until they have been childminding for at least six months.
How to choose the right childminder

- Please see our leaflet “What to look for when choosing a childminder and some key questions to ask”
- Visit North Somerset Family information service website to find out about childminders with vacancies in your area. [http://www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk/](http://www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk/)
- Visit the childminder in their home. This will allow you to see how the childminder works, and make a decision on whether the childminder is right for you and your child.
- Ofsted check the suitability of childminders to work with children. However, in addition we recommend you ask the childminder to provide contact details for references from previous parents/ employers to help you make your decision.

What will the childminder expect from you?

- The childminder will ask for some information about you and your child, this will include, for example your child’s date of birth, address and emergency contact details. It will also include some general questions about your family so the childminder can help settle your child and make them feel welcome and secure.
- The childminder will expect you to sign a contract. This will set out the hours and fees and arrangement for payments, holidays, absences and notice periods. This is a legal document so please read it carefully.
- Childminders will be expected to keep some records of your child’s learning and development, so will want to work closely with you to find out about your child and how they learn and behave at home.
- Childminders will ask permission to share information about your child with other professionals working with you and your family, for example other settings your child may attends, or your health visitor. The childminder will ask you sign certain permission slips for example, to allow the childminder to take children on outings or take photographs.
- For you to consider back up care for when your child is unwell – childminders cannot normally care for children when they are ill, as they have the interests of other children to consider.