Sandwell Family Information Service is operated by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. We offer free, impartial and confidential information to parents and carers on all aspects of childcare and on a wide range of family services available locally in Sandwell and also regional and national services.

Sandwell Family Information is committed to providing accessible information. Please tell us what you require and we will consider with you how to meet your needs.

How to contact us

Call the Sandwell Family Information Service **0121 569 4914**
Between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Thursday
and 8.30am and 4.30pm Friday.

We operate an answer machine service for out of office hours

On the web

[www.sandwell.gov.uk/familyinfo](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/familyinfo)
Email: [family_information@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:family_information@sandwell.gov.uk)

Make an appointment to visit us at:

Sandwell Family Information Service,
Training and Development Centre,
Popes Lane, Oldbury, B69 4PJ

We are also out and about across Sandwell at community events
and venues. Look out for us in your local area.
Entrusting a stranger with your child is a big step. You need to feel confident about the Childminder you are using for your child.

So before you choose your Childminder it is important to make sure that you make the relevant checks yourself by asking the right questions to ensure that you are finding childcare that is safe and secure and which best suits your needs and the needs and age of your child.

Choosing a Childminder for your child will involve thinking about your child’s personality and their needs as well as your family’s needs. As well as the usual questions you would ask a Childminder there will be extra information you will want to find out about, to make sure that the Childminder you choose can meet your child’s individual and special needs.

**Finding a Childminder in your area**

To find out about Childminders in you area, you can contact Sandwell Family Information Service who hold a comprehensive, up to date list of Childminders in Sandwell.

Sandwell Childminding Team and Family Information Service (FIS) has produced this short guide which goes through the different questions you should ask when you are considering using a Childminder.

Childminders are often flexible offering care outside normal working hours which can include weekends. Childminders look after children in the Childminder’s own home, only care for a small number of children at any one time and are OFSTED Registered.

You should arrange to visit any Childminders that you are considering, by contacting them directly. If you require further support when visiting a Childminder then the Sandwell Family Information Service (FIS) may be able to help.

**Checklist**

If you are considering using a Childminder there a number of important questions you should ask to ensure that you are finding the right type of childcare to suit you and your child.

**Things to look out for:**

Is the premises easy to access, is the Childminder approachable and welcoming and can you spend time in the premises?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do the children there seem calm, safe and happy? Would my child be calm, safe and happy here?

Yes ☐ No ☐

How does the Childminder respond to children and manage behaviour? Do they listen, talk and interact at the children’s level? Would my child respond well to this type of approach?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the Childminder have relevant documentation in place, for example, daily register, medication book, incident/accident book?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Has the Childminder got up to date Paediatric First Aid and Public Liability Insurance?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the Childminder work with other professionals, for example Early Years and Childcare Advisor, School Teacher, or Speech and Language Therapist?

Yes ☐ No ☐
### Top Tips for Choosing a Childminder

**Information for Parents and Carers of children with Special Educational Needs**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What provision is there for children’s medical and health needs?</td>
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<td>Are there adequate changing facilities and places for children to rest?</td>
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<td>Does the Childminder talk to the children in a positive way?</td>
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<td>Are the staff prepared to make changes or undergo training to meet your child’s needs?</td>
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<td>Does the Childminder offer a variety of learning experiences through play?</td>
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<td>Are the children given support to learn at their own pace, and learn about things they are interested in?</td>
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<td>Are the children offered healthy meals or snacks?</td>
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<td>Are the children’s individual dietary requirements catered for?</td>
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<td>Is their play valued and recorded?</td>
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**Environment, resources, materials and equipment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Is the environment clean, attractive and does it represent the children and their achievements?</td>
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<td>Does the environment and areas for learning seem well equipped and stimulating? Are there different kinds of play spaces indoors and outdoors?</td>
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<td>Do the activities in the room appear to cater for all of the children’s needs?</td>
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<td>Are resources, materials and equipment clean, safe and organised?</td>
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<td>Are children encouraged to access resources for themselves?</td>
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<td>Are the basic materials age appropriate and of sufficient variety?</td>
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<td>Do resources reflect their home culture and ethnicity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the Childminder provide ideas or resources for children and parents to borrow in order to support learning in the home.</td>
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Communication between children and adults in the setting

Does the Childminder help children to learn the routine and understand what is happening e.g. by using picture clues, having a regular daily routine?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Is there lots of talk going on?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Does the Childminder balance listening and talking appropriately for the ages of the children?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Does the Childminder appear to actively encourage children’s language and literacy skills?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Is there evidence of respect and celebration of other home languages?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Are there quiet areas where children can listen to stories?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Are stories, rhymes, songs a feature of the daily routine?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Parents as Partners:

Are parents/carers encouraged to share their own observations of what their children say and do at home, in order to plan future learning experiences?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Does the Childminder inform you of the planning and keep detailed records about your child’s development and progress?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Are you encouraged to contribute to learning records
Yes ☐ No ☑

Does the Childminder have an assistant?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Is the quality of relationships – warm, inviting, positive, relaxed and well organised?
Yes ☐ No ☑

How is your child’s learning supported as they move from one learning base to another?
Yes ☐ No ☑

How does the Childminder prepare you and your child as they move into school?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Are you offered any information and advice?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Do you feel that you can ask for extra help for your child?
Yes ☐ No ☑

Making Your Decision

After you have visited the Childminders you are considering, you will need some time to think about what you have seen and heard before making your decision. You will probably want to talk this through with other members of the family and friends. Professionals who are involved with your child will be happy to talk about what you have seen and what your child’s needs are, but remember that they are not able to recommend a named Childminder or tell you where they think is best. Remember, you need to feel confident about the Childminder you decide to use for your child. Find out as much as you can then follow your feelings.