

This document was developed by the Childminding Development Officer Team in September 2020 under the National Action Plan for Childminding 2021 – 2028. Version 2 updated September 2021.

The Childminding Development Officers provide support to the local City and County Childcare Committees to work with existing and potential childminders to deliver a high-quality early learning and care and/or school age service to meet the requirements of individual children, families and communities.

The Childminding Development Officer team would like to acknowledge that the material in this pack has been adapted from resources previously developed and published by the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) and Tusla.

**Disclaimer:**

 The Childminding Development Officers have made every effort to ensure that all the information included in this publication is accurate and correct. However, under no circumstances will the board of any City/County Childcare Committee be liable in respect of any error(s), omissions, typographical errors or incorrect information therein.

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# What is a Childminder?

A childminder cares for a small group of children of mixed ages in the childminder’s own home. Children are welcomed as individuals, they are offered affection and respect and their developmental and recreational needs are met. Childminders offer a flexible service, tailored to each child, thereby helping parents and guardians to balance their work and family commitments. A childminder negotiates and agrees her/his terms with parents. The child’s welfare must be the prime consideration of the childminder. Childminders have sole responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of each child entrusted to their care.

Childminding is governed by two pieces of legislation:

[**Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016**](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/20160510ChildCareActEarlyYrsRegs2016SI221of2016.pdf)**:**

A childminder means a person who provides a childminding service. A childminding service means a pre-school service, which may include an overnight pre-school service, offered by a person who single-handedly takes care of pre-school children, which may include the person’s own children, in the person’s home for a total of more than 2 hours per day, except where the exemptions provided in section 58L of the Act apply.

[**Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018**](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/si/575/made/en/pdf)**:**

A childminding service means a school age service, which may include an overnight school age service, offered by a person who single-handedly takes care of school age children, which may include the person’s own children, in the person’s home for a total of more than 2 hours per day, except where the exemptions provided in section 58L of the Act apply.

# How CCCs support Childminders

CCCs support childminders to:

* avail of relevant up to date childminding information
* develop appropriate Policies and Procedures
* access funding supports such as The Childminding Development Grant and Learner Fund Bursary for childminders
* participate in local network opportunities with other childminders
* avail of local training opportunities
* avail of the Childcare Services Relief with Revenue
* Voluntary Notify (if applicable)
* register with Tusla (if applicable)
* offer the National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
* remove the isolation often experienced by childminders
* connect with parents who are seeking childminding care
* have their names included on a public list of childminders which is made available to parents

# Childminders

Childminders care for children in their own home. There are many childminding services who are not required to register with Tusla (see below).

These childminders may choose to contact their local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC) or/and Childminding Ireland to avail of information, support, network and training opportunities and grants.

## Childminders exempt from Tusla registration under section 58L of the cHILDCARE Act (1991) are as follows:

1. the care of one or more children undertaken by a relative of the child or children or the spouse of such relative
2. a person taking care of one or more children of the same family and no other such children (other than that person’s own such children) in that person’s home
3. a person taking care of not more than 3 children of different families (other than that person’s own such children) in that person’s home.

A childminder is **exempt** from registering with Tusla if they care for a mix of Early Years and School Age children (up to a maximum of 6 children) as set out below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No. of pre-school children being cared for** | **Maximum no. of school age children** |
| 0 | 6 |
| 1 | 5 |
| 2 | 4 |
| 3\* | 3 |
| 3\* | 0 |

\*no more than 2 babies under 15 months

# Voluntary Notification

Childminders who are minding 3 or less children (in their own home) or who are legally exempt from registering with Tusla may choose to voluntarily notify that she/he is providing a childminding service by contacting their local CCC and avail of information, support, network, training opportunities and grants.

CCCs who offer Voluntary Notification will support childminders to complete the process which considers the four nationally recognised core areas where certain requirements should be met by Childminders:

1. **Suitability of the person**

The childminder must be a person aged 18 or over who is genuinely interested in caring for children and is of a suitable character to do so.

1. **Wellbeing of the Child**

The childminder must have a commitment to providing quality childcare which ensures that the wellbeing and development of the child is paramount.

1. **Physical Environment**

The childminder’s home should provide a secure and happy environment in which the health, safety and welfare of the child is assured and in which the developmental needs of the child are met.

1. **Health & Safety**

The childminder must provide evidence that adequate health and safety procedures are in place.

# Tusla Registration

Certain categories of childminders are legally obliged to register their childminding service with Tusla and are subject to Inspection.Childminders who wish to care for 4 or more preschool children ***or*** care for 7 or more school age children ***or*** a mix of both.

## Who is obliged to register with Tusla?

* Childminders who wish to care for 4 or more preschool children (only preschool children)
* Childminders who wish to care for 7 or more school age children (only school age children)
* Childminders who care for a mix of preschool and school age children, i.e. if caring for 4 or more preschool children and a small number of school age children or 7 or more school age children and a small number of preschool children

It is a legal requirement that childminders **must apply at least 3 months in advance of registering with Tusla**. The registration process must be completed online.

**In relation to pre-school children:** A Childminder should look after no more than 5 preschool children (birth – 6 years) including your own children. Childminders who care for 4 or more ‘minded’ preschool children are legally required to register their childminding service with Tusla prior to caring for the 4th minded child. The number of children for registration with Tusla (4 children) does not include your own.

**In relation to school age childcare:** If a childminder cares for school age children only, the childminder can care for up to 12 children in the childminder’s home. A childminder can care for up to 6 school age children without having to register with Tusla, however the care of 7 or more school age children requires such childminders to register their childminding service with Tusla.

**Childminders who care for a mix of preschool and school age children**:

The maximum numbers of each that a childminder can care for at the same time is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No. of preschool children cared for****(0 – 6 years)** | **Maximum no of school age children than can be cared for****(6+ years)** |
| 1 | 10 |
| 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 1 |

All scenarios in the table above will require a childminder to register their service with Tusla.

## Registering an Early Years Childminding Service

Registration of an Early Years Service is an on-line process which can be accessed [here](https://portal.tusla.ie/) follow the link to [create a Portal Account](https://portal.tusla.ie/Account/Register).

The following documents are required to be uploaded to complete the on-line registration process:

* Garda Vetting/Police Vetting for the proposed registered provider and person in charge (if different)
* Garda Vetting/Police Vetting for the "second person" if required (Childminders/Single Person Operations only)
* Two references for the proposed registered provider
* Proof of identity of the proposed registered provider (copy of passport or driving licence or Public Service Card are the only acceptable documents)
* Certificate of Insurance or written confirmation of insurance cover
* Safety statement
* Statement of Purpose and Function
* Signed Declaration

The following Policies & Procedures are required to be uploaded to complete the on-line registration process:

* Behaviour Management Policy
* Administration of Medicine Policy
* Infection Control Policy
* Safe Sleep Policy
* Complaints Policy (not required for registration, but you must have a Complaints Policy in place when operating)

## Registering a School Age Childminding Service

Registration of school age settings is an online process which can be accessed [here](https://portal.tusla.ie/)

follow the link to [create a Portal Account](https://portal.tusla.ie/Account/Register).

The following documents are required to be uploaded to complete the on-line registration process:

* Garda vetting/Police vetting for proposed registered provider and person in charge (if different)
* Garda vetting/Police vetting for the “second person”, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly
* Two references in respect of the proposed registered provider, and in respect of the person in charge if different
* Proof of identity of the proposed registered provider (copy of passport or driving licence or Public Service Card are the only acceptable documents)
* Copy of the Certificate of Insurance or written confirmation of insurance cover
* Copy of Statement of Purpose and Function
* Copy of Safety Statement
* Copy of Child Safeguarding Statement

The following Policies & Procedures are required to be uploaded to complete the on-line registration process:

* Behaviour Management Policy
* Complaints Policy (not required for registration, but you must have a Complaints Policy in place when operating)
* Administration of Medicine Policy
* Infection Control Policy
* Authorisation to collect Children Policy
* Fire Safety Policy

## Registering a Combined Early Years and School Age Childminding Service

A childminder registers on the portal based on the majority age group of children the childminder cares for i.e. if a childminder cares for a majority of preschool children they register on the Early Years’ Service section; if the childminder cares for a majority of school age children they register on the School Age Childcare service section of the portal.

## Cost of Registering a service

There is a one-off application fee of €40.00 for a proposed new childminding service. The application fee is not required until it is requested. The childminder will be sent an electronic payment link by email, which is unique to each service, stating the applicable fee and how to pay.

## Quality and Regulatory Framework

Tusla has the authority to assess compliance with the [Quality & Regulatory Framework: Childminding](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4567-TUSLA_QRF_CHILDMINDING_LR.pdf) also referred to as QRF. The aim of the QRF is to help and support best practice for Tusla registered childminders to meet the regulatory requirements.

**On receipt of an application, the Early Years Inspectorate will:**

* Acknowledge receipt of application. This acknowledgement is not an indication of registration/acceptance of the application
* Check and review the application for completeness
* Return an incomplete Registration Application Form (RAF)
* Request additional documentation/information, if required
* Issue the applicant with a further acknowledgement when all completed documentation is received
* Confirm with the proposed provider when the premises are ready for inspection
* Make an appointment with the proposed provider for a Fit for Purpose Inspection
* Complete onsite Fit for Purpose Inspection
* Issue a draft copy of the Fit for Purpose Inspection Report to the applicant
* When the regulatory requirements for the Fit for Purpose Inspection are met, the final report is presented to the Registration Panel for registration
* A service can only commence operation when the applicant has been advised that the service has been deemed registered

Contact details for Early Years Inspectorate’s Registration Office are below:

* **Email: ey.registration@tusla.ie**
* **Telephone: 061-461700**

# Garda Vetting

Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016 all people undertaking relevant work with children or vulnerable adults need to be vetted by the Garda National Vetting Bureau.

All Tusla registered childminders must have Garda Vetting, but best practice would indicate that **all** childminders and their emergency backup contact should be Garda Vetted.

Barnardos' Vetting Service processes childminder applications for Garda Vetting and this service is free, unless you have lived in other countries for more than 6 months. To apply for Garda Vetting, you must contact [Barnardos’ Vetting Service](https://www.barnardos.ie/our-services/garda-vetting) directly.

Alternatively, Barnardos can be contacted on:

**Phone:** 021 4547060

**Email:** vetting@barnardos.ie

If a childminder is a member of Early Childhood Ireland they can be vetted through [Early Childhood Ireland.](https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/membership/garda-vetting/)

# Child Protection and Welfare

Children First relates to the recognition of child abuse and neglect, the reporting of same to Tusla - Child and Family Agency, and the best practice which organisations should adhere to, to keep children safe while availing of their services.

The Children First Act 2015 sets out additional statutory obligations for defined categories of persons and for organisations providing relevant services to children.

For further information: [Cosaint Leanaí Child Safeguarding: National Child Safeguarding Programme Early Learning & Care](http://childsafeguardingelc.ie/)

## [**Children First Act 2015**](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf)

**The key provisions in the Act that will affect early years’ services are:**

* Legal obligation on ‘Mandated Persons’ to report child protection concerns and child abuse over a certain threshold to Tusla
* Requirement to have a Child Safeguarding Statement

## Mandated Persons

Tusla registered childminders are classed as ‘Mandated Persons’. Childminders caring for three children or less are not ‘Mandated Persons’ however, anyone working with children should always inform Tusla if they have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

## Child Safeguarding Statement

A Child Safeguarding Statement is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm. It should set out any potential risk of “harm” to a child that the childminder has identified in their risk assessment, and procedures in place to reduce the identified risks, as specified in section 11 (3) of the Children First Act 2015.

## Children First Child Protection training Programme

**Tusla Children First E-learning Programme**

The programme is based on [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf) and the Children First Act 2015.

The programme takes approximately 1.5 hours to complete but it can be done in a number of sittings. It covers topics including:

* Recognising and reporting child abuse
* The role of mandated persons
* The responsibilities of organisations working with children to safeguard children
* The role of designated liaison persons

To adhere to best practice in relation to Child Protection & Welfare, all childminders should complete the [E-learning programme](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/).

**Always Children First Training – Foundation Level**

Always Children First training aims to create an awareness of Child Protection and Welfare issues in the Early Years sector. The aim of the training is to help childminders understand how to safeguard children and report Child Protection and Welfare concerns.  A prerequisite of attending this training is that childminders have completed the Tusla Children First E-Learning Programme.

# Policies & Procedures

A childminder must develop and review policies, procedures and statements. Policies, procedures and statements standardise the childminder’s approach to implementing best practice, support communication with parents and ensures compliance with the regulations, if applicable.

A childminders policies and procedures should represent their individual service and reflect their childminding service as a ‘home from home’ to the children and families in their care.

## Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance

Please see the table below for the various policies and procedures required for Voluntary Notified Childminders and Tusla Registered Childminders:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Childminders/Voluntary Notified** | [**Tusla Registered**](https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/) |
| * Confidentiality Policy
* Health & Safety Policy (including safety statement)
* Child Protection Policy
* Fire Safety Policy
* Positive Discipline Policy
* Partnership with Parents Policy
* Equal Opportunities Policy
 | * Statement of Purpose and Function
* Complaints Policy
* Administration of Medicine Policy
* Infection Control Policy
* Behaviour Management Policy
* Safe Sleep Policy
* Fire Safety Policy
* Inclusion Policy
* Outings Policy (where children attending the service are brought on such outings)
* Accident and Incidents Policy
* Healthy Eating Policy
* Outdoor Play Policy (where such play is provided to children attending the service)
* Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy
* Risk Management Policy
* Settling-in Policy
 |

## Communication of policies, procedures and statements

Policies, procedures and statements, including any updates, should be communicated and available to parents and guardians. Parents and guardians should confirm in writing that they have read and accepted the policies, procedures and statements of the service.

# Developing a Record Keeping System

All businesses are required to maintain adequate records and childminding services are no different. Not only are childminders required to maintain accounting records for their business, but it is recommended that all childminding services maintain certain types of childcare specific records.

Records offer childminders guidance and inform parents of best practice, regulations and protect the children in the childminder’s care.

Records show that childminders are working in a professional manner, are organised and care about the work they do. Setting up an appropriate record keeping system will support best practice in the childminding service.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Childminders/Voluntary Notified** | **Tusla Registered** |
| * Child’s Information Record
* Children’s Register/Attendance
* Daily Routines
* Menu Plans
* Accident/Incident Record
* Medication Administration Record
* Fire and Safety Procedures including Evacuation Plan
 | * Child’s Information Record
* Children’s Register/Attendance
* Accident/Incident Record
* Medication Administration Record
* Risk Assessment of Service/ Outings
* Daily Record of Visitors
* Fire and Safety Evacuation Plan
* Monthly Fire Drill Record
* Maintenance Record of Firefighting Equipment and Smoke Alarms
* Complaint Record Form
* Cleaning Protocol and Schedule
* Safe Sleep Record
* Nappy Changing Record
* Observation Records
* First Aid checklist
 |

# First Aid Requirement for childminders

As a measure of best practice all childminders are encouraged to participate in first aid for children. Childminders who wish to complete the Voluntary Notification process are required to complete first aid for children.

A registered childminder must be trained in first aid for children. **As per the** [**Quality & Regulatory Framework: Childmind**](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4567-TUSLA_QRF_CHILDMINDING_LR.pdf)**ing:**

* The childminder is trained in first aid for children
* The childminder’s in-date FAR certification is available
* Children with additional healthcare needs that relate to the provision of first aid are managed in line with the child’s individual care plan

The First Aid Responder (FAR) Education and Training Standard established by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) is recognised by Tusla as being inclusive of content and instruction relating to first aid for children.

A registered childminder shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children is:

* safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises
* available to the children attending the service at all times

# Insurance

**All** childminders should ensure that the childminding service is adequately insured, evidenced by a current certificate of insurance. Childminders who are registered with Tusla are required to adhere to Regulation 28 of the Childcare Act (1991) as outlined below and in the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4567-TUSLA_QRF_CHILDMINDING_LR.pdf): Childminding

## Core Requirements of Regulatory Compliance:

Insurance cover:

* The service’s insurance includes the following, where appropriate:
* Public Liability Insurance
* Insurance against fire and theft
* Buildings insurance
* Insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision
* Motor insurance cover for vehicles used by the service to transport children
* Any other insurance requirements depending on the services provided as identified by the childminder or the inspectorate

Insurance Certificate:

* The insurance certificate for the childminding service is available and in date on inspection.
* The information provided on the relevant insurance certificate includes:
* The contact details for the insurance provider
* The name and address of the childminding service insured
* The categories of insurance cover for the childminding service
* The number of children covered by insurance within the childminding service
* The start date and end date of current insurance cover
* The number of children in the childminding service at any time does not exceed the number for which the insurance is provided.
* Any vehicle used to transport children is appropriately insured for the purpose. Details of all relevant vehicle insurance policies and certificates are kept by the childminder.

Childminders caring for more than 6 children should contact their broker or home insurance company to ensure they have adequate insurance cover.

## Childminders/ Voluntary Notified Childminders

Many home insurance policies cover childminding for up to 2 children, which may be extended to mind up to 6 children. For specific childminding insurance, there are policies, such as that offered by [Childminding Ireland](http://www.childminding.ie/),which are tailored packages for minding up to 6 children.

## Car Insurance & Car Safety

Childminders should check with their car insurer to clarify if they are covered to carry minded children. As childminders are paid to mind these children, the car insurance company may ask childminders to get Class 2 insurance to cover the use of their car for business purposes.

Suitable child car seats are essential if childminders are transporting children as part of their working day, **all** childminders have a duty of care to ensure the safety of children.

See the [Road Safety Authority (RSA)](https://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Road-Safety/Child-Safety-in-Cars/Types-of-child-car-seats/) advice in relation to child car seats.

# Fire Safety Information and Regulations

As outlined in the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4567-TUSLA_QRF_CHILDMINDING_LR.pdf): Childminding, Tusla registered childminders must have Fire Safety policies and procedures in place, however it is recommended and considered best practice that all childminders have these policies and procedures. This includes an emergency evacuation plan, relevant fire equipment and a fire drill should be carried out monthly with drills being recorded and documented as recommended in [Fire Safety in Preschools (1999).](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/53099-fire-safety-in-preschools-1999/)

## Fire Drills

Fire Drill advice on fire safety matters should be sought from your Local Authority Fire Officer. Action to be taken in the event of a fire:

• Raise alarm immediately

• Evacuate the house immediately

• Call the Fire Brigade and stay calm while giving necessary particulars

• Give the precise address of the house on fire and any necessary directions

• Stay on the phone until the operator tells you to hang up

## Evacuation Plan

A simple, easy to follow Evacuation Plan should be central to every childminder’s fire safety policies and procedures. Plan your escape route from each room, such as kitchen, family room, bedroom etc. Make sure that nothing blocks your exits, staircases, landing etc and ensure all escape routes are kept clear at all times.

 Think about:

* Planning a prearranged assembly point
* The ages and understanding of the children – whether they need to be carried
* Know the exact location of the nearest phone e.g. Neighbour’s house

Evacuation:

• Gather everyone and leave immediately

• Use the nearest available exit unless it is dangerous to do so

 • Close doors to minimise damage

• Do not stop to gather your own personal belongings or the children’s personal belongings/toys

• When outside, ensure that the children are safely away from the building, at the prearranged assembly point

 • Do a head count of the children. When outside:

* + - * Stay with the children at all times
			* Do not re-enter the premises until you are told it is safe to do so

## Golden Rules

The Three Golden Rules to follow to make sure that you and your family are safe from fire are:

* **Prevention:**The best way to be "fire safe" is to make sure that fires never happen
* **Detection:**A fire alarm that works will give you time to get everyone out of the house
* **Evacuation:**Help very young, old or sick people to leave the house.  Get out and stay out

For further information please see [Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government](https://www.housing.gov.ie/community/fire-and-emergency-management/fire-safety/fire-safety-your-home)

## Tusla Registered Childminders

Tusla Registered childminders must adhere to the requirements in the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4567-TUSLA_QRF_CHILDMINDING_LR.pdf): Childminding

* Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Children
* Regulation 26: Fire Safety Measures

# Childminder Qualification Requirements

Childminders who are not obliged to register with Tusla are not required to have a childcare qualification, however all childminders are encouraged to continue their professional development and participate in relevant childcare training as a measure of best practice.

Childminders who registered with Tusla as a pre-school service are required to hold at least a major award in [Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5](https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/AwardDetails?awardCode=5M2009) on the National Qualifications Framework prior to registration. This includes the care of a mix of preschool and school age children. (Please note that childminders who deliver the ECCE scheme must hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6).

There is currently no qualification requirement for childminders registered with Tusla as a School Age Childcare service. This includes the care of a mix of preschool and school age children.

# Aistear Síolta Practice Guide

The purpose of the [Aistear Síolta Practice Guide](https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/) is to support those working with children including childminders in using Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (2009) and Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (2006) together, to develop the quality of their curriculum and in doing so, to better support children’s learning and development.

Aistear describes the types of learning that are important for children in their early years and is designed for use in a number of different early years’ settings, including childminding.

Síolta is designed to define, assess and support the improvement of quality across all aspects of practice in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) settings where children aged birth to six years are present including childminding.

# Registering with Revenue

The main legal obligation when becoming self-employed is that childminders must register as a self-employed person with Revenue. Childminders pay tax on the profits from their business and on any other income that they have.

The following links to Revenue and Citizens Information provide guidance on registering as a self-employed person:

* Revenue – Registering for tax more information click [here](https://www.revenue.ie/en/starting-a-business/registering-for-tax/index.aspx)
* Citizen Information – Types of employment more information click [here](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/types_of_employment/self_employment/self_employment_as_an_individual.html)
* Citizen Information – Taxation of Self-employed person more information click [here](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money_and_tax/tax/income_tax/taxation_of_self_employed_people.html)

# Childcare Services Relief

Section 13 of the Finance Act 2006 introduced a relief known as [Childcare Services Relief](https://www.revenue.ie/en/tax-professionals/tdm/income-tax-capital-gains-tax-corporation-tax/part-07/07-01-29.pdf). The Childcare Services Relief is available to childminders who care for 3 children or less in their own home at any one time and earn up to no more than €15,000.

 The purpose of the relief is to provide an exemption from income tax, where certain conditions are met, to individuals who provide childminding services in their own homes.

**Further information is available in Guidelines on Planning a Childminding Business in your own home**

# Planning Permission

Childminders who mind no more than 6 children using existing rooms in their home, do not require planning permission.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001, S.I.600, provide an exemption from planning permission for:

‘*the activity of minding no more than 6 children, including the children, if any, of the person minding, in the house of that person for profit or gain*.’

# The National Childcare Scheme

Currently only Tusla Registered childminders can offer [The National Childcare Scheme (NCS)](https://ncs.gov.ie/en/). Parents of children attending these services can avail of this Scheme.

To offer the NCS, registered childminders must have an NCS contract with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth (DCEDIY). To register/contract for NCS the childminder will need to complete a once-off on-boarding process on the [Early Years Hive](https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/).

For further information please visit the [NCS website](https://ncs.gov.ie/en/)

# Childminding development grants

The Childminding Development Grant (CMDG) offers an incentive, in the form of a small capital grant, to childminders to enhance and support their awareness of quality childcare.

The CMDG is designed to assist childminders providing a childminding service in their own homes, to enhance safety/quality in the service through the purchase of small capital items, equipment, toys, or minor adaptation costs. It may also give financial assistance to new or prospective childminders with their initial set up costs. All applicants must be committed to maintaining/improving the quality of their childminding service.

#  Learner Fund bursary for childminders

The Learner Fund Bursary for childminders provides subsidy funding to support childminders who hold a Level 5 or a Level 6 award on the National Framework of Qualifications. The qualification must be on the DCEDIY Early Years recognised Qualification list.

The Learner Fund Graduate Bursary provides subsidy funding for Early Learning and Care practitioners (which includes childminders) who hold awards at Level 7, 8 and 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The qualification must be on the DCEDIY Early Years recognised Qualification list.

Childminders who are registered with Tusla as a School-Age Childcare service only are not eligible for the Learner Fund Graduate Bursary.

# Steps to become a Professional Childminder

* Contact the Development Officer in your local City/County Childcare Committee.
* Participate in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) such as First Aid, Children First E-Learning programme and CPD resources available on [National Action Plan for Childminding 2021-2028](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e8f86-training/) and [First 5](https://first5.gov.ie/practitioners/continuing-professional-development)
* Arrange a support visit (where applicable) to access advice on the physical layout and set up of the service.
* Organise 2 written references and take copies to share with potential parents.
* Organise insurance cover.
* Develop your own Childminding Policies & Procedures by consulting the samples available in the ‘Childminding Sample Policies & Procedures’.
* Develop your own Childminding Record Keeping system by consulting the samples available in the ‘Childminding Sample Record Keeping Forms’.
* Complete and return the Voluntary Notification Form to your local CCC.
* If required to do so, register your childminding service with Tusla.
* Register your new childminding business with Revenue.
* Decide on your fee policy and preferred hours of work etc.
* Request that your contact details be included in your local CCC Directory of ELC/SAC Services.
* Participate in organised childcare networks to meet other childminders.
* Design a flyer and place in your local supermarket, library, parent & toddler group preschool / school etc.
* Place advertisement on social media platforms or in the local newspapers.

# Useful links

For further information on childminding please see [National Action Plan for Childminding 2021-2028](https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/df207-national-action-plan-for-childminding-2021-2028/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/childminding/)

The following resources are available to support childminders in developing their business:

* A Guide to Becoming a Childminder
* Childminding Sample Policies and Procedures
* Childminding Sample Record Keeping Forms
* Guidelines on Planning a Childminding Business in your own home