



Childminders'
Information Booklet





Childminder's Information Booklet: Introduction

The County Childcare Committee's were established in 2000 to assist in the development of a wide range of integrated, high quality, accessible and affordable services for children in each County. Childminding has always been supported as an integral part of this range of services. However, since the implementation of the National Childminding Initiative, more time and resources were allocated nationally and locally to continue supporting the childminding sector. Childminders are encouraged to notify the Health Service Executive, Pre-School Services or, under the 'National Guidelines for Childminders (Voluntary Notification)' to notify their local County Childcare Committee / childminding advisory officer(referred to CMAO from here in). All Childminders, whether they are notified to the HSE or to the County Childcare Committee/ CMAO, can take advantage of the many supports available, such as:

- Assistance to set up a childminding service, including Advisory Visits to the home by the Childminder Advisory Officer.
- Ongoing support for established services
- Ongoing training specific to Childminding
- Assistance in preparation for HSE inspections for notified services
- Guidance in record-keeping
- Assistance to access equipment, toys and furnishings through the Childminding Development Grant
- Access to funding
- Mutual support through a local network of childminders.

Childminding is valued as another option for parents when choosing the type of childcare that suits the needs of their family. It is the traditional model of childcare in Ireland. Childminding represents the largest type of childcare being used by families of preschool children in the country today.

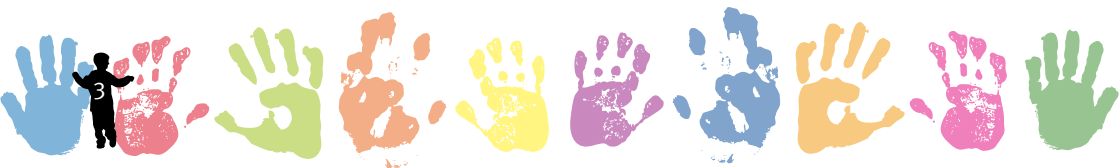






Childminder's Information Booklet: Contents

1. What is Childminding?	
Does Childminding Suit You?	4
2. The Legal Aspects of Childminding	6
• Legal Definitions of a Childminder: Child Care (Preschool Service) Regulations 2006	
• Notification to the HSE	
• Voluntary Notification	
3. Frequently asked questions	10
4. Tax Exemption for Childminders:	
New Childcare Services Relief	13
5. Childminders' Development Grant	14
6. What Next? Useful Contacts	15





1. What is Childminding? Does Childminding Suit You?

A Childminder offers single-handed, home based, small group, childcare providing the following services throughout the day:

- Meeting each child's nutritional needs, being aware of allergies, dietary needs, cultural practices, developmental needs, etc
- Educational activities, developmentally appropriate for the mixed ages and stages of growth of the children within the service; daily activities and routines are varied, allowing for successes and challenges.
- Promoting equality and respecting diversity, by encouraging each child's individuality and sense of identity
- Providing a safe, clean, well-maintained and varied environment where the children feel at home.
- Providing toys and equipment that are safe, well maintained and developmentally appropriate for each child in the service.
- Providing for each child's sanitary, hygienic and health needs in a respectful and nurturing manner.
- Setting up and maintaining a professional and confidential record keeping system.
- Supporting parents by developing a welcoming, non-judgemental relationship in which both the parents and the Childminder are partners in the child's daily care.
- Continuing to develop as a professional by attending on-going training, availing of support through networking, etc.

A Childminder Is Self-employed, Operating A Small Business, Meeting The Legal Responsibilities As Follows:

- Notifying the Health Service Executive, Pre-School Services, of their childcare service or Voluntarily Notifying their local County Childcare Committee/CMAO, as appropriate.



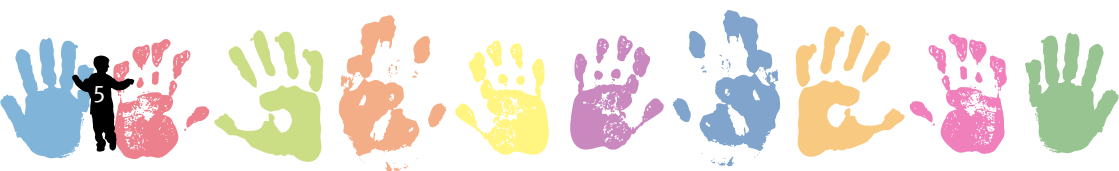


- Registering their business with the Department of Revenue.
- Maintaining proper accounts, including receipts, income/expenditure records, payroll as needed, etc.
- Acquiring appropriate insurance, including public liability insurance, for your home based business (Details from your local County Childcare Committee). Car insurance should be amended to include business use. Speak to your Insurance provider.
- Submitting annual tax returns to the Department of Revenue, PRSI contributions and personal and/or business tax, as appropriate.
- Maintaining past years' business records, as required.

A Childminder is often a parent, or spouse maintaining a household as well as operating a home-based business. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have adequate space in my home to provide opportunities for play, indoors and out, places for children to sleep, eat, change nappies, etc?
- Are others in my family supportive of my plans and aware of the implications to everyone in the home, including noise, untidiness, wear and tear, a constant busy atmosphere, parents coming and going, etc?
- Are others in my family prepared to share my time, their own family home with other children?
- Will I have the time and energy at the end of a busy childminding day to devote to my own family and our household needs as well as time to prepare for the next day?
- Am I aware of the importance of finding time for myself, to provide balance in caring for minded children, my own family and myself to avoid stress, fatigue and burn out?

Often a person decides to set up a Childminding Service without realising the full impact on their home, their family and themselves. If, after considering the issues raised above, you still feel you are a suitable candidate to provide home based childcare, read further on the regulations governing businesses, in Ireland, particularly childcare services and the supports available to you from your local County Childcare Committee/CMAO.





2. The Legal Aspects of Childminding

Definitions of a Childminder:

In Ireland, the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (Cited here as the ‘Regulations’) govern all types of childcare as they relate to pre-school children.

Below please find excerpts from the Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 as they refer to ‘Childminding’:

Part I. Interpretation

4. in these Regulations-

“Childminding service” means a pre-school service, which may include overnight service, offered by a person who single-handedly takes care of pre-school children including the childminder’s own children, in the childminder’s home for a total of more than 2 hours per day, except where the exemptions provided in section 58 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Amendment) Act 2007. (No.26.) Pr.2 S.13 apply:

Part II

Explanatory Guide to the Requirements and Procedures for Notification and inspection

Part I

1 Introduction

Certain exemptions from the provisions of part VII are provided as follows

Exemptions.

58.-(1) Regulations under section 50 and section 51 shall not apply to-

- a. The care of one or more children under taken by a relative of the child or children or the spouse of such relative, or
- b. A person taking care of one or more children of the same family and no other children (other than that person’s own children) in that person’s home.





- (2) Section 51 to 57 shall not apply to a person taking care of not more than 5 Children, of whom not more than 3 may be pre-school children, of different families (but excluding that person's own children) in that person's home.
- (3) In this section, "child" means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years.". In this context a relative to a child means a brother, sister, uncle, aunt, grandparent or step-grandparent of the child.

Part II

Regulation 8

Management and Staffing

(v) Childminding Service

A childminder (a person who provides a childminding service) 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. Exceptions in relation to numbers under 15 months can be made for multiple births or siblings.

Where a childminder is caring for 6 pre-school children, including her own pre-school children, at the time of the commencement of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006, the childminder will not be required to reduce the number cared for to 5 until such time as the first child from that group of 6 pre-school children begins to attend school or leaves the service voluntarily.

A childminder should have a telephone on the premises and a second person must be available to cope with emergencies.

All Childcare services should have a copy of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) Regulations 2006 on the premises and providers should familiarize themselves with the entire contents. To obtain your own copy of the regulations contact the Government Publications Office at 01-6476000 or on line at www.doh.ie





Notification to the Health Service Executive

A Childminder who falls under the scope of the 'Regulations' must notify the Health Service Executive, Pre-School Services, that they are operating a 'Pre-School Service'. Notification forms may be obtained by contacting your local Pre-School Inspection team (see useful contacts). Once notified, a Pre-School Service Officer will inspect a Childminder to ensure they are operating within the regulations, promoting quality childcare.

A Childminder working within the scope of the 'Regulations' must comply with the legislation in terms of record keeping, health and safety issues, having written policies and procedures that guide their service and will need to provide adequate space, toys and equipment that allow for the developmental needs (including physical, educational, social, emotional, etc) of all the children in their service. Your local Childminder Advisory Officer (CMAO) will support you through this process.

Further Regulations Governing the Operation of a Childminding Service:

All persons operating a business in Ireland fall under other legislation including:

- **Fire Service Act:**
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1981/en/act/pub/0030/index.html>
- **Food Hygiene Regulations**
http://www.fsai.ie/legislation/food/legislation_foodhygiene.asp
- **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act**
<http://oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=4305>
- **Tobacco (Health Promotions) Regulations**
http://www.otc.ie/legislation_national.asp
- **Finance Act**
<http://www.finance.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/Publications/legi/financeact04.pdf>
- **Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act**
<http://www.foi.gov.ie/cpu-notices/notice.2007-01-02.8561996151>





There are a number of exemptions, allowing Childminders to legally operate their service and not be required to notify under the ‘Regulations’. These exemptions are outlined above. See ‘Part II from the ‘Regulations’. Childminders who are exempt from the notification process may choose to ‘Voluntarily Notify’ the ‘Committee’ /”CMAO” of their service. The ‘National Guidelines for Childminders’ outlines the voluntary notification system. This system allows childminders who are exempt from the ‘Regulations’ a route by which their service will be properly recognised as a professional service of high quality. The Childminder Advisory Officer can advise and support Childminders through this system. Childminders should contact the county Childcare Committee/ CMAO to avail of the Support Pack for Voluntary Notification.

By contacting the Childminder Advisory Officer, Childminders may also access the various services and supports available from the ‘Committee’ including access to grants, training, networking and information. Voluntary Notified Childminders may also qualify for the new Childcare Services Relief (Tax Exemption).





3. Frequently Asked Questions Regarding The ‘Regulations’

- **When do I have to notify the HSE of my Childminding service?**

At least 28 days prior to you taking on your fourth minded pre-school child you must give notice, in writing, together with the required fee to the local Pre-School Services Department of the HSE that you intend to operate a preschool service. (Details available from your local Childminding Advisory Officers) Details Page 15

- **When am I exempt from notifying the HSE of my Childminding Service?**

You are NOT required to notify the HSE of your service under the following situations:

- If you care for 3 or fewer preschool children, including your own children
- If you care for pre-school children who are related to you or your spouse
- If you care for pre-school children who are all from one family

These three exemptions, which are defined in the Part II of the excerpt from the ‘Regulations’ on the previous pages, cannot be combined. Refer to page 6

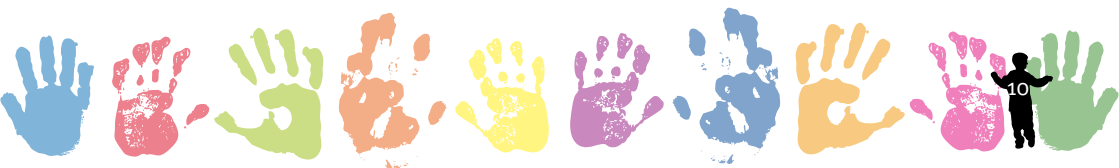
The care of school-aged children is also exempt from the notification requirements as the ‘Regulations’ are only concerned with care of pre-school children. Check with your insurance policy for limitations and seek advice from your local County Childcare Committee or the HSE Pre-School Services Department regarding the care of school-aged children.

- **Who is considered a pre-school child, for the sake of the regulations?**

A ‘pre-school child’ means a child who has not attained the age of 6 years and who is not attending a national school.

- **How many pre-school children may I care for in total?**

A childminder (a person who provides a childminding service) should look after not more than five pre-school children including her own pre-school children
Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006





Your Childminding Insurance Policy (as required by the 'Regulations' and by the Voluntary Guidelines) will also set limits on the number of children for whom you may care. Breaching these limits could make your insurance policy invalid.

- **What happens if I do not notify the HSE and I am caring for more than 3 pre-school children? What happens if I am notified as a Childminder to the HSE and I care for more than 5 pre-school children?**

In both these situations, you are in breach of the regulations. You may be reported to the HSE and the inspection team could make an emergency call to your home; you could be charged and/or taken to court. Your Childminding Insurance may be invalid if you are in breach of the regulations. If you knowingly operate in breach of the regulations you are not acting professionally or taking your responsibilities to your families and their children seriously; you are also letting down your fellow childminders who do work in compliance.

- **Can I legally mind more than 5 pre-school children?**

If you wish to care for more than 5 pre-school children, you are required to notify the HSE as a full daycare or part time service and must meet the criteria set out in the 'Regulations' for such services. The CMAO in the county Committee is available to advise and assist you in expanding your service in this manner.

- **What if my service is exempt from notification, but I wish to notify the HSE of my service?**

Childminders who are exempt from the legal notification requirements may choose to 'Voluntarily Notify' their local County Childcare Committee/CMAO of their service. These Childminders are expected to sign up to the National Guidelines for Childminders (Voluntary Notification) and offer a service of a quality similar to those that are notified and inspected by the HSE. Your local County Childcare Committee/CMAO has prepared a Support Pack that will provide you with details of this process.





- **Why would I want to notify if I am exempt? What are the benefits?**

The voluntary notification system allows exempt Childminders to show families that they are offering a formal, professional service for the children for whom they care. It shows they take their work seriously and strive to provide the best quality service they are able. It also allows these Childminders to avail of training, information, support and funding that are provided through the National Childminding Initiative and is one of the criteria for the Tax Exemption for Childminders. In situations where families are in receipt of childcare assistance it is often required that the childminder be 'notified' in order for the parent to avail of this subsidy. Contact the CMAO for more details

- **Where can I obtain Childminder's Insurance? Is it expensive?**

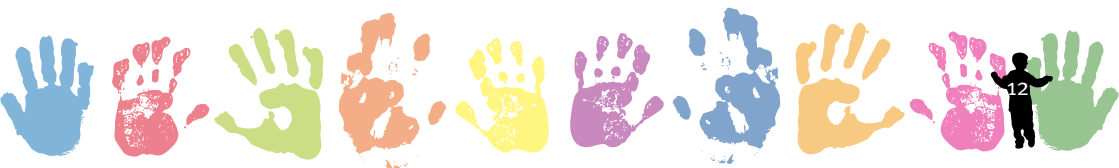
Childminder specific insurance can be obtained for approximately €220.00 per year. The CMAO has details of various providers. Your home insurance policy may include your childminding service or, for a small extra fee additional children maybe included. Also, speak to your motor insurance provider about amending your policy if you will be taking the minded children in your vehicle.

- **What about planning permission?**

Childminders are exempt from the need to obtain planning permission from their local council.

- **Any other Questions?**

Contact your local County Childcare Committee/CMAO, details at the back of this booklet.





4. Childminding Tax Relief

Childminders who have 'Voluntarily Notified' their local County Childcare Committee/CMAO of their childminding service can avail of tax relief on their childminding income.

The details of this Relief are as follows:

- The Relief is only available to an individual operating within Ireland, who is providing a Childcare Service (Childminding) from her/his own home, whether the home is owned or rented
- The Relief is available to Childminders caring for a maximum of 3 or fewer children, whether full or part time, and have voluntarily notified the designated person in the local HSE or County Childcare Committee of their service and can show evidence of this notification
- There is a cap of €15,000* per annum on the gross amount the Childminder can receive for the services provided. Proper accounts must be kept in order to demonstrate the income of the service in question
- The individual must apply in writing for the Relief to apply and must do so before the 'specified return date'

The individual must submit an Income tax Return each year, even if the Relief shows no tax liability.

If all criteria are met the Childcare Services Relief will ensure that the Childminder will have no income tax liability and also that her/his entitlement to Home Carer's Allowance, Mortgage Interest Relief and Principal Private Residence Relief is not affected, where applicable.

Individuals qualifying for the Relief must still pay the minimum PRSI contribution applicable to Self-Employed contributors of €253.00*

This information is a brief outline of the new Childminders Tax Relief. It is recommended you obtain professional advice from your own accountant, from the Department of Revenue. See contact details section.

Your local County Childcare Committee/CMAO may offer workshops on the subject of Setting up a Business, Registering for Tax and Calculating Individual Tax.

*** These figures are correct as of July 2007**





5. Childminder Development Grants

The purpose of the Childminder Development Grant is to offer an incentive, in the form of a small capital grant, to Childminders to enhance and support their awareness of quality childcare.

Who Is Eligible?

Childminders, those persons who provide home based childcare, whether full time or part time, are eligible for this scheme. Childminders who provide care for more than 3 and up to 5 preschool children and are notified to the Health Service Executive may apply. Childminders who care for 3 or less preschool children and sign up to the Voluntary Notification system offered through your local County Childcare Committee are also eligible.

What is the Total Amount Available Through this Scheme?

Childminders are responsible to match funding for this grant programme in the amount of 10 % of the total. The maximum amount available is €700 per childminder. If applying for the maximum amount, the Childminder would provide €70 with the balance of €630.00 from the grant scheme.

For What Purpose May the Grant be Used?

The grant may be used for the purchase of small capital items such as items to enhance the safety/quality in the service, equipment, toys or minor adaptation to the home to improve the service provided.

How is the Grant Application Assessed?

The Board of your local County Childcare Committee/CMAO will review each application. The applicant must meet the criteria set out for the scheme and is currently childminding or proposing to do so with the assistance of the grant. There is a two year commitment to continue providing a childminding service once in receipt of the grant.

How Does Someone Apply for the Scheme?

Contact your local County Childcare Committee/CMAO to receive the full details of the Childminder Development Grant Scheme and Application Forms.



6. What Next? Useful Contacts

If after reading the information provided in this Childminders Information booklet, you wish to proceed with your plans of setting up a Childminding service, contact your local County Childcare Committee, Childminding Advisory Officer for a copy of our Childminders' Support Pack and further information on the next steps to be taken.

Please see contact page for details of your local Childminding Advisory Officer

Other Useful Contacts:

For more information on the Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 and notification obligations contact:

Southern Region

Kilkenny / Carlow
Pre-School Officer
Community Care Centre
James Green
Kilkenny
Tel: 056-7784602
Fax: 056-7723529
Email: clearyp@maila.hse.ie

Wexford
Pre-School Officer
Local Health Officer
Georges Street
Wexford Town
Tel: 053-9123522
Fax: 053-9121842
Email: Kathleen.lucking@maila.hse.ie

Western Region

West Cavan
Pre-School Officer
Health Services Executive
Markievicz House
Sligo
Tel: 071-9155100 Ext 5346 / 5286
Fax: 071-9155131
Email: Sheila.noone@mailb.hse.ie

North-East

Meath
Pre-School Officer
Family Resource Centre
Health Service Executive
Commons Road
Navan, Co Meath
Tel: 046-9074431
Fax: 046-9073183
Email: Maureen.joyce@maile.hse.ie

Louth
Pre-School Officer
Health Services Executive
The Ramparts
Dundalk, Co Louth
Tel: 042-9389170
Fax: 042-9389184
Email: Bernie.landy@maile.hse.ie

Cavan / Monaghan
Pre-School Officer
Health Services Executive
Primary Care
PCCC Health Office
Rooksey, Monaghan Town
Tel: 047-30400
Fax: 047-77908
Email: Siobhan.mccormac@maile.hse.ie





Mid-Leinster

Laois / Offaly
HSE Pre-School Services
Harbour Street
Tullamore
Co Offaly
Tel:057-9328110
Fax:057-9328107

Longford / Westmeath
Pre-School Services Office
Marlinstown Business Park
Marlinstown,
Mullingar
Co Westmeath
Tel:044-9336070
Fax044-9336077

To obtain your own copy of the regulations contact the Government Publications Office at 01-6476000 or download a copy on line at: www.doh.ie

Childminding Ireland
9 Bulford Business Campus, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow
TEL: 01 2878466
www.childminding.ie

Revenue Commissioners:
www.revenue.ie

The Citizens Information Centres (CIC) provide individual and confidential advice, either by telephone or in person, on a number of issues, including tax.

www.citizensinformation.ie
Lo Call 1890 777 121





Cavan County Childcare
Committee Ltd
Railway Station
Belturbet
Co. Cavan

Tel: 049 9529882
Email: admin@cavancoccc.ie
Website: www.cavancoccc.ie



Longford County Childcare
Committee
Enterprise Centre,
Ballinallee Road
Longford.

Phone: 043 42505
Fax: 043 42504
Email: info@longfordchildcare.ie
www.longfordchildcare.ie



Louth County Childcare
Committee
Unit 14 Ardee Business Park
Hale Street, Ardee
Co Louth

Tel: 041 -685 9912
Fax: 041 -685 9913
E-mail: info@louthchildcare.ie
www.louthchildcare.ie



Monaghan County
Childcare Committee
7 The Grange
Plantation Walk
Monaghan

Tel. No. 047 72896
Fax No. 047 72881
E-mail: monaghancoccc@eircom.net
www.monaghanchildcare.ie



Westmeath County Childcare
Committee Ltd,
6 St John's Terrace,
Blackhall,
Mullingar,
Co Westmeath.

Tel: 044 93 354 54
Fax: 044 93 47 962
Email: info@westmeathchildcare.ie
www.westmeathchildcare.ie



Offaly County Childcare
Committee Ltd,
St. Joesphs Community Centre,
Kilcormac,
Co Offaly, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0) 57 91 35878
Fax: +353 (0) 57 91 35879
E-mail: info@offalychildcare.com
www.offalychildcare.ie



Wexford County Childcare
committee
7 Castle Hill
Enniscorthy
Co. Wexford

Tel: 053 9237156 / 9239763
Fax: 053 9239540
E mail: info@wexccc@eircom.net
www.wexfordcountychildcare.ie



Meath County Childcare
Committee
No 1 New Bridge
Athlumney Road
Navan
Co.Meath

Telephone:046-9073010
Fax: 046-9067221
Email: meathchildcare@eircom.net
www.mccc.ie



Kilkenny County Childcare
committee
Rear Coill Mhuire
Glendine Road
Kilkenny

Tel: 056 7752865
Fax: 056 7786903
E mail: info@kkccc.ie
www.kkccc.ie



This Booklet has been Reproduced with kind permission from Galway County Childcare Committee.

Transforming Ireland.

The NCIP 2006-2010 is funded by the Irish Government.

The EOCP 2000-2006 is Funded by the Irish Government and part financed by the European Union Structural Funds under the National Development Plan

