

# Childminding

## Introduction

Childminding is small-scale, home-based childcare. It is the largest childcare sub-sector in Ireland, accounting for 80 per cent of childcare places for infants, pre-school and school-going children.

Looking after other people's children is a responsible job and therefore requires a responsible and business-like approach. Child minders are self-employed family day carers who negotiate their own terms and conditions with parents.

The Childcare Investment Programme (2006 – 2010) will have a capital-funding stream for grant aid for private providers for the building or expansion of childcare facilities. (See the Department of Health and Children's website [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie) for more details.)

## Market

With high employment rates and in particular the increase in female employment, the demand for childminding services in Ireland is presently very high. This growing market for quality childcare provision has seen many individuals enter the childminding profession.

Advertising forms an important part of capturing a market outlet. The simplest way is to advertise by word of mouth letting friends and family know of availability. Childminding services are oftentimes advertised in local papers and notice boards. Registering with Childminding Ireland can also be advantageous. This voluntary body can give advice on networking and marketing a childminding service. (See [www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie) for more information.) Because of the high demand for childcare services in Ireland at present there should be little problem finding work. Another option is to work in the child's home as a childminder.

## Requirements

### How do I become a Childminder?

Current legislation only requires those minding more than three children, of pre-school age to notify the healthboards. Therefore, it is not essential to register formally as a childminder in Ireland. However, many childminders are registered with the national voluntary agency 'Childminding Ireland'. A "notification" process is essential to qualify for funding.

Insurance is a must especially when starting out. Make contact with the local Childminding Advisory Officer. Take the opportunity to attend local network meetings by working with other childminders; it may be possible to receive and pass on families looking for childcare to each other.

Be sure that you will enjoy being at home for long periods with only children as company.

### Do I need qualifications?

Supporting the development of children from varied backgrounds and cultures which are different to your own will require new knowledge and skills. To maintain a professional approach childminders need to understand the nature of child development, health and safety, child protection, legislation and best practice Standards.



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*This is one of a series of fact sheets on income generating activities.*

*All fact sheets are available in the Advisory Section of the Teagasc Website*  
**[www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)**

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Currently, it is not a requirement for childminders to have qualifications. However, there are advantages to obtaining qualifications, especially if you want to make a long-term career out of working with children. Training will naturally allow you to develop and improve the quality of childcare provision.

In order to avail of the Childminder's Development Grant a Quality Awareness Programme of training is needed. These courses are provided by local county childcare committees. It is also a good idea to undertake training courses to further your skills. A Paediatric First Aid course is particularly important. Training will also put you in contact with other childminders in the area which can be useful for support and advice. Some of these courses are provided free of charge under the National Development Plan. Contact your local childcare committee for more details.

### **How many children can I legally care for as a childminder?**

As a childminder you can mind up to six unrelated children under the age of six (See Child Care Act, 1991) It is wise to limit yourself to the number of children you feel you can comfortably work with in order to maintain good quality care both for minded children and your own family.

### **How much will I earn as a Childminder?**

Childminders are self employed and it is up to them to negotiate their own rates of pay and working conditions. As self employed persons Childminders should be registered with the Revenue under the Self-Assessment taxation system. This does not mean that they are required to pay tax. That is dependent on profit, but it means they can contribute Social Insurance under Class S, and avail of certain State benefits such as the Contributory Pension Scheme.

Where an individual minds up to three children in the minder's own home, no tax will be payable on the childminding earnings received, provided the amount is less than €10,000 per annum (as of 2005). If childminding income exceeds this, the entire amount will be taxable under self-assessment. An individual is obliged to return their childminding income in their annual tax return.

Childminding Ireland provides a guide to pay and conditions for registered childminders that would give an idea of the rates of pay. See [www.childminding.ie/publications](http://www.childminding.ie/publications)

### **How much does it cost to set up a childminding business?**

Start up costs vary depending on your current circumstances. They may include:

- A fee for registration
- Cost of start up equipment – toys, high chairs, smoke alarms, fireguards, fire blankets etc.
- Public Liability insurance
- Business tools, such as cashbook and contracts
- First Aid training
- Possible alterations to property such as additional fencing and gates

### **Are there any grants available to help me set up my business?**

Large-scale grants of up to €100,000 are available to persons who wish to improve the quality of their childminding service and increase the number of childminding places.

Information is available from the equality section of the department of justice, equality and law reform [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie) ph:1890 20 90 30. Funding information can also be obtained from your local county childcare committee.

There are also small-scale grants available with a maximum value of €630. This can assist towards the cost of safety items, books, toys or equipment.

There is also capital funding of up to €1 million for 'not-for-profit' organisations.

Guide to applying for the Childminder Development Grants available at [www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)

In order to qualify for grants individuals are required to notify their County Childcare Committee that they are providing a childminding service and attend a quality course.

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