



CHILDMINDERS

WHO IS A CHILDMINDER?

A childminder is a person who is registered with Ofsted [Office for Standards in Education] to use their home to care for children aged under 8 years for more than 2 hours per day. Childminders can care for older children but the Law does not require them to register for this. Most childminders work alone, although sometimes they work in partnership with others. They are usually willing to work all year round; they are self-employed and negotiate their own pay and conditions. All childminders are encouraged to use a contract. The contract is a legal document and will be signed and dated by both the childminder and the family using the service. Childminders are required to have public liability insurance.

WHAT DO CHILDMINDERS PROVIDE?

Childminders provide full-time or part-time day care and education for the under 5's and before / after school and holiday care for school-aged children. Childminders can provide a wide range of activities for children including visiting the park, the beach and local toddler groups. All childminders caring for the under 5's are required to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS].

WHERE DO I FIND CHILDMINDERS NEAR ME?

Information about Childminders can be found at our online directory: www.southendinfopoint.org. If you are a parent/carer for whom English is a second language, a parent/carer whose child has additional needs or you are a professional working with parents/carers, then the Family Information Service can help provide additional support looking for childcare. Please contact us on 01702 215007 or email fissos@southend.gov.uk

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE [EYFS]

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years of their life has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that the services they access will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The EYFS is the framework that provides that assurance.

REGISTRATION

All childminders must be registered with Ofsted, under the terms of the Children Act 2004. Ofsted must ensure the suitability of any childminder who becomes registered. This involves assessing the childminder's ability to meet the needs of young children, keep them safe and enable them to learn through play. Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] checks and safety checks of the home environment are also carried out prior to registration.

All childminders are subject to regular inspections by Ofsted Inspectors. Ofsted Inspectors' reports can be viewed on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you have a complaint concerning a registered childminder you should contact Ofsted on 0300 123 1231.

AGES OF CHILDREN FOR WHOM CHILDMINDERS CARE

Childminders may care for a maximum of three children aged under 5, this usually includes only one child under 1 year, and a maximum of three 5 – 8 year olds. These

numbers include the childminder's own children under the age of 8. Additional children aged between 8 and 14 will also be taken into consideration when decisions are made about the number of children for whom a childminder may care. The childminder does not have to be registered for children aged 8 and over but they may choose to join Ofsted's Voluntary Register.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Childminders are required to attend a Registration course and a 12 hour Paediatric First Aid Course before Ofsted will register them. Once they are registered there are an increasing number of opportunities for childminders to undertake further training to develop their skills and knowledge.

NETWORK CHILDMINDERS

Some childminders belong to a Childminding Network which means they have been assessed to ensure they are working to quality standards. If your childminder belongs to the Network they will be regularly monitored to support their quality improvement. Some Network childminders are also able to claim the free early education and childcare.

For more information request or view our factsheets 'Free Early Years Education and Childcare for 3 and 4 year olds' and/or 'Funded places for targeted 2 year olds'

COST AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES

Childminders are entitled to fix their own fees and these vary - not only from childminder to childminder, but from area to area. Some childminders charge by the hour and they may charge extra for part-time places due to the difficulties of matching vacancies. Southend SHIP directory and Family Information Service have details of all registered childminders in the Borough and the services they are able to offer. This information can be found at www.southendinfopoint.org If you are having particular difficulty you can contact the Family Information Service on 01702 215007 or email fissos@southend.gov.uk

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN LOOKING FOR A CHILDMINDER

- Start looking for a Childminder well in advance as some may have waiting lists.
- Visit the Childminder and take your child with you to see their reactions. Print off the list below to take with you. When you are there consider the following points:
 - Be clear about what type of care you need.
 - Ask to see a copy of their registration and insurance certificates.
 - Ask whether or not they belong to the Southend Childminding Network or if they are able to offer Free Early Years provision.
 - Find out their normal hours of work
 - What are their fees and what is included for this? Some childminders may charge more but provide nappies for small children, hot meals and outings, others may ask you to provide these each day.
 - What charges are made for absence / sickness?
 - What arrangements are made for school holidays?
 - Does the childminder have emergency cover arrangements with another childminder in case they fall ill or go on holiday?
 - How many children do they look after and what are their ages?
 - What qualifications and experience do they have?
 - Do they have a routine – and what activities are provided for the children?
 - How do they manage challenging behaviour?

- Who else will be in their house whilst they are looking after children? This may be older siblings or relatives that may come to stay.
- Are they a member of the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)?
- Do they drive and will they be taking your child out frequently in a car?
- Do they smoke?
- Do they have a garden that is registered for use? Ofsted may not approve of the garden facilities and restrict these from use.
- Do they have pets and are these in contact with the children?
- How can a place be reserved?
- Speak to other parents/carers who use the Childminder where possible. Online forums can be a good place to do this if you do not know anyone.
- Make a second visit to Childminders you like.
- Go to the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk) to view the latest Ofsted Inspection Report for the Childminders you are considering.
- Be prepared to spend time settling your child with the Childminder.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS – MARVELLOUS MINDERS

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all childcare and early years settings in the Borough provide a service that includes all children and support is available to achieve this. In addition to this commitment Southend-on-Sea has Marvellous Minds, a scheme aimed at finding a suitable childminder to provide opportunities for parents and carers to have short breaks, return to work or access training while their child receives high quality care. The scheme is co-ordinated by designated PACEY Development Co-ordinators who will provide a personalised service to support families. The aim is to link parents with specialist childminders who can offer care that is tailored to meet their child's and family's specific needs. Placements are paid through Social Care funding, direct payments or by parents themselves.

All Marvellous Minds are registered with Ofsted and are fully qualified. They have gained further specialised knowledge and skills which may include safeguarding children with disabilities, child development, disability awareness, manual handling, and hold a current paediatric first aid certificate. They are committed to further training to support and extend their knowledge and skills. All Marvellous Minds work in partnership with parents/carers/social workers/key persons in the child's life to fully understand the complex needs of the child in their care.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDMINDERS

Every registered childminder in the Southend-on-Sea Borough has access to a development worker who offers support, advice and guidance. There is also a national organisation [www.pacey.org.uk] that offers a wide range of services to both childminders and parents.

CONTACT THE FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE

01702 215007 | fissos@southend.gov.uk | www.southendinfopoint.org

Southend-on-Sea Family Information Service cannot recommend or endorse any childcare providers or activities and does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this information. Updated February 2016