



NEWS RELEASE.....NEWS RELEASE.....NEWS RELEASE

## **Lurgan childminder puts ‘Quality First’**

### ***Local childminder receives quality assurance award***

Date issued: 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2010  
For immediate use

Contact: Liz Fawcett, Liz Fawcett Consulting Tel: 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662

***See also ‘5 top tips for choosing a childminder’ and photos issued with this release - caption details in editors’ notes***

-----

**A Lurgan childminder is celebrating the fact that she has received a special quality assurance award in recognition of the outstanding level of care she provides.**

Jennifer O'Connor has just been awarded the ‘Quality First’ accreditation by NICMA – the Childminding Association.

Just 120 childminders in Northern Ireland hold this prestigious award which covers all aspects of childminding - from promoting children’s learning and development to providing good nutrition.

Jennifer is one of four members of the Splash Sure Start/NICMA childminding network in Lurgan who now hold this prestigious award.

It took her nine months and many hours of study to complete the Quality First programme, but Jennifer says the hard work was well worthwhile.

***“I think there’s an assumption that childminders don’t have any qualifications and that a nursery is more professional when it comes to caring for your child,”*** she explains.

***“I wanted to demonstrate to parents that childminders actually do work very hard for their money, and that we do make a really important contribution to a child’s development.”***

Jennifer was assessed for the award by Geralyn Maguire, who co-ordinates the Splash Sure Start/NICMA childminding network.

***“Jennifer certainly deserved her award,” says GERALYN. “She provides a warm, caring environment for her children, and offers a quality service.”***

Jennifer says that the children she looks after have really benefited from her membership of the network.

***“Before I got involved with the network, I would have been inclined to mostly stay at home doing things with the kids,” she says.***

***“But now I get out with them as much as possible, and the younger children really benefit from socialising with the other kids at the network meetings.”***

The network holds two very informal weekly ‘drop-ins’, in different locations, for childminders and children to get together with each other. Non-members and parents are also very welcome at the meetings.

***“The children and childminders obviously get a great deal out of socialising with each other,” says GERALYN. “But the parents who come along also benefit from meeting the childminders.***

***“It’s a great opportunity for them to find out more about childminding both as a potential childcare option and as a possible career.***

***“Indeed, some parents have considered going back to work when they might not have otherwise because they’ve been so impressed with the childminders they’ve met.”***

If you would like more information on childminding as a career or on choosing a childminder, go to: [www.nicma.org](http://www.nicma.org) or contact NICMA on 028 9181 1015. For more information on the Splash Sure Start/NICMA childminding network, contact GERALYN MAGUIRE on 028 3831 3365.

ENDS

**Editor’s notes:**

1. NICMA – the Childminding Association is a charity, and is the sole organisation representing childminders in Northern Ireland. 74% of registered childminders here are members. For more details about NICMA, please go to: [www.nicma.org](http://www.nicma.org)
2. **Photo caption details. Photo 1 of 2: Jennifer O’Connor with (l to r) Thomas Russell, Jennifer’s son Alfie and Ella Oldham, all aged 2, at a Splash Sure Start ‘drop in’. Photo 2 of 2: Jennifer O’Connor with (l to r) Thomas Russell and Jennifer’s son Alfie, both aged 2, at a Splash Sure Start ‘drop in’.**
3. For further details, please contact Liz Fawcett, Liz Fawcett Consulting on 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662.

