

Top tips for choosing a childminder

1. Arrange a visit when at least some of the children the childminder currently looks after are there – if they seem happy and at ease, that's a very positive sign.
2. Make sure the childminder is registered and has adequate insurance cover – ask to see his or her current registration and insurance certificates.
3. Check on issues which could impact on your child's care e.g. does anyone in the house smoke? any pets? will any other people be in the house when your child is there?
4. If the childminder will be transporting your child in a car, check whether he/she has an appropriate level of insurance, and whether seat belts and car safety seats are fitted.
5. Food is very important! Check what food is provided and whether any snacks are healthy.
6. Find out about the daily routine followed by the childminder, the activities he/she provides and any outings or trips e.g. swimming, library, parent-toddler groups.
7. Ask about outdoor play - make sure there's either an outside play area or a park nearby.
8. Check there are plenty of books and toys available.
9. Make sure there's somewhere quiet for the children to rest.
10. Ask about the childminder's policy on behaviour and make sure you're quite happy about his/her approach.
11. Do ask to see any parts of the home and garden which the children use.
12. Always make sure you sign a contract with the childminder – it provides a vital safeguard for both you and the childminder.

If you have any questions about choosing a childminder or would like a more detailed guide to help you make your choice, please call NICMA on (028) 9181 1015.