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Guidance

Providing childcare and the 2-hour rule

Find out how you can still register with Ofsted if you provide childcare immediately before or after school for less than 2 hours in a day.

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Applies to: **England**

One of the requirements as to whether a childcare provider, such as a childminder, nanny, nursery or other daycare, can or must register with Ofsted is the 2-hour rule.

If you are registered with Ofsted it can help the parents of the children you look after qualify for [free childcare](#).

The 2-hour rule

You can only register with Ofsted if you look after at least one of the children for 2 hours or more a day. More information is available in our collection of guides, [Providing childcare services in England](#).

The amount of time your setting is open does not matter. It is only the length of time the children are looked after that counts.

There is one exception to the 2-hour rule.

Exception to the 2-hour rule

You can still register with Ofsted if you look after children for less than 2 hours in any of the following situations:

- immediately before school
- immediately after school
- both before and after school

If you will only be looking after children in this way, you must contact Ofsted by email on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

If, however, you will be looking after children in this way as part of meeting the requirements of being a nanny, childminder or daycare, you can [register for those in the usual way](#).

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