



Office for Standards
in Education

Childminding: Guidance to the National Standards

Revisions to certain criteria: version 2

© Crown copyright 2004

Document reference number: HMI 2089

To obtain an additional copy, contact:

Ofsted Publications Centre

Telephone: 07002 637833

Fax: 07002 693274

E-mail: freepublications@ofsted.gov.uk

Web site: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.



Introduction

The *National standards for under-eights day care and childminding* are a set of outcomes that providers must achieve.¹ Each standard describes a particular quality outcome, and is accompanied by a set of supporting criteria giving information about how that outcome is to be achieved. Ofsted produced further guidance to help childminders meet these national standards.²

From 1 September 2003, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) introduced revisions to some of the criteria in the national standards for childminding. This document updates our guidance to help you understand these changes. It must be read alongside the main guidance document *Childminding: guidance to the national standards*. That guidance continues to be the main source of help and advice about interpreting the national standards.

How to use this guidance

This guidance is set out under national standard headings where criteria have changed. It uses the same section headings as the main guidance. You must use this revised guidance instead of the advice in the main document for each of these section headings. For easy reference we have set out the page numbers where we have made changes overleaf, and throughout the document.

¹ *National standards for under-eights day care and childminding* is available from your local authority or the DfES website www.dfes.gov.uk

² *Childminding: guidance to the national standards* is available from your local authority or the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk

List of changes made

Please refer to your *Childminding: guidance to the national standards* and replace the sections set out below with the guidance in this document.

Section heading in main document	Page number
Qualifications (1.4, 1.5)	8
Childminder ratios (2.2 – 2.6)	10
Early Learning Goals (3.7)	13
Planning and building requirements (4.2)	14
Supervision	20
Fire safety	27
Smoking (7.13)	28
Including children with special needs (10.2)	33
Physical punishments and interventions (11.4 – 11.6)	36
Protection of the child is the childminder's first priority	42
Area Child Protection Committee procedures	42
Reporting concerns and confidentiality (13.3, 13.4)	43
Records to be kept	46

Standard 1: Suitable person

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

Qualifications (1.4, 1.5) (page 8)

You should complete a registration course approved by the local authority. You should also complete a first aid course approved by the local authority including training in first aid for young children. If you have not been able to do this before registration then you need to make sure you do so within six months of the date shown on your certificate of registration. Your local authority can provide details of approved courses.

Standard 2: Organisation

The registered person meets required adult to child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet children's needs effectively.

Childminder ratios (2.2 – 2.6) (page 10)

The number of children for whom you may care is stated on your certificate of registration. The following factors are taken into account when deciding on the number of children:

- whether you work with an assistant or in partnership with another childminder
- your public liability insurance cover
- whether any of the children attend ten early education sessions a week, for example in reception classes, nurseries or pre-schools
- whether there are any other children under eight years of age for whom you regularly care, including your own. For example, foster children, children of relatives (if you look after them), or any other child you look after regularly without payment.

You will be registered to care for no more than a total of six children aged under eight, including your own children and any others for whom you are responsible. Within this total, only three children will normally be aged under five, and only one may be aged under 12 months.

In certain circumstances, set out below, you may care for more children than set out in these ratios, but not more than six children in total.

Two babies under 12 months

Childminders who can demonstrate that they can meet and reconcile the varying needs of all the children they care for may also be able to care for two children under 12 months. In all cases, before making plans to care for two children under 12 months, you will need to write to your Ofsted regional centre with full details of how you intend to plan your day, meet all your minded children's needs and make best use of space and resources. Ofsted will then either make arrangements to change the numbers of children on your certificate or decide that your arrangements to meet children's needs are not suitable. We may ask for more information before we make a decision, and may require a visit to see you.

In all cases you cannot begin to care for two children under 12 months until you have a certificate of registration stating that you can do this. You may still normally only look after a total of three children aged under five.³

³ The National Standards criterion 2.4 sets out special arrangements for children aged 4 attending 10 early education sessions a week.

Here are two examples of childminders who may care for two children under 12 months.

Example 1

This new childminder has considerable experience of looking after babies. She was previously a qualified nursery nurse, who worked in the baby room of a large day nursery. She has produced full but flexible plans for how she will make best use of the childminding day and adapt her model to meet individual children's needs.

Example 2

This experienced childminder is bilingual and has been approached by two sets of parents of babies who want their babies brought up in a bilingual environment. The childminder particularly enjoys looking after babies and does not want to care for any other minded children. She has set this out in her plan.

Three babies under 12 months

In exceptional circumstances you may care for three children under 12 months. You must make a separate request on each occasion where you wish to do this. You must write to your regional centre and identify clearly the specific children for whom you are making the request with full details of how you intend to meet the needs of the children. Ofsted will make decisions based on the individual circumstances of each request. We will only consider such requests for time-limited arrangement involving:

- triplets
- continuity of care for children from the same family.

In all circumstances involving caring for three children under 12 months, we will visit you to discuss your arrangements. We will take the following factors into account:

- the length of time you are providing care
- whether your furniture and equipment is sufficient for three babies
- any other children you are caring for, including your own (you cannot normally care for more than three children aged under five)⁴
- contingency arrangements such as help during busy times of the day.

If your request is successful Ofsted will issue you with a certificate setting a new or varied condition that details the numbers of children that you may care for. This condition of registration only applies while you are caring for the particular children identified on your request. If any of these children or your care arrangements change then you must tell your Ofsted regional centre.

Here are two examples of childminders who may care for three children aged under 12 months.

Example 1

Parents who are expecting triplets asked a friend of theirs if she would help to care for their babies from October. Mum wants a break for three half-days a week so that she can continue studying at home for her degree. Her friend is an already-registered childminder who currently cares for two children due to start school in September. The parents of the children she currently looks after will then no longer require her services. She does not wish to look after any other children until the triplets are older. She is confident that she can manage the triplets. She already has equipment for two babies and intends to hire a third travel cot from her local childminding resource centre. Mum will also bring some equipment each day. Mum lives in the same village as the childminder and will come round if there are times the childminder needs an extra pair of hands.

⁴ The National Standards criterion 2.4 sets out special arrangements for children aged 4 attending 10 early education sessions a week.

Example 2

This experienced childminder currently looks after two children from different families. She has cared for these children since they were babies. They are now aged four and have just started in the reception class at the same school. She began to care for a baby from a third family, mornings only, as the children approached school age. That baby is now five months old. Just after taking on the baby, both mums of her older children told her they were pregnant. They want her to care for their babies, who are due within a month of each other. Both mums are returning to work part time. For a short period of time, the childminder is requesting to care for three babies under 12 months to provide continuity of care for the families. The three babies will only be there together on two mornings each week. She will borrow some extra equipment from her childminding friends. The childminder has thought about how she will cope with a number of situations such as taking the children out for walks and what she would do if the children were upset and needing a cuddle. Her mother, who was also previously registered as a childminder, lives round the corner and will be on call during the two days. The childminder is obtaining a police check for her mother.

In all cases you cannot begin to care for three children aged under 12 months until you have a certificate of registration stating that you can do this. You may still normally only look after a total of three children aged under five.⁵

More than three children aged under five

In exceptional circumstances you may care for more than three children aged under five. You must make a separate request on each occasion where you wish to do this. You must write into your regional centre and identify clearly the specific children for whom you are making the request with full details of how you intend to meet the needs of the children. Ofsted will make decisions based on the individual circumstances of each request. We will only consider such requests for time-limited arrangements involving:

- siblings
- continuity of care for children from the same family.

If your request is successful Ofsted will issue you with a certificate setting a new or varied condition that details the numbers of children that you may care for. This condition of registration only applies while you are caring for the particular children identified on your request. If any of these children or your care arrangements change then you must tell your Ofsted regional centre. You may not care for more than three children aged under five on a permanent basis.

Here are two examples of childminders who may care for more than three children aged under five.

Example 1

This childminder is registered and is caring for three children under five. The mother of one of the children, aged three, has recently given birth and wants to place the baby with his brother. This means that the childminder would then have four children aged under five. The childminder is keen to look after the baby and is confident that her plans to look after four children aged under five will work, especially as two children are at pre-school for five mornings each week. The arrangement is for six months until her own daughter starts in reception class.

Example 2

This childminder is registered and cares for three children under five. The parent of one of the children asks if she would care for the younger sister, currently looked after by mum and gran. This is because mum's work patterns have changed and she must work full-time for the next three months. This would mean that for three days a week the childminder has four children under five. The childminder realises that she needs extra equipment and must change her daily routine so that most of her outings take place when she does not have four children. She asks mum to leave her car seat for the young girl, and borrows a double buggy from the childminder resource centre.

⁵ The National Standards criterion 2.4 sets out special arrangements for children aged 4 attending 10 early education sessions a week.

Students on training placements are not included in the adult to child ratio. The amount of supervision any student needs depends on whether the student is vetted and their competence and experience. A student cannot have sole charge of children.

Occasionally, students may be placed for longer periods, for example a year or more. In such cases you could treat the student as an assistant and apply to Ofsted for a variation of your registration to allow you to care for additional children when the student is present.

Standard 3: Care, learning and play

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Early Learning Goals (3.7) (page 13)

As an accredited childminder who is part of an approved childminding network you will be helping children to work towards the Early Learning Goals. These are described in the joint DfES/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority publication *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*. This guidance is an excellent source of advice and ideas for anyone caring for children, whether in a network or not.

Standard 4: Physical environment

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and have access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

Planning and building requirements (4.2) (page 14)

This criterion no longer applies. However if you intend to make any changes to the premises or their use, you should notify Ofsted at the earliest opportunity (Standard 14: Documentation, criterion 14.3). You might also consider whether changes to your home are likely to affect the children you look after.

Standard 6: Safety

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

Supervision (page 20)

Supervision means that children you care for are within your sight or hearing at all times, or within the sight or hearing of your assistant. When considering how much supervision children need think about:

- their age and ability
- the activity being undertaken
- children's growing independence
- their need for privacy
- how your house and garden is set out.

You may need to pay particular attention at times when children are:

- arriving and departing
- playing outdoors
- transferring from indoors/outdoors
- going on outings (see 6.15)
- using the toilet.

Fire safety (6.11 – 6.14) (page 22)

The fire safety officer can give advice on:

- the proper location, storage and use of a fire blanket
- the proper location of smoke alarms.

Fire safety officers do not always visit childminders. If your local fire safety officer has visited you must keep a record of any recommendations he or she has made, and comply with them.

An escape plan should be simple and clear. Think about:

- the ages and understanding of the children
- whether children need to be carried
- how you will alert the emergency services
- making sure that nothing blocks your exits, such as buggies or other equipment.

Standard 7: Health

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

First aid (7.9 – 7.11) (page 27)

Children Act Regulations – you must keep a signed record of all accidents to children, and notify Ofsted of any serious injury or death to any child in your care.

In providing a first aid box think about:

- whether it contains only items that you are trained to use
- storing first-aid equipment in a waterproof container that is clearly marked
- where you will keep it so that you can use it quickly and easily.

Advice on the contents of your first-aid box will be given at your first-aid training course.

When asking for parents' permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, it is useful to:

- ask parents who do not wish to give permission because of religious or cultural reasons to give you written instructions about their wishes
- think about what you would do in an emergency if you care for more than one child.

Accidents can happen in the best of homes. You may wish to consider, for example, recording:

- details of existing injuries when a child arrives
- the time, date and cause of any accident
- where it happened
- details of the child(ren) affected
- the type and location of any injury
- the action taken at the time, and later if relevant.

You should sign the record and ask the parent(s) to sign when the child is collected.

In addition, consider:

- making sure the parents know about any accident as soon as possible if their child is collected by someone other than themselves, for example by phone or providing a copy of the accident record
- ensuring that all injuries/incidents where no wound may be visible are recorded
- if you need to sign an accident book for a child attending pre-school/nursery/school, this is also recorded in your records and the parents informed.

Smoking (7.13) (page 28)

You must not smoke in the presence of children, and no one else in your house should smoke in children's presence. If you or other members of your household smoke when children are **not** present, consider the following:

- storing matches, lighters and smoking materials safely and out of the reach of children
- carefully disposing of cigarette ends and matches
- emptying ashtrays after use and washing them frequently
- ensuring all rooms where smoking takes place are well ventilated.

Standard 10: Special needs (Including special educational needs and disabilities)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

Including children with special needs (10.2) (page 33)

Think about how you:

- welcome children with special needs and take their specific needs into account in your daily routine
- value and acknowledge children's individuality and help them to feel good about themselves
- seek information from parents about the child's routines, likes and dislikes
- adapt activities to enable children with special needs to take part
- ensure that you have access to specialist equipment if needed
- take children out
- encourage children's confidence and independence
- consider any risk factors.

You may find it useful to link this criterion to Standard 9: Equal Opportunities.

Your local authority (EYDCP) can provide further advice on:

- advice on facilities and resources, for example special needs toy library, loan service, support groups
- funding for extending your service to children with special needs.

Standard 11: Behaviour

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

Physical punishments and interventions (11.4 – 11.6) (page 36)

Children Act Regulations – you must not give corporal punishment to a child in your care, or allow any other person looking after children or living and working on the premises to do so.

Physical punishments, or the threat of them, must not be used. This includes smacking. You must not smack children in your care. Also you must never shake children in your care. It can cause damage to the brain.

Standard 13: Child protection

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

Protection of the child is the childminder's first priority (page 42)

Coping with concerns about the possible abuse of a child is very stressful. However, your first responsibility is to the child. This means that you need to know about signs of abuse or neglect and what to do if concerns arise.

You need to be aware of the government booklet *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – summary* (or any national guidance which replaces this). You need to find out how to contact your local social services department or the police if you are concerned about a child. This includes any situation where an allegation of abuse covers a period while the child is in your care.

You need to ensure that any co-worker, assistant or student also knows what to do.

Area Child Protection Committee procedures (13.2) (pages 42 - 43)

This is now criterion 13.3

Children Act Regulations – you must notify Ofsted about any allegations of serious harm or abuse against a child while the child is in your care.

The Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) is a committee of senior managers from all agencies working with children and their families within a local authority area (including police, health and social services). It has responsibility for ensuring that all agencies work together for the protection of children. It also ensures that national policies and procedures relating to child protection are put in place locally. It gives guidance on what to do if you have a concern and what will happen as a result of you reporting it.

Because you work closely with the children in your care, listening to them and playing with them, you know them and you are therefore in a position to notice:

- any significant changes in their behaviour
- any unexplained bruising or marks
- any comments they make which give you cause for concern
- any deterioration in their general wellbeing.

If you do have any cause for concern, or if an allegation is made against you, you should report it to the Social Services Department of your local authority in accordance with your local ACPC procedures and to your Ofsted regional centre without delay.

Reporting concerns and confidentiality (13.3 13.4) (page 43)

It is a matter of your professional judgement whether or not you raise your concerns with the parents. However, it is important that you do not attempt to investigate for yourself and that you:

- keep accurate factual records of any concerns
- report concerns quickly to minimise any risk to the child.

Consider including in any record:

- the child's full name and address
- the date and time of your record
- details of what prompted your concern, for example observation of bruising, something told to you by the child
- details of any previous concerns
- details of any explanations given by the parent or child
- any action you have taken, such as speaking to parents.

Under certain circumstances inspectors may require to see records relating to child protection matters.

You should make sure that any child protection concerns that could identify a particular child are kept confidential and only shared with people who need to know this information. There are guidelines for you to follow in *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – summary*.

Standard 14: Documentation

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children, are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.

Records to be kept (pages 46 – 47)

Children Act Regulations- the following records must be kept on the premises

Particulars required in all cases:

- the name, home address and date of birth of each child who is looked after on the premises
- the name, home address and telephone number of a parent
- the name, home address and telephone number of any person who will be looking after children on the premises
- a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of the persons who looked after them
- a record of accidents occurring on the premises
- a record of any medicinal product administered to any child on the premises, including the date and circumstances of its administration, by whom it was administered, including medicinal products which the child is permitted to administer to himself, together with a record of a parent's consent.

A list of all the records, policies and procedures set out in the *National standards for under-eights day care and childminding* are set out below.

Standard 6: Safety

- Fire safety recommendations (where given) 6.14
- Vehicle records including insurance 6.17
- Parental permission for transport 6.17

Standard 7: Health

- Prior parental consent to administer medicines 7.8
- Record of medicines administered 7.8
- Parental consent for emergency treatment 7.10
- Accident record 7.11
- Sick children policy 7.12

Standard 8: Food and drink

- Children's special dietary requirements 8.3

Standard 9: Equal opportunities

- Information to enable appropriate care 9.2

Standard 11: Behaviour

- Incident record relating to use of physical intervention 11.6

Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers

- Parental agreement 12.1
- Record of complaints 12.3
- Contact details 12.4

Standard 13: Child protection

- Child protection concerns 13.3

Additionally, there may be other documentation **not** required by the national standards but which may provide evidence of compliance with them. The following list is not comprehensive but such evidence may include:

- copies of qualifications and training outcomes, for example certificates, statements from authorised trainers
- planning permission documents
- environmental health, fire officer reports
- maintenance of equipment
- gas and electrical safety checks
- records of food intake, especially for babies.

