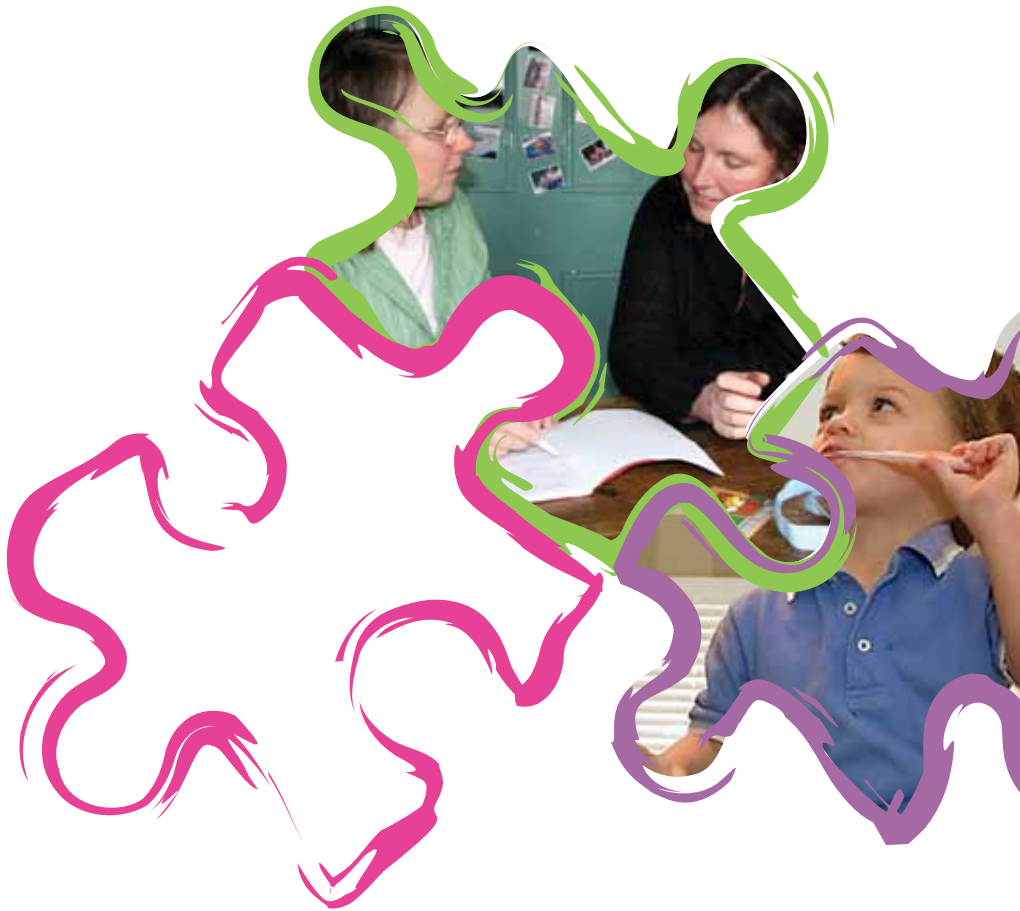


# Childminding Information Pack







## Becoming a childminder

Childminders come from many different backgrounds and are of all ages. Some may be graduates looking for a career change, some may never have gained any previous formal qualifications.

All have lots of energy and want to become part of a professional workforce. They can provide the best possible care and opportunities so that children reach their full potential.



# Why be a childminder?

Imagine a job that makes a real, positive difference to children - one that builds their confidence, and helps them develop into well adjusted, sociable young people. Then imagine the flexibility to do this job in your own home, fitting in with your other commitments.

## **Can you give your time, energy and enthusiasm to:**

- \* inspire young minds?
- \* help children to develop socially?
- \* provide a safe and stimulating environment?

Are you committed to giving children the best start in life?

Are you motivated by the idea of being your own boss and working flexibly?

If the answer is **Yes!**

– then becoming a registered childminder could be the career for you.

Leicestershire's Early Learning and Childcare Service  
can help you get started!





# What is a childminder?

## A registered childminder:

- ✱ offers before and after school care to children aged over eight
- ✱ is self-employed, runs their own business and provides a service to the families whose children they care for
- ✱ looks after one or more children under the age of eight for more than a total of two hours a day on domestic premises (normally a childminder's own home) for reward
- ✱ is registered and inspected by Ofsted – demonstrating the quality and standards of their care

## Although every day is different a typical day may include:

- ✱ arranging fun and stimulating learning activities, tailored to individual children's needs, such as dressing up, creative play, reading and exploring cultural events
- ✱ visiting a park, museum, library or playgroup
- ✱ providing meals and snacks for the children, involving them in food preparation and menu choices
- ✱ taking children to and from school or clubs
- ✱ working with other local childminders and settings to organise group activities.

# Easy as child's play?

Before committing to a career in childminding you need to consider how this may affect you and those around you:

## Your own family

As with all career moves you need to make sure that childminding fits in with your current commitments. There will be a number of adjustments to make to your daily routine and these need to be considered before you take on the responsibility of childminding.

You'll need to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, but it is also important to realise that anyone in your household over the age of 16, i.e. partners, children or lodgers, will also have to obtain a satisfactory CRB check.

## The cost

There will be some initial costs – such as buying safety equipment, toys and documentation insurance. There will be the cost of registration and an annual inspection fee.

## Running a business

Firstly you'll need to start thinking about your business plan. Ask yourself:

- ✳ what childcare is already available in my area – is there a real need for anything extra?

- ✳ what can I offer to parents?
- ✳ how will I promote my services?
- ✳ how can I work with local pre-schools and schools?
- ✳ what would be the ongoing costs?

Attending one of the Early Learning and Childcare induction workshops will help you to explore your market and potential customers. Contact us on **0116 305 5829** to discuss your individual needs.

To succeed as a childminder, you'll need to be organised and be able to plan your work. You will need to have a clear business relationship with parents and you will have a written contract with each family.

You will be classed as self-employed and will have to keep records of your income and expenditure. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Business Support Team can help you – call the team on **0116 253 5200**.

## What about finances?

Childminding is a valuable self-employment option for people who want to set up in a business that will give them a flexible, fulfilling, varied and challenging profession. The

amount you earn will depend on how many children you look after, for how long and for how much.

A childminder, like any self-employed person, can deduct business-related expenses from their income before paying tax. Expenses can include toys, play materials, the cost of outings, food and drink, together with a proportion of the childminder's housing, heating and telephone costs.

## Your neighbours

You will need to think about whether your neighbours will object if you childmind. If you think that they might complain about families arriving and leaving from your home, or about having children next door, you should try to discuss this with them before you go ahead. You may also need to contact your district council to apply for planning permission.

## Your pets

Any pets must be kept under control and must not be left alone with children in your care.

## A place to play outside

Children need to play outdoors. If you don't have a garden, you must be prepared to take children out to local parks and playgrounds for fresh air and exercise on a daily basis.

## Working long hours

Although working with children can be rewarding it can also be very tiring and you may need to consider working long hours if you wish to provide a professional service to working parents. Working hours and patterns vary considerably but generally parents may need childcare from 8am to 6pm.

## Make a commitment

Parents need reliable childcare arrangements that will last. Children suffer from the disruption of moving from one childcare situation to another. So you should only become a childminder if you are prepared to commit yourself to providing a reliable service over a reasonable period of time. Looking after other people's children is a position of great trust.

## Yourself

Most people who have paid jobs sometimes find it difficult to keep a balance with the demands of their personal and family life. This is especially difficult for childminders because they work in their own homes and their job and family life are so closely interwoven, particularly if they have their own children.

# Is childminding for me?

- \* do you like looking after children?
- \* are you interested in a rewarding career that allows you to take control of your own personal development?
- \* would you enjoy planning activities as well as responding to spontaneous interests?
- \* would you describe yourself as energetic, enthusiastic and caring?
- \* would you enjoy caring for children from a variety of different cultures and backgrounds?
- \* would you enjoy working with parents ensuring you deliver a good service?
- \* are you interested in caring for children with special needs – such as a disability?
- \* would you enjoy working in your own home and being your own boss?

## Be flexible

You set your own hours. You could decide, for instance, to look after just one child – or a baby for a morning a week. Or you might decide to make your childminding into a thriving business and care for several children full-time, maybe with an ‘assistant’

– a partner, family member or friend (provided they are registered). Childminders can work with up to two other people; making a total of three childminders on the premises.

## And you’re your own boss:

You have the satisfaction of running your own small business, from your own home. So you’re contributing to the family income but you’re still able to be at home with your family.

## You’re a childcare professional:

You work in partnership with the parents and other partners to make a real impact on a child’s progress. You can progress in your career through training and qualifications right up to degree level and beyond.

## You have the opportunity to gain business skills:

We offer training which will give you a chance to learn and develop business planning skills which will help you run your childminding business effectively, and keep it sustainable. Once registered with Ofsted we can add your details to a list of childminders which can be sent out to parents looking for childcare by the Family Information Service (FIS).



# What does a childminder have to do?

## Plan the routine of the childminding day

This means organising your day so that you can fit in regular events such as taking children to and from school, meals, naps, exercise and play, as well as time for individual children to explore their interests. A daily routine is especially important for young children who feel more secure when they know what to expect.

You must put the child's needs and interests first. This means that family tasks such as gardening, shopping, washing and ironing have to be fitted around the children in your care.

If you look after children aged 0-5, you will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. If you look after children 5-8 years you follow the requirements of the Childcare Register. Further information is available at [www.leics.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.leics.gov.uk/eyfs)

## Provide play activities which respond to the child's interests

Play is a serious business for children – it's how they learn. Through play, children learn to understand the world and how they fit in it. Play activities should promote an individual child's development – social, physical, intellectual, communication and emotional. Each child will have different needs and interests and you will need to be able to plan activities accordingly.

## Keep children safe

As a childminder it's your responsibility to make your home safe and prevent accidents, as well as keep children safe when you are out and about. You should ensure high standards of hygiene, and be prepared for an emergency including having a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate.

## Managing children's behaviour

You will need to be able to manage children's behaviour, encouraging positive behaviour and discouraging unwanted behaviour. Although you will have some experience of doing this if you have your own children, the way in which you manage behaviour may be different for other people's children, and you will need to discuss how you do this with the parents to make sure they are happy with your views and methods.

## Working with parents and other carers

You will need to be able to work closely with parents, exchanging information with them about their child's developments, and making sure that between you, you are providing consistent care for the child. Parents are a child's first and most important educator. You must be able to show you respect parents' views, values and ways of doing things.

You will also need to work with other carers and professionals – such as the local pre-school and school. This will ensure consistent, continuity of care and the best possible environment for a child's growth and achievement.

## Protect children from abuse

All adults have to take responsibility for protecting children from abuse. Children, especially young children, can't seek help for themselves and rely on those caring for them to do so on their behalf. Childminders must be able to spot signs of abuse and know who to tell and how. These responsibilities will be outlined when you complete your *'Understand how to set up a home-based childcare service'*. Further information is available from your Development Advisor who offers support and guidance to all childminders throughout their careers.

# What's Ofsted?

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) registers childminders and inspects them at regular intervals. Ofsted ensures that every childminder meets the minimum standards required by law:

- \* ensuring you're suitable to be with children
- \* checking that you provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment, giving children opportunities for learning and play
- \* making sure that you'll work in partnership with parents and carers

The Childcare Act 2006 introduced a Childcare Register with two parts – a compulsory and a voluntary part.

## Compulsory registers

The Early Years Register is for providers who meet the requirements of the Early Years Register you follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and care for children from birth to the 31st August following their fifth birthday. The Childcare Register is for providers who care for children from 1st September following their fifth birthday up to the age of eight and includes the voluntary part for childcare providers.

## Voluntary register

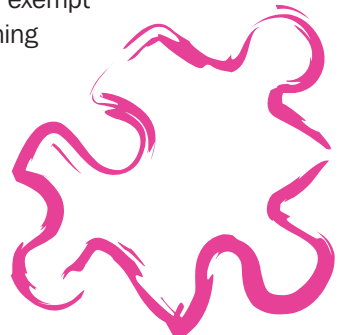
Providers may choose to join the voluntary part of the register if they are caring for children:

- \* in the home of one of the children, for children aged from birth to 17 years
- \* aged from birth to under eight in a provision that is exempt from compulsory registration, such as sports coaching

Providers of short-term care, nannies, activity-based settings and those caring for over eights may wish to join the voluntary register.

Some childcare providers may be exempt from registration.

Please visit **[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)** for more details on the Childcare Register and Voluntary Register.





## How do I set up as a childminder?

It's very straightforward. Just follow these steps:

1. You have taken the first step by getting hold of this information pack.
2. Check you hold a Level 2 in Adult English Literacy or a GCSE in English Graded A\*-C. If you do not hold this qualification you will not be able to access our training courses, or funding for professional development.

To access this course for free call Go Learn on 0800 988 0308 or visit [www.leics.gov.uk/golearn](http://www.leics.gov.uk/golearn)

3. You can attend an Induction Workshop to learn more about setting up your own childcare business. Details of this workshop are enclosed in the pack.
4. Download a copy of the Early Years Foundation Stage Pack (May 2008) from [www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears) (hard copies currently unavailable until 2012 as the framework is under Department for Education Review) Under 'Sections in Early years' or for the same format as the hard copy [www.publications.education.gov.uk](http://www.publications.education.gov.uk) The statutory framework and EYFS cards provide a good introduction to the requirements you will need to meet in addition to the practice guidance, which looks at meeting children's learning and development needs.

5. Book a place on the Pathways to Childminder Registration session by using the booking slip enclosed in the Childminding Information Pack, this session provides you with information to enable you to meet registration requirements with Ofsted. For more information regarding this session please call 0116 305 6555.
6. If you already hold a Level 2 in Adult English Literacy or a GCSE in English Graded A\*-C you can now request a home safety visit from one of our Development Advisors. If you do not hold this qualification, you must gain it before requesting your visit. When your Development Advisor visits, they will discuss your requirements for Ofsted registration and bring an application pack for you. Once all requirements are met you will need to return this to Ofsted.
7. You will now need to book a place on a full 12 hour Paediatric First Aid Course which meets the requirement of the EYFS.

We would advise you to:

Initially look at our maintained list of approved training providers on our website at <http://www.leics.gov.uk/eytraining> if there is a course listed that you can attend, contact the training provider directly to book your place, confirm the price of the course and pay for the course. Training organisations will charge different prices so it is important that you know what the charge will be.

Some trainers and ourselves will maintain a list of potential delegates when a course is not available, and arrange a course when sufficient enquires have been received.

If you see a course or wish to contact a trainer which does not appear on our approved trainer list, please ensure that it is the correct 12 hour Paediatric First Aid course and that the cost is not greater than that of the approved trainers.

8. You can now apply to Ofsted to be registered, you'll need to pay a registration fee along with an annual fee for each subsequent year. For more information regarding registration and up to date fees visit [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)
9. An Ofsted inspector will then visit your home and ask you questions based on the Early Years Foundation Stage to make sure you'll provide a suitable, safe environment for children. Your Development Advisor will help you to prepare for the Ofsted visit. You will need to carry out any actions the inspector sets before you can be registered.

10. Once you've got your Ofsted registration certificate (usually within 12 weeks of applying) and have taken out public liability insurance you can start work as a registered childminder!
11. You now have 6 months from registering to complete the Understand how to set up a home-based Childcare Service Course. Leicestershire County Council may be able to provide funding towards the cost of this course. Details and funding forms will be provided by your Development Advisor, for more information please contact the Workforce Development Team on 0116 305 6555.

## Do I have to register as a childminder?

Yes, the law says that if you are looking after children under the age of eight in your own home for a total of two or more hours a day for reward, then you have to be registered with Ofsted as a childminder.

## What if I am only looking after children who are over the age of eight?

If you wish to care solely for children over the age of eight then you do not have to be registered but you may wish to join the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register.

You will have to pay the fees for the CRB Checks if you opt for the Voluntary Register and for anyone else aged over 16 years living at your address. Please visit [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) for more details on fees.

If you register on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register:

- \* parents will know that you have met basic standards designed to safeguard children
- \* eligible parents will be able to get help with the costs of their childcare through Childcare Tax Credit and employer-supported childcare schemes
- \* the Family Information Service pass on your details to parents who are looking for childcare
- \* schools which use external organisations to provide extended services are encouraged to work only with registered providers

## Insurance

You will need to take out Public Liability Insurance to cover any accidents that children in your care may have, and any legal costs that you may face as a consequence. There are a variety of organisations who offer insurance. Your Development Advisor will explain this at the Pathways to Registration Session.

## Do I need to do any qualifications or training?

You will need to complete a full 12 hour Paediatric First Aid training course prior to registration (this needs to be updated at least every three years).

Within six months of registration you will need to complete the course; Setting up a Home Based Childcare Service.

These can be accessed at community colleges across Leicestershire - or even in your home. You may be able to access funding to cover the cost of this course.

The Workforce Development Team run many other courses, on various dates across the county at a subsidised rate.

To apply, contact us on **0116 305 6555** or visit **[www.leics.gov.uk/trainingopportunities](http://www.leics.gov.uk/trainingopportunities)**

You should undertake Child Protection and Equal Opportunities courses every few years as these policies and procedures can change from year to year.

## How many children can I look after?

You can usually look after up to six children under eight, including your own. Normally no more than three of the six children should be under five and no more than one child can be under one. Although in certain circumstances such as looking after brothers and sisters or twins or to provide continuity of care an exemption can be made, subject to approval by Ofsted.

You can also care for children over eight without affecting your registration, providing this does not adversely affect the younger children's care.



# Caring for children with Special Educational Needs – what support is available?

- \* funding is available to childminders for specialist equipment that can occasionally be needed to support children with disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs
- \* specialist support, advice and training is available to childminders throughout the county through Menphys SOS. This includes Open College Network accredited training and regular network meetings for childminders who are providing care to children with disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs
- \* monies are available to support your provision to become more accessible for children with disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs



# Where can I go for support?

Leicestershire County Council's Early Learning and Childcare Service can offer you valuable advice and support.

Development Advisor	<b>0116 305 5829</b>
Business Support	<b>0116 305 6512</b>
Finance	<b>0116 305 5788</b>
Training	<b>0116 305 6555</b>

## Funding available

You may also be able to register as a childminder and still claim some benefits, even though you'll be self-employed or you may be better off claiming Working Tax Credit.

Many working parents are eligible for financial help and can access up to 70% of what you charge through tax credits.

# Real stories...

## Maria Marraffa Hudson, Glenfield

Just a year into her childminding career, Maria Marraffa Hudson decided to become an Early Years Professional (EYP).

Nestled in a Derbyshire village in 2007, Maria's childminding practice, Creative Explorers, became the focus of her passion, ambition and energy. Now living in Glenfield, she employs two assistants and has 15 children on her books. But what brought her to the childcare sector? And how did she rise to the status of Early Years Professional?

### How did you get here?

As one of eight children, I was brought up in a very large family and was used to children coming and going in the house. I've always been interested in the way that children learn and develop. When I completed my Masters degree at Derby University I was hoping to secure a political placement with the EU, but I ended up getting married and having two beautiful children. As a consequence I began minding my niece and then formally registered as a childminder.

At the time I lived in the village of Findern, Derbyshire. I did all the compulsory courses to become a childminder and after six months of registration I achieved an Outstanding grade in all five areas at my first Ofsted inspection. I was really eager to learn more and when I saw an advertisement in Nursery World for the Early Years Professional pathway, I knew it was for me. I continued my

EYPS when I moved to Leicestershire, and received continual support from the Early Years team at Leicestershire County Council.

### What's involved in getting the status?

I applied to achieve the status through EM Direct rather than the conventional university route as it offered me flexibility around my work and family commitments. Because I already had a degree in a non-related subject, I was able to join the 'long pathway'. This involved six months intensive seminars and teaching, as well as private study, and two work placements – one of which I did at Little Fishes Pre-school. After that I completed the three month validation pathway.

There's a lot of reflection and learning involved, as well as gathering a vast amount of evidence for your portfolio. I was required to meet

39 standards covering all areas of childcare, professional development, partnership with parents and working with other professionals. Before I was awarded the status I had to pass a gateway review which involved role play, and various interviews as well as proving that I had what it took to become an EYP. Once that was over, I went into validation and an assessor visited my setting. The process is very challenging, rigorous and hard work but it was definitely worth it.

### What challenges did you face on your road to EYPS?

As the only childminder on the pathway, I was initially conscious of being 'different' or even 'inferior' to those working in day care. But in reality I was treated as an equal colleague and the pathway was a great way of sharing practice with other professionals.

We all know that childminders are often perceived as 'glorified babysitters' but the Early Years Professional Status really does place us on an equal footing with our sector peers.

It's vital that childminders begin to shout about their expertise. We can arguably offer the most flexible care and learning to families – and the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children access the same high quality

early education at childminders as at nurseries or pre-schools.

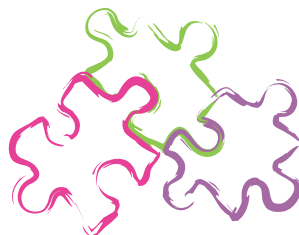
### How has the Early Years Professional Status changed your practice?

In reality it has merely reinforced all the good things that I was already doing – like adapting my outdoor environment to suit the developing needs of all children, my EYFS displays of children's work, my adaptable routines, and my all-ages French lessons!

Early Years Professional Status has enabled me to continue delivering high quality care to all children in my setting.

### What would you say to your fellow childminders?

I am proud of my Early Years Professional Status as it has enabled me to reach my full potential, and in turn this feeds into helping the children reach theirs! I would wholeheartedly encourage other childminders to consider embarking on their own learning journey, and gain the recognition that they and their settings deserve.





## Real stories...

### Amanda Curtis, Stoney Stanton

Just six months into her childminding career Amanda Curtis was judged Outstanding at her first Ofsted inspection. Armed with previous experience as a nanny and nursery nurse, Amanda was determined to offer the very highest level of learning and care to all children.

Amanda has now been childminding for just over a year and lives in Stoney Stanton with her husband and three children aged one, three and six. Her entire ground floor and enclosed garden is dedicated to her childminding practice, where children are able to explore their own interests safely and independently.

Within this enabling environment, Amanda places health and well-being high on the agenda. She looks after two children with disabilities: a one-year-old with Cerebral Palsy, and a one-year-old with Cystic Fibrosis.

Positive, driven and kind, Amanda describes the impact of caring for children with additional needs: “All the children I look after bring their own personalities and interests and this makes for rich and diverse experiences for everyone.

“I received no specific training to care for children with Cystic Fibrosis, although I had some experience in caring for children with disabilities, and I accessed formal training from Menphys Special Outreach Service (SOS) which was funded by Leicestershire County Council.

“It’s sometimes difficult to secure care for children with disabilities, and I’m pleased that I can offer care to local families who need it.”

Although Amanda needed no special equipment to care for children with additional needs, she makes use of a range of sensory equipment and toys from Menphys SOS.

Ed Harris is Assistant Service Manager at Leicestershire County Council’s Early Learning and Childcare Service, “In the majority of cases there is no need for specialist training or equipment. Standard good practice for children without additional needs is good practice for those children with additional needs. The main barrier that childminders face is the unknown.”

To maintain excellent levels of care, Amanda communicates regularly with parents and other professionals, she continues: “Communication with parents is vital. As well as daily discussion, regular observation and photographs, my parents receive a comprehensive information pack which explains routines and regulations in clear language, while their children are aware of basic hygiene needs such as washing and drying their hands.

“Our menus are planned well in advance and are shared with parents. I offer healthy choices of food and home cooked meals. I’m really careful that everything’s prepared according to any dietary requirements.”

Amanda offers all the children in her care a range of stimulating activities as well as high standards of care, “I look for spontaneous learning opportunities throughout the day – like counting grapes, or comparing shapes.

“We spend a lot of time outdoors either in the garden, visiting local parks or in the woods. I try to plan experiences which reflect the children’s interests and what they’ve been doing at home.”

With an exceptional Ofsted report and a string of other achievements, Amanda is still keen to keep improving, “I’m always evaluating my practice and reflecting on how I can maintain high standards. As each child develops and grows their requirements change and it’s essential that I can respond to their individual needs – each one of them.”

Lyn Edwards is from Menphys SOS, “Leicestershire needs more childminders to register with the Menphys SOS network. We not only support and offer training to childminders, we also match childminders with families with children that have SEN or disabilities, and need childcare. Menphys continues to support the childminder after the placement is made, if this is needed.”



## Useful links

For the latest job vacancies, training opportunities and details of local childcare providers.



### **Leicestershire's Family Information Service**

Free advice for parents, carers and families with children aged 0-19.

**0116 305 6545**

**[www.leics.gov.uk/family](http://www.leics.gov.uk/family)**

### **National Childminding Association (NCMA)**

The national support network for childminders.

**0800 169 4486**

**[www.ncma.org.uk](http://www.ncma.org.uk)**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework**

Advice and information for child carers of children aged 0-5.

**0116 305 6418**

**[www.leics.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.leics.gov.uk/eyfs)**

### **Ofsted**

Responsible for the registration and inspection of childminders.

**0300 1231231**

**[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**

### **HM Revenue and Customs**

Local information and business support.

#### **Business Support Team:**

**0116 253 5200**

**[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)**

### **Jobcentre Plus**

Providing support and information to people of working age and advice to employers on filling vacancies.

**0116 206 8000**

**[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)**

### **Children's Centres**

Provide a range of accessible services for families and children from pregnancy until age 5.

**0870 000 2288**

**[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)**

### **Extended Services**

Provide a range of accessible services for families, children and young people aged 5-19.

**0870 000 2288**

**[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)**





**Leicestershire  
County Council**

Early Learning and Childcare Service  
Tel: **0116 305 5829**