Childminding Frequently Asked Questions

These Frequently Asked Questions are designed to assist anyone interested in childminding registration. We update the questions as information changes or new information becomes available. Please regularly check our website.

You can click on the questions listed below to find the answers. You can also search this document for key words or phrases using the find function on your device (Ctrl + F)

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General Questions

1) What changes have happened regarding Childminding?

A. In 2021, the Government launched the National Action Plan for Childminding 2021 – 2028. An important development in this plan, is the introduction of new regulations specifically developed for childminders who work in their own homes. The regulations were published on the 19th of September 2024 and came into operation on the 30th of September. From this date, childminders have been able to apply for registration with Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate. Once the childminder has been successfully registered and registers for the National Childcare Scheme, parents of children in these services will be able to apply for the National Childcare Scheme in the same way that other parents currently can when their children attend centre based early years services.

2) Why have these changes been made?

A. There are three main reasons why the Government has introduced these changes. First and foremost, they want the care provided to children in a childminder's home to be of a high standard, and for parents to be reassured that their children are being safely cared for. Secondly, they want to make sure more parents are supported with childcare costs. Thirdly, they want to ensure that childminders receive recognition and support for the important work that they do. Many other countries already regulate childminding services in this way.

3) When were the changes introduced?

A. The **Child Care (Amendment) Act 2024,** which is the legislation needed to allow for new childminding regulations, was passed by the Oireachtas in July 2024 and the regulations came into effect on the 30th of September 2024. This means that from the 30th of September 2024, Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate commenced accepting applications for the registration of childminding services under the new childminding-specific regulations.

The new childminding-specific regulations are accompanied by guidance, and together these documents set out all the details of how childminders will be regulated and includes information on how many children a childminder can care for and what policies and other documents a childminder needs to have. **Guidance documents for parents and childminders** which are easy to access and read are available, and support and training is being provided to childminders by local **City and County Childcare Committees**.

4) What is a Childminder / Childminding service?

A. A childminder is a person who runs a childminding service looking after other people's children (under the age of 15 years) for at least 2 hours per day, in the childminder's own home. This definition does not apply to people who care for children in the children's own home (such as nannies and au pairs). Childminders work by themselves and do not employ any other people to assist them with the children they are caring for.

5) How have Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate prepared for the childminding regulations?

A. The Early Years Inspectorate has put in place a suitable system to regulate childminding across Ireland. We commenced accepting registration applications from childminders in September 2024.

6) What are the benefits of regulation for children and families?

A. The regulations help to make sure children are safer and are being well cared for, which also provides assurance to parents. Once a childminder is registered, and registers for the National Childcare Scheme, parents can apply for the National Childcare Scheme so their childcare costs will be reduced. Parents will also be able to look at the childminding register to see who is childminding in their area, and this will make it easier for parents who are looking for a registered childminding service

Childminder Questions

7) What are the benefits of regulation for childminders?

A. The regulations make sure that childminders are valued for their contribution to the childcare sector in Ireland. They help to support childminders to make sure children in their care are safe and being well cared for. By registering as a childminder, you will also be able to apply for government funding schemes.

8) I want to register as a childminder, what do I need to do now?

A. If you are planning to register as a childminder, you will first need to contact your local City and County Childcare Committee at **City and County Childcare Committees.** You need to arrange to undertake pre-registration training which provides all the information you need to understand what is required to apply to register and explains the registration process.

You can then apply to Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate for registration using the dedicated **Tusla Childminding Portal.** This is where you submit your registration application. We have also provided **comprehensive, user-friendly guidance materials** on our website about how to register, the requirements for registration and what you can expect from your initial pre-registration assessment visit.

9) I am already registered with Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate as a Childminder under the 2016 Pre-school Regulations or the 2018 School-Age Regulations. Do I need to re-register?

A. Childminders who are already registered with Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate. under the 2016 or 2018 Regulations will be automatically deemed registered under the new childminding-specific regulations. We will contact all of these services to discuss their options.

10) What is the transitional period?

A. The Child Care (Amendment) Act 2024 provides a transition period of three years for the new childminding regulations. This means that from the 30th of September 2024, childminders are able to register with Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate, but it will not be mandatory until the end of the transition period in September 2027. Childminders who mind 3 or fewer preschool children and 6 or fewer children in total will continue to be exempt for the duration of the transitional period. Only childminders who are minding more than 3 preschool children or more than 6 children in total will be required to register immediately.

11) How long will registration take?

A. It is important that you submit all the required documentation with your application and complete all sections of the application on the portal. If you do so, then your application will be processed as quickly as possible by the Early Years Inspectorate.

12) Will someone come to my home?

A. Yes, as part of the registration application process a pre-registration assessment visit will take place. This will involve an Early Years Inspector calling to your home and checking that everything is ready for children to be cared for safely.

These visits to your home will not be the same as inspections that take place in larger settings, such as pre-schools. Our approach to the regulation of childminders in their own home is one of 'supportive compliance' which means we will work with you to help you to achieve compliance with the childminding regulations.

13) What is meant by 'supportive compliance'?

A. Supportive Compliance places an emphasis on guidance, engagement and support. Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate apply this approach to childminders, acknowledging their unique home-based setting, and are mindful of the private family environment and first-time regulation concerns of childminders.

The aim is to help childminders comply with regulations, address any issues through constructive discussions to ensure children's health, safety, and well-being.

14) Will I be expected to make big changes to my home?

A. There is no expectation that you will be asked to make any changes to your home. Your home will be fully respected. To ensure your home is safe for children, you may, for example, be asked to fix things that are broken such as a fence in your garden, or to ensure safe storage for cleaning equipment. Most childminders will not have to make any changes as their homes are already safe and suitable for children.

15) Will I be expected to do lots more paperwork to run my service?

A. The childminding regulations will require that you keep some paperwork. However, you will be provided with policies, guidance documents and sample templates for any records you need. All the paperwork required will be explained further in the pre-registration training, and you will have access to the support of the Childminding Development Officer in your local **City and County Childcare Committees** if you have any questions or issues with your paperwork.

16) I am worried that when I register, I may have to pay more tax, or lose some social welfare payments or a SUSI grant for my own children?

A. You should look for advice on this from the relevant agency, your childcare committee, or a tax expert. The Early Years Inspectorate will not be able to advise you about this.

17) I am currently working as a childminder in my own home; do I need to close my service while I am applying for registration?

A. No, you can continue to run your service as normal while you are applying for registration during the 3-year transition period.

18) Will I need to close my service during the pre-registration assessment visit?

A. No. The time of the pre-registration assessment visit will be agreed between you and the inspector in advance. This assessment visit can take place when you have children present.

19) Will my pre-registration assessment report be published on the Tusla website?

A. Once your application for registration is successful, the pre-registration assessment report outlining your compliance with the relevant regulations will be published on the **Early Years Inspectorate website.**

20) I have heard that childminders can care for 6 children. I am currently minding more than 6 preschool children; will I need to reduce my numbers to register?

A. The regulations allow a childminder to care for no more than 6 children at any one time. Childminders who mind 3 or fewer preschool children and 6 or fewer children in total will continue to be exempt from registration for the duration of the transitional period. Only childminders who are minding more than 3 preschool children or more than 6 children in total will be required to register immediately. In your application you will be required to indicate how many children up to a maximum of 6 children you wish to register your service for.

21) I am living in rental or local authority accommodation- can I still apply to be a childminder?

A. Yes, you can apply for registration. However, you will need to check the conditions of your rental or tenancy agreement and speak to your landlord. You will also need to ensure that your insurance company has all the necessary information.

22) I am living in a small apartment with a balcony, can I apply for registration?

A. Yes, you can apply for registration. If your apartment is very small, the number of children you can mind may be reduced. However, this will be discussed with you, and we will explain the reason why. You will also need to make sure that you assess the risk of the balcony to children and that you are doing regular safety checks so that it is safe for children if you want them to have access to it. In addition to the balcony, you will also need to have a suitable outdoor space that the children can access on a daily basis.

23) Can I register as a childminder if I have a dog or another pet in my home?

A. Yes, you can apply to register if you have a pet in your home. It is important to consider how any children in your care may interact with your pet. You are required to identify any potential risks and plan how to minimise any risks that pets can pose.

24) I have heard I will need to apply for Garda Vetting, when can I apply for this?

A. From 1st February 2025 Tusla will commence providing the Garda Vetting Application Service for Childminders or anyone who is planning to submit an application to become a Childminder.

Currently there is no defined pathway for childminders to obtain Garda vetting for their emergency contacts.

In the absence of being able to obtain Garda vetting for an emergency contact, a childminder can proceed with submitting their registration application for assessment. They will need to add the emergency cover person(s) details but will not be required to upload the Garda vetting disclosure at this time. The registration assessment will continue as normal. This issue will not delay registration. Once we have clarified how emergency contacts can be vetted, we will follow up with the childminder if necessary.

More information on Garda Vetting, including how to apply, can be found on the **Garda Vetting section of our website**

25) I lived abroad for a number of years; will I have to apply for police vetting?

A. Police vetting is required when a childminder or an emergency cover person has lived in another country or countries outside of the island of Ireland, for more than 6 months, after their 18th birthday.

26) Who can I ask to provide me with the references I need to submit with my application?

A. You will be required to submit 2 written references with your application. You can ask current or previous parents of children in your service to write a reference for you, or if you have not yet opened your service, you could ask a former employer or another appropriate person in your community who knows you well to write a reference.

27) What will registration cost me?

A. There is a fee of €40 for registration. This is paid as part of the portal application process. There is also an annual fee of €40 payable for the years in which you are not paying a registration fee.

28) What if I have other questions about childminding and how to become a childminder?

A. You can contact our Childminding advice line, either via email **cm.registration@tusla.ie** or on (061) 440600 (option 9)

Parents Questions

29) I am a parent of children in a childminding service, what steps should I take?

A. Speak to your childminder now and ask them about their plans for registration. Remember they can register at any point over the next 3 years, and they must be registered after 3 years. You can keep up to date with developments by checking the **Early Years Inspectorate website** regularly and you will also be hearing more about this in the media. If you want to ask us any questions you can email **cm.registration@tusla.ie** and we will do our best to answer your specific questions.

30) When will I, as a parent, be able to access childcare funding schemes?

A. Once your childminder is registered with the Early Years Inspectorate and the National Childcare Scheme, you will be able to apply to access the National Childcare Scheme.

31) I am a parent. How can I support my childminder to prepare for registration?

A. You can direct your childminder to the **Early Years Inspectorate website** or ask them to contact their local **City and County Childcare Committees** if they have any questions.

32) I am a parent and I employ someone to come into my home to care for my children. Are they required to register?

A. The childminding regulations only apply to childminders caring for children in the childminder's own home. If you employ a childminder to come into your home every day, or if you have a live-in nanny or au-pair, they are exempt from the childminding regulations, and you do not need to do anything.

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