

Requirements for written documents: childminders delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

A childcare factsheet

Age group: 0–18

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The Childcare Act 2006 says childcare is 'any form of care for a child including education or any other supervised activity'.

Most childcare providers caring for children under eight years old must register with Ofsted unless the law says they do not need to.

We register childcare providers on the following two registers.

- The Early Years Register
- The Childcare Register

Introductory reading is in *Registering childcare providers from September 2008*, which is on our website (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080043).

Introduction

All childcare providers on the Early Years Register must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Those on the Childcare Register must meet the requirements of that register. The EYFS and Childcare Register explain the records and policies providers must keep for the safety and management of the setting and for children's development and wellbeing. Some providers, particularly childminders, have had questions about the forms they must complete, especially those about the EYFS.

This factsheet sets out the records, policies and assessments that childminders must make and to keep.

The EYFS does not ask childminders to keep written policies and procedures except where the law covers both childminders and other childcare. These few times are listed in our booklet *Are you ready for your inspection*. (see note 1 below) All childminders should have a copy of this document. In general the requirements are no more difficult to meet than the previous National Standards.

The Childcare Register says that childminders must have some policies and records in writing and those childminders on that register or both registers must make sure that they hold that information.

The EYFS

We do not ask childminders to have extra documents to deliver the EYFS, except for those they must hold by law.

Welfare requirements

Childminders must keep the following records in writing:

1 www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090001.

- the name, home address and date of birth of each child
- the name, home address and telephone number of the child's parent
- the name, home address and telephone number of everyone living or working in the premises where the childcare is provided – or the part of the premises where the childcare is held
- a daily record of the hours the child attends
- a record of accidents that happen on the premises
- a record of any medicine given
- the date and details of any medicine given and who gave the medicine
- a record for parents to sign, to say that staff can give medicines (see note 2 below)
- a record of their risk assessment.

Childminders must have policies for the legal requirements they must meet but these do not have to be in writing. However policies must be in place and must be clear to parents and assistants. Inspectors will check this at inspection using the self-evaluation form, and by talking to parents and assistants.

Learning and development requirements

There are three legal requirements relating to children's learning and development in the EYFS, which are the early learning goals; the educational programme; and the assessment arrangements. All registered providers including childminders must meet these unless they have an exemption. (see note 3 below)

The learning and development requirements of the EYFS are new to many childminders. However good childminders will find that the type of play they have always provided is how children learn best, and this is the 'educational programme'. This programme should help children meet the early learning goals in the EYFS. We do not expect childminders to have extensive written plans of their educational programme, but we do expect childminders to know children's abilities and where they need help, and to use this information when planning activities. Many childminders will find it helpful to note down what they will be doing especially if they have children at different stages and with different abilities. It will also help them to show parents and others how they meet the welfare requirement to plan and provide experiences so that every child has an enjoyable and challenging learning and development environment.

2 Please see our factsheet *Administration of medication to children in registered childcare*, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080290.

3 Please see our factsheet on learning and development exemptions, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publication/080144.

The EYFS calls for everyone, including childminders, to make observations on the children. We do not expect long written notes or ask that childminders take time away from the children to make the observations. Simple notes can form part of the assessments carried out and shared with parents and other partners. Useful methods are ones that most childminders have always used, for example samples of children's work, photographs, shared diaries, notes of what children do and so on. Unless childminders are the main provider of the EYFS to children in the term before they are of legal school age (see note 4 below) then this is all we expect. If childminders are the main provider of the EYFS to children of legal school age, then by law they must complete the EYFS profile for those children. (see note 5 below) This is usually a very small number of childminders as most children are in school at this stage. If you are in this position then your local authority can advise you on how to do this.

Self-evaluation form (SEF)

We ask all providers including childminders to consider completing a SEF if they are on the Early Years Register. This is not the law but we believe it is important to help childminders improve and continue to provide the best possible care.

The SEF is just one tool for providers to use for self-evaluation. It contains key questions to help all early years' providers to review what they do, and to continue improving the care as set out in the EYFS.

If providers choose not to complete the SEF, inspectors will check to see what self-evaluation is done and make a judgement about how good this is in line with the guidance set out in *Are you ready for your inspection*.

There is no fixed time for doing a SEF. Childminders do not have to describe everything they do; instead they should write about their strengths and areas for development, in terms of the impact on the children. The SEF is intended as a working document, which childminders can complete as often as they like and when it best suits them. For example, they can complete the SEF when they normally plan and review. However, we recommend that when providers do use the form, they update it at least once a year.

Childcare Register

If childminders are on the Childcare Register they must keep the following three written policies: a statement on keeping children safe; a statement on dealing with complaints; and a written record of any complaints, the results of the investigation and any action taken.

4 Statutory school age is defined as the compulsory age for a child to start full time education. In the UK this is at the beginning of the school term after the child's fifth birthday.

5 You can find more information about the EYFS profile here <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/site/profile/index.htm>

Childminders on the Childcare Register do not have to have an educational programme or make assessments, but parents must still be told about the service and activities for children.

Childminders on both registers

The Early Years Register and Childcare Register are covered by two different sets of regulations. Mostly the requirements are the same for each register, but in some cases they are not. Childminders on both registers must meet the requirements for each of the registers.

Where childminders are on both registers they must meet the requirements of both registers all the time. One register does not take priority over the other. For example a childminder on the Early Years Register is not required to have a written policy for complaints and keeping children safe but those also registered on the Childcare Register must have these if they care for children in this age group.

The requirements of one register do not take priority over the other. We have no power to let providers have differences between the two registers.

It is for providers to decide how they will meet the requirements. For example the time for reporting complaints is currently different in the two registers. In the Early Years Register it is 28 days but it is 20 days in the Childcare Register. Childminders may report all complaints within a 20 day period but they cannot use the 28 day timescale as this would not meet the timescale for the Childcare Register. However, childminders may decide to keep the separate reporting times – it is for the childminder to decide.

Common questions

Question 1

There are many forms for sale to record information about the children I care for. What form would Ofsted prefer us to use?

We do not have one form that we would like you to use. Any way you choose to keep the information as set out in EYFS, will be acceptable. You can use your own system or buy a form if you prefer. You do not have to buy extra forms and you should think carefully about whether any particular form will help you in looking after the children you care for.

Question 2

I have some children I care for after school who are in their final year of EYFS. Who must complete the end EYFS profile?

The provider who must complete the EYFS profile is the one where a child in their final year of the EYFS spends the majority of their time – between the hours of 8am and 6pm. The provider must use the child's records, as well as talking to parents and any others who cared for the child in that year. Most often this will be a child's school as this is where they spend most of their time. For a small number of children – who

have not started school in their final year of EYFS and where you mostly cared for them – then you will complete the EYFS.

Question 3

Having read through EYFS, I believe that I must keep a record of visitors. Is this true and if so, who needs to sign the visitor book?

You do not have to keep a record of visitors. Keeping a record of visitors is mentioned in the statutory guidance of the EYFS and is not a legal requirement. The statutory guidance says this is good practice because it is one way that providers can keep children safe.

You must decide how to use the guidance. If you choose not to keep a visitors' record then you must show how you keep children safe when strangers visit. Where the number of visitors is small and easy to control, such as with a childminder, we would look at how you treat visitors who are not vetted and how you watch the children in your care at all times.

Childminders do not have to keep a written record of visitors to their home or ask them to 'sign in' when they arrive. However, you must take action to stop intruders from entering the premises.

However, a sign in system would be useful for group care providers, and childminders must have a system to stop any unchecked adults from being alone with the children.

More information from Ofsted

You can find further information and guidance about self evaluation here www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080104.

You can find out more information about the learning and development requirement exemptions here www.ofsted.gov.uk/publication/080144.

You can find out about the requirements for the Childcare Register here <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080161>.

You can find further information about record keeping here <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090001>.

Further information

You can find out more information of the requirements in The EYFS pack at <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00261-2008&>.

You can find out more about the learning and development exemptions here http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18407.aspx.

Your local family information service (FIS) will help you. You can get their contact details from

www.familyinformationservices.org.uk/index.php?option=com_comprofiler&task=userslist&listid=7&Itemid=72, or from your local phone book.

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