

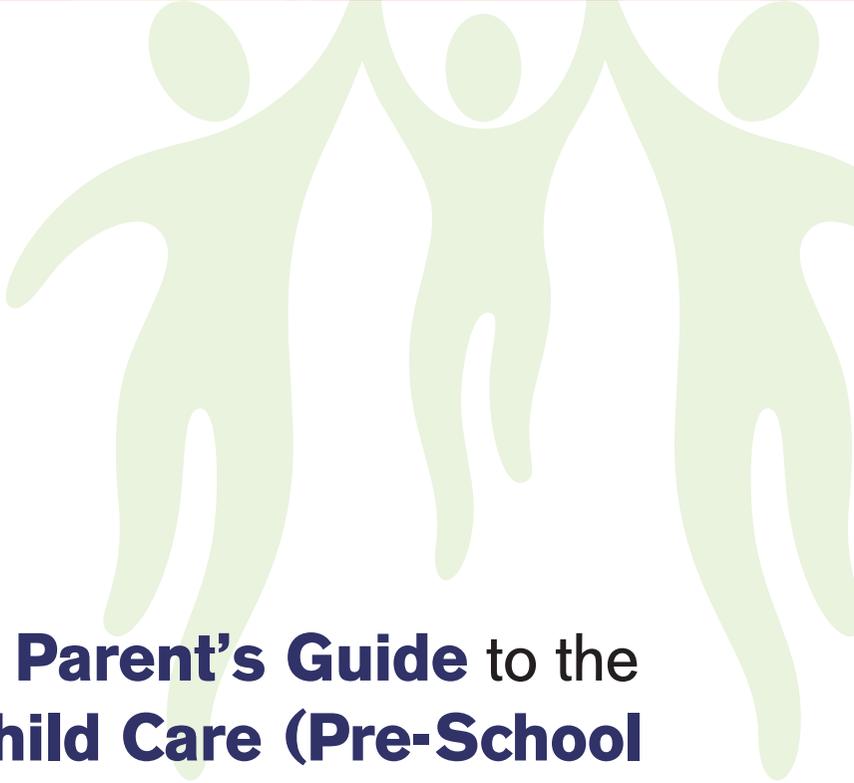
# A Parent's Guide to the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006

Compiled by Marie Willoughby



**Barnardos**

No child gets left behind



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Compiled by Marie Willoughby

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*This publication does not purport to be a document giving legal advice as to the provisions of the Pre-School Regulations, 2006, and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice. While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the publication, no liability is accepted by the author or Barnardos for any errors.*

**Barnardos supports children whose well-being is under threat, by working with them, their families and communities and by campaigning for the rights of children. Barnardos was established in Ireland in 1962 and is Ireland's leading independent children's charity.**

**Barnardos' vision is an Ireland where childhood is valued and all children and young people are cherished equally.**

**Barnardos' mission is to challenge and support families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focusing specifically on children and young people whose well-being is under threat.**

The **Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006** can be downloaded from the Office of the Minister for Children website at [www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie) under the heading Childcare or from the Department of Health and Children website at [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie). They can also be obtained in printed form from:

Government Publications

Postal Trade Section, 51 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 647 6834

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# INTRODUCTION

The Government has a key role to play in ensuring the systems are in place for regulating childcare. Regulation aims to ensure that childcare services meet suitable standards. But parents, with their unique knowledge of their own children, have to determine what care is best for their own child. Looking after children's safety and development through childcare must therefore be a shared responsibility of Government, childcare providers and parents.

Childcare services make it possible for parents, especially women, to take up jobs and education and the number of parents in Ireland who need childcare is growing. Even parents who can provide full-time care for their children themselves occasionally need help with childcare or believe it is good for their children to play and learn with other children.

But parents should not settle for just any childcare. During the early years it is especially important that children have a quality childcare experience that addresses their developmental needs. Research shows that children who attend quality early childcare and education settings benefit through improved cognitive (thinking, reasoning), language and social development. Quality care and education can help to protect children from the adverse effects of living in at-risk families or disadvantaged homes so these children can benefit even more. Barnardos has been actively lobbying for the introduction of free, quality childcare places for all children for one year prior to starting primary school,

and for the roll out of these places to begin with children experiencing disadvantage.

'The positive relation between childcare quality and virtually every facet of children's development is one of the most consistent findings in developmental science.'<sup>1</sup>

Children who participate in **quality** early childhood programmes learn better and are more successful in school.

The law in Ireland provides for the regulation and inspection of pre-school childcare services under the Child Care Act, 1991. Pre-school children in Ireland are defined by law as 'children under 6 years of age, who are not attending a national school'. Pre-school childcare services include pre-schools, play groups, day nurseries, crèches, childminders or other similar services catering for pre-school children.

The purpose of this guide is to provide parents and guardians of young children with information about the Pre-School Regulations, 2006. These Regulations, made under the Child Care Act, 1991, came into effect in September 2007. The aim of these Regulations is to improve childcare standards and to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children, as well as promoting their development while attending pre-school services. The Government can ensure consistent levels of quality across all childcare services by legally requiring them to meet basic standards.

It is important to remember, though, that there is more to quality childcare than just meeting legal requirements. This guide also provides information about childcare quality and the importance of play for young children.

1 Shonkoff, J., and Philips, D. (2000) *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* National Academy Press, Washington

The full title of the Pre-School Regulations 2006 is:  
**The Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.**  
The Regulations are available from the Department of Health and Children (see *Sources of Further Information*) or can be downloaded from their website [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie).

## Background Information

In 1999, the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare<sup>2</sup> made recommendations about the development of childcare to meet the needs of parents in employment, education and training. This included the provision of grants towards the development of new childcare services and the improvement of existing services, coordinating the approach to the delivery of childcare services and the provision of taxation relief on childcare costs.

There have been many developments since 1999 and the situation now is that the **Department of Health and Children** has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance and developing policy in this area. The **Office of the Minister for Children (OMC)**, which is part of the Department of Health and Children, is responsible for the National Childcare Strategy 2006–2010<sup>3</sup>. This strategy aims to improve the availability and quality of childcare to meet the needs of children and their parents.

The OMC has responsibility for the Pre-School Regulations while the **Health Service Executive (HSE)** is required to inspect and regulate pre-school childcare services. Under the Pre-School Regulations, pre-school care providers are

2 National Childcare Strategy (January 1999) Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare

3 National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010: A Guide for Parents

required to notify the HSE that they are providing services. In addition, they are required to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children attending their service.

Childminders are recognised as an important part of childcare provision in Ireland and the preferred choice for many parents. While many childminders are covered by the Pre-School Regulations, **some** are not required to notify their services to the HSE. The OMC encourages these childminders to notify the HSE through a voluntary notification system. Parents with specific enquiries about the notification or inspection of a pre-school service should contact their local HSE Pre-School Service Office (see *Sources of Further Information*).

The OMC supports a network of 33 local **City and County Childcare Committees** (CCCs) (see *Sources of Further Information* for details of your local CCC or see page 17 for more information). These provide a valuable resource for parents seeking information on childcare services and other issues relating to the care of young children. **Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre** also provides information on issues relating to childcare (see *Sources of Further Information*).

**For further information:**

Guidelines for Childminders have been published by the OMC and are available directly from the OMC or from your local City/County Childcare Committee (See *Sources of Further Information*).

## What the Regulations Cover

There are specific legal requirements covered in the Pre-School Regulations for all of the following areas:

- Health, welfare and development of the child
- First aid and medical assistance
- Management and staffing
- Behaviour management
- The number of pre-school children who may be catered for
- Keeping a register of pre-school children
- Records
- Providing information for parents
- Fire safety measures
- Premises and facilities including heating, ventilation, lighting, sanitary accommodation
- Equipment and materials
- Food and drink
- Safety measures
- Facilities for rest and play
- Furnishing of information to the Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Insurance
- Inspection (which is carried out by the HSE)



# CHILDCARE

## Types of Childcare Service

There are five main types of pre-school childcare service in Ireland:

- **Sessional services:** (playgroups, crèches, Montessori groups, playschools)
- **Full day care:** (nurseries, crèches, etc.)
- **Childminders:** (children cared for in the childminder's own home)\*
- **Drop-in Centres:** (for example in shopping centres, leisure centres, hotels)
- **Part-time day care service:** this is a pre-school service offering a structured day care service for pre-school children for a total of between 3.5 hours and 5 hours a day.

*\* Only childminders caring for more than three children (other than their own) are covered by the Child Care Act, 1991, so those with fewer children are not covered by the Pre-School Regulations*

## What these services are

### Sessional Services

Playgroups, crèches, Montessori groups, playschools, High/Scope groups, Naoínraí (pre-school through Irish) and Steiner groups throughout Ireland offer sessional pre-school services. Services normally offered are planned programmes, consisting of up to 3.5

hours per session (usually a morning or an afternoon). Generally these services are provided for children aged 3–5 years.

### **Full Day Care**

This is a structured day care service for more than 5 hours per day. Providers include day nurseries and crèches.

### **Part-Time Care**

This is a new type of pre-school service offering a structured day care service for pre-school children for a more than 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours per day.

### **Childminders**

Childminders care for children in the childminder's own home. Throughout the year, they offer this service for the full working day or for different periods during the day. Parents and childminders negotiate their own terms (hours, rates, duties, etc.).

*Childminding tax relief:* A new childminding tax relief was introduced in Budget 2006. This applies to people who mind up to three children in the minder's own home. The exemption allows these Childminders, when they have voluntarily notified their local City/County Childcare Committee, to avail of tax relief on their childminding income.

### **Drop-in Centres**

A pre-school service in a drop-in centre is a service where care is provided for pre-school children for not more than 2 hours while the parent/guardian is availing of a service or attending an event, for example in shopping centres, leisure centres or other establishments, as part of customer service.

The Pre-School Regulations also make specific provisions for **overnight childcare services**, which are provided either by a crèche type service or a childminder. These are services that are provided for more than 2 hours between 7pm and 6am.

## The Importance of the Early Years

There is growing recognition of the importance of the early years. Neuroscience and psychological research have demonstrated that a significant amount of children's learning takes place in the first six years of life.

It is important for parents and others who work and live with children to keep in mind the broad range of kinds of learning that are important in the early years.

'Children's experiences during these formative years shape them as learners. Supporting and nurturing children's early learning is critical if they are to avail of the tremendous opportunities early childhood can offer in realising their individual potential as learners.' *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (see Sources of Further Information)*

Because infants and toddlers are very motivated to engage with others and to communicate, those who care for them can make a difference that will last a lifetime.

Some important areas of learning for young children are:

- Use of the body, including hands.
- Respect for others.
- How to relate to others, both adults and other children.
- How to resolve conflict.

- Problem solving skills.
- Communication.
- Getting used to the things that make people different from each other.
- Self knowledge – understanding of feelings, a sense of your own strengths, talents and uniqueness.
- Confidence.
- A sense of identity and belonging to family, community, culture.
- How to look after and take care of yourself.
- Behaving in acceptable ways and controlling your own behaviour.

Learning all of these begins at birth.

## **What Children Need to Support Learning in the Early Years**

- Adults who help them to stay safe and healthy.
- Positive caring relationships that are ongoing. This is the most important part of supporting a child's learning. All children need people, or at least one person, who believe in them, care for them, and want to support them. Children do some of their most powerful learning from copying what people around them do.
- Adults who appreciate the uniqueness of each child, and who respect and respond to the child's feelings, needs and interests.
- Help to learn to control their behaviour through patient teaching and example about what behaviour is acceptable.
- Materials and experiences to learn from, and time to get involved with them.

- To be actively involved in meaningful experiences. Learning happens best in context, that is, when there's a real need to know. So going to the supermarket, working in the garden, cooking with an adult, helping to wash the car and going to the park or the beach are some of the best kinds of learning experiences. Young children in particular need chances to get actively involved.
- Books to look at and read, stories to listen to and people to have conversations with. A love for language and books makes a great and strong start to developing a wide vocabulary and literacy skills. Children can benefit from having stories read to them from the very beginning, even before they are able to understand what is being said.
- Time to really get involved and build relationships with other children and adults.

Children are born ready to learn and are naturally curious beings who are motivated to make sense of the world around them. Think of what an amazing process early development is – between birth and age three, babies learn to roll, crawl, stand, walk and run. They learn to talk, joke, rhyme, sing and much more. But development doesn't happen in the same way, at the same time, for all children. Some children will develop certain skills (like walking or talking) faster or more slowly than others. These differences are very normal.

It's important to remember that development is not a race. What is most important is tuning into your child's individual path, building on his or her strengths, and providing him or her with support when needed. Development happens within loving relationships, ones in which babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers can be supported to safely and comfortably explore, learn and grow.

Remember, children develop at their own pace and in their own way. Children need encouragement but they don't need to be 'pushed' and put under pressure to learn things earlier than is natural for them. Learning happens best when caring adults work with the child, have loving relationships and explore the world together in ways that are interesting and fun.<sup>4</sup>

## The Importance of Play for Young Children

When children are playing they are not just being kept busy, they are also learning. Among other things they are learning key scientific concepts such as what sinks and floats; mathematical concepts like how to balance blocks to build a tower; and literacy skills, such as trying out new vocabulary or storytelling skills as they 'act out' different roles. Play is the true work of childhood.

There is a growing body of evidence supporting the many connections between learning and quality pretend play. If children lack opportunities to experience such play, their long-term development relating to problem solving and socialising as well as to academic areas such as literacy, maths and science may be diminished. These complex skills involving many areas of the brain are most likely to thrive in an atmosphere rich in quality pretend play.<sup>5</sup>

Children's play supports all aspects of their development:

- They are able to explore intellectually and physically. They can follow their current interests, experiment and find out 'what will happen if...'
- They can make choices and consider possibilities.
- They often extend their skills of communication within play, through talking and listening with other children as well as with adults who are involved in their play in a flexible way.

4 'Making the most of childhood: the importance of early years', 2006 State Government of Victoria, Australia, Department of Human Services Office for Children

5 Bergen, D., 'The Role of Pretend Play in Children's Cognitive Development', *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, Spring 2002, Vol. 4, No. 1, Miami University, Miami

- Play allows children to give free rein to their imagination.
- Some forms of pretend play allow children to try out adult roles, for example cooking or taking on a job role such as fire-fighter or nurse that they could not do in reality.
- Given the space and resources, children promote their physical development through play that draws upon their fine and gross motor skills. They build their muscle strength and can develop habits and interests that build a firm basis for healthy activity.
- Children become ‘couch potatoes’ when adults restrict their activity, limit their access to outdoor play and allow them to spend excessive time with a television or computer.
- Children sometimes use play in a spontaneous way to work through events and feelings that absorb them. They may choose to retell and sometimes rework experiences through their pretend play, story creation and artwork.

When adults join in play, children learn that they are loved and important and that they are fun to be around. These social-emotional skills give them the self esteem and self confidence they need to continue building loving and supportive relationships all their lives.<sup>6</sup>

The importance of play is highlighted in one of the 12 main principles outlined in **Síolta – the National Quality Framework** from the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (see page 17 for details):

**‘Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child.** Play is an important medium through which the child interacts with, explores and makes sense of the world around her or him. These interactions with, for example, other children, adults, materials, events and ideas, are key to the child’s well-being, development and learning. Play is a source of joy and fulfilment for the

6 Zero to Three ([www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org))

child. It provides an important context and opportunity to enhance and optimise quality early childhood experiences. As such, play will be a primary focus in quality early childhood settings.' *Solta principle*

While children can learn a considerable amount through their play, they do not learn only through play. They learn when they are given the chance to be involved in daily routines and to be an appreciated helper to adults. In family life as well as play settings such as nurseries, crèches and pre-schools, children like to feel a valued 'working member' and can learn vital life skills so long as adults make the space for them.

## Quality in Childcare

'Quality is achieved in childcare through the provision (among other things) of a good physical infrastructure; imaginative materials which meet the different needs of the children in the facility; a warm and caring team of childcare practitioners; a good relationship between parents and the childcare team; sound management policies and practices; awareness of equality and diversity; and a responsiveness to the individual needs of each child. Equally important are appropriate ratios of staff to children, the presence of qualified staff and the contentedness of staff with their working environment and structures.' *Developing Childcare in Ireland*<sup>7</sup>

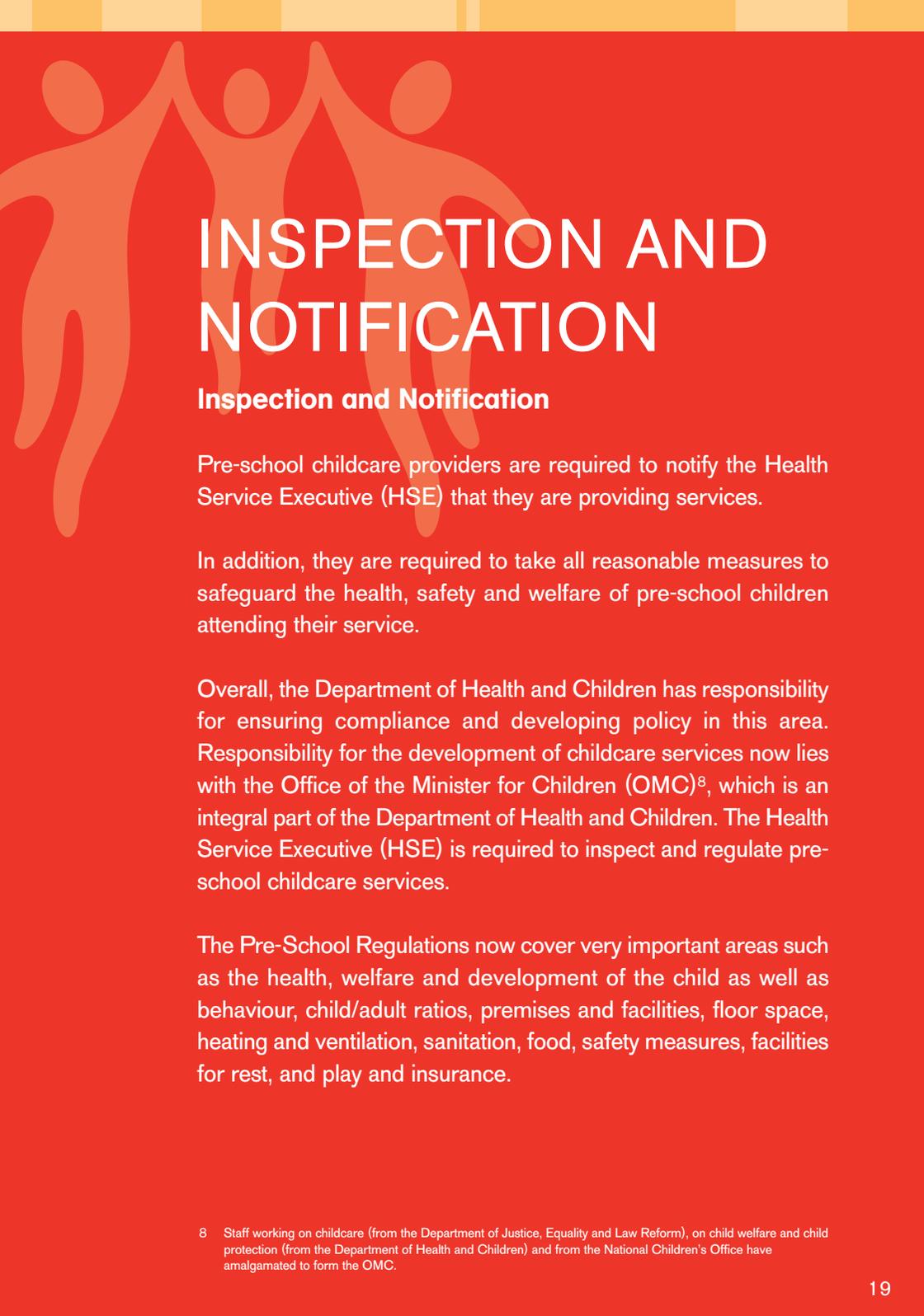
There have been significant developments in the area of quality in childcare, most notably through the work of the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE). The NCCA and the CECDE are both agencies of the Department of Education and Science (DES).

<sup>7</sup> Developing Childcare in Ireland: A Review of Progress to End 2003 on the Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006, Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform

- **Thirty-three City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs)** were established in 2001 to encourage the development of childcare locally. They offer a wide variety of services locally including advice on setting up a childcare business; childcare information sessions; training courses for childcare providers; and advice and support on applying for a National Childcare Investment Programme grant. They also offer services to parents, such as providing information on local childcare facilities and information on parent networks.
- **The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)** is developing a national framework to support all children's early learning. This will be relevant and useful to all those who are responsible for children's early learning and development. This includes parents/guardians, childminders and practitioners working in the range of settings outside the home. These settings include childminding environments, crèches, nurseries, parent-and-toddler groups, playschools, pre-schools and Naoinrai. The purpose of the work of the NCCA is to help ensure that all children have appropriately enriching, challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities throughout their early childhood years.
- **The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE)**, established by the Department of Education in 2001, covers children from 0 to 6 years of age in a wide variety of settings, including families, nurseries, crèches, playgroups, childminders, pre-schools and the infant classes of primary schools. The CECDE published a quality framework for early childhood education called **Síolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland** in 2006.

The contents of Siolta have been designed to assist all those concerned with the provision of quality early education in Ireland (including parents) to work towards the improvement and enrichment of young children's early and most critical life experiences.

A Parents' Guide to Siolta is available from the CECDE. The Siolta website [www.siolta.ie](http://www.siolta.ie) contains an introductory handbook, four manuals, and a complementary Resources section. A CD-Rom containing the entire Siolta pack is also available. The entire contents of the pack can be downloaded and printed. To obtain a CD-Rom contact the CECDE (see *Sources of Further Information*).



# INSPECTION AND NOTIFICATION

## Inspection and Notification

Pre-school childcare providers are required to notify the Health Service Executive (HSE) that they are providing services.

In addition, they are required to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children attending their service.

Overall, the Department of Health and Children has responsibility for ensuring compliance and developing policy in this area. Responsibility for the development of childcare services now lies with the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC)<sup>8</sup>, which is an integral part of the Department of Health and Children. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to inspect and regulate pre-school childcare services.

The Pre-School Regulations now cover very important areas such as the health, welfare and development of the child as well as behaviour, child/adult ratios, premises and facilities, floor space, heating and ventilation, sanitation, food, safety measures, facilities for rest, and play and insurance.

<sup>8</sup> Staff working on childcare (from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform), on child welfare and child protection (from the Department of Health and Children) and from the National Children's Office have amalgamated to form the OMC.

## Pre-School Care Providers who are Exempt from the Regulations

Those who are exempt include:

- A relative of the child or the spouse of such a relative (i.e. the aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent of the child or the spouse of any of those relatives).
- Those who are caring for one or more pre-school children of the same family and no other children (other than their own).
- Those who are caring for not more than three pre-school children (other than their own) in their own home.

Currently, school age childcare services do not come under the Pre-School Regulations as these apply only to services for children aged up to 6 years. There are no regulations governing school age services to date, but there are best practice guidelines that those providing school age services should follow available from Barnardos NCRC (see *Sources of Further Information*).

## The Purpose of Inspection

Inspection is designed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and the promotion of their development. It is also to ensure that pre-school services comply with relevant statutory requirements including the Pre-School Regulations. The inspectors consider:

- How the children are being cared for and how their development and welfare is being promoted through child-centred practice.
- The suitability and safety of the premises.
- The standards of the premises in terms of space, heat, lighting, cleanliness, ventilation, and repair and maintenance.
- The suitability of the person providing the services.
- The availability and suitability of toys and equipment.

In the case of childminding, the inspection should also look to the standard of comfort and the home environment available to the children. It should be obvious that children are encouraged to play and have appropriate freedom within and outside the home with safe limits.

## **The Outcome of Inspection**

The HSE provides the public with access to information about their local pre-school services and has now standardised how the information is collected and how it is reported. This is done to help parents in making informed judgements about their children's care and by doing so to ensure that children have access to the highest quality pre-school service available. It enables the pre-school inspection process to be more transparent and informative to the public.

The reports from the HSE Pre-School Inspections, which are known as Outcome Inspection Reports, are expected to be available to the public on the HSE website towards the end of 2007. The purpose of making these Outcome Inspection Reports public is to help those choosing childcare to choose the best care available.



# AREAS COVERED BY THE REGULATIONS

## Health, Welfare and Development of the Child

The National Children's Strategy takes what it calls a **whole child perspective** and recognises all of the different dimensions of childhood development and learning (for example the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral and spiritual). Research has shown that the different aspects of development and learning are all interconnected (for example a child's physical well-being influences his or her cognitive ability).<sup>9</sup> This 'whole child perspective' is referred to in the 2006 Pre-School Regulations under **Regulation 5** as follows:

'Each child's learning, development and well-being needs should be met within the daily life of the service through the provision of the appropriate opportunities, experiences, activities, interactions and materials. In meeting these needs, service providers should recognise how children affect and, in turn, are affected by the relationships, environment and activities around them.'

The whole child perspective highlights that it is artificial to divide care and education in young children's lives. The interconnectedness of development and learning means that care and education must be interdependent and complementary. In other words, **quality care is educational and quality education is caring.**

<sup>9</sup> 'When Two are One: The Changing Nature of Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland', ESAI Presentation by Thomas Walsh, Development Officer, and Dr. Gemma Kiernan, Assistant Director, CECDE, April 2004

The Regulations require that when planning activities to support children's development, each child's individual needs, interests and abilities should be considered by childcare providers. They should also work in co-operation with parents to ensure that each child's needs are met appropriately.

## Management and Staffing

### Recruitment and Vetting

The Pre-School Regulations require that there are enough staff members in childcare services who are suitably qualified and/or experienced to work in the service at all times while the service is being provided. There must also be one particular individual who is designated to be in charge on the premises at all times.

'The effectiveness of an early years programme is determined by the skills, attitudes and commitment of the adults involved. Adults play a key role in determining the quality of the experience of the children.'<sup>10</sup>

Anyone who provides a childcare service must also ensure appropriate vetting (checking) of all staff, students and volunteers who have access to children. This means getting references from past employers and Garda vetting. These procedures must be followed before anyone is appointed or allowed access to a child in the pre-school service.

Suitable adults caring for children:

- Are trained and experienced in childcare.
- Have a good knowledge of the different stages of child development.
- Understand and respond to a child's individual needs.
- Enjoy working with children.

<sup>10</sup> Donohoe, J. and Gaynor, F. (2003) *Education and Care in the Early Years*. Gill & MacMillan

- Have good communication skills and use positive body language.
- Are enthusiastic about their work.
- Relate well to children, parents and other workers.
- Understand the importance of play.
- Respect the needs and wishes of parents.
- Are warm, affectionate and welcoming.
- Are good organisers.
- Are creative in planning daily activities and the environment.
- Are aware of current legislation and guidelines relating to childcare.

### **Training in Childcare and Childminding**

Unfortunately, under the 2006 Pre-School Regulations there are still no minimum standards concerning the training and qualifications of staff working in childcare services.

However, in the **Explanatory Guide to Requirements and Procedures for Notification and Inspection** that accompanies the Regulations it is stated that many childcare staff who do not have a childcare qualification are working towards achieving a qualification. It is also stated that in centre-based services, the person in charge should aim to have at least 50% of childcare staff with a qualification appropriate to the care and development of children.

The formal professionalisation of childcare in Ireland is a relatively new and welcome development. For many years, pre-school sector services were delivered by volunteers or by groups of women who did it out of love for young children and an interest in their development, but who didn't have opportunities to train.

Training and education are now available through vocational courses accredited by both FETAC (at Level 5 and increasingly

at Level 6) and HETAC. Higher Education courses are available in the Universities and Institutes of Technology with taught courses to degree level and Masters and PhD awards by thesis. This has led to an increase in the quality of the knowledge and standards of those working in childcare.

Childminding (or family day care) is still the preferred childcare option for many families in Ireland. The Pre-School Regulations make provision for small scale childminders (who look after three or fewer children in the birth to six age) to voluntarily notify the HSE of their service and in return receive advice, support and training from their local Childminder Advisory Officer.

The role of the Childminder Advisory Officer is outlined by the Department of Health and Children as follows:

- Setting up and speaking at public information meetings for childminders.
- Facilitating the establishment of local networks of childminders.
- Preparing information literature.
- Supplying information and/or organising training courses on a wide range of appropriate topics, for example child development, child protection, health and safety, grant schemes, tax incentives etc.
- Providing advisory visits to the childminder's home to assist them in developing best practice.
- Acting as a referral point between parents and childminders.

National Guidelines for Childminders are available from your local County or City Childcare Committee.

## Adult and Child Ratios

A person carrying out a pre-school service must ensure that a sufficient number of competent adults are supervising the children at all times.

'Competent' adults are defined in the Regulations as adults with adequate appropriate experience in caring for children under six years and/or who have appropriate qualifications to care for these children.

Specific ratios of staff to children are set out in the guidelines that accompany the Regulations as set out in the table below:

Type of Service	Age of Children	Adult:Child Ratio Recommended
<b>Full Day Care</b>	0–1 year	1:3
	1–2 years	1:5
	2–3 years	1:6
	3–6 years	1:8
<b>Part-time Day Care</b>	0–1 year	1:3
	1–2 years	1:5
	2–3 years	1:6
	3–6 years	1:8
<b>Sessional</b>	0–1 year	1:3
	1–2½ years	1:5
	2½–6 years	1:10
<b>Drop-in</b>	0–6 years	1:4 (no more than 2 under 15 months)
<b>Childminder</b>	0–6 years	1:5 (no more than 2 under 15 months)

These ratios should apply flexibly so that brothers and sisters can meet and interact and children of mixed ages can be in groups together.

The maximum number of children allowed in a sessional group at any one time is 20 and the number allowed also depends on there being enough space per child in the room.

The maximum number of children allowed in a drop-in group is 24 and children should not be there for any longer than two hours.

Parents who are looking for information on childcare services can contact their local City or County Childcare Committee (see *Sources of Further Information*).

## Discipline

The word 'discipline' means **to teach not to punish**. Many people believe that children can't understand concepts at certain points in time and that the only way to handle discipline is to inflict punishment on them. It's just not true. When you inflict punishment on a child, you are teaching them fear, not obedience.

Young children shouldn't have to guess what 'being good' means. They don't have the experience or the brain development to understand that yet as they are still learning. It is an adult's job to give children opportunities to succeed, to fail and to learn in a warm, caring and safe environment.

The 2006 Pre-School Regulations state that:

- 'A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child attending the service.'

- 'A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of any child.'

The Regulations also require that Positive Behaviour Management be included in the written policy and procedures document of the service 'to deal with and to manage a child's challenging behaviour and to assist the child to manage his or her behaviour as appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.'

It is particularly important for your child that you know what the behaviour policy of the childcare service is and that you discuss it with the childcare provider. This will ensure that the approach taken is one that supports your child to form positive attachments to his or her carers and other children through positive, encouraging interactions.

It is very important that parents and carers work together to ensure that children are supported to develop a strong sense of self esteem and self confidence in surroundings that provide emotional warmth and approval. Consistent and fair boundaries or limits are necessary and important to a child's sense of security. Children should never be subjected to any degrading or abusive language or behaviour.<sup>11</sup>

## Childcare Premises and Facilities

As stated in the guidelines that accompany the Pre-School Regulations, 'the design, layout and physical environment play a definitive role in the provision of a quality childcare service.'

Pre-school services (including childminders, drop-in-centres, crèches, etc.) are obliged to ensure their premises meet certain

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from *The Whole Child Perspective* first set out in the National Children's Strategy and specifically referred to in the 2006 Regulations

standards to provide different types of childcare services.

They must:

- Ensure that the premises are of sound and stable structure and are suitable for providing pre-school services.
- Provide adequate space per child (both indoors and outdoors) and adequate and suitable storage for prams, pushchairs, carrycots, play and work equipment, and personal belongings.
- Ensure that clean, hygienic conditions are maintained and that measures are in place to protect the premises from infestation.
- Keep fixtures, premises and fittings in a proper state of repair.
- Ensure that furniture, work and play surfaces are clean, suitable, non-toxic and retained in a proper state of repair.
- Provide suitable and secure storage facilities for cleaning chemicals and unsafe, toxic, dangerous or hazardous materials, substances or equipment.

'Enriching environments, both indoor and outdoor (including materials and equipment) are well-maintained, safe, available, accessible, adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and offer a variety of challenging and stimulating experiences.' *Standard 2 of Síolta, the National Quality Framework.*

There are very specific requirements provided in the guidelines that accompany the Regulations in relation to the amount of space necessary for each child in a childcare service depending on the age group of the child.

There should be enough toilets (at least one for every 10 children), child-friendly toilets and separate adult toilet facilities.

The requirements for areas such as the kitchen and cooking facilities for full day care and part-time day care services are also very specific under Food Hygiene Regulations. For example, the fridge must be clean, well maintained and its temperature correct. Food and storage cupboards must be cool, ventilated, clean and hygienic. Nappy changing areas too must conform to strict hygiene standards with provision for ventilation.

## Food and Nutrition

The Regulations require that 'suitable, sufficient, nutritious and varied food' is available for children attending pre-school and childcare services. The guidelines which accompany the Regulations refer directly to The Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services from the Department of Health and Children<sup>12</sup>. These guidelines recommend the following:

- Children who are in day care for more than 5 hours per session (full day care) should be offered at least two meals and two snacks, for example breakfast, snack, lunch and snack. One meal should be a hot meal. If children are there for a long day, an evening meal may need to be provided. If a child does not have a main meal for some reason, parents should be told so they can offer a meal at home.
- Children in day care for up to 5 hours should be offered at least two meals and one snack, for example breakfast, snack and lunch. The meal doesn't have to be hot but it should be nutritionally balanced.
- Children in day care for up to 3.5 hours should be offered one meal and one snack, for example snack and lunch or breakfast and snack.
- Drinking water should be available to children at all times.

<sup>12</sup> These are available from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

## Outings

Pre-schools and childcare centres are required to have clear written procedures for taking the children in their care on outings. These should at least include the following:

- Obtaining permission from parents in advance of all outings, and discussing details of the trip with them.
- Ensuring that there are enough staff members to ensure the children's safety and to meet their individual needs. The Regulations don't specify the ratio of staff to children on outings but there should be at least one adult to every two children.
- Having pre-planned emergency procedures such as at least one staff member having a charged mobile phone and emergency contact numbers.
- Ensuring that a first-aid box is taken and at that least one person going has had first aid training.
- Ensuring that the service's insurance policy includes adequate cover for outings.

## Safety

### Safety Measures

- Adequate supervision by staff is the key to maintaining the health, safety and welfare of children. Children should be within sight or hearing of a member of staff at all times.
- Having a key worker system\* ensures that one staff member is accountable for each child.
- Viewing panels in doors and walls allow the children to be supervised and ensure that there are no blind spots where children are out of view of the childcare staff.
- The outdoor play area should be secure and safely fenced off to ensure that children cannot leave the area without adult supervision and that unauthorised access is prevented.

- There must be a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in place and smoke detectors installed.
- Regular fire drills must be carried out and all staff must be familiar with evacuation procedures.
- All accidents and incidents, no matter how small, should be recorded in an accident and incident book. The Pre-School Regulations require that details of any accident, injury or incident involving a child attending the service are recorded and that parents are informed. In the case of a serious accident involving a child, parents should be told immediately.

\* **How a key worker system works:** Key workers work very closely with parents from the very first contact. The key worker coordinates information about an individual child's needs and progress, and shares this with parents/guardians and other staff members to maintain consistency and continuity of care. They are often crucial in children settling in to the setting. At the end of each day, the key worker is available to feed back any information to parents about the child's day at the Centre. However, key workers do not remain with their children all day and children are encouraged to develop relationships with other staff members at the Centre. The key worker's role is supported by and supports the work of the whole staff team.

### **Safety during Play<sup>13</sup>**

Play should offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. Children need and want to take risks when they play. They should be provided with interesting environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, the level of risk should be managed so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

13 The Play Safety Forum 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: A Position Statement'

There is growing concern about how safety is being addressed in children's services. Fear of being sued is leading many childcare providers to focus on minimising the risk of injury at the expense of children enjoying a healthy range of play opportunities. This limits children's enjoyment and causes potentially damaging consequences for their development.

## Child Protection

Child protection is covered under Regulation 9 of the Pre-School Regulations, which requires that 'within the framework of *Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, clear written guidelines on identifying and reporting child abuse should be developed by the pre-school service.'

In line with Article 2.2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- All childcare services and providers should consider children's welfare to be of paramount concern.
- All children should be respected and treated with dignity at all times.
- Children's rights should be acknowledged and respected at all times.
- Children should never be subjected to any degrading or abusive behaviour.

In addition to the national guidelines, services must have their own comprehensive **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**.

The following is a list of what you should look for in a childcare service's written (and unwritten) procedures to ensure that a safe and secure environment is provided for your child:

- Each child is under the care of a specific adult and the adult knows where the child is at all times.
- Children are under the care of a minimum of two adults at all times.
- All entrances are kept secure.
- An adult is present close to the main entrance of the building during all hours of service.
- Parents/guardians are allowed access to their children's group rooms at all times.
- Playground gates are secured to prevent unauthorised access.
- All visitors are signed in and out and are accompanied while in the building.
- Volunteers and students are supervised at all times.
- It is possible to view each room used for the childcare service through a window in the doors or walls.
- Children's arrivals and departures are supervised.
- Behaviour policies and practices promote the development of children. Staff never physically punish or are in any way verbally abusive to a child.
- Records are kept accurately and up to date.
- Training on child protection is provided and is compulsory for all staff members.
- Children are encouraged to report cases of bullying to a staff member of their choice.
- The personal space, safety and privacy of individuals of all ages in the centre are respected.
- Staff members do not give lifts in their cars to individual children unless accompanied by another member of staff and with the prior knowledge of the child's parent/guardian.
- Children are not released to anyone other than their parent/guardian or the person approved in writing by the parent/guardian. There are procedures in place on the collection of children.

- There is respect for children in their ordinary physical care – staff members talk to children and personalise all their interactions. Information is shared with children, their opinions are sought and encouraged, and their growing abilities to care for themselves are acknowledged.
- The level of contact around intimate care is dealt with sensitively and a child's need for privacy, for example in the toilet, is respected in accordance with his or her self-care abilities.
- All workers are guided by individual children in expressions of affection.

### **First Aid**

Ideally all childcare staff should be trained in first aid but, where this is not the case, at least one person who holds a current qualification in first aid should always be in the childcare building. There must be a fully equipped first-aid box for children in the building. A first-aid box should also be taken on outings and a person with training in first aid for children should accompany the children on outings.

## **Records and Registering**

### **Keeping a Register of Children**

Childcare services are required to keep a register with details of each child. This is good practice and is in the best interest of the child, the parents and staff, so it is important that parents cooperate in giving the information asked.

Parents should be concerned if they are not asked for relevant details about their child, such as:

- Name, address and contact numbers of parents or guardians, especially where they can be contacted at the time the child is being cared for.

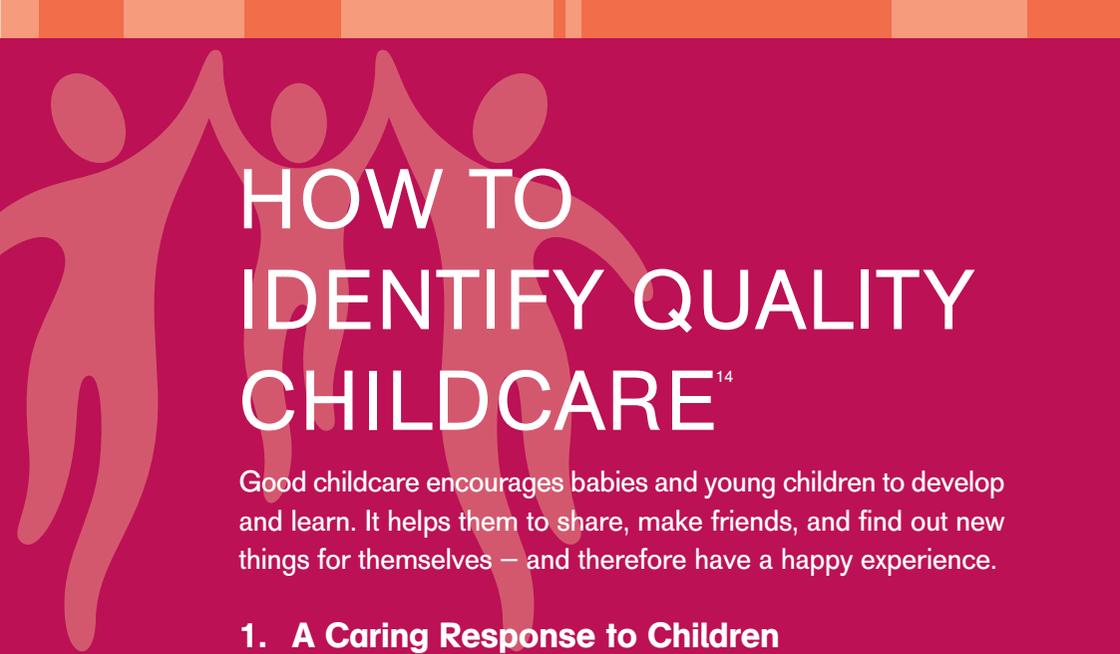
- Authorisation for the collection of the child. This is extremely important and should be taken seriously by parents and carers.
- Details of any illness, disability or allergy suffered by the child and all information that may be helpful in caring for and understanding the child.
- The name, address and telephone number of the child's family doctor and records of any immunisations received.

This information should be treated with confidence and only available to the staff members of the pre-school service who need to know it and the child's parents.

### **Information for Parents and Records**

Under the Pre-School Regulations, parents are entitled to be given information by their childcare provider on the following:

- The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge.
- Details of the maximum number of pre-school children catered for at any one time.
- Details of the type of service and age range group.
- Details of the staff/child ratios in the service.
- The type of care or programme provided in the service.
- The facilities available.
- The opening hours and fees.
- The policies and procedures of the service.



# HOW TO IDENTIFY QUALITY CHILDCARE<sup>14</sup>

Good childcare encourages babies and young children to develop and learn. It helps them to share, make friends, and find out new things for themselves – and therefore have a happy experience.

## 1. A Caring Response to Children

Whether you choose to use a childminder or send your child to a pre-school, crèche or nursery, one of the key things to notice is the way that adults respond to children. There is no exact method for finding the right carer but it's a good idea to look at the way adults react to children already in their care. Ask about how children are normally settled in. In a nursery or pre-school, one person in particular – a 'key worker' or 'key person' – should be appointed to look after your child as they settle in and beyond (see page 32). Ask also how babies and toddlers are supervised when napping.

## 2. Talking and Listening to Children

Look out for how carers talk and listen to children. Communication plays an important role in helping children to feel special. It is also an essential ingredient in helping them to learn. Adults who are good with children are able to chat to them and bring out even the shyest child. They are also able to develop children's language by adding to what a child has said. Look out for:

- Whether children appear keen to talk to the adults.
- Whether adults make eye contact with the children.

14 Adapted from The British Association for Early Childhood Education Learning Together Series and Sure Start ([www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk))

- Whether the adults are genuinely listening and interested in what children are saying.
- Whether children come up to the adults to show them things or ask for help.

### 3. Positive Attitudes

The overall attitude that the adults have towards children can provide you with clues.

- Listen for the way that the adults talk about children they already have in their care.
- Is a nappy change seen as a nuisance?
- Is a boisterous toddler seen as 'bold' or 'naughty'?
- Do the adults look miserable when supervising outdoor play or are they interested in what the children are doing?

Working with children is a tiring job, but in a good childcare environment you will see adults who enjoy being with children.

Ask to see references for childminders.

### 4. Good Play Opportunities

- To develop all their skills, children need lots of different ways to play.
- Dressing-up clothes and props for pretend play help children's language.
- Cycling tricycles and climbing help their physical skills.
- Look out for a range of toys, natural materials and resources, and ask about how and when they are put out.
- Children should be able to reach toys and resources for themselves and well organised childcare practitioners show children how to tidy away too.

Find out if children play outside for long periods and how this is organised. Look out for equipment that helps children to play in the following ways:

- **Pretend play:** dressing up, farm sets, play people
- **Physical play:** tricycles, climbing frames, balls
- **Construction play:** bricks, train sets, Lego, jigsaws
- **Exploratory play:** play dough, water, sand, objects that seem strange to children
- **Creative play:** paint, musical instruments, a range of equipment for drawing, junk for model-making
- **Table work and activities using fine motor skills:** jigsaws, threading beads, stacking, etc.
- **A quiet corner and a good selection of children's books:** appropriate books for the different stages of the pre-school child's development

The space in a pre-school room should be divided into different areas to allow for different activities.

Young children benefit from being able to play freely rather than doing formal learning tasks. Adults who are well organised provide activities, games and toys that stimulate children because they have thought about all the children's needs and interests.

When visiting a nursery, crèche, pre-school or childminder's home, look at what the children are doing rather than be dazzled by jazzy equipment. Look also at what adults are doing while the children are playing.

Ideally, young children should have time to play and explore for themselves as well as an opportunity to spend time with an adult who takes an active role in their play. Thoughtful adults are available to help children and look for ways to extend children's learning, perhaps by asking the odd question.

During your visit:

- Ask about how activities are chosen.
- Look to see how involved children are in their play.
- Notice how the adults respond and interact in children's play.

## **5. Observing the Children and Planning their Activities**

To plan well for children, the adults need to note down what skills and strengths each child has. From this they can plan different kinds of play that will help children to learn and develop skills. You might like to find out how the childcare option you are considering does this, and how you will find out about your child's progress and interests.

While looking out for all these indications of good childcare, check out the professional level of qualifications that staff members hold. Some practitioners have degree level qualifications and above. A FETAC Level 5 qualification means that the person is trained to look after children without needing supervision. Below this level, staff should always be supervised when working with children.

### **Childcare for Babies<sup>15</sup>**

It is particularly important to understand what babies need when you are looking for childcare. Babies should be cared for by the same person every day, someone with whom they can develop a special relationship. In a crèche or a nursery this is their key person or key worker (see page 32).

Look out for adults who carry babies, point out objects to them and give plenty of physical reassurance. Babies learn language best when it is wrapped in love. Listen to the tone of voice that is being used and watch to see if the adults sing and play with them.

15 Adapted from The British Association for Early Childhood Education Learning Together Series and Sure Start ([www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk))

As well as play and language, the routine care of babies is important to their development. Nappy changes and feeding should not feel like a conveyor belt system as these are special moments for babies which help them to gain trust and feel secure.

Here are some important things to find out about people who might care for your baby:

- Will the same person look after your child every day?
- What would happen if this person is sick or on holiday?
- How are babies held? Is eye contact made?
- How are babies fed and put to sleep? Are these tasks done by their key worker?

For more information on early childhood care and education see *Once in a Lifetime*, published by Barnardos' NCRC (see *Sources of Further Information*).

## **Who to Contact with Queries or Concerns about a Childcare Service**

If you have any queries about childcare services you should contact your local City or County Childcare Committee office. There is an office in each City and County (see *Sources of Further Information*).

If you have any concerns regarding the operation of a pre-school service, you should contact the Pre-School Officer in your local Health Service Executive (HSE) office (see *Sources of Further Information*).



# CHECKLISTS

## Checklist for Full Day Care

Remember, your child will be spending a large part of the day and most of his or her waking hours in the service.

- ✓ Is the environment safe, clean, warm, bright and airy?
- ✓ Is the atmosphere welcoming and friendly?
- ✓ Are you satisfied that there are enough staff members to care for and supervise the children?
- ✓ Are you satisfied that the staff members are capable of caring properly for the number of children in their care?  
Are they qualified and experienced?
- ✓ Will your child receive continuity of care? Look at the number of staff changes and how the rosters are managed.
- ✓ Are the facilities for resting and sleeping areas suitable for your child's needs?
- ✓ Does the space available meet the requirements?
- ✓ Is the food preparation area clean and are adequate health and safety precautions taken by adults preparing food?
- ✓ Do the staff members have sufficient information about your child to be able to deal with an emergency?
- ✓ Would you feel welcome to discuss your child with the staff?
- ✓ Does the atmosphere and environment give you confidence in the service?

## Checklist for Sessional Pre-schools

- ✓ Has the service been notified to the local Health Service Executive (HSE)?
- ✓ Is the environment safe, clean, warm, bright and airy?
- ✓ Is the atmosphere welcoming and friendly?
- ✓ Are there enough staff members? Are they qualified and experienced?
- ✓ Is there a balanced programme of care and stimulation offered to the children?
- ✓ Is there a good selection of toys and play equipment available?

## Checklist for Childminders

- ✓ Are the premises suitable for the children being cared for? Is it a child-friendly environment? Have adequate safety measures been taken?
- ✓ Are you happy that this person is experienced and capable of taking care of your child?
- ✓ Have you asked for references?
- ✓ Is there a second person on the premises? Is there an easily accessible telephone?
- ✓ Can you work out a contract which suits you and your child?
- ✓ What is included in the fees?
- ✓ If your child does not attend, are you charged for that time?
- ✓ If the childminder needs time off, how much notice can you expect?

# SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

## **Barnardos' National**

### **Children's Resource Centre**

Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

T: 01 453 0355 E: ncr@barnardos.ie

[www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

## **Border Counties Childcare Network**

Unit 10d, M:TEK Building, Knockaconny,  
Armagh Road, Monaghan

T: 047 72469 E: bccn@eircom.net

[www.bccn.ie](http://www.bccn.ie)

## **Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education (CECDE)**

Gate Lodge, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra,  
Dublin 9

T: 01 8842110 E: early.childhood@spd.dcu.ie

[www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)

## **Childminding Ireland**

9 Bulford Business Campus,

Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow

T: 01 2878466 E: info@childminding.ie

[www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)

## **Dept. of Education & Science**

Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

T: 01 8896400 E: info@education.gov.ie

[www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

## **Dept. of Health & Children**

Hawkins House, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2

T: 01 6354000 [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

## **Forbairt Naíonraí Teo**

7 Cearnóg Mhuirfean, Baile Átha Cliath 2

T: 01 4773151 E: eolas@naionrai.ie

[www.naionrai.ie](http://www.naionrai.ie)

## **High/Scope Ireland**

c/o NIPPA, 6c Wildflower Way, Apollo Road,  
Belfast, BT126TA, Northern Ireland

T: 028 90 662 825 E: highscope@nippa.org

## **Irish Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Association (ISWECA)**

Cappaduff, Mountshannon, Co. Clare

T: 061 927944 E: info@steinerireland.org

[www.steinerireland.org](http://www.steinerireland.org)

## **IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation**

Unit 4, Broomhill Business Complex,

Broomhill Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24

T: 01 4630010 E: info@ippa.ie [www.ippa.ie](http://www.ippa.ie)

## **National Children's Nurseries Association**

Unit 12c, Bluebell Business Park,

Old Naas Road, Bluebell, Dublin 12

T: 01 460 1138 E: info@ncna.ie [www.ncna.net](http://www.ncna.net)

## **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)**

24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

T: 01 661 7177 E: info@ncca.ie

[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)

## **Office of the Minister for Children (OMC)**

Hawkins House, Dublin 2

T: 635 4000 E: omc@health.gov.ie

[www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)

## **St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland**

Ground Floor, 29 Patrick St.,

Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

T: 01 2805705 E: info@montessoriireland.ie

[www.montessoriireland.ie](http://www.montessoriireland.ie)

## **Health Service Executive Pre-School Offices**

### **Southern Region**

**Kilkenny/Carlow:** Pre-School Officer, Community  
Care Centre, James's Green, Kilkenny

T: 056 778 4602 F: 056 772 3529

**Tipperary South:** Pre-School Officer, 34 Queen  
Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

T: 052 70931/ 29276

**Waterford:** Pre-School Officer,  
Community Care Centre, Cork Road, Waterford  
T: 051 842897

**Wexford:** Pre-School Officer, Local Health Office,  
George's Street, Wexford Town

T: 053 912 3522 Ext. 358/333

F: 053 912 1842

**Cork:** Pre-School Inspection Team, Floor 2,  
Abbeycourt House, George's Quay, Cork  
T: 021 492 3884 F: 021 492 3953

**Cork – North Cork Community Services Area:**  
Pre-School Inspection Team, Gouldshill House,  
Mallow, Co. Cork  
T: 022 302000 F: 22 30211

**Cork – West Cork Community Services Area:**  
Pre-School Inspection Team, Coolnagarrane,  
Skibbereen, Co. Cork  
T: 028 40490/598 F: 028 40511

**Kerry:** 19 Derry Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
T: 066 718 4911 F: 066 718 4899

## **Western Region**

**Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan:**  
Pre-School Services  
Health Service, Executive County,  
Markievicz House, Sligo  
T: 071 915 5100 Ext. 5346/5286  
F: 071 915 5131

**Donegal:** Pre-School Services, Health Service  
Executive, County Clinic, St. Conal's Hospital,  
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal  
T: 074 912 3669 F: 074 912 2592

**Galway:** Early Child Care Services,  
8B Liosbán Industrial Estate, Tuam Road, Galway  
T: 091 771928/47 F: 091 735701

**Mayo:** Early Child Care Services, 2nd Floor,  
Mill Lane, Bridge Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo  
T: 094 903 4776 F: 094 903 4815

**Roscommon:** Early Child Care Services,  
Abbeytown House, Abbey Street, Roscommon  
T: 0906 626732 F: 0906 626766

**Tipperary North:** Pre-School Inspection &  
Information Services, Health Service Executive,  
Annbrook, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary  
T: 067 38308 F: 067 38301

**Clare:** Pre-School Inspection & Information  
Services, Health Service Executive, River House,  
Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare  
T: 065 686 3902 F: 065 686 3983

**Limerick:** Pre-School Inspection & Information  
Services, Health Service Executive, 87 O'Connell  
Street, Limerick  
T: 061 483591 F: 061 483365

## **North-East Region**

**Meath:** Pre-School Officer, Family Resource  
Centre, Health Service Executive, Commons  
Road, Navan, Co. Meath  
T: 046 907 4431 F: 046 907 3183

**Louth:** Pre-School Officer, Health Service  
Executive, The Ramparts, Dundalk, Co. Louth  
T: 042 938 9623 F: 042 938 9184

**Cavan/Monaghan:** Pre-School Officer, Pre-  
School Services, Primary Care, PCCC Services,  
Local Health Office, Rooskey, Monaghan Town  
T: 046 30400 F: 047 77908

**Laois/Offaly:** HSE Pre-School Services, Harbour  
Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly  
T: 057 932 8110 F: 057 932 8107

**Longford/Westmeath:** Pre-School Services  
Office, Marlinstown Business Park, Springfield,  
Co. Westmeath  
T: 044 933 6070 F: 044 933 6077

**Kildare/West Wicklow:** Pre-School Officer,  
Area 9, Poplar House, Poplar Square, Naas  
Co. Kildare  
T: 045 873241 F: 045 879225

**East Wicklow:** Pre-School Officer, Area 10,  
Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown  
Drive, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18  
T: 01 282 2122 F: 01 282 1594

## **Dublin Region**

**Area 1:** Pre-School Officer,  
Loughlinstown Health Centre,  
Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18  
T: 01 282 2122 F: 01 282 1594

**Areas 2 & 3:** Pre-School Officer,  
The Maltings Business Park,  
54-55 Marrowbone Lane, Dublin 8  
T: 01 454 4733 F: 01 454 4827

**Areas 4 & 5:** Pre-School Officer, Community Services, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10  
T: 01 620 6323/ 092 F: 01 620 6358

**Area 6:** Pre-School Officer, Local Health Office, North-West Dublin, Rathdown Road, Dublin 7  
T: 01 882 5164 F: 01 882 5168

**Area 7:** Pre-School Officer, Local Health Office, North West Dublin, Rathdown Road, Dublin 7  
T: 01 882 5164 F: 01 882 5168

**Area 8:** Pre-School Officer, The Cottage, 2 Church Road, Swords, Co. Dublin  
T: 01 840 2835 F: 01 890 1636

## City/County Childcare Committees

**Carlow:** 16 Dublin Road, Carlow  
T: 059 914 0244 E: [info@carlowccc.ie](mailto:info@carlowccc.ie)  
[www.carlowccc.com](http://www.carlowccc.com)

**Cavan:** Railway Station, Belturbet, Co. Cavan  
T: 049 952 9882 E: [admin@cavanccc.ie](mailto:admin@cavanccc.ie)  
[www.cavanccc.ie](http://www.cavanccc.ie)

**Clare:** 1 Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare  
T: 065 686 4862 E: [info@clarechildcare.ie](mailto:info@clarechildcare.ie)  
[www.clarechildcare.ie](http://www.clarechildcare.ie)

**Cork City:** 29 Penrose Wharf, Cork  
T: 021 450 7942  
E: [corkcitychildcare1@eircom.net](mailto:corkcitychildcare1@eircom.net)  
[www.corkcitychildcare.ie](http://www.corkcitychildcare.ie)

**Cork County:** Market House, Buttevant, Co. Cork  
T: 022 23880 E: [corkchildcare@eircom.net](mailto:corkchildcare@eircom.net)

**Donegal:** Glenview Business Park, Donegal Road, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal  
T: 074 913 2416 E: [info@donegalchildcare.com](mailto:info@donegalchildcare.com)  
[www.donegalchildcare.com](http://www.donegalchildcare.com)

**Dublin City:** Block 4, Floor I, Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Woodquay, Dublin 8  
T: 01 222 3073 E: [dccc@dublincity.ie](mailto:dccc@dublincity.ie)  
[www.childcareonline.ie](http://www.childcareonline.ie)

**Dun Laoghaire Rathdown:**  
5a Woodpark, Sallynoggin, Co. Dublin  
T: 01 236 8030 E: [info@dlrcountychildcare.ie](mailto:info@dlrcountychildcare.ie)  
[www.dlrcountychildcare.ie](http://www.dlrcountychildcare.ie)

**Fingal:** ABCO KOVEX Building, Swords Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin  
T: 01 807 7660 E: [info@fingalcountychildcare.ie](mailto:info@fingalcountychildcare.ie)  
[www.fingalcountychildcare.ie](http://www.fingalcountychildcare.ie)

**Galway:** 9B Liosban Retail Centre, Tuam Road, Galway  
T: 091 752039 E: [mail@galwaychildcare.com](mailto:mail@galwaychildcare.com)  
[www.galwaychildcare.com](http://www.galwaychildcare.com)

**Kerry:** 1 Powers Court, Boherbee, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
T: 066 718 1582 E: [info@kerrycountychildcare.ie](mailto:info@kerrycountychildcare.ie)  
[www.kerrycountychildcare.ie](http://www.kerrycountychildcare.ie)

**Kildare:** The Woods, Clane, Co. Kildare  
T: 045 861 307 E: [info@kildarechildcare.ie](mailto:info@kildarechildcare.ie)  
[www.kildarechildcare.ie](http://www.kildarechildcare.ie)

**Kilkenny:** Rear Choill Mhuire, Glendine Road, Kilkenny  
T: 056 7752 865 E: [kkccc@eircom.net](mailto:kkccc@eircom.net)  
[www.kkccc.ie](http://www.kkccc.ie)

**Laois:** 6 Lismard Court, Portlaoise, Co. Laois  
T: 057 866 1029 E: [info@laoischildcare.ie](mailto:info@laoischildcare.ie)  
[www.laoischildcare.ie](http://www.laoischildcare.ie)

**Leitrim:** Laird House, Church Street, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim  
T: 071 964 0870  
E: [leitrimcountychildcare@eircom.net](mailto:leitrimcountychildcare@eircom.net)

**Limerick City:** 1st Floor, The Granary, Michael St, Limerick  
T: 061 407 525 E: [childcare@limerickcity.ie](mailto:childcare@limerickcity.ie)  
[www.limerickcitydb.ie/childcare](http://www.limerickcitydb.ie/childcare)

**Limerick County:** 32 Main Street, Croom, Co. Limerick  
T: 061 600 918 E: [clcc@eircom.net](mailto:clcc@eircom.net)  
[www.clcc.ie](http://www.clcc.ie)

**Longford:** Longford Enterprise Centre, Ballinalee, Longford  
T: 043 42505 E: [lcchildcare@eircom.net](mailto:lcchildcare@eircom.net)  
[www.longfordchildcare.ie](http://www.longfordchildcare.ie)

**Louth:** Unit 14, Ardee Business Park, Hale Street, Ardee, Co. Louth  
T: 041 685 9912 E: [info@louthchildcare.ie](mailto:info@louthchildcare.ie)  
[www.louthchildcare.ie](http://www.louthchildcare.ie)

**Mayo:** 1st Floor, Chambers House, Ellison Street,  
Castlebar, Co. Mayo  
T: 094 904 7010 E:  
mayochildcare@mayococo.ie  
www.mayocdb.ie

**Meath:** 1 Newbridge,  
Athlumney Rd, Navan, Co. Meath  
T: 046 907 3010 E: meathchildcare@eircom.net  
www.community.meath.ie

**Monaghan:** 7 The Grange,  
Plantation Walk, Monaghan  
T: 047 72896 E: monaghance@eircom.net  
www.monaghanchildcare.ie

**North Tipperary:** Civic Offices,  
Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary  
T: 067 44886 E: childcare@northtippcoco.ie  
www.northtipperarychildcare.ie

**Offaly:** St Joseph's Community Centre,  
Kilcormac, Birr, Co. Offaly  
T: 057 913 5878 E: offalychildcare@eircom.net

**Roscommon:** Knock Rd,  
Castlerea, Co. Roscommon  
T: 094 9622 540  
E: info@roscommonchildcare.ie  
www.roscommonchildcare.ie

**Sligo:** Unit 6, Cleveragh Retail Park,  
Cleveragh, Sligo  
T: 071 914 8860 E: sccc@eircom.net  
www.sligochildcare.ie

**South Dublin:** Block D, Bawnogue Enterprise  
Centre, Bawnogue, Dublin 22  
T: 01 457 0122 E: info@southdublinchildcare.ie  
www.southdublinchildcare.ie

**South Tipperary:** Unit 5, Ground Floor, Hughes  
Mill, Suir Island, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary  
T: 052 82274 E: cccadministrator@eircom.net  
www.southtipccc.ie

**Waterford City:** Unit 15,  
Tycor Business Centre, Tycor, Waterford  
T: 051 860 444  
E: waterfordcitychildcarecom@eircom.net  
www.waterfordcitychildcare.com

**Waterford County:** 9 Emmet St,  
Dungarvan, Co. Waterford  
T: 058 43601  
E: waterfordcochildcare@eircom.net  
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**Westmeath:** 6 St John's Terrace, Blackhall,  
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath  
T: 044 35454  
E: info@westmeathcountychildcare.ie  
www.westmeathchildcare.ie

**Wexford:** 7 Castle Hill, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford  
T: 053 9237156 E: infowxccc@eircom.net  
www.wexfordchildcare.ie

**Wicklow:** Kilmantin Hill, Wicklow  
T: 0404 64455 E: info@wccc.ie  
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# GLOSSARY

- CCC**      **City/County Childcare Committee**  
There are 33 City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) They offer a wide variety of services locally including advice on setting up a childcare business; childcare information sessions; training courses for childcare providers and advice and support on applying for National Childcare Investment Programme grants. They also offer services to parents, such as providing information on local childcare facilities and information on parent networks.
- CECDE**    **Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education**  
The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) established by the Department of Education in 2001 has published a quality framework for early childhood education called *Siolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland* in 2006.
- HSE**      **Health Service Executive**
- NCCA**    **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment**  
The function of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is to advise the Minister for Education and Science on curriculum matters in early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools.
- OMC**      **Office of the Minister for Children**  
The Childcare Directorate of the Office of the Minister for Children has responsibility for implementing the National Childcare Strategy 2006–2010. The strategy aims to further develop the childcare infrastructure to meet the needs of children and their parents for quality early childhood care and education.

**Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre**  
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