

Checking childcare provider documentation

A free information guide
for parents
provided by childcare.co.uk



Choosing the perfect childcarer for your child is one of the most important things you as a parent will ever do for them. It is important that you take your time and be as sure as you possibly can be that the person you choose is suitable to work with your child, so you can go to work reassured that your child's care and learning are in good hands.

There are a number of checks you should do before you sign a contract. We suggest that you put together a file with a tick sheet which will help you to ensure you have seen each piece of evidence and talked to the childcarer about each aspect of your child's care which you want to discuss.

Check registration certificates and insurance

All childminders are registered with Ofsted in England, CSSIW in Wales and The Care Commission in Scotland. Childminders must show you their registration certificate - and the childminder's registration number provides online access on the Ofsted website to the childminder's latest inspection report and details about any complaints which have been upheld against the childminder.

The Ofsted website can be accessed here - www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Nannies might be registered on the Voluntary Childcare Register, which is an Ofsted registration service for carers of older children. Registration is not a statutory requirement for Nannies - although your nanny will need to be registered if you need to claim Tax Credits against a portion of your childcare costs. However, voluntary registration with Ofsted is one of the ways a nanny can demonstrate good practice.

All childcarers should have appropriate, up-to-date insurance to carry out their work.

DBS / PVG checks

CRB checks in England and Wales have a new name since 1st December 2012. They are now DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. You can find out more on this website - <https://www.gov.uk/crb-criminal-records-bureau-check/overview>.

In Scotland, childminders and nannies will undergo a PVG check. You can find more information here - http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/pvg/pvg_index.html. There are different rules for childcarers in Northern Ireland.

It is very important that parents check that their potential childcarer has a DBS / PVG check in place and read any comments on the disclosure carefully. Note that some childminders who were registered before October 2005 in England might not have a CRB check because they will have been Police checked at the time and Ofsted hold these details, not the childminder.

Everyone who lives in a childminder's house who is over the age of 16 must also have a DBS check. Checks are not normally updated by Ofsted (for English childminders) but are renewed every 3 years in Wales. Parents might find that some childcarers have more than 1 check if they do other child-related voluntary or paid work.

A DBS / PVG check will help parents to find out more about the criminal history of their potential childcarer and / or childminder's family. The following information is included in an enhanced DBS disclosure -

- Spent and unspent convictions;
- Cautions, warnings and reprimands via a search on the Police national database;
- Notification if the person is listed on the children's or vulnerable adults' barred list;
- Information held by Police or SAAFA if the childcarer has been in the army;
- Social services concerns relating to the childcarers children or family history.

Note that a DBS check is **not** infallible because it is only up-to-date on the day it is printed. However, it does provide parents with useful insights into their childcarer's past.

Please note that Childcare.co.uk **cannot** verify DBS / PVG checks for childcarers who are registered on our database. It is, therefore, very important that parents carry out their own robust checks during the interview process.

Vehicle documents

If your childcarer is going to transport your child in their own vehicle then you must ensure they have the correct documentation in place.

This includes -

- Insurance - class 1 business insurance is required for transporting children and the childcarer's insurance certificate should state that the insured is covered to drive a vehicle used for transporting children;
- Up-to-date tax and MOT certificates;
- Driving licence;
- Car rescue cover is important so your child is not stranded if the car breaks down.

You should also ask to see the childcarer's vehicle - would you be happy for the childcarer to use it for transporting your children? Are car seats in good repair and consistent with current standards - or will you provide your own? Does the childcarer demonstrate competent parking skills?

If a childcarer is reluctant to show parents documentation and demonstrate that their car is suitable for transporting children - alarm bells should ring!

Proof of identity

Parents should ask to see 2 sets of proof of identity - one which features the childcare provider's photo and one which contains their address. Proof of identity might include, for example, a passport, driving licence, visa, work permit, birth certificate or utility bill.

For more information about documentation required by a non-British citizen who wants to work in the UK please see this website -

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/migrantworkers/documents.htm>.

As part of a 'proof of identity' check, parents should verify the childcare provider's eligibility to work in the UK. It is a legal requirement, detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act 2006, to check that the person you intend to employ has the right to work in the UK and is here legally. This website provides further advice and information -

<https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-to-work-in-the-uk>.

Please note that Childcare.co.uk **cannot** verify proof of identity of childcare providers who are registered on our database. It is very important that parents carry out their own robust checks during the interview process.

Do some sleuthing to find out more information

Parents might also be able to find out more about their potential childcare provider's identity online. For example, social networking sites give a useful insight into the childcare provider's online activities - are they on Facebook all day? Do they talk about the children and families for whom they currently work? If you are looking for a live-in nanny does their online persona reflect the type of person you want living in your house?

Childminders are often registered with their local Family Information Service which offers another source of information about the provider which parents can easily access.

Qualifications checks

All childminders must have a valid paediatric First Aid certificate - this is not a requirement for nannies but strongly recommended. If childcare providers care for older children who have reached puberty they should also have a valid adult First Aid training certificate.

Many childcare providers will have evidence of continued professional development including course attendance certificates and level 2 and 3 early years qualifications. These are important for demonstrating that the childcare provider is committed to self improvement and to enhancing their practice - however, it is not a requirement of Ofsted registration.

References

It is very important that parents find out as much as they can about their potential childcare provider before leaving them alone with the children. All childcarers should be able to provide parents with references. If they are newly registered, they might provide a character reference rather than a job-based reference plus a reference from, for example, a college tutor or a parent for whom they have provided babysitting services.

Parents should **telephone** all referees - anyone can answer an email! Make a list of questions you want to ask and go through them all after introducing yourself and checking that the person you are calling has time to chat to you.

Questions you might ask include -

- How long have you known the childcare provider?
- What is your relationship with the provider?
- How long has the childcarer worked for you - and in what capacity?
- Are you pleased with the childcarer's work? You might want to ask about their timekeeping, cleanliness, play ideas with the children, responsibility, ability to cope in stressful situations etc.
- Why is the childcarer leaving your employment?

If you are looking for a live-in nanny there will be other questions to ask to reassure yourself that they will conduct themselves appropriately while living in your home.

Please note that Childcare.co.uk **cannot** check the references of those childcarers who are registered on our database. It is, therefore, very important that parents carry out their own robust checks during the interview process.

Other documentation your childcare provider might show you

A professional childcare provider will want to demonstrate to you that they are capable of caring for children of different ages and that they have the skills and knowledge to manage the very individual needs of your child. Many childcare providers will do this via a combination of telephone and face-to-face interview and written documentation. For example, childminders will show you their policies, procedures, risk assessments, sample paperwork for the children and share with you information as required about the EYFS (Early Years Register) as required by Ofsted.

You should make time to look at this documentation and to complete any forms given to you by your childcarer because they will form part of the contract between you and will be important to ensure your child's needs are met.

References etc

- EYFS (2012) and related documents
- Ofsted

About websites used in this information guide - in places this information guide links to other websites. The author and distributor cannot be held responsible for the content or availability of these sites.

Disclaimer - however carefully researched the material in this information guide might be it is not possible to guarantee its accuracy or completeness. The author and distributor therefore accept no liability for any inaccuracies or any loss or damage arising from the use of or reliance on details obtained from this information guide. Ofsted (England), CSSIW (Wales) and Care Inspectorate (Scotland) might expect different ways of doing things from others and the ideas contained in this information guide are indicators of best practice only.

About information taken from EYFS statutory documents - information for this guide to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS has been taken from the following source – www.foundationyears.org.uk.

Information sourced from the Department for Education has been reproduced as per the Open Government Licence for Public Sector Information, which can be viewed on the following website – <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>. The source of the information is acknowledged as EYFS © Crown Copyright 2012.

Copyright protection - if any person is tempted to pass on any of the pages in this information guide for reward or profit, please be aware that, unless you ask for specific written permission from the owner and distributor of this information guide before making the transfer, you may be in breach of UK copyright law. The owner and distributor reserve the right to take legal action in such an instance.