



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Information for Childminders on the National Action Plan for Childminding (2021 – 2028)



National Action Plan
for Childminding
2021-2028

Introduction

Childminders play a central role in providing both early learning and care and school-age childcare in Ireland. For many children, a childminder is their main carer other than their parents, often starting in their early childhood and continuing into their school years. Childminders integrate the care of children into their own family life and give children the opportunity to experience daily activities that they would experience in their own family home. Childminders are often a cherished and constant figure in a child's life – almost a second family.

Childminders are highly valued by many parents because of the home-from-home setting, their strong and lasting relationships, the low child to adult ratio and the flexibility they can offer. Childminders cater for children of all ages and this can give parents the added benefit of siblings being minded together.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) developed a National Action Plan for Childminding which was published in April 2021. The Action Plan aims to improve access, through childminding, to high quality and affordable early learning and care and school-age childcare.

What is the National Action Plan for Childminding?

The Action Plan is a pathway to be developed over the next 8 years that sets out steps towards regulation, support and subsidies, for all paid, non-relative childminders. The Action Plan will involve change and significant benefits for childminders, children and the families using their services.

The Action Plan follows through on the following commitments:

- The Programme for Government - to examine options to accelerate access to subsidies for non-relative childminders.
- *First 5* - to promote and support the registration of paid, non-relative childminders currently eligible to register with Tusla and to extend regulation to all other paid, non-relative childminders on a phased basis over the lifetime of the Strategy.

What is the aim of the National Action Plan for Childminding?

The aim of the Action Plan is to provide greater recognition for childminding and to support childminders in their work of providing high quality early learning and care and school age childcare, thus supporting child development and learning outcomes and helping families. The Action Plan aims to support parental choice and increase availability of flexible and affordable early learning and care and school-age childcare for working parents.

Who is the National Action Plan for Childminding for?

The Action Plan is designed to support all paid, non-relative childminders, parents using or considering using a childminding service, and children. The Action Plan is not focused on nannies or au pairs who work in the child's home, who are employees of the child's parents.



How will the National Action Plan for Childminding benefit childminders?

The Action Plan sets out a step by step supportive pathway to regulation, support and subsidies. It will enable childminders to access a variety of supports to assist them in meeting regulatory, quality and training requirements. Childminders will be able to access financial supports and training opportunities including an expanded Learner Fund. The Action Plan will help improve the quality of provision, support child outcomes and provide greater recognition and support for childminders. It will give more childminders the opportunity to take part in the National Childcare Scheme and create a positive incentive for childminders to register with Tusla. This in turn will allow parents to access subsidies that were not previously available to them.

How will childminders be consulted on future developments?

Consultation with childminders has already informed the development of the Action Plan. Childminders will continue to be central and will be consulted further at key stages through different avenues such as childminding networks, focus groups, online consultation etc.

In particular, it will be important that childminders' views and opinions are reflected in the development of new regulations and inspection processes to ensure they are suited to the home and childminding setting.

Childminders will participate in a number of Advisory Groups to ensure the views of childminders are heard.

What is involved?

	Phase 1: Preparatory (2-3yrs)	Phase 2: Transition (3-5yrs)	Phase 3: Full Implementation commencing by 2028
Legislation and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting of new childminder-specific regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New childminder-specific regulations come into force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the childminder-specific regulations
Qualification and training requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop training programmes for childminders, and roll out a Foundation Training Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Development Programme available for childminders who have completed Foundation Training Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Development Programme complete for current childminders
Quality Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine options for delivery of supports for childminders through existing structures and new options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend and enhance quality supports for childminders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide quality supports on an equitable footing for childminders and centre-based providers
Funding and financial supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support childminders who meet current regulatory requirements to participate in the National Childcare Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open National Childcare Scheme to all childminders who meet new regulatory requirements, including Foundation Training Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Childcare Scheme open to all childminders who continue to meet new regulatory requirements, including the Quality Development Programme
Consultation and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a consultation and communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement consultation and communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of consultation and communications strategy

What do I do now?

There is no need to do anything right now. Childminders will be communicated with at key stages in the implementation of the Action Plan. For up to date information, follow us on facebook and our webpage which will be updated as developments occur.

Where can I get further information and support?

[Local City/County Childcare Committees](#)

[Childminding Ireland](#)

[Early Childhood Ireland](#)

[Barnardos](#)

[National Parents Council](#)

[National Childhood Network](#)

Glossary of Terms

First 5: First 5 is a whole-of-Government strategy to improve the lives of babies, young children and their families. It is a 10 year plan to help make sure all children have positive early experiences and get a great start in life.

Foundation Training Programme: A Foundation Training Programme specific to childminders will be developed. The Foundation Training Programme will be made available during Phase 1, with completion of this foundation training programme being a pre-requirement for registration with Tusla. Recognition of a childminder's experience, skills and prior learning will be built into the assessment of the Foundation Training Programme.

Quality Development Programme (QDP): A Quality Development Programme of training and mentoring that is specific to childminding will be developed as a follow-on to the Foundation Training Programme, offering childminders a local, supported pathway to quality development. By 2028, Tusla-registered childminders will be required to have completed this QDP over a number of years in order to remain registered with Tusla. Recognition of a childminder's experience, skills and prior learning will be built into the assessment of the Quality Development Programme.

For more detailed information please see the National Action Plan for Childminding.



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