

School Age Childcare



What is School Age Childcare?

There is growing demand for after-school care, as highlighted by the most recent data published in 2009 from CSO (Q4, 2007). Childminders are increasingly providing this care, 85% of parents of primary school children who use childcare use a Childminder.

After school care is defined as "childcare for school going children provided outside of normal school hours where the same children attend the childcare facility on a regular basis and access to the service is clearly defined by agreement with parents and guardians."

Legislation

Currently after-school care is not covered by the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations. These Regulations only apply to children who have not yet reached their 6th birthday, or who have not started school. However, Childminders providing after-school care are expected to comply with Health & Safety Law and Children First Guidelines.

Training

A FETAC Level 5 award was launched in October 2008 in School Age Care. Please contact your local VEC or adult education centre to find out if they are running this course.

Ratios

The Report "School Age Childcare in Ireland" recommends a maximum ratio of 1 adult per 8 children.

Insurance

You must be adequately insured to provide an after-school facility. *Childminding Ireland's* group insurance scheme for Childminders allows you to mind a maximum of 6 children. If you mind more than 6 children, you can upgrade your insurance provision. Contact (01)207 9400 for more information.

Transport

It is likely as an after-school provider that you collect children from school. It is vital that you inform your Motor Insurance provider that you are a Childminder, and are using your car for this purpose. *Childminding Ireland* and Kidd Insurances have a group motor insurance scheme for Childminders, whereby Childminders can avail of motor insurance specifically for Childminders at a significant discount. Contact (01)207 9400 for more information.

School Holidays

Providers of After-School care are likely to also provide full time care during school holidays and in-service days. If you provide this service, you should be clear with the parent at the outset, and include fees in the contract (contact *Childminding Ireland* for a sample contract).

Money Matters

If you are providing after-school care for 3 or less children, you can avail of Childminder's Tax Relief, providing your income from Childminding is less than €15,000. If you are providing care for more than 3 children you must make a tax return in the usual manner. Refer to *Childminding Ireland's* "Guide to Tax and PRSI for Childminders" for more information, including a comprehensive list of allowable expenses.

It is important to note that after-school care is not exempt from VAT, but only if your Childminding income is above €27,500 should you register for VAT.

Garda Vetting

Garda vetting is available free of charge to all Childminders whether or not their service is notifiable to the HSE. *Childminding Ireland* promotes vetting as best practice for all Childminders, and recommends that appropriate policies and procedures including recruitment and reference checking should reflect this. Contact Suzanne Tompkin 021 4547060.

Policies & Procedures

The Report "School Aged Childcare in Ireland" recommends that providers of after-school care have a range of policies and procedures. The policies needed are the same as those needed by providers of care for pre-school children, but should be tailored specifically for the age of the children you provide care for:

These include:

- Food and Nutrition Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Equality and Social Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Accident and Illness
- Fire Safety
- Child Protection
- Partnership with Parents
- Confidentiality

Best Practice

Basic Requirements

- The facility should be bright and warm
- There should be a range of rooms available to children
- The environment should be safe
- There should be adequate space
- There should be adequate storage
- The facility should be clean and well maintained

Outdoor Recreation

- Children should have access to a safe garden
- Children should have the opportunity for outdoor free play

Reading Time

- Children should have access to a quiet area for reading
- An agreement should be reached with parents as to whether homework is to be completed with the Childminder, and the level of support required.

Activities

Activities should be age appropriate, and could include arts and crafts, cooking, board games, visits to local attractions, trips to the library/park etc.

Grants Available

A **Capital grant** of up to €5,000 per child minded is available. Childminders should apply in first instance via Expression of Interest for to County Childcare Committee.

Further Information

- *Childminding Ireland's* Information Line (01) 287 8466
- "After School +, A practice Guide for Childminders" available from Barnados (01) 453 0355
- "School Age Childcare in Ireland, Report of a Working Group of the National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee" available from the Office of the Minister for Children (01) 1 635 4000
- "School's Out, a Practice Manual for Providers", available from Limerick City Childcare Committee (061) 407525