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How to manage a business successfully

National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

National Standard 9: Equal opportunities

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

Helpful Hint

Keeping your records up-to-date saves time later.

Aims

To increase your knowledge and understanding of:

- registration and inspection
- fees, insurance and social security
- record keeping
- first meeting with parents and recording agreements reached
- sharing information and agreeing strategies
- agreeing a contract
- handling a complaint
- working as a professional
- promoting the business.

Introduction

To manage a childminding business successfully, you need to understand fully a range of technical and general information. This chapter outlines some of the important areas to address.

Registration and inspection

The registration and inspection body is now the Ofsted Directorate (this role used to be undertaken by the local authority).

The wider framework of the Children Act 1989 and the English National Standard for Childminders governs the approach to registration and inspection. It is a condition of registration that childminders keep certain records of children in their care. Refer to the Appendix for publications concerning registration and inspection. Childminding practice needs to be viewed in the light of the Charter for the 1989 United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child. Childminders may wish to join organisations which are concerned with the needs of children. (Addresses can be found in the Appendix.)

Ofsted also have powers of investigation to ensure that you are able to meet the National Standards and other requirements, and powers of enforcement if you fail to do so.

Tax

Before you start work as a childminder, you must inform the local tax office of your intention to become a childminder. The completion of tax self-assessment forms is a legal requirement for all self-employed persons and is done retrospectively.

The area of income tax is complex and you would be advised to obtain pamphlets and other information relating to 'Working for yourself' from the Contributions Agency. These will help clarify issues relating to National Insurance contributions.

Income, National Insurance and expenses need to be clearly recorded, particularly as you may be asked to give evidence that you are keeping accurate records.

The Registration and Inspection Body, Ofsted, provides advice to childminders, as does the EYDCP.

Setting fees

The childminder decides the fee to be paid. However, it is important to consider the following:

- costs incurred in the business
- the local average rate for childminding
- facilities the childminder intends to use: for example, use of car or visits to the swimming pool