

Case Study



“The benefits of becoming a childminder outweigh any worries”.

Tracey Plowman an Ofsted Outstanding childminder from Charnwood shares her story about setting up her own childminding business.

Read how she describes even though it can be scary and daunting, the benefits of becoming a childminder outweigh any worries.

My journey into Childminding

When I first thought about becoming a childminder, I didn't know where to start. I quickly discovered that there is so much free support available from the Local Authority – from business advice, and help registering with Ofsted, to wonderful Improvement Advisors who support you in delivering the EYFS, helping you to understand SEND, safeguarding and even just being there to answer day to day questions. They are a phone call or email away and visit you at home.

A job that fits around my life

One of the best parts of being a childminder is that it fits around your life. Whether you want to work full-time, part-time, term-time only, the choice is yours. You decide the hours, holidays and the services you want to offer- whether you offer EYFS, before and after school holiday care, wrap around or a mixture of all of them.

Creating my own style of care

Childminding allows you to define your own approach. You get to discover what you believe in and become a champion for that. Families are drawn to authentic care, when you stay true to your values. You will soon have families wanting you to care for their children

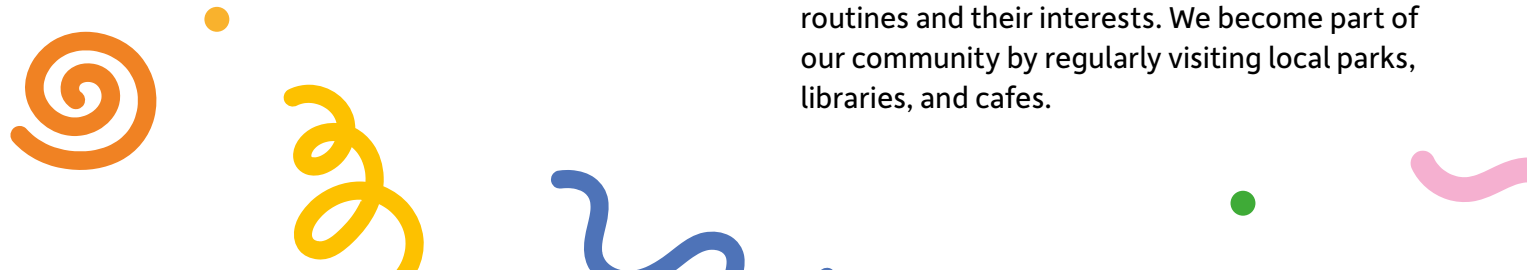
Top tip: Don't compare yourself to what everyone else is doing on social media. Much of it isn't real or sustainable. Focus on what feels right for you and your children you are looking after.

Home from Home

Your home doesn't need to look like a nursery. Childminding is about offering a safe, nurturing and playful environment where children learn through fun, both indoors and outdoors. I plan my days around each child's routine and interests- whether that's exploring nature, messy play or quiet story time. Resources do not need to cost a fortune. A good mix of open-ended toys-blocks, cars, people, animals- alongside everyday objects can spark endless opportunities for play and learning.

Use your local Community

We plan our day around the children's individual routines and their interests. We become part of our community by regularly visiting local parks, libraries, and cafes.



Building strong relationships with families

Working closely with parents is essential. We support everything from potty training to early reading. We share fun activities to try at home and signpost other services when needed. Occasionally, we're just the listening ear a parent needs and providing a safe space to do that. Most importantly, we celebrate every little milestone together- because those small steps really are the big ones.

Staying safe and up to date

Safeguarding is a big responsibility and while it can be challenging, there's always support. The Local Authority offers regular training and advice, and there are online resources too. Continual Professional Development (CPD) helps us to stay current and confident in our practice. Training might be free or low cost, but it's worth it- and it shows parents you're serious about offering quality care. Achieving qualifications or accreditation also helps you stand out.

Growing my business

Social media has helped me showcase what I offer and help reach new families. There are also brilliant childminding and early years groups online where you can get ideas and support. At first, I worried that parents might prefer nurseries, but after asking mine why they chose me, I was overwhelmed by their reasons:

‘We love the warm, homely setting and how well our child is understood’.

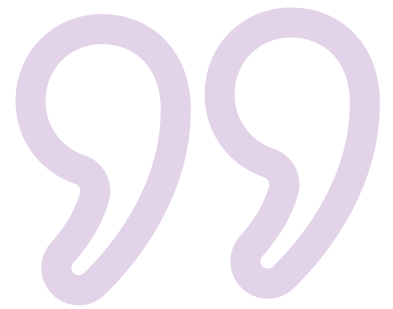
‘The flexibility suits our lifestyle, and the child-led approach is perfect’

‘There's consistency with one key person and a close group of friends’

‘We wanted someone who'd offer home cooked meals, lots of outdoor play and a more personal space’.

Wearing many hats, can be so rewarding

As a childminder, you're more than just an early year's educator. You're a business owner, nurse, cook, cleaner, storyteller and sometimes even a counsellor. It can be challenging- but no two days are the same. It's incredibly rewarding!!



If you are interested in becoming a childminder and starting your own business, or want to gain a qualification there is plenty of free support and guidance available if you visit

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/early-years/training-and-professional-development/becoming-a-childminder>

