

Over-eight childminders are not required by law to register with Ofsted but may choose to join the Childcare Register to demonstrate their commitment to a high standard of home-based child care.

Information on what is expected of childminders within the regulations, including how many children can be cared for, keeping children safe and well, promoting development, home conditions, health and safety, can be obtained from Ofsted.

The NCMA have produced a helpful guide to the EYFS for registered childminders, *Early Years Foundation Stage – Getting Started*. Go to: www.ncma.org.uk

Training requirements for childminders

All childminders should demonstrate their knowledge and skills in relation to the Common Core. Childminders who meet the requirements of the EYFS will also be able to show they have the required skills and knowledge for the Common Core. Otherwise, compliance can be demonstrated either through experience as a childcarer and/or any previous training completed.

New childminders must attend a local authority approved training course within six months of registration on either the Early Year Register or the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. Those not required to register, but who wish to join the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, must complete training before Ofsted will grant registration.

All childminders must hold a current paediatric first aid certificate at the point of registration and it is important to keep this up-to-date.

There are a number of qualifications that have been specifically designed for childminders. Many of these are designed to be flexible in approach, combining taught modules, distance learning and with stand alone units so that they can be completed at the pace of the learner.

The NCMA has developed a strategy to enable childminders to take a building block approach toward achieving level 3 NVQ.

ChildcareLink is a government website which provides information about local childcare and early years services and support. Find your local early years team by going to www.childcarelink.gov.uk



Key Specialist Area – Working in Early Years

The early years education, childcare and play workforce is made up of those who work with babies, toddlers and young children, with opportunities to work within a range of settings providing full day care, sessional day care, crèches, out-of-school care and childminding.

If you are thinking of a career as an Early Years Practitioner the *Making Choices* programme gives information to help make a choice about your career. Go to www.childcarecareers.gov.uk

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

All childcare providers must comply with EYFS requirements by ensuring that staff are safe to work with children and have the relevant skills, knowledge and qualifications.

The EYFS (introduced in September 2008) identifies the standards for learning and development and welfare that must be met for children from birth to 31 August after their fifth birthday, by all schools and early years providers in Ofsted registered settings.

Practice guidance is available to help meet the legal requirements in a way that reflects the needs of the individual children, appropriate to the setting. For a comprehensive free pack on EYFS, go to www.teacher.net.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/eyfs

Where next?

Additional guidance on assessment has been produced and it is expected that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will continue to clarify any aspects of the EYFS.

The Certificate in Early Years Foundation Stage Practice

To help implement EYFS, CWDC have developed the Certificate in EYFS Practice as a level 3 qualification to build on existing practitioner competence and the good practice in early years settings. It is appropriate for those who wish to update their skills and who already have a recognised level 3 qualification such as an NNEB, NVQ in Early Years Care and Education or Children's Care, Learning and Development.

Other practitioners at different levels may also find the Certificate suitable for them but must recognise that this is not a full level 3 qualification.

Go to your local Early Years Team or one of the accrediting bodies, e.g. City and Guilds or Ed Excel (see resource section) for information on available training.

Early Years and Playwork Qualifications Database

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has an online database listing all the currently recognised Early Years and Playwork qualifications. This should be used when recruiting and for planning continuing professional development pathways. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/cncl2f>

With the implementation of the EYFS the qualifications on the database have been reviewed and mapped against seven key criteria which list the competences that managers and practitioners need to meet in order to work with young children.

All managers and practitioners should check whether their qualifications meet the mandatory criteria and what further training is required. Go to <http://qualificationslist.cwdcouncil.org.uk>

Where next?

The new qualification list will be used from September 2009. Practitioners will have until September 2012 to complete any required training or assessment.

National Occupational Standards – Children's Care, Learning and Development (NOS CCLD)

The NOS CCLD are for people who work with children from 0 to 16 years (and their families) in settings or services whose main purpose is children's care, learning and development. The NOS CCLD were introduced in 2005 and have recently been revised.

The new NOS will **not** be incorporated into the current NVQs, but will provide a basis for the new qualifications developed for the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). These will be available from 2010 onward. Managers should use the revised NOS **now** for job descriptions and workforce planning. Go to www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/nos/ccld

The CCLD NVQs are offered by a number of the accrediting bodies, including City and Guilds and Ed Excel, who will be able to advise on how to access these locally.

Note that those who complete the level 3 NVQ CCLD, including the optional playwork unit, are not qualified as a playworker (see below).

What are the qualification requirements for the Early Years workforce?

The EYFS requires that supervisors and managers in registered settings other than childminding settings, must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification (as defined by CWDC) and half of all other staff in the setting must hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification (as defined by CWDC).

Holders of a level 3 qualification currently working within early years, child care or playwork settings who wish to develop a career across both settings, can complete a further level 3 award in either:

- Early Years and Child Care for Playworkers or;
- Playwork for Early Years and Child Care Workers.

These awards focus on the critical differences between the knowledge and skills of someone who already holds a level 3 qualification in either playwork or early years and child care, and builds the knowledge and skills to be effective in a different setting.

Where next?

The recent *Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare* considers making level 3 a minimum requirement for all 'qualified' members of the early years workforce by 2015, either through having level 3 qualifications as they enter the workforce or through continuous professional development (CPD). Go to www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications-and-resources/

Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)

Early Years Professional Status is awarded to individuals who meet a set of national, graduate-level standards when working with children aged 0-5. The standards set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and other professional attributes that an Early Years Professional (EYP) will need.

The EYP is someone who can be a 'change agent' to improve practice and can lead and inspire others across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They are expected to model best practice in safeguarding and supporting children and support and mentor other practitioners.

The role of EYP is different to that of managing a setting, so whilst the same person could possibly hold both roles, the EYP is trained to lead practice.

The Government aims to have at least one EYP in all Children's Centres by 2010 and in all full day-care setting by 2015. Managers need to ensure that new practitioners are prepared to work towards this level of qualification.

Managers should also develop job descriptions for the EYP that will meet the specific needs of the setting. Further support and information for managers on the EYPS can be obtained from the early years lead in the local authority.

Who can be an EYP?

EYP status is open to all early years' workers who fulfil the entry criteria of a degree qualification and GCSEs in English and Maths at grade C or above (or equivalent).

Where next?

CWDC are piloting new routes to EYPS for those within and outside of the existing early year's workforce. This includes a new process for sector endorsement of Early Years Foundation Degrees, providing a bridge for practitioners from level 3 to the EYPS.

Playwork

Playwork comes within the footprint of SkillsActive, which have published the UK Strategy for Playwork Education and Training, Quality Training, Quality Play, 2006-2011. Go to www.skillsactive.com/resources/publications

The Children's Plan (2008) introduced the first national Play Strategy. This includes a commitment to the development of playworkers to achieve a recognised play qualification at level 3 and to enable a core of professionally qualified graduate leaders to emerge.

This, together with the Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS) produced by SkillsActive should help ensure accessibility of funding for education, training and qualifications, as well as clear career pathways for playworkers.

The Playwork Principles

The Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork. Go to www.skillsactive.com/playwork/principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Playworkers

The inclusion of playwork qualifications onto the CWDC Early Years and Playwork Qualification Database means that not every playworker will be required to hold an early year's qualification to comply with the EYFS. For example, if you work in a playwork setting only, where you do not usually complete written assessments or formal recording of a child's play, it is expected that, providing you apply the Playwork Principles, the EYFS requirements will be met.

National Occupational Standards for Playworkers (Playwork NOS)

There are two sets of NOS relevant to playworkers. Managers should use these for job descriptions and deciding on the right qualification for their setting. These are the CCLD NOS (see above) and the Playwork NOS.

The Playwork NOS at level 2, 3 and 4 are in place for those 'working in a setting or service whose main purpose is providing children and young people with opportunities for freely chosen self-directed play'. Go to www.skillsactive.com/playwork/nos

How do NOS relate to training and qualifications for Playworkers?

The Playwork NOS underpin all qualifications and accredited training offered in playwork. They form the basis of NVQs in playwork at level 2, 3 and 4. See information above about NVQ level 3 award in Early Years and Child Care for playworkers.

It is possible to enter playwork without a qualification; however, all playworkers should aim to gain a qualification relevant to their role.

Ofsted accept a wider range of qualifications than those in playwork for registration of a play setting and so may be prepared to accept the qualifications staff already hold. For full information on the accepted qualifications for all levels of playwork, go to <http://eyppquals.cwdcouncil.org.uk/public/>

Playwork Foundation Degree

One of the Government's aims is to enhance the playwork profession through the development of a senior practitioner role. The playwork sector endorsed degree is a newly developed degree that will provide qualification to senior practitioner status.

It can be studied over two years full-time or three years part-time and has a substantial work-based learning element. For information on sector endorsed foundation degrees, go to www.playwork.org.uk

Further information about playwork

SkillsActive have development officers and a learndirect advice line that can give up-to-date information about all aspects of playwork training, qualifications and funding. Go to www.skillsactive.com/playwork/qualifications

Local Authority Early Years Teams are a good source of information about all aspects of playwork and child care training.

Play England will provide guidance, funding and support to local authorities and work with them to build capacity and skills in the third sector. Go to www.playengland.org.uk

Childminders

Childminders generally work within their own home. There are support networks for childminders, which are also designed to assure the quality of childcare provided. These may be locally organised or, as with the Children Come First Network, provided as part of the membership of the National Childminding Association (NCMA).

Childminders that look after children under eight are required to register on the Childcare Register and those who work with children under five will also be required to register on the Early Years Register and work within the EYFS framework.

