

# Guide to Choosing Unregistered Childcare

## Information for parents and carers

Sandwell Family Information Service • 0121 569 4914

Sandwell Family Information Service is committed to providing accessible information. Please tell us what you require and we will consider with you how to meet your needs.

### How to Contact us

Call the Sandwell Family Information Service 0121 569 4914  
Between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Thursday and  
8.30am and 4.30pm Friday.

We operate an answer machine service for out of office hours

### On the web:

[www.sandwell.gov.uk/familyinfo](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/familyinfo)  
Email: [family\\_information@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:family_information@sandwell.gov.uk)

### Make an appointment to visit us at:

Sandwell Family Information Service, Training and  
Development Centre, Popes Lane, Oldbury, B69 4PJ

We are also out and about across Sandwell at community  
events and venues. Look out for us in your local area





## Your guide to choosing unregistered childcare

**There are many different types of unregistered childcare available. Entrusting a stranger with your child is a big step, so before you choose any type of childcare you should do some research.**

Unregistered childcare is not regulated by Ofsted, unless they have joined the Voluntary Part of the Childcare Register, however this is not compulsory. It is, therefore, important to make sure that you make the relevant checks yourself by asking the right questions to ensure that you are finding the right type of childcare that is safe and secure and which best suits your needs and the needs and age of your child.

Sandwell Family Information Service has produced this short guide which goes through the different questions you should ask if you are considering using unregistered childcare.

Sandwell Family Information Service is operated by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. We offer free, impartial and confidential information to parents and carers on all aspects of childcare and on a wide range of family services available locally in Sandwell and also regional and national services.

## Types of childcare that are not regulated by Ofsted

The majority of daycare providers caring for children aged 8 and under must register with Ofsted. The list below are providers that do not have to register but may choose to by joining the Voluntary Part of the Childcare Register.

- Providers that care for children who are aged 8 to 18
- Providers that provide care where any individual child does not stay with them for more than 2 hours each day even if the childcare is open for longer than 2 hours a day
- Anyone who cares for a child or children aged under 8 to whom you are related
- Providers that care for children aged under 8 on domestic premises as a childminder without receiving any payment or reward in kind for their services
- A foster carer for the children
- Home-based carers in the home of the child such as nannies caring for children from birth until their eighteenth birthday
- Providers that provide care only between 6pm and 2am on domestic premises (baby sitting arrangements). Domestic premises can be your own home or someone else's home
- Anyone who provides home education

- Providers that provide no more than two types of activities from the following list:
  - School study support or homework support
  - Sport
  - Performing arts
  - Arts and crafts
  - Religious, cultural or language study

This exemption only applies if they care for children who are aged 3 and over and children aged under 5 do not attend for more than 4 hours in any one day



- Anyone that provides care as part of the establishments activities in:
  - A children's home
  - A care home
  - A hospital in which a child in a patient
  - A residential family centre
  - A young offender institution or secure training centre
- A school that provides education or care for children aged 3 and over, where at least 1 child using that provision is a pupil of the school

- Providers that care for children aged under 8 for 4 hours or less each day, where the care is for the convenience of parents who intend to remain on the premises where the provision is or within its immediate locality. This type of provision has no long term commitment to provide care for children: e.g. a shoppers crèche, a crèche attached to a sports centre or adult learning centre, or an exhibition where children do not attend every day
- Providers that care for children under 8 from particular premises for 14 days or less in any year
- Providers that provide care only between 6pm and 2am in hotels, guest houses or similar establishments. The care is for children of no more than 2 different clients, staying at the establishment, at the same time (Babysitting arrangements)

## What questions should I ask?

If you are considering using childcare provision that is unregistered there are a number of questions you should ask to ensure that you are finding the right type of childcare to suit you and your child.

### Childcare Checklist

Does the provider have an Ofsted Voluntary Childcare Register certificate?

Yes  No

If not, is the provider going to join the Ofsted Voluntary Childcare Register?

Yes  No

Does the provider have the relevant insurance?

Yes  No

### Qualifications / Training

Have all the staff got the appropriate qualifications?

Yes  No

Are all members of staff appropriately trained?

Yes  No

Are all the staff given the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge by regular training?

Yes  No

### CRB (Enhanced Disclosure)

Have all staff had an Enhanced Disclosure police check in the last 3 years?

Yes  No

### References

Can appropriate references be seen?

Yes  No

### Supervision

Is there a Supervisor?

Yes  No

What is the staff to child ratio? \_\_\_\_\_

### Day to Day

How is the day organised?

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Will my child be taken out and about in the local area?

Yes  No

Will I be informed about my child's day?

Yes  No

Are parents actively encouraged to become involved?

Yes  No

### Environment

Is the environment secure?  Yes  No

Does it feel nurturing?  Yes  No

Is it non-smoking?  Yes  No

Are there any pets?  Yes  No

Is there enough space?  Yes  No

### Safety

What happens in the case of an emergency or accident?

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Are there safety procedures in place?

Yes  No

Are there child protection procedures and a child protection policy in place?

Yes  No

Do the staff and children participate in regular fire drills?

Yes  No

If transport is provided, are there correctly fitted, age appropriate restraints and does the provider have adequate insurance?

Yes  No

Is there good access to the building and around the setting?

Yes  No

### Diet

Is the provider able to meet my child's dietary requirements?

Yes  No

Has my child got access to water when he/she wants it?

Yes  No

### Emotional Care

Do they follow routines?

Yes  No

How is difficult behaviour dealt with? Is there a written policy?

Yes  No

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Are staff friendly, warming, joining in?

Yes  No

Will the provider be able to meet any additional needs that my child may have?

Yes  No

Does the provider have a special needs policy?

Yes  No

What are the attitudes towards disability, more able children, gender and different cultures?

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## Equipment

Is there a lot of equipment?  Yes  No

Is equipment creative and varied?  Yes  No

Is equipment to a high standard and safe?  Yes  No

Is there secure space to play outside?  Yes  No

Do the children take part in physical activity?  Yes  No

## Health Habits

Are the toilets and basins clean and child size?

Yes  No

Are there facilities for potty training/baby changing?

Yes  No

Is the play area clean and safe?

Yes  No

## Other issues

Do I feel that my child will become happy, settled and safe in this setting?

Yes  No

When and how do I pay?

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## Do I have to pay for:

- Absences due to holiday or illness?  Yes  No
- Early morning, late evening or weekend care?  Yes  No
- Snacks, meals, outings, nappies, etc?  Yes  No

How much notice will I have to give if my child leaves?

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**Remember, you need to feel confident about the childcare you are using for your child.  
Find out as much as you can and then follow your feelings!**