

# Government to monitor child carers [GB] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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### EXCERPTS:

Parents can expect better childcare in a big shake-up of the way carers are regulated.

Schools watchdog Ofsted on Monday took on new powers to inspect childminders, creches and playgroups.

People looking after children under eight must register with Ofsted and will face regular inspections, the Office for Standards in Education said.

"Parents need to know that their children are well cared for and that they will be provided with activities which promote their personal development and learning," the chief inspector of schools Mike Tomlinson said in a statement.

"These new responsibilities will present challenges which Ofsted is determined to meet."

Ofsted has taken on 1,500 staff to do the work previously carried out by more than 150 local authorities.

Their job is to ensure childcare providers register with Ofsted and meet standards published by the Department for Education and Skills.

National childcare charity The Daycare Trust welcomed the changes.

"For the first time ever, there will be a registration and inspection system in place that will bring consistent levels of quality to the care provided for children across the country," said Stephen Burke, the charity's director.

A recent report found parents in Britain face some of the highest childcare costs in Europe.

The Daycare Trust said a nursery place for a two-year-old costs an average 5,700 a year.

Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged in his election manifesto to improve childcare across the country. The Labour party promised to triple childcare spending to 200 million pounds a year by 2003.

Reprinted from Reuters.

**Region:** Europe <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** quality <sup>[3]</sup>

staff <sup>[4]</sup>

legislation and regulation <sup>[5]</sup>

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