

Childminding: Regulation and recognition ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full brief in pdf ^[2]

Description:

The Policy Brief is timed to contribute to policy debate on the forthcoming National Early Years Strategy. There's added urgency because the Government is currently bringing two child protection bills through the Dail, and most childminders are excluded from them. We are urging the Government either to amend the bills, or to make a commitment to regulate all paid childminders.

Nearly 50,000 young children are cared for by childminders every day, but most of their 19,000 childminders remain exempt from regulation and operate without supervision or support. Only 1% of paid childminders are currently subject to inspection.

The regulation of childminders would be good for children, offering them additional protection and extending opportunities to raise quality standards in childminding. Regulation would be good for parents, giving them assurance that basic quality standards are met when they look for a childminder. And regulation would also be good for childminders themselves, through recognition of the importance of their work, enhancing their professional standing.

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We know that regulation works. Our Policy Brief describes the system in Scotland, where all paid childminders must be registered, and where the regulation and inspection framework for childminders is the same as for centre-based services (though applied in a proportionate manner to reflect the home environment).

The positive impact is striking. Scotland's population is very similar to Ireland's, but while in Ireland there are only 257 childminders notified to the HSE, Scotland has 6,000 registered childminders. And Scotland's independent Care Inspectorate has found quality standards among childminders to be even higher than among centre-based services.

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Region: Europe ^[3]

Tags: quality ^[4]

legislation and regulation ^[5]

regulated family child care ^[6]

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Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/10/childminding-regulation-and-recognition> ^[2]

http://www.startstrong.ie/files/Childminding_-_Regulation_and_Recognition.pdf ^[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> ^[4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> ^[5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation> ^[6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/regulated-family-child-care>