

## Supporting Childminders in delivering blended childcare incorporating the 30 hour extended entitlement and early education including the 2 Year Old offer.

### Top Practice Tips

- Agree with childminders how they can provide a range of childcare and early education options for parents in order that they can access their 30 hour entitlement and 2YO offer
- Work with the local authority and existing childminder networks to recruit childminders to the partnership hub
- Make sure training is relevant to childminders' needs and affordable. Consider providing crèches for day time training
- Ensure the Hub website clearly informs parents how childminders can be part of a blended childcare package of support
- Consider whether enabling childminders to work in schools would provide opportunities to improve blended childcare and early education, to meet the demand for the 30 hour entitlement and 2YO offer particularly in rural areas

### Background

All Early Learning and Childcare Partnership Hubs must support parents with their working patterns by offering blended childcare and early education to secure the 30 hour entitlement and 2YO offer. Engaging childminders is a crucial part of achieving this goal. Parents of younger children often prefer the caring home environment offered by childminders, who can also provide before and after-school care for older children. Childminders can also deliver the free childcare entitlement, sometimes in partnership with other settings.

Changes to policy and practice such as the introduction of childminder agencies and the freedom to work from venues other than the home are set to make childminding more flexible. When engaged with a Hub, they are a strong element in an offer which helps to support parents with their working patterns.

**HOW**

**ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

**WORKS**

## **How have childminders engaged with Hubs?**

Some Hubs have been successful in engaging childminders while others have found it difficult or impossible. Hubs which have successfully engaged childminders treat them as professional colleagues, offering tailored training at convenient times. Newham-based Sheringham Nursery School focused on childminders as its core partners before extending its offer to other early years providers. The Hub supports childminders through a dedicated children's centre co-ordinator, and crèche facilities allow them to access training during the day.

Forging links with local childminder networks makes it easier to bring childminders on board in greater numbers. Grange Park Primary School in Telford, and Wrekin promotes local childminders through the Hub website, while Oasis Academy Limeside in Oldham keeps in touch with childminders online, freeing them from the need to attend meetings.

## **What are the benefits of working with childminders?**

Engaging childminders allows Hubs to offer more flexible childcare and early education, delivers the 30 hour entitlement and 2YO offer, as well as easing children's transitions between settings. Thorpepark Academy in Hull has developed paperwork and networking which supports children who are looked after by a childminder as well as attending the school nursery, a model which will become more common with the 30 hours entitlement..

## **What are the challenges around working with childminders?**

The experience and capacity of childminders can vary considerably, and support strategies need to recognise this diversity. Good and outstanding childminders often have limited spare capacity.

Childminders also have concerns about the impact of the roll out of the 30 hours entitlement, particularly around capacity and cost. Hubs need to address this challenge as soon as possible, as it could result in a decline in childminder numbers, leading to a less flexible childcare market.

## **What have Hubs learnt about engaging childminders?**

Working to engage existing childminder networks with the Hub is easier than trying to start from scratch. Hubs should take childminders' views into account before finalising agendas and training offers, and recruit local childminding representatives to the Hubs to act as the link to the wider childminding community. They should also market childminders to parents, particularly focusing on their provision of early education, the ways they can link to nurseries or pre-schools, and their role within a blended childcare offer.

## What does the future hold?

For most Hubs this depends on how the 30 hours entitlement is implemented. Concerns include uncertainty about the hourly fee and the impact this has on financial viability as well as the practical administrative arrangements. In some early implementer areas, such as the City of York, Hubs were key to the delivery of the 30 hours, while in other areas Hubs have worked closely with the local authority as they plan for implementation.

St Edmunds Nursery School plans to work with employers to highlight the ways childminders could support their workforce. It will also liaise with the local authority to ensure the area has sufficient childcare places through support for childminders, and monitor the number of early education places in case these fall as the 30-hours entitlement is implemented.

The Barnet Early Years Alliance and Grange Park Primary School will both focus on partnerships between childminders and other settings, such as schools. Oasis Academy Limeside is set to support childminders in developing different business models, such as taking on assistants. Sheringham Nursery School is exploring the possibility of championing fair pay for childminders, and will work with them to build capacity. The Hub will also work with childminders to investigate the possibility of specialising in specific age bands.