

The Childcare Register, Ofsted and The Study Zone - Information for Parents

The Study Zone is registered with Ofsted to provide care for children aged 8 to 14. Because of the age of the children we are on the Voluntary Register. By being registered Parents can use childcare vouchers, access working family tax credits and apply for support with child care costs if they are a student.

So what does this mean - well in Ofsted's own words (slightly abridged!)

The Childcare Register is for people for whom registration is either **compulsory**, because they care for children aged from 1 September following their fifth birthday up to the age of eight, or **voluntary** because they care for children for whom compulsory registration is not required. This includes:

- home childcarers such as nannies caring for children from birth until their eighteenth birthday
- providers who care for children aged eight or over, until their eighteenth birthday
- provision that is not required to register with us such as activity-based provision like sports coaching.

Regardless of the type of register people join, we can:

- register provision, suspend and cancel registration
- inspect the childcare provision, usually unannounced
- investigate non-compliance with standards and regulations
- take enforcement action to bring about compliance.

Registration

We register applicants who want to provide childcare. For everyone who applies to register we carry out a series of checks, or require employers to do so. These include a check against police records on the applicant and others who may have unsupervised contact with children.

Those who are registered on the Childcare Register must agree to meet a set of requirements about the people who have access to children; the premises where childcare is provided and the provision of childcare. Further reading is in:

- *Guide to registration on the Childcare Register* (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080032).
- *Requirements for the Childcare Register: childcare providers on non-domestic or domestic premises* (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080143).

Inspection

Each year we inspect a proportion of those who are registered on the Childcare Register and check that they comply with requirements. After these inspections we issue a letter. If the provider does not meet all the necessary requirements we tell them what needs to be put right. Copies of letters are published on our website.

Investigation

We follow up any concerns that you or others raise and check that providers meet the requirements of the Childcare Register. We will decide whether they remain suitable for registration, or if they need to take any action to put matters right. To do this, we may visit the provider or ask them to look into the concerns and report back to us. If action is required as a result of our investigation or inspection we will mention this in our letters.

We do not follow up complaints you might have about matters that are not covered by the EYFS or the Childcare Register requirements, such as complaints about fees or other contractual arrangements with your childcare provider.

You can find more information about sharing concerns with us in our leaflet *Concerns and complaints about childminders and childcare providers* (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080120). **(This leaflet is displayed on The Parents Notice board in the hallway of our Building)**

Enforcement

If childcare provision does not meet the requirements of the Childcare Register we set providers actions to put things right in a letter called 'a notice to improve'. This normally brings about the required improvement. However, if they do not put things right and/or we believe that children are at risk we take action that we can enforce by law. The action we take is proportionate to the risk to children. It can range from issuing a legal notice known as a 'welfare requirements notice' to cancelling registration where the quality of care is seriously inadequate.

Those who choose to be registered on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register can continue to operate without registration.

You can find more information about Ofsted's regulatory role in the *Framework for the regulation of those on the Early Years and Childcare Registers* (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080024).

How we take account of your views

We carry out inspections of registered childcare with little or no notice. This can make it difficult for you to share your views directly with us. If we do give your childcare provider notice of an inspection they should tell you when we will inspect. Inspectors will normally display a poster to say an inspection is in progress. Please try to make time to talk to us. Your views are important so do not be afraid to say what you think.

If we do not tell your childcare provider about the date of the inspection you can still let us know your views by telephoning our helpline on **08456 404040**. Your provider should display a poster giving details of how you can contact us.

We are interested to know:

- whether your child is happy and settled
- whether your childcare provider could do things better
- how well your childcare provider involves you, consults you and keeps you informed about the care your child receives.

Information about childcare choices

If you want information about the availability of childcare you should contact your local authority's family information service. It holds information on the services and facilities that childcare providers in your area offer. You can find your local service on www.childcarelink.gov.uk or by telephoning 08000 960296.

To find out more about those providers who must register, you can read childcare inspection reports and conditions of registration (restrictions to the provision of childcare that apply at all times). The parents section on our website has more information about these: www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents-and-carers.

How to get information about your registered childcare provider

The law requires providers to display their certificate of registration during their hours of operation, so that you can see it easily. Each certificate gives information about the childcare provision and, where applicable, any conditions of registration.

We also send providers a copy of their inspection report or a letter for those on the Childcare Register. Providers on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register must share information about their service with parents.

Childcare providers are also required to investigate any written complaint you make that relates to the requirements of the Childcare Register, to keep a record of such complaints and to share the results of any investigation with parents who made the complaint.

For further information please read *Concerns and complaints about childminders and childcare providers* (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080120).

What if I have concerns I cannot share with my childcare provider?

It is important for you to develop a good relationship with your childcare provider to help your child's well being, development and progress. You can resolve most concerns by talking to your childcare provider. However, if you have any concerns about your childcare provider that you cannot discuss with them please let us know. Most of the enforcement action that we take against registered providers comes from information that parents give us.

What if I want to complain about Ofsted?

We treat all complaints about us very seriously. If you have a concern about our work please call us on **08456 404040**. For further information please read our complaints procedure *Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted* (www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2473)