Working Together

A Sure Start guide to the childcare and early education field
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Sure Start is a cornerstone of the Government’s commitment to halve child poverty by 2010. It brings together universal early education, more and better childcare, and integrated services including children’s centres and Sure Start local programmes. This guide is a general introduction to the childcare and early education field within the context of Sure Start.

The guide is designed to support you if you are working to improve childcare and early education services
- in a local authority;
- in a Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus;
- in a Primary Care Trust or other local or regional health organisation;
- in a childcare setting – a children’s centre, Sure Start local programme, Neighbourhood Nursery, Early Excellence Centre, Maintained Nursery School or any kind of nursery;
- as a childminder;
- in nursery or reception classes in a primary school;
- in any other organisation where there is work going on to improve children’s services.

We hope that ‘Working Together: A Sure Start guide to the childcare and early education field’ will help you meet your objectives and ease the way for your clients, customers and target audience.

The aim is to:
- make sure that agencies are aware of each other’s role;
- highlight common objectives;
- enable you to identify areas where your work overlaps with other agencies;
- stimulate ideas about how you may interact with other agencies to reach your aims, objectives and targets;
- add value to the service you provide to your clients;
- enable information to be more easily disseminated – to clients, to colleagues and to other agencies;
- develop networks for future collaboration.

Sure Start Unit

The 2002 Spending Review combined the former Sure Start and Early Years & Childcare Units into a single interdepartmental unit, called the Sure Start Unit, accountable for delivery to the Department for Education & Skills and Department for Work & Pensions.

Cathy Ashton is the lead Minister for the work of the Unit, and is a Minister in both DfES and DWP. Charles Clarke speaks in Cabinet on Sure Start issues, whilst Margaret Hodge has oversight for the work of the Unit as Minister for Children, Young People & Families.

The vision for Sure Start
- Better outcomes for all children, particularly closing the gap in outcomes between children living in poverty and the rest of the child population.
- Better outcomes for all parents, ensuring pathways out of poverty and strengthened families and communities.
- Better outcomes for communities, including less crime, higher productivity, a stronger labour market and the rebuilding of a civic society.
Sure Start brings together universal free early education and more and better childcare, with healthcare and family support where it’s most needed; for example, through children’s centres and ongoing support for Sure Start local programmes.

Sure Start is for children, parents and communities across England. Many of its programmes are focused on the early years, but its childcare remit covers children from conception through to the age of 14, including those with special educational needs and up to age 16 for those with disabilities.

The objectives of the Sure Start Unit are to:

- transform education, health and family support services for children under five and their families;
- increase the availability of high quality childcare for all age groups whose parents need it;
- meet the needs of the most disadvantaged, so children can fulfil their potential and parents can find ways out of poverty.

To build:

- a better future for all children – closing the gap between children in poverty and those in the wider community;
- a better future for all parents – opening routes out of poverty;
- stronger and safer communities – less crime, better employment prospects.
The Sure Start Performance Targets

By 2005-06 the Sure Start Unit aims to achieve, in fully operational programmes:

- an increase in the proportion of young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age;
- a 6% reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy;
- an increase in the proportion of children with normal levels of communication, language and literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage, and an increase in the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at age two years;
- a 12% reduction in the proportion of young children living in households where no one is working.

Realising the vision

The Sure Start Unit plans to deliver the following:

Early education for all

- Free part-time early education for three and four year olds.
- All four year olds are now guaranteed a free early education place. 88% of all three year olds are currently enjoying some form of free early education, and, as a result of increased Government funding, from April 2004 there is a free place for all three year olds whose parents want one – six months earlier than originally planned.

More and better childcare

- At least 250,000 new childcare places for 450,000 children by 2006, on top of the existing target of creating new places for 1.6 million children by 2004 – therefore we will create new places for over 2 million children by 2006.
- Making childcare happen – new full or part-time childcare places with startup grants for childminders, nurseries and after school activities.
- Making childcare better quality – we now have National Standards for all childcare settings. Ofsted now inspect and approve these settings as well as early education providers.
- Developing the workforce – we are running a campaign to recruit and train people to work with children and raise the expertise and status of the workforce.
- Making childcare more affordable – the Government is spending almost £2 million per day to help working parents with their childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.
- Helping parents find out what’s there – through local Children’s Information Services and a national information service for parents.
- Linking information on childcare to employment advice.

Local programmes making a difference

- Establishing children’s centres where they are needed most – in the most disadvantaged areas – to offer families with pre-school children early education, good quality childcare with health and family support services, and advice on employment opportunities. Children’s centres will build on Sure Start local programmes, Neighbourhood Nurseries and Early Excellence Centres to extend their success.
Sure Start services

This section provides information on the range of services funded by Sure Start or the Department for Education and Skills to deliver childcare and early education, explaining what they do and why you might need to be in contact with them.

There are also thousands of voluntary and private sector services which help to ensure choice and diversity for parents and which are often engaged in the services detailed below. These services include private day nurseries and nursery schools, voluntary sector nurseries and playgroups, and private and voluntary sector out of school clubs and holiday playschemes. For more information on these private and voluntary sector services, contact their representative agencies, listed in the Address Book at the back of this guide.

Sure Start local programmes

Sure Start local programmes are area-based programmes which bring together health and family support services with play, learning and childcare opportunities to give young children living in disadvantaged areas a good start in life and ensure they are ready to flourish when they reach school.

Five hundred and twenty four local programmes are operational, based mainly in areas of disadvantage, reaching 400,000 children under four.

What are their key priorities and targets?

There are a number of areas on which Sure Start local programmes will be working with local parents. Key targets they will address:

- Achieving an increase in the proportion of babies and young children under four living in Sure Start areas with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development.
- Parenting support and information available for all parents of young children in their area.
- 100% of families with newborn babies visited within the first two months of the child’s life.
- Achieve by 2005-6 a 6% reduction in the proportion of mothers who smoke during pregnancy.
- Information and guidance on breast feeding, nutrition, hygiene and safety available to all families with young children in Sure Start areas.
- Reduce the number of children aged 0-3 living in Sure Start areas admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, a lower respiratory infection or severe injury.
- Antenatal advice, support and information available to all pregnant women and their families living in Sure Start areas.
- Achieve by 2005-06 an increase in the number of children with normal speech and language development at age two, and normal levels of communication, language and literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- All children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities, helping progress towards early learning goals when they get to school.
- Increased use of libraries by families with young children in Sure Start areas.
- Reducing by 12% the number of children who live in households where no-one works.
- Developing local targets to ensure they have links with Jobcentre Plus, local training providers and further education institutions.
- Working with local authorities to help close the gap between the availability of childcare for 0-3s in Sure Start areas and other areas.
- All Sure Start local programmes to have parent representation on their board.
Part 1  Sure Start services and partners

What do they do?

Sure Start local programmes work with parents, parents-to-be and their children aged 0-3 to improve the life chances of children through better access to:

- family support;
- advice on children’s development;
- health services;
- early learning and childcare;
- training for parents to develop their confidence and their skills.

Funding is provided to reshape existing services so that they are more responsive to – and better meet the needs of – parents and their children. New services can be added to fill the gaps or to establish new and more integrated ways of working. Services paid for by Sure Start must be additional to existing ones.

Forty-six mini Sure Start local programmes have also been set up to meet the needs of families in rural areas or areas with pockets of disadvantage. Each reaches between 150 and 200 children under four and largely focuses on adding health and family support to settings that provide childcare.

Opportunities to work in partnership

Sure Start local programmes are set up and run by a local partnership involving a wide range of partners, including:

- the local authority (education, social services and advisory groups such as EYDCPs);
- health providers;
- voluntary sector organisations;
- community groups;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- others with an interest in services for young children.

Parents themselves are key partners and are involved at all levels – using services, delivering services, managing services.

Think Sure Start local programme if your remit includes:

- working with families in disadvantaged areas;
- gathering and disseminating information on childcare available in the area;
- working with partners to set up childcare facilities;
- running training programmes for prospective childcare workers;
- gathering and disseminating information on local childcare training opportunities;
- getting more people into work – including childcare jobs;
- linking with partners to run events on childcare or childcare employment;
- working with hard to reach groups who might benefit from Sure Start services;
- providing child and family health services, including antenatal care and mental health services.

Please note that Sure Start local programmes only deliver services to people in their catchment areas. They do not normally give funding to third parties, and the Sure Start Unit only gives funding through local partnerships.

Sure Start local programmes will provide the basis for the new children’s centres – see below.

For more information about local Sure Start programmes visit the Sure Start website:

www.surestart.gov.uk

Sure Start Plus

Sure Start Plus is a pilot programme providing personal support and advice for pregnant teenagers. Its aim is to enable them to make informed decisions about their pregnancy and provide young parents-to-be with co-ordinated packages of support tailored to individual needs. Sure Start Plus works in 20 pilot areas across the country.
Sure Start services and partners  Part 1

Children’s centres

The next phase of the Government’s strategy to deliver better outcomes for young children and families involves the development of a network of children’s centres, providing integrated care and education for young children, health services, family support, and a base for childminders. They will serve children and families in disadvantaged communities, although local authorities will be encouraged to develop this integrated approach to services for all children.

The centres will bring together locally available services and integrate management and staffing structures. Local authorities will play a central role in improving the co-ordination, quantity and quality of the services.

Most children’s centres are likely to be developed from Sure Start local programmes and new or planned Neighbourhood Nurseries and Early Excellence Centres, with others developed from existing local provision in the maintained, voluntary and private sectors.

They will offer:
• good quality early education combined with full day care provision for children;
• good quality teacher input to lead the development of learning;
• parental outreach;
• family support services;
• child and family health services, including antenatal services;
• support for children and parents with special needs;
• effective links with Jobcentre Plus, local training providers and further and higher education institutions;
• a base for childminders.

What are their key priorities and targets?
• At least 30% of the children to be reached by each children’s centre should be additional to those served by existing or planned local Sure Start programmes.
• By March 2006, children’s centres are expected to reach at least 650,000 pre-school children in the 20% most disadvantaged wards.
• The Government’s long-term aspiration is that there will be a children’s centre in every community.

What do they do?

Children’s centres will act as a hub within the community for parents and providers of childcare services for children of all ages. Their integrated approach will:
• provide holistic support for children’s development;
• support families with young children;
• facilitate the return to work of parents who are currently unemployed;
• offer a base for childminder networks and a link to other day care provision, out of school clubs and extended schools.

The funding available to develop children’s centres is targeted at the needs of under-5s, but many centres may want to offer services to a wider age range using alternative funding.

Opportunities to work in partnership

Children’s centres will have links with:
• local training and education providers;
• Jobcentre Plus, especially Jobcentre Plus Childcare Partnership Managers;
• Children’s Information Services;
• local schools, extended schools and out-of-school activities;
• health service providers, including Primary Care Trusts (PCTs).
Think children’s centre if your remit includes:
• providing parental outreach;
• providing child and family health services, including antenatal care and mental health services;
• working with hard to reach families;
• information or support for parents on learning, training and employment;
• offering specialist support such as with speech and language;
• providing information on childcare.

Neighbourhood Nurseries

The objective of Neighbourhood Nurseries is to support children under five and families in the most disadvantaged areas by providing new, good quality childcare services – so that parents previously prevented from working because of lack of childcare will now be able to work. An extra 45,000 full-time day care places in around 900 Neighbourhood Nurseries in the voluntary, maintained and private sectors will be available by mid-2004.

The initiative has been backed with £203 million revenue funding until April 2004, of which £198 million goes directly to providers. £100 million of capital has been made available through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), which is administered in parallel with the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative (NNI).

Many new and planned Neighbourhood Nurseries will feed into the new children’s centres. Some will be the basis for a centre with other services added on. Others will contribute the early education and childcare element to a children’s centre.

What do they do?

In each region there is a Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative (NNI) consultant whose role is to work with the local authority’s early years team to:
• encourage communities to work together so that Neighbourhood Nurseries are successful and sustainable;
• promote Neighbourhood Nurseries locally, encouraging other private and voluntary providers, Government programmes, employers, schools and colleges to get involved;
• work with people who apply to set up Neighbourhood Nurseries:
  • helping with detailed development work;
  • advising on the design of suitable premises;
  • identifying sources of funding (Neighbourhood Nurseries can often take advantage of sources of capital funding from regeneration initiatives and other programmes including Sure Start local programmes).
Opportunities to work in partnership

The NNI is managed at local level by local authorities and their early years teams, which have representatives from a variety of interested parties. They assess and make final decisions on which providers can best deliver quality childcare within a sustainable financial network.

Think Neighbourhood Nurseries if your remit includes:
- sourcing funding for childcare provision;
- setting up local childcare provision;
- helping parents into work;
- signposting employers to nursery opportunities;
- working with clients in disadvantaged areas.

For more details visit the Sure Start website: www.surestart.gov.uk

Extended Schools

The Government is encouraging schools to develop ‘extended’ services for their pupils, families, school staff and communities. These services include health and social care, childcare, adult and family learning and sports and arts facilities. Schools will need to work with local partners to develop the types and levels of services appropriate given their own resources and the needs of their community.

Full service extended schools are required to deliver a core set of services, including childcare, some health and social care, study support, family and lifelong learning, parenting support, IT access and sports and arts facilities. Schools must ensure they are open to pupils, staff and the wider community.

The Sure Start Unit has made funding available for the co-ordination of childcare services in extended schools. This funding is being rolled out throughout England from 2003-2006 so that by 2006 every authority will have received some funding.

What do they do?
- School governing bodies can run the childcare themselves, or they can invite private and voluntary providers onto school premises to run it.
- Sure Start childcare funding can be used to fund co-ordinators’ posts, thereby relieving burdens on existing staff.
- Childcare can be a breakfast club, after school club, pre-school, nursery, or holiday club.

Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative targets

By 2004 to:
- create 45,000 new day care places in up to 900 Neighbourhood Nurseries;
- set up around 50,000 Neighbourhood Out of School Hours childcare places;
- establish 25,000 new Neighbourhood Childminder places in disadvantaged areas as part of an overall national 145,000 increase.

What are their key priorities and targets?
- No targets related to numbers of childcare places created.
- Extended schools aim to contribute to increased levels of motivation and attendance in schools.
- Creation of new childcare places in schools will contribute to places created as part of the National Childcare Strategy.
Opportunities to work in partnership

Schools have a statutory duty to consult the LEA and other interested bodies before setting up extended services. They will need to work with their local authority prior to setting up a childcare facility, and with any other relevant local organisations.

Think Extended Schools if your remit includes:
• funding for childcare provision;
• setting up local childcare provision;
• expanding your school’s facilities/community services.

Maintained Nursery Schools

Current Government policy on the reform and development of nursery school services draws on the best of the sector’s traditional role and supports the enhancement and wider dissemination of the innovative practices and activities taking place throughout the sector.
• Since September 2003, all Maintained Nursery Schools now have governing bodies, with fully delegated budgets from April 2004.
• More than half of the Early Excellence Centres are nursery schools and many children’s centres are likely to incorporate nursery schools.
• The nursery school development grant available over the last three years has enabled a number of nursery schools to offer enhanced services.

Opportunities to work in partnership
• In planning strategic development of integrated early years services, local authorities need to consider the contribution that nursery schools can make.
• Nursery schools may form the basis of children’s centres or be able to extend the availability of services in less disadvantaged areas.

Think Maintained Nursery Schools if your remit includes:
• setting up or providing information on local childcare provision;
• working with parents in the community;
• directing employers to nursery opportunities;
• working with parents and families with young children.

Early Excellence Centres

The 107 Early Excellence Centres deliver high quality integrated early education, childcare and family services.

The centres demonstrate good practice in education, childcare and integrated services for children and their families. They provide training and dissemination to other practitioners. They are also catalysts for further development and innovation over wider areas – locally, regionally and nationally.

What are their key priorities and targets?

Early Excellence Centres:
• should offer models of high quality practice in providing one-stop-shop integrated early education and day care for young children;
• provide support services for parents and carers of children, such as home support, drop-in facilities, counselling and information services.
What do they do?

Early Excellence Centres:
• provide good quality integrated early education and centre-based daycare;
• involve parents and carers through family learning, developing parenting skills and raising parents’ expectations;
• provide parent and carer support services, including home support, drop-in facilities, counselling and information services;
• offer access to adult education and training for parents of young children and other adults;
• promote social inclusion for isolated and disadvantaged families;
• provide high quality training and development opportunities for centre staff and other early years providers in the area;
• disseminate good practice.

Additionally, each Early Excellence Centre has identified specific objectives and activities which make the most of its areas of expertise.

Opportunities to work in partnership

Early Excellence Centres:
• develop multi-agency collaboration between education, social services, health, community services, other agencies and employers in the provision of services;
• work with schools and providers of before-and after-school care to promote continuity of educational provision and study support;
• work with local training and education providers;
• liaise with Jobcentre Plus;
• deal with specific agencies relating to their particular speciality.

Think Early Excellence Centre if your remit includes:
• providing parental outreach;
• working with ‘hard to reach’ families;
• information, support or provision for parents on learning, training and employment;
• providing information on childcare.

Early learning

Research shows that children’s development is supported by attending good quality early education and childcare services. As part of its drive to provide good quality early education for all, the Government has ensured that all three and four year olds are now entitled to free part-time early education in school nursery classes, playgroups, day nurseries, childminder networks and maintained nursery schools, as well as fulltime in school reception classes. From April 2004 this applies to all three year olds too. Each child is entitled to early education for at least two and a half hours per day, five days a week, 33 weeks a year. If they attend all day, the additional time may need to be paid for.

Choosing early education and childcare

There’s early education for young children:
• in school nursery and reception classes;
• in nursery schools;
• in day nurseries;
• in playgroups or pre-schools;
• with registered childminders if they are part of a childminding network.

Detailed advice on making the most of a child’s entitlement to early education is available from local Children’s Information Services. You can find their contact details by phoning free on 0800 096 0296 or visiting www.childcarelink.gov.uk and using the map to pinpoint the nearest service.
Early learning for children aged 0-5

What do children do when they attend early years and childcare provision?

0-3 year olds

The years between birth and three are particularly important for babies and toddlers because the experiences they have during this time will have an impact on their future development.

In November 2002, the Sure Start Unit launched ‘Birth to Three Matters: A framework to support children in their earliest years’. ‘Birth to Three Matters’ is a set of resources developed with the aim of guiding the way babies and toddlers are cared for when they are with registered childcare providers. It aims to help childcare workers think professionally about the developmental needs of the individual child and ensure their time with their carer is happy and productive.

The ‘Birth to Three Matters’ Framework covers four aspects of children’s development:

• a strong child;
• a skilful communicator;
• a competent learner;
• a healthy child.

A national training strategy is underway to support the implementation of the Framework. Trainers, nominated by local authorities, will deliver training to the childcare workforce in their area. Some of these trainers are drawn from the health profession and from further and higher education establishments. Training materials for them to use are also under development and will be available from the end of March 2004. This is good timing because from April 2004, local authorities will see a significant increase in funding to support workforce development.

3-5 year olds

From April 2004, the entitlement to free, part-time early education was extended to all three year olds. At this point children can enter the Foundation Stage, a distinct phase of education for three to five year olds. The Foundation Stage is the first stage of the National Curriculum.

The Foundation Stage can be delivered in a range of settings, including in a childminder’s home where the childminder is part of an accredited childminding network. Because the Foundation Stage continues until the start of Year 1 (Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum) it also covers education delivered in primary school reception classes.

There are six areas of learning, each with early learning goals which set out the skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes that it is hoped children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. The areas are:

• personal, social and emotional development;
• communication, language and literacy;
• mathematical development;
• creative development;
• knowledge and understanding of the world;
• physical development.

The ‘Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage’ is the statutory document for all practitioners delivering funded Foundation Stage education. It gives advice on effective learning and teaching and provides a flexible framework within the six areas of learning, enabling early years settings to devise the content of their own individual educational programmes to meet the needs of the individual child in their care. It also sets out the principles of early education, including working in partnership with parents, building on what children already know and can do, and children engaging in activities which they plan themselves.

Play is one of the key ways children learn throughout the Foundation Stage. The guidance includes examples showing how children can learn with enjoyment and challenge and gain the key skills they need for future learning.

Local Education Authorities are responsible for resourcing and organising Foundation Stage provision in their areas. They are responsible for developing and implementing training and development strategies to support the practitioners who deliver the educational programmes.

The recent appointment of a Foundation Stage National Director and team of Foundation Stage Regional Directors will provide expert support for
Local Education Authorities in the delivery of the Foundation Stage. They have launched a consultation on the key skills necessary to deliver the Foundation Stage and will be supporting and challenging local authorities in their delivery of training against this framework.

This support is delivered as part of the Primary National Strategy, with the Foundation Stage Director working alongside the Directors for Literacy, Numeracy and Inclusion, to harness the benefits of joining up work on support for learning and teaching within the Foundation Stage with the work in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Quality Assurance

Investors in Children

The Sure Start Unit has established a programme called Investors in Children, designed to help nurseries, childminders, after school clubs, crèches and playgroups find the best quality assurance schemes. The first 25 quality assurance schemes endorsed by Investors in Children were announced in November 2003. Details of the programme, including contact details for endorsed schemes, can be found here: www.surestart.gov.uk/ensuringquality/investorsinchildren

Sure Start partners

This section explains the roles of some of the key agencies working to improve childcare and children’s services in the context of Sure Start.

Local authorities

Top-tier local authorities – the 150 London boroughs, unitary authorities, metropolitan authorities and counties that are responsible for education and social services – are the Sure Start Unit’s main delivery partners for expanding and improving early years and childcare services.

What are their key priorities and targets?

Local authorities:

- set local targets, based on their estimate of how many childcare places will be needed over the next few years;
- have targets for recruiting under-represented groups into the childcare workforce;
- promote the take-up of the Working Tax Credit – especially the childcare element;
- should ensure that all three and four year olds can access a free, part-time early education place from April 2004.

What do they do?

Local authorities are the lead agencies for ensuring that Sure Start services are delivered. They join up agencies by bringing local partners together.

The specific responsibilities of local authorities are:

- strategic planning for delivery;
- consultation and partnership;
- supporting delivery;
- financial accountability;
- monitoring performance;
- promoting children’s development.
Opportunities to work in partnership

Local authorities need to take account of a broad range of issues in their delivery planning and work with practitioners in areas including:

- health;
- education;
- social services;
- planning;
- neighbourhood renewal;
- employment;
- the local labour market.

Think local authority if your remit includes:

- reaching childcare recruitment targets, including lone parents, ethnic minority communities or people with disabilities;
- increasing the number of nursery places;
- disseminating local childcare information;
- meeting targets in disadvantaged areas;
- securing funding for childcare provision;
- planning or providing services including outreach in the community, childcare, education or job training.

For more detailed information, please see ‘Sure Start Guidelines 2004-2006’ (details in Part Five).

Children’s Trusts

The Green Paper, ‘Every Child Matters’, sets out the Government’s proposals for reforming the delivery of services for children, young people and families. Key services are to be integrated under the Director of Children’s Services as part of Children’s Trusts, which bring together:

- local authority education and children’s social services;
- some children’s health services;
- Connexions;
- sometimes other services such as Youth Offending Teams.

The Trusts will enable education, health, social services, and some other agencies jointly to plan, commission, finance and deliver services for children. Children’s Trusts will normally be part of the local authority and will report to local elected Members.

The main difference between Children’s Trusts and children’s centres is that Trusts are a way local authorities and health partners might opt to organise different agencies to deliver a set of services chosen by themselves, whereas children’s centres are a location (or a network of locations) where a prescribed set of services for 0-5 year olds and their families will be delivered.

Local authorities’ advisory groups

Local authorities currently have a number of different organisational arrangements in place to deliver on the Sure Start agenda. They may bring together elements of existing services with those traditionally provided through specific grant funding, such as training coordinators and Local Education Authority (LEA) curriculum advisers.

Local authorities work with advisory groups such as Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs) or other partners to improve outcomes for children and families in the local area.
These advisory groups are made up of a wide range of people with local knowledge such as:

- Jobcentre Plus;
- private and voluntary sector providers of childcare;
- schools;
- FE colleges;
- social services;
- health authorities;
- SEB groups;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- parents;
- employers;
- LSCs.

Children’s Information Services (CIS)

A Children’s Information Service (CIS) operates in each local authority area, run by local authorities or on their behalf. The CIS provides current information for parents, carers, childcare providers, employers and others on available childcare and early education.

What are their key priorities and targets?

CISs must be able to:

- supply details on all providers in the area registered under the Children Act, along with information on suitable non-registered provision;
- update changes of provider details within two working weeks of notification;
- review their entire database at least once a year;
- update changes to provider vacancy information within one working week of notification;
- have regular contact with local childcare providers.

Examples of working in partnership with local authorities

- Working with LSCs, Jobcentre Plus, training and employment agencies to deliver a support programme to people new to childcare and playwork – or to recruit individuals from minority groups.
- Working with the Jobcentre Plus New Deal Advisers to help prospective candidates into childcare and playwork.
- Working with employers to arrange childcare provision on-site or elsewhere, along with childcare information to employees.
- Working with a childcare organisation such as Kids’ Clubs Network and an employment agency to run return-to-work courses, with an additional push to involve lone parents.
- Working with local childcare providers to identify playwork and childcare need amongst ethnic groups, identify opportunities and recruit from those groups.

What do they do?

The role of each local Children’s Information Service is to act as a central point that:

- holds details of all childcare and early years provision locally;
- ensures that the materials they have are relevant to a wide readership, including lone parents, ethnic groups and people with disabilities;
- promotes the take-up of the Working Tax Credit – especially the childcare element.
Part 1  Sure Start services and partners

Opportunities to work in partnership

CISs have good links with local authority officers and teams involved in services for children with Special Educational Needs, childcare quality standards and training, as well as with other local organisations, including:

- local FE colleges;
- Sector Skills Councils;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- the Health Authority;
- neighbouring CISs;
- relevant community organisations and groups;
- providers;
- parents;
- voluntary sector;
- local businesses;
- national organisations.

Think CIS if your remit includes:

- dealing with clients who need childcare;
- disseminating childcare information;
- setting up childcare provision;
- meeting targets on helping specific groups into work, where childcare might be a barrier;
- reaching users of childcare or early years provision;
- working with clients from disadvantaged areas.

For local Children’s Information Service details, look in the phone book, ring Childcare Link free on 08000 960 296 or visit the website: www.childcarelink.gov.uk

Examples of working in partnership with Children’s Information Services

Typical CIS partnership working usually includes:

- communicating with the Sure Start Unit, Ofsted, NACIS, Opportunity Links and other CISs to promote best practice;
- maintaining close links with the CIS Development Project to ensure effective internet communication;
- working with Ofsted to promote the registration and inspection of childcare providers;
- exchanging information with relevant organisations;
- communicating with bodies such as the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA), the National Childminding Association (NCMA), the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) and Out-of-School Childcare Action (OSCA);
- contact with organisations and bodies that can be used for directing enquirers to the information they need.

Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs)

The Learning and Skills Council is the result of a merger between the former Training and Enterprise Councils and the Further Education Funding Council, and is responsible for funding and planning post-16 education and training in England. Their national office is based in Coventry, with 48 local Learning and Skills Councils across England.

Their work covers:

- further education;
- work-based training and young people;
- workforce development;
- adult and community learning;
- information, advice and guidance for adults;
- links between education and business.
What is the role of Sure Start units in promoting training and education? LSCs work alongside Jobcentre Plus, local authorities, the Small Business Service, Connexions, post-16 education and training providers – further education and sixth form colleges – and representatives of community groups to understand, define and then meet training and education needs.

Local LSCs have funding to promote training and remove barriers, providing help, for instance, with course fees or to pay for supply cover. Funding is also available to support training in relation to delivery of the Foundation Stage and for Special Educational Needs (SEN).

What do Primary Care Trusts do? Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are local health organisations which commission and provide healthcare for the local population. Health visitors and GPs are managed within Primary Care Trusts, for example, as are many specialist children’s services such as Speech and Language Therapy Services.

Opportunities to work in partnership

With guidance from the Sure Start Unit and national LSC, local LSCs and local authorities are working together to:

- identify and assess current and future training needs within the early years, childcare and playwork sector;
- plan training provision accordingly.

Think LSC if your remit includes:

- sourcing early years, childcare and playwork training opportunities;
- post-16 education and training;
- filling vacancies in the childcare sector;
- sourcing funding for training;
- working with employers to ensure suitable training provision;
- basic skills training;
- family learning.
Local authorities must involve Primary Care Trusts and other Health Trusts at a strategic level when planning children’s centres if the objectives of the centres are to be met.

Think PCT if your remit includes:
- building provision which includes health;
- providing information on health issues;
- working with disadvantaged communities;
- improving health;
- developing services for young parents and families.

Connexions

What is Connexions?
Connexions is the Government’s support service for all young people aged 13-19 in England. Currently 47 LSC-sized areas in England provide the service.

What does it do?
Through Connexions Partnerships it:
- brings together all the services that help young people;
- gives each young person access to a Personal Adviser who provides or co-ordinates information and advice on issues such as:
  - studying, careers, training and jobs;
  - personal development and volunteering opportunities;
  - boosting skills and confidence;
  - problems with drugs, alcohol, depression, teenage pregnancy, homelessness or other issues that hinder participation in learning.

Parents and carers can also contact their local Connexions Partnership for information, advice and support for teenagers on these issues. Personal Advisers may be based in a school, college or Connexions centre – or may be reached via community centres or youth work provision.
Opportunities to work in partnership

Connexions joins up the work of six Government departments and their agencies and organisations on the ground, together with private and voluntary sector groups and youth and careers services. Typically, Connexions Partnerships comprise representatives from:

- local councils;
- schools and colleges;
- youth services;
- social services;
- health authorities;
- probation services;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- the police;
- voluntary and community groups.

Think Connexions if your remit includes:

- reaching recruitment or training targets, including specific groups such as teenage parents;
- working with employers on issues of childcare provision;
- working with childcare employers;
- helping young people reach their full potential;
- dealing with young people (or parents of young people) who:
  - want to know about early years and childcare studying, training, job specs and opportunities;
  - need advice on teenage pregnancy and where to find childcare;
  - come from disadvantaged areas.

The Connexions website is here:
www.connexions.gov.uk

There is also a website for young people here:
www.connexions-direct.com

Examples of working in partnership with Connexions

Those already working in partnership with Connexions include:

- Sure Start Plus Advisers;
- Young Person’s Advisers;
- Youth Offending Team workers;
- Drug Action Team workers;
- Learning and Skills Councils.

For example, Connexions Partnerships are working with local LSCs to:

- plan learning provision to make sure it suits the needs of young people – including as a route to childcare and early years work;
- encourage employers to provide high quality work-based learning opportunities for young people – including childcare placements;
- help to find high quality work experience placements – including those in early years and childcare – to help young people make further study and career decisions.

This service is still evolving and local partnerships are keen to explore other ways of working together with related agencies and organisations.
Part 1 Sure Start services and partners

Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education)

Ofsted is a non-ministerial Government department. It was established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of education in all schools in England. Its role also includes the inspection of:

- all education for 16-19 year olds;
- local education authorities;
- teacher training institutions;
- youth work.

Ofsted is also responsible for the regulation of early years day care, including:

- childminders;
- home childcarers;
- day care providers;
- out-of-school clubs;
- crèches.

What do they do?

Before registering a provider, Ofsted assesses individuals’ suitability to provide childcare, look after or be in contact with children. This is done in a number of ways, including health checks, criminal records checks and ‘suitable person interviews’.

These assessments are carried out on all people aged 16 and over who look after children, are connected with the registration, or who live or work on the premises where children are to be cared for, including looking at equipment and checking that the local authority building control department is satisfied that the building is of a satisfactory standard.

After registering a provider, Ofsted inspects day care providers and childminders at least once every two years to ensure that they continue to meet the national standards, and reports on these inspections.

Ofsted needs to be informed of any changes of personnel or to the premises so that they can carry out any further checks as necessary. Ofsted will investigate complaints made about a provider and take enforcement action, if necessary, to ensure that providers meet the national standards.

Think Ofsted if your remit includes:

- caring for children under eight for more than two hours a day;
- dealing with prospective childminders or day care facilities; or
- if you are concerned about a childminder or day care facility.

For more information on Ofsted, call 0845 601 4771 or visit www.ofsted.gov.uk

What are their key priorities and targets?

Ofsted has four main regulatory functions with regard to childminding and day care:

- To register childminder applicants and new applicants who want to provide day care.
- To inspect every day care provider and childminder at least once every two years to ensure they are meeting the national standards.
- To investigate complaints made about day care providers and childminders to make sure they remain suitable to provide childcare.
- If necessary, to take enforcement action against providers to ensure they meet the national standards.
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

What does it do?
The DWP is responsible for delivering a range of benefits, support and advice through a network of services to people of working age, employers, pensioners, families with children and people with disabilities. The Sure Start Unit is accountable to the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions.

What are its key priorities and targets?
The Department’s key aims include:
- helping their customers become financially independent, sustaining a higher proportion of people in work than ever before, while providing security for those who cannot work;
- helping to reduce child poverty, with the objective of reducing it by 50% within a decade, on the way to eliminating it within a generation.

Jobcentre Plus

In April 2002, Jobcentre Plus was created by merging the Employment Service and those parts of the Benefits Agency dealing with customers of working age. The full Jobcentre Plus service is available in 275 offices across Great Britain. The new national network will be fully rolled out by 2006.

It will take several years to integrate services fully, so during the interim local Jobcentres and Social Security offices will still be providing help and advice to clients.

Jobcentre Plus clients are people of working age – men aged 16-65 and women aged 16-60.

What are their key priorities and targets?

Some of the key priorities of Jobcentre Plus:
- Helping people move from welfare to work.
- Helping employers to fill their vacancies.
- Providing people of working age with the help and support they are entitled to.
- Jobcentre Plus Lone Parent Advisers have targets for helping lone parents into work.
- Jobcentre Plus Advisers can check the status of Working Tax Credit (WTC) applications so that people moving from welfare to work do not suffer hardship through delays.
- There are also targets for Jobcentre Plus focusing on getting people from welfare to work, including people with disabilities.

What do they do?

Jobcentre Plus is the first point of contact for people looking for work and for new and repeat claims for all working-age benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance and Income Support.

Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers:
- help people who can work to find a job, giving information on childcare, training and in-work benefits;
- help people who can’t work and want to claim benefits;
- provide specific help for lone parents and people with disabilities.

Local Account Managers are experts on the local labour market. They work with employers and agree levels of service.
Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs)

DEAs provide a job brokerage scheme specifically to help disabled people into employment. They work in partnership with external organisations and advise and support people with disabilities on work and training issues, improving recruitment and retention rates.

Opportunities to work in partnership

Jobcentre Plus provides a variety of products and services to help people move from welfare to work, some of which may help you meet your targets.

Think Jobcentre Plus if your remit includes:
- meeting targets to help clients into work and meeting National Childcare Strategy objectives;
- recruiting people with disabilities, older workers and those from ethnic minorities;
- advertising for, screening, interviewing, shortlisting and appointing staff;
- running recruitment campaigns;
- answering queries on training, job content, legal issues;
- providing and funding training for childcare work;
- working with specific people such as lone parents, people with disabilities or ethnic groups;
- setting up childcare provision.

The range of help Jobcentre Plus can offer includes:
- help with all aspects of recruitment, including the use of interview suites and admin support with recruitment campaigns;
- information on training, employment legislation and equal opportunities;
- information on the need for childcare places among their clients;
- Employer Direct – a single national telephone number for employers to notify job vacancies;
- Jobseeker Direct – a telephone job-matching service, with around 80,000 potential employees calling each week;
- New Deal – part of the Government’s Welfare to Work strategy, it aims to close the gap between the skills employers want and the skills people offer, with extra help for priority groups including Lone Parents and Disabled People – and a fasttrack into funding-related projects; visit the website at www.newdeal.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus contact details are in your phone book. Or visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Childcare Partnership Managers are now in every Jobcentre Plus District to help Jobcentre Plus and local childcare partnerships work together better in meeting the childcare needs of parents. They work alongside Jobcentre Plus Advisers, local authorities and Children’s Information Services (CIS) – and equivalent bodies in Wales and Scotland – as well as employers and other partners.

Their role is to:
- improve the fit of childcare provision to the needs of jobseekers with children;
- contribute to the growth of local childcare provision;
- optimise the flow of information about childcare to Jobcentre Plus staff through regular communication networks, awareness sessions and presentations;
- promote the services and customers of Jobcentre Plus to employers in the childcare sector.

Childcare Partnership Managers work closely with:
- local authorities;
- Children’s Information Services;
- all Jobcentre Plus staff – New Deal Managers, Personal Advisers, District Programme Quality Managers and Jobcentre Plus Local Account Managers, whose experience in working with employers is invaluable.
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

The Department of Trade and Industry works with a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations to achieve their objectives.

What are their key priorities and targets?

The Department’s stated aim is to increase competitiveness and scientific excellence in order to generate higher levels of sustainable growth and productivity in a modern economy.

Work-Life Balance campaign

The Work-Life Balance campaign for England and Wales sits within the DTI alongside policy and legislation on employment rights, including maternity rights, paternity and adoption leave, flexible working, time off for emergencies, parental leave and part-time work.

What are their key priorities and targets?

The role of the Work-Life Balance campaign is to convince employers of:

- the economic benefits of work-life balance, by presenting real-life case studies;
- the need for a culture change.

How does it work?

Childcare is one of the central issues of work-life balance, a core part of what are sometimes known as ‘family-friendly policies’. Information on childcare, provision of a nursery place or help with funding childcare can have an impact on all areas of the work-life balance campaign.

www.surestart.gov.uk
By ensuring that employees, potential new recruits and returners to work have access either to childcare provision, financial support for childcare or information about childcare, employers can:

• widen their recruitment pool;
• enable skilled staff to stay in their job;
• ensure that the company benefits from their experience;
• cut recruitment costs;
• improve morale and productivity.

How the Work-Life Balance campaign can help you

Think work-life balance if your remit includes:

• working with employers to disseminate childcare information;
• engaging employers to have input into partnership approaches;
• working with partners to set up nurseries;
• helping parents and carers into work.

The DTI publishes a wide range of publications, including several on Childcare Link, employment regulations and work-life balance.

Call 020 7215 6024 for details.

For more information, visit the Work-Life Balance website: www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance

See Part 7 for a summary of current legislation relating to Work-Life Balance.

Inland Revenue

The Inland Revenue is responsible for administering a range of taxes, national insurance contributions and stamp duties. They support the National Childcare Strategy by providing within tax credits help for parents with the costs of registered or approved childcare.

• Their website has details of tax credits relating to families, parents and childcare and information about liabilities for self-employed people such as childminders or nursery owners.

• They also have local Business Support Teams who can offer small businesses and new start-ups free one-to-one advice on tax and National Insurance – at any location that suits you. And their Business Advisers also offer free, local half-day workshops designed specifically for new and small businesses. Details are on their website: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/bst

• From April 2003, the Working Families’ Tax Credit, Disabled Person’s Tax Credit and Children’s Tax Credit were replaced by two new tax credits, the Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit. The new tax credits provide support to a wider range of people through a single framework.

For more details, visit the Inland Revenue website, www.ir.gov.uk
Part Two
Jobs and careers in childcare

There is variety as well as job satisfaction for people working in childcare and early education services.

For example people can work in group settings and:

- work in a day nursery, pre-school or playgroup;
- use their skills alongside a teacher in a nursery school or in a nursery class or reception class, with children up to the age of five;
- get involved in one of the many Playwork schemes, the out-of-school clubs and holiday play schemes that exist around the country, working with children up to the age of 14 years;
- specialise in working with children with special educational needs.

Or people can work in their own home or in the home of the children they look after and:

- set up as a childminder, based in their own home;
- work as a home childcarer, in the child’s home.

Building careers

- There is flexibility to move from one childcare setting to another and to gain promotion and greater responsibility with experience and qualifications – from Nursery Assistant to Nursery Manager for instance, Pre-School Assistant to Pre-School Leader or Assistant Playworker to Senior Playworker.
- There are also opportunities to work with children with special needs.
- Some roles require prior qualifications; others have qualifications that can be worked towards in a childcare setting. Qualifications range from on-the-job training for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), to full-time degree courses at university.
- There is a popular Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree. If candidates are already employed in a childcare setting and have their Level 3 NVQ, they can study while they work over two or three years. This can also lead on to Qualified Teacher Status.
What are the options in group settings?

Nurseries

- There are various kinds of nursery – some run by voluntary or community groups, some by employers or local authorities. Others are privately run.
- There are also nursery and reception classes attached to or within primary schools.
- Nurseries usually provide full day care, education and play for children up to the age of five and are generally open from 8am to 6pm. Some also offer extended care for school-age children, opening from seven in the morning until seven in the evening.
- The majority of nurseries are open weekdays all year round (except for Bank Holidays) – but some are open term-time only.
- Those in school settings are open during normal school hours.
- There are likely to be opportunities to work part-time or term-time to fit in with other commitments.

The role would include:

- planning and organising stimulating educational and fun activities and taking care of children’s personal needs – for food, washing and sleep, for instance;
- building positive relationships with children and their families;
- observing and assessing children’s development and keeping accurate records;
- working as part of a team.

Entry qualifications

- It’s possible to start as a trainee with no qualifications at all and work towards NVQ Level 2 in Early Years Care & Education, progressing to Level 3. Some start with these qualifications already.
- For Manager or Supervisor, nurseries will require NVQ 3 in Early Years Care & Education or CACHE (the Council for Awards in Children’s Care and Education) Level 3 Diploma in Child Care & Education. (This used to be NNEB Nursery Nursing.)

A qualified teacher with an early years specialism may be employed in the nursery to help with the delivery of early years education to 3-5 year olds.

Pre-schools and playgroups

- Pre-schools and playgroups provide childcare, play and early years education, usually for children aged between two and five.
- While many operate on a part-time ‘sessional’ basis, an increasing number are offering extended and full day care and holiday schemes.
- Both full and part-time work may be available, as may the possibility of term-time only work.

The role includes:

- planning and providing a range of play opportunities for the children, together with early years education and taking care of children’s personal needs such as toileting and washing hands;
- building positive relationships with children and their families;
- observing and assessing children’s development and keeping accurate records;
- working as part of a team.

Entry qualifications

- It’s possible to start with no qualifications, as a trainee, then work towards the NVQ Level 2 Certificate in Pre-School Practice to become an assistant. An applicant can join as an assistant if they have this qualification already.
- The Level 3 Diploma in Pre-School Practice or NVQ Level 3 could lead to a job as Supervisor or Manager.
Playwork: out-of-school clubs and holiday clubs

Out-of-school clubs (sometimes called kids’ clubs) open before and after school and all day long during school holidays, giving four to 14-year-olds a safe and enjoyable place to play, meet and sometimes catch up on homework.

Holiday play schemes are often run by voluntary organisations, local authorities or charities, in local parks, community centres, leisure centres or schools. They are not only a great place for youngsters to meet their friends, they also offer a wide range of activities to keep them busy, such as sports or drama, arts and crafts or music.

The role includes:
• organising and running or helping with anything from a breakfast club before school to a football team or holiday play scheme;
• preparing play activities;
• taking part in day-to-day administration, record keeping and buying and ordering materials;
• providing full care for children, such as delivering to school, collecting from school and delivering them safely to their parents or carers, possibly providing refreshments;
• administering first aid;
• encouraging parental involvement.

Entry qualifications
• No formal qualifications are necessary, although a short entry course gives a good grounding. Trainees can take NVQ Level 2 Certificate in Playwork to become an assistant.
• NVQ Level 3 in Playwork or CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Playwork can lead to a supervisory role.
• There’s also NVQ Level 4 in Early Years Care & Education and the Management Charter Initiative NVQ Levels 4 & 5 (also useful in other early years and childcare work).

Where to find out about childcare careers in group settings

• The Sure Start Unit publishes a free information pack. This is available by ringing the national childcare recruitment orderline free on 0800 99 66 00 or visiting the website at www.childcarecareers.gov.uk
• Children’s Information Services enquiry lines throughout the country keep a vacancy register of jobs in childcare. This local information is regularly uploaded to the Childcare Link service. Visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk or call Childcare Link on 08000 96 02 96.
• The local authority may offer taster courses and will have advice on childcare and playwork opportunities via a Children’s Information Service. (Details of Children’s Information Services can be found at www.childcarelink.gov.uk – by referring to the map – or call free on 0800 096 0296.
• The Pre-School Learning Alliance – runs its own courses and publishes information on pre-school work and training. Ring on 020 7833 0991 or visit their website at: www.pre-school.org.uk
• The Daycare Trust – campaigns for quality, affordable childcare and provides information and advice on childcare issues. Ring 020 7840 3350 or visit www.daycaretrust.org.uk
• National Day Nurseries Association – offers training and support programmes. Ring 0870 774 4244 or visit www.ndna.org.uk
• Kids’ Clubs Network – information about jobs and training in out-of-school childcare. Ring 020 7512 2100, email information.office@kidsclubs.org.uk or visit www.kidsclubs.org.uk
• The local Jobcentre Plus may have details of job opportunities. (Jobcentre Plus offices are listed in the phone book. Or visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk to find your nearest.)
The childminder role includes:

- choosing working hours and deciding how many children to take on;
- preparing play activities and outings to support children’s learning, play and development;
- offering stability in children’s lives, often from babyhood onwards, all the way through the school years;
- sometimes working with an ‘assistant’ – a partner, family member or friend (provided they are registered too);
- working in partnership with the parents and encouraging parental involvement.

Registration

To make sure that children have good quality care in a safe environment, everyone who looks after children aged under eight for more than two hours a day – and gets paid or rewarded for doing so – must be registered by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education.

Useful information for potential childminders

Childminders are self-employed, setting their own rates of pay and can often continue to receive benefits that other self-employed people can’t. Many childminders also receive a grant to help them start their business. The local authority early years team will be able to advise on the local availability of start-up grants, or in some areas, Sustainability Grants.

Local authorities also have funds (from April 2004) to set up a Support Childminder scheme. This will offer prospective and newly registered childminders support from an established childminder who will listen and provide practical help.

Childminders can become part of an approved childminding network, giving them the support of a network co-ordinator and other childminders. It also gives them the opportunity to build specialist skills that let them become an accredited childminder offering early education – or a community childminder caring for children with special needs.

What are the options as a childminder?

There are over 70,000 childminders in England, looking after children from babyhood right through to school-age, and supporting their development, learning and play. There are also increasing numbers of Home Childcarers.

Childminders are self-employed professional childcarers working in their own homes. They must be registered by Ofsted (see page 22 for more info).

Once a person is registered as a childminder they can apply to be additionally approved as a Home Childcarer, by Ofsted.

A Home Childcarer is a professional childcarer working in the home of the children’s parents, employed by the parent of the children they are looking after.

Learnedirect has information on courses, including childcare and early education courses, nationwide. Visit their website at www.learndirect.co.uk or ring their helpline on 0800 100 900.

The local Connexions or careers service hold information on careers in early years, childcare and playwork and may have details of jobs or training locally. They can also give advice on what would suit you best. They’re listed in the phone book under Careers or Connexions. Check the website at www.connexions.gov.uk to see if there’s a Connexions service near you. Some careers services offer advice and guidance to adults.

Local employers may run or have links with nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups or playwork schemes. It’s worth asking them for details about job opportunities.

Local colleges have information on relevant training courses and how to enrol.

Some careers services offer advice and guidance to adults.

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It also gives them the opportunity to build specialist skills that let them become an accredited childminder offering early education – or a community childminder caring for children with special needs.
How many children can childminders look after?

They can look after up to six children under eight, including their own. No more than three of the six children should be under five and normally no more than one child can be under one.

In certain circumstances approved by Ofsted, childminders may be registered to care for two children under one — as long as they can show that they can meet the varying needs of all the children being cared for, and that they can provide continuity of care. Looking after brothers and sisters or twins may be such an exception, for example.

They can also care for children over eight providing this does not adversely affect the younger children’s care.

Becoming a childminder or home childcarer

1. Contact the local Children’s Information Service (CIS) by calling Childcare Link on 0800 096 02 96. They will enrol the prospective childminder on a pre-registration briefing session. That’s where they’ll be given an application pack and advised about the registration process.

2. Fill in the forms in the pack and return to the relevant Ofsted regional centre. The local authority can help with this.

3. Apply for the essential checks explained in the pack, including:
   - a police check for the prospective childminder and anyone else in their home aged 16 or over, by the Criminal Records Bureau;
   - a health check for the prospective childminder, to make sure that they are physically and mentally fit to care for children;
   - an Ofsted inspection of the prospective childminder and their home, when an Ofsted inspector will ask them some questions based on the national standards to make sure they will provide a suitable environment for children.

4. Contact the local authority to enrol on an introductory childminding course (Introducing Childminding Practice (ICP) or equivalent) and first aid training. They can do these either before they start childminding or within six months of registering. The courses are normally free.

5. Pay the £14 fee to register as a childminder with Ofsted. Then, once they’ve got their Ofsted registration certificate (which takes between three and six months while the checks and inspector’s visit are made) and insurance, they can start work as a registered childminder.

Childminders who want to go on to become a Home Childcarer should contact their local CIS to obtain an application pack. They will be required to complete a short workbook within six months of applying.

Entry qualifications

- No qualifications are needed to apply to become a childminder, but many childminders do have childcare qualifications, often gained once they have registered and started work.
- Childminders do need to complete a short registration course and first-aid training within six months of being registered. After that the local authority, local childminding group and the National Childminding Association (NCMA) will let them know about other courses locally and how they can take their career further.

Where to find out about childminding and home childcare

ChildcareLink Service

Phone free on 0800 096 02 96 or visit the website at www.childcarelink.gov.uk — for contact details for the local Children’s Information Service and the early years team at your local authority.
Children’s Information Services (CIS)

For information about childcare provision in the local area, details of pre-registration sessions and support during and after registration.

Local authority

For details about start-up and other grants and to enrol onto introductory childminding/first aid courses, contact the early years team in your local authority.

Ofsted

Helpline – phone 0845 601 4771, charged at local rate. Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/about/childcare – for more information about registration and inspection and contact details of local authorities.

Inland Revenue

Phone 0845 300 3900 – charged at local rate, visit the website: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk or call in at any Inland Revenue Enquiry Centre for details of tax credits. Phone 08459 15 45 15 for advice on tax and national insurance.

National Childminding Association (NCMA)

Phone NCMA’s Information Line on 0800 169 4486, open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, email info@ncma.org.uk or visit their website: www.ncma.org.uk – for support and information on childminding including insurance and Quality Assurance schemes and details of membership.

Sure Start Unit

Phone 0870 000 22 88 or visit the website: www.surestart.gov.uk – for more information on the ‘Business Success for Childcare’ programme, grants available, becoming a home childcarer, the ‘Birth to three matters’ pack, the national standards and much more.

Sure Start free helpline

Call 0800 294 2904 for more information on the ‘Business Success for Childcare’ programme.
Part Three
Information for parents

This section signposts sources of help for parents, which may be useful if you are advising parents on their childcare and early education options.

Finding out more about childcare and early education options

Local authorities offer advice and information on childcare opportunities, through the local Children’s Information Service (CIS), responsible for gathering and distributing information on childcare and making sure that it’s accessible. Call free on 0800 096 0296 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk and click on the map to find your nearest CIS.

The Sure Start Unit publishes a detailed parents’ guide to childcare and early education options, called ‘Choosing Childcare and Early Education’. You can request up to 100 copies at any one time, free, by calling Daycare Trust on 0207 840 3350. The guide covers private, voluntary sector and maintained services.

Finding out more about free early education for three and four year olds

All four year olds are entitled to free part-time early education in schools, playgroups, day nurseries or with childminders if they are in a childminding network. From April 2004, all three year olds are entitled to free part-time early education too. Young children are entitled to early education for at least two and a half hours per day, five days per week, 33 weeks per year. If the child attends all day, though, the additional time may be charged for.

• The local Children’s Information Service has detailed advice on making the most of a child’s entitlement to early education. For their contact details phone free on 0800 096 0296 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk and use the map to pinpoint the nearest service.
Finding out more about financial support for parents

- Working Tax Credit provides a top-up for people on low incomes. Extra support is available for working parents and disabled people at work. The main part of Working Tax Credit is paid through pay packets or directly to people who are self-employed. Jobcentre Plus Advisers can monitor the progress of Working Tax Credit applications from people moving from welfare to work to ensure they will be paid promptly.

- The childcare element of Working Tax Credit is aimed specifically at helping working parents with the cost of registered and approved childcare. The childcare element can pay up to 70% of childcare costs up to a limit of £135 per week for one child and up to £200 a week for two or more children.

- Child Tax Credit is paid in addition to Child Benefit and is based on income. Parents may be eligible for this regardless of whether they work or not. Generally, families with incomes of up to £58,000 (or £66,000 if there is at least one child under a year old) could still be eligible for help. Families could receive support for each child in the family and, if there’s a baby under one year old or a child who has a disability, they can receive extra help. Child Tax Credit is paid directly into the bank account of the main carer.

- Women in low income families that are receiving Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance or Child Tax Credit (at a higher rate than the family element) or Working Tax Credit (if a disabled worker is included in the assessment) may be eligible for a Sure Start Maternity Grant of £500. Ask at the Jobcentre Plus office.

For more information about tax credits, call the Tax Credits Helpline on 0845 300 3900 (local rate) or visit the Inland Revenue website at www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Finding out more about childcare help for students in sixth form colleges, schools, Further or Higher Education

Care to Learn is a programme which helps remove barriers to learning by giving financial support to teenage parents (including dads) who want to continue their education or training, or are returning to education or training and need help with the cost of their childcare.

Phase 1 of Care to Learn was introduced on 1 August 2003, since when any young parent aged 16-19 who participates in some form of learning/training at a sixth form school, sixth form college, FE college or work-based learning programme (non-employed status) can have their childcare costs paid.

Young parents can claim for childcare and associated transport costs up to a maximum of £5,000 per child per annum. They can choose their preferred childcare, provided that this is Ofsted registered. The DfES is also piloting Care to Learn for the under 16s living in Rotherham, Lambeth, Brighton & Hove and North East Lincolnshire. Find out more about Care to Learn: www.dfes.gov.uk/caretolearn
This section sets out some examples of work in progress across England, to illustrate how providers and agencies are working together to deliver childcare and Sure Start services.

The examples in this section are drawn from Partners in Excellence, a Sure Start Unit scheme to celebrate excellence, innovation and good practice in the development and delivery of quality services to children and families. The following are just some of the 2003 winners.
## Joining up with local partners

### Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

With pathfinder Children’s Trust status achieved in summer 2003, a Trust is being developed to include all the services currently provided by the Education & Life-Long Learning and Social Services departments. This includes all early years and family support services.

- The Trust will also work in partnership with the Primary Care Trust to coordinate a range of child and family health services.
- The joined-up strategic group working locally will include Sure Start local programmes, the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, New Deal and many other significant projects and programmes.

Working together has extended to funding agreements and accessing a complex blend of external grants, much of it matched by further investment from the Council. All this funding and strategic planning is focused on developing community-led, professional and well-informed services. This includes a network of newly-created, integrated children’s centres.

A new Children & Young People’s Strategic Partnership offers a platform for the involvement of other stakeholders, facilitating links to the wider agenda for Children and Families, including Children’s Fund and the Youth Offending Team.

Groundbreaking agreements between the PCT and the Council to pool resources to best meet the needs of local children and families underpin partnership work and joint planning at every level within the local authority and wider community.

For more information contact Gladys Rhodes on 01254 585 657.

## Better information to more parents

### City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Children’s Information Link is now an integral part of Bradford’s one-stop-shop service, bringing services such as Council Benefits, Housing and Social Services together with government agencies such as Inland Revenue and Jobcentre Plus, along with voluntary and independent sector organisations.

**Reach and effectiveness of the Children’s Information Service have been increased by:**

- a bilingual helpline;
- a text phone helpline;
- extensive publicity materials;
- the development of a website;
- geographical information services software;
- advertising on the Asian Radio Network.

An outreach information officer promotes the service in the wider community, with roadshows and presentations to parents and professionals. An extensive advertising campaign and inclusion in the NHS Personal Child Health Records for newborn babies widen awareness of the CIS. Information packs have also been distributed to the largest employers in the area.

With the service extended to include children’s activities and family support services, the Bradford Children’s Information Link provides a comprehensive and very accessible range of services.

For more information contact Renos Christodoulou on 01274 431 705.
Promoting children’s well-being

Sure Start South and North, Hartlepool

Working in some of the most disadvantaged wards in the country, the Sure Start North and South local programmes in Hartlepool have developed a range of preventative strategies and schemes which have resulted in the reduction of social service referrals, fewer admissions to hospitals due to gastroenteritis or severe injury, fewer pregnant women smoking and improved educational attainment in local schools. Many of the schemes have been developed in response to requests by parents.

Effective multi-agency working is ensured through the Sure Start Pathway of Care project. This follows each individual child from conception to entering full-time education, ensuring families receive advice and support from key professionals at different stages. Other strategies include:

- screening to identify women most likely to develop post-natal depression;
- disposable cameras and photo albums, and baby massage sessions to encourage bonding;
- breastfeeding support and weaning parties;
- stay and play sessions;
- rhyme times and play at baby clinics;
- the ‘Bubblebag’ and ‘Chattersack’ healthy eating projects.

For more information contact Meredith Teasdale on 01429 523 671.

Supporting parents’ next steps

Sure Start Abbey Bucknall

Focused on supporting lone parents in the Sure Start local programme areas, the ‘Work Start’ scheme provides individual support to enable most isolated lone parents to gain the confidence to access knowledge and skills in preparation for returning to work.

Working closely with Jobcentre Plus, a local community college, employers and other partners, the scheme provides:

- drop-in and one-to-one sessions;
- accredited learning;
- mentoring support;
- CV and interview skill training.

Based in an extended school, the scheme actively seeks out isolated lone parents, particularly targeting fathers and teenage parents. Networking with Sure Start Plus, Health promotion and school outreach workers enables the scheme to focus their work. The support workers offer individual support to parents with a wide range of issues, including:

- drugs;
- mental health;
- debt problems;
- parents needing support with childcare, transport or other practical difficulties.

A member of the Information, Advice & Guidance on work (IAG) signposting network, the scheme is already working towards the IAG Quality Standards Award.

For more information contact Michael Durell on 01782 209 096.

Oxfordshire County Council

Multi-agency partnerships in Oxfordshire deliver a wide range of schemes and programmes to develop the learning opportunities, support and guidance for parents, particularly targeting lone and teenage parents.

Open access family centres in disadvantaged wards and voluntary sector centres provide:

- integrated family support;
- early years education;
- childcare.

‘Saturdads’ groups offer targeted support to fathers, while the Oxfordshire Parenting Forum works to ensure an effective network between support agencies. Basic skills initiatives are prioritised, with the Early Start family basic skills initiative for birth to threes and their parents proving successful.
Many and varied opportunities for accredited training are available to parents to develop their confidence and promote return to the workplace. For example, Sure Start Oxford volunteers operate a family centre café, Sure Cook, with on-the-job and CD Rom-based training.

A Connexions Personal Adviser and a teenage pregnancy reintegration officer support teenage parents. The Young Parent Network supports workers to develop new young parents’ groups, including a Young Dad’s project run in a partnership between Sure Start and the Youth Service.

For more information contact Chris Sewell on 01865 810 517.

Warrington Borough Council

An innovative and groundbreaking project in Warrington saw 132 local people from disadvantaged areas return to work. The ‘Maximising Opportunity in Warrington’ project was developed by the Warrington Partnership, which includes many local agencies such as:

- the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership;
- Warrington Borough Council;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Tesco.

The project, funded by the North West Regional Development Agency, provided a job guarantee scheme to help unemployed residents from the most disadvantaged wards. It prepared people to take up employment with Tesco at a new Tesco Extra store and comprised:

- preparation for return to work;
- interview training and support;
- a six-week Retail Preparation course;
- additional training for basic skills needs.

Funding was provided to help with finding and paying for childcare until the trainees started in employment. Addressing childcare and transport needs was critical in overcoming practical barriers to returning to work.

Working closely at all stages with the Tesco recruitment team, the Warrington Partnership has helped many local people find work and access quality childcare. Such has been the project's success that Tesco hopes to replicate the scheme in other areas.

For more information contact Chris Jones on 01925 443 137.

Creating the workforce

London West Early Years and Childcare Quality Forum

Bringing together the EYDCPs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon and Hounslow, together with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the London West Early Years Quality Forum is an effective collaboration determined to build a professional workforce.

With a focus on developing formal management training opportunities to promote more effective working and better understanding of quality assurance issues, the Forum’s aim is to improve retention of managers within the early years sector. This fits with a culture that recognises the importance of formal management training and values the skills, knowledge and experience of its practitioners.

With an effective marketing campaign and a commitment to offer courses where they were needed, a strong demand-led training programme was established. The programme has been well-received and demand for places continues to grow. Following a successful bid for further funding, the project’s future is secure, enabling more practitioners and settings to benefit from this important opportunity.

For more information contact Joe Rooks on 020 8224 1141.

Copies of the ‘Partners in Excellence’ booklet can be obtained free from:

Sure Start Partners in Excellence Awards c/o Daycare Trust, 21 St George’s Road London SE1 6ES Tel: 020 7840 3350 x204 Fax: 020 7840 3355 Email: info@daycaretrust.org.uk
All Sure Start publications are available to download from the document bank on our website: www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/

Some key publications and periodicals:

Sure Start introductory leaflet
Outlines Sure Start’s basic aims and principles. Order copies from DfES Publications by calling 0845 602 2260 or emailing dfe@prolog.uk.com
Quote reference: SSULeaflet01/12/03.

Sure Start Guidance 2004-2006
Detailed guidance covering Government policy in respect of Sure Start, setting out aims, objectives and targets, and local delivery arrangements. Order copies from DfES Publications by calling 0845 602 2260 or emailing dfe@prolog.uk.com
Quote reference: SSGuidance0406.

Choosing Childcare
A useful and popular guide to childcare and early education aimed at parents. To order copies of Choosing Childcare, call Daycare Trust on 020 7840 3350 or email info@daycaretrust.org.uk

Recruitment and Retention – a good practice guide for early years, childcare and playwork providers
Advice on hiring and keeping staff. Order copies from DfES Publications by calling 0845 602 2260 or emailing dfe@prolog.uk.com
Quote reference: GPGPROVIDERS. There is also a version for local authorities. Quote reference: GPGPARTNERSHIPS.

Working With Children
Information for prospective childcare workers. Order copies from DfES Publications by calling 0845 602 2260 or emailing dfe@prolog.uk.com
Quote reference: CRWORKWITH.

DfES publications for childminders and home childcarers
Phone 0845 602 2260, charged at local rate, or email dfe@prolog.uk.com – for the Home Childcarer pack (reference: HC07) and the Birth to three matters pack (reference: BIRTH).

‘Sure Start’ magazine
A quarterly magazine for all early years practitioners, featuring best practice and different views on issues across the sector. The magazine is sent automatically to all early years settings, Sure Start-funded programmes and early years departments in local authorities. If you don’t get a copy by one of these routes, you can subscribe online: www.datadirectltd.co.uk/surestart or email surestart@redwoodgroup.net

‘Partners’ newsletter
‘Partners’ is the bi-monthly Sure Start newsletter for local authorities, produced by Daycare Trust and funded by the Unit. You can subscribe to ‘Partners’ by emailing partners@daycaretrust.org.uk

‘Sure Start News’ email bulletin
‘Sure Start News’ is a monthly email bulletin with details of news and resources from Sure Start. View the bulletin here: www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/newsletters/surestartnews/ or receive it regularly by emailing surestart.news@dfe.gsi.gov.uk
Sure Start – to find out more call 0870 001 2345 or visit www.surestart.gov.uk

Careers Services
For help with career information and local job or training opportunities. Try the Careers Services National Association website www.careers-uk.com

Daycare Trust
Information and advice on childcare issues. Tel: 0207 840 3350
www.daycaretrust.org.uk

The Early Years National Training Organisation
Qualifications and training information. Tel: 01727 738300
www.early-years-nto.org.uk

Kids’ Clubs Network
Information on jobs and training in out-of-school childcare and playwork. Tel: 0207 512 2100
www.kidsclubs.co.uk

The Pre-School Learning Alliance
Runs its own courses and publishes information on pre-school work and training. Tel: 0207 833 0991
www.pre-school.org.uk

The Childcare Partnership Manager
Based in the Jobcentre Plus. It’s their role to improve the fit of childcare provision to the needs of jobseekers with children.

Local authorities and Children’s Information Services (CISs)
Have information, advice and support about childcare work and childcare. For details ring Childcare Link free on 08000 960 296 or visit the website at www.childcarelink.gov.uk or contact your CIS – call free on 0800 096 0296 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk (click on the map)

The National Association of Children’s Information Services
Supports quality in local CISs. Tel: 0207 935 0088
www.nacis.org.uk

Skillsactive
Information on a career in playwork. Tel: 020 7632 2000
www.skillsactive.com

The National Day Nurseries Association
Promotes quality childcare and early years education. Tel: 0870 774 4244
www.ndna.org.uk

The National Childminding Association
Information on training and childminding generally. Tel: 0208 464 6164
www.ncma.org.uk.

The Regional Ofsted Centre can advise on registration requirements. Ring 0845 601 4771 and your call will be directed to your local regional centre. Or visit the website at www.ofsted.gov.uk. They will also provide you with guidance on the National Standards.

Worktrain is the Government’s national jobs and learning website. Among other services, it can be used to find:
- local childcare and information on a range of childcare topics;
- early years and childcare occupation information;
- training and employment in childcare.
Visit the site at www.worktrain.gov.uk
Part Seven

The legal framework for Work-Life Balance

This section summarises the current legislative framework which supports improved work-life balance.

Antenatal care

An employer cannot unreasonably refuse a pregnant employee paid time off for antenatal care.

Maternity Leave

All pregnant women, whatever hours they work and regardless of how long they have worked for their employer, are entitled to maternity leave. Pregnant employees are entitled to 26 weeks’ ordinary maternity leave. Women who have completed 26 weeks’ continuous service with their employer by the fourteenth week before the due date are able to take additional maternity leave. Additional maternity leave starts immediately after ordinary maternity leave and continues for a further 26 weeks.

Maternity Pay is conditional on length of service and pay received. If an employee is not entitled to that, they may be able to claim Maternity Allowance.

Paternity Leave

Fathers are entitled to two weeks’ paid paternity leave, to be taken around the time of the birth. The rate of Statutory Paternity Pay will be the same as the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay.

Adoption Leave

New rights to adoption and paternity leave and pay entitle eligible employees to take paid leave when a child is placed for adoption.

Parental Leave

Eligible parents and adoptive parents can take a total of 13 weeks’ parental leave, usually up to the child’s fifth birthday or fifth anniversary from the date of adoption placement (or child’s eighteenth birthday if that is sooner), to look after the child or make arrangements for the child’s welfare. Eligible parents of disabled children are entitled to take a total of 18 weeks up to the child’s eighteenth birthday.

Parents who are low paid may be entitled to state benefits or tax credits if they take unpaid parental leave. For more details, read ‘Parental leave’, leaflet PL509, from the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk
Time Off for Dependents

All employees are entitled to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency or unexpected situation involving a dependant, such as a child or elderly relative who lives with them, regardless of length of service. There is no limit on the amount of times an employee can take time off under this right, as long as the reasons for taking it are genuine.

Full details are on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Act makes it unlawful for an employer who employs 15 or more people to discriminate against an employee who is disabled or has had a disability when they are applying for a job or are in employment.

The Act defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse effects on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.” An employer must make reasonable adjustments to enable continued employment or future recruitment of disabled employees. Providing information on childcare or adjusting a working pattern to accommodate childcare arrangements could be one way of making such an adjustment.

In September 2002, new legislation came into effect, which, for the first time, provides legal protection for disabled children and students in all aspects of educational life.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) promotes the benefits of disabled people's new rights to education in the mainstream system.

For more information, contact the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) helpline on 08457 622633, textphone 08457 622644 or visit the DRC website at www.drc-gb.org

The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000

Regulations that came into force in July 2000 give part-time workers the right not to be treated less favourably than full-timers. This applies not only to pay but also contractual sick pay, access to occupational pension schemes, training, holidays and maternity leave, maternity pay and parental leave.

Sex Discrimination Act 1995

There is no automatic legal right to work on a reduced hours basis, but employers are potentially guilty of unlawful discrimination if they refuse to allow women to return on reduced hours after the birth of a baby. Case law has clarified the position to the effect that a refusal to allow an employee to return part-time or to a job share after maternity leave could be considered indirect sex discrimination unless the employer can show justification for their refusal based on good business reasons.
**Equal Opportunities**

**Sex Discrimination Act 1995**

There is no automatic legal right to work on a reduced hours basis, but employers are potentially guilty of unlawful discrimination if they refuse to allow women to return on reduced hours after the birth of a baby. Case law has clarified the position to the effect that a refusal to allow an employee to return part-time or to a job share after maternity leave could be considered indirect sex discrimination unless the employer can show justification for their refusal based on good business reasons.

The **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** makes it unlawful for an employer who employs 15 or more people to discriminate against an employee who is disabled or has had a disability when they are applying for a job or are in employment.

The Act defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse effects on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.” An employer must make reasonable adjustments to enable continued employment or future recruitment of disabled employees.

For more information, contact the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) helpline on 08457 622633; textphone 08457 622644.

**Free leaflets**

The following leaflets are available on the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) website or from the DTI Orderline (details in the Where Next? section):

- Time off for dependants: a short guide
  DTI Ref: URN 99/1186
- Maternity leave changes: a basic summary
  DTI ref: URN 03/557
- Paternity leave and pay: a basic summary
  DTI Ref: URN 03/559
- Flexible working the right to request: a brief summary: URN 03/560

The TUC also has free leaflets on all aspects of rights at work. The Know Your Rights line is on 0870 600 4882 – the website is at www.tuc.org.uk

**Acknowledgements**

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