Islington Childminder Information Partnership Working

Welcome to childminder partnership working with Islington local authority early years and childcare service.

We warmly encourage Islington childminders to work in partnership together with us. This document sets out how we can work with you and what procedures are in place to support this process.

In Islington’s early years and childcare service there are two qualified early years childminding coordinators, Sandra Nicholson and Jo Hunter who work as part of a larger teaching and learning team. They monitor the quality of practice in home-based settings, deliver pre-and post-registration training and are the first point of contact for advice and support for childminders in the borough. They work closely with Islington’s Family Information Service and Renate Laux, Childminding and Childcare Information Officer, to support families to find childcare and childminders to fill their vacancies.

Benefits of partnership working

- It supports the offer of high quality practice and provision in a home setting as part of Islington’s Bright Start services for parents and children.
- It can form part of your marketing strategy acting as an attractive selling point for parents who can be reassured that you are making best use of the support on offer from the local authority. Information for parents on the local authority website encourages them to speak to their childminder about partnership working.
- It provides opportunities to share skills, knowledge and good practice and discuss ideas with a diverse range of colleagues.
- Through forums you can gain expert advice from professionals across a wide range of services as well as a network of professional contacts to draw upon.
- You can participate in programmes such as Healthy Early Years London
- You can use the Register of Good Practice to share aspects of good practice between each other: www.islingtoncs.org/registerofgoodpractice
We offer:

- Access to expert support and advice from childminder coordinators.
- An annual home monitoring visit to discuss and monitor statutory requirements and the quality of practice and provision, considering strengths and identifying any areas for improvement. This includes how you support children’s learning and development.
- Telephone and email advice from childminding coordinators.
- Access to childminder groups in children’s centres led by a senior early childhood practitioner. These are held in a play-based environment and workshops are held over the year on a variety of subjects for CMs to take away ideas and information.
- A termly childminder forum to receive important updates and information.
- Access to bespoke termly safeguarding training workshops.
- The opportunity for you to offer to parents, free entitlement places for 3 and 4 yr. olds and places for children allocated through the Priority Early Learning Panel.
- The opportunity to offer emergency childcare brokered through the Family Information Service.

Participation in partnership working involves:

- An annual home monitoring visit from a childminder coordinator with follow up of any identified actions for improvement.
- Your attendance at least two childminding forums a year to keep up to date with relevant information. These are either held in the evenings or on a Saturday for approximately 2 hours and include local and national updates, safeguarding information, speakers from wider services and opportunities for discussion.
- Regular attendance at Bright Start childminder groups.

The annual home monitoring visit

This is arranged in advance and lasts about 90 minutes. A monitoring form (Appendix A) is sent out ahead of the appointment, some of which can be filled in before the visit. During the visit the form will be completed and an assessment of the quality of practice will be made in discussion with the CM coordinator and the childminder. At this time, a rating of red, amber or green (RAG) will be given to support with identifying strengths and areas for development. A copy of the final report with relevant actions will be emailed to childminders. The criteria for the rating can be found in Appendix B.
Free early education funding

All childminders who receive funding from Islington to provide free early education entitlement (FEEE) places to 2, 3 or 4 yr. old children and those from the Priority Early Learning Panel must participate in partnership working*. This includes the annual monitoring visit which is in line with DfE guidance (2018 A4.18 pp22-23) that sets out local authority requirements to ensure:

- That the provider meets the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs
- Effective safeguarding and promotion of welfare of the children for whom the early education is provided
- That providers actively promote fundamental British values and not promote as evidence based views or theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations
- That the early years provider takes any measures identified in a report from Ofsted to improve the overall effectiveness of the provision

Safeguarding and Inclusion

Islington Council has an overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. Childminders offering funded places will have the opportunity to complete their DBS with Islington local authority.

Islington partnership working supports the principle that equality of opportunity is fundamental when developing a high quality service to childminders, children and parents. It is essential to ensure that no one is disadvantaged on grounds of race, culture, language, disability, gender or class. Islington local authority is committed to building a fairer place to work and live and has established a Race Equality Network to tackle systemic racism. In turn, Islington partnership working is committed to monitoring childminders in a fair and open way.

*This does not apply to childminders registered with an agency.

On behalf of the children and families in Islington, we look forward to working with you.

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