



Ofsted self-check

for childminders in England

47 questions across the seven evaluation areas, the call before the visit, and the records an inspector may ask to see. Free to copy, print and pass on.

Written from the Early years inspection toolkit, v2.0, for use from 1 September 2026. Last checked 27 October 2026.

How to use this

1. Do it in one sitting, before you need it

Forty minutes with a cup of tea beats an evening the week an inspection is due. Tick what is true today, not what you intend.

2. An unticked box is not a failure

It is the next thing to do. Three unticked boxes you have noticed beat thirty you have not.

3. Answer out loud

Most of these are questions you will be asked in conversation, not asked to produce on paper. If you cannot say it out loud in two sentences, the box is not ticked yet.

4. Pick one thing

When you finish, choose the single unticked box that would change the most for a child, and put a date next to it. Then do it. The rest can wait for the next pass.

5. Do it again in six months

Inspections moved to a four-year window from April 2026, and new registrations are seen inside 18 months. Twice a year keeps it boring, which is the point.

Before the visit

Ofsted phones to notify you. The planning call follows later the same day, usually by video.

- ☐ I know the planning call comes later the same day as the notification call, and lasts about 30 minutes.

It is normally by video. Ofsted also reserves the right to inspect without notice.

- ☐ I can describe what the children in my care are working towards, in two minutes, without notes. The call is for the inspector to understand my context and discuss practicalities.

- ☐ I can name what I think my strengths are, and what I am working on. The inspector asks for both on the call.

- ☐ I know that having nobody else to invite to the call does not count against me. Childminders are the leaders of their setting and need no nominee.

- ☐ I know roughly how long the visit runs: about three hours for a childminder.

The seven evaluation areas

Safeguarding is met or not met. The other six carry one of five grades, from urgent improvement to exceptional. There is no overall grade.

Safeguarding

Reported as met or not met. No grade on the scale.

- ☐ I can say, step by step, what I would do if I had a concern about a child today.
Including who I would contact and how quickly.
- ☐ I can say what I would do if an allegation were made about me or someone in my household.
- ☐ I can describe how I would spot a child who needs early help, not only one at risk of harm.
- ☐ I understand that babies and children with SEND depend on me to notice and act for them.
- ☐ Parents and children know who to go to.
- ☐ My safeguarding training is current and I can say when I last did it.

Inclusion

Graded: urgent improvement, needs attention, expected standard, strong standard, exceptional.

- ☐ I know which of my children are disadvantaged, have SEND, are known to children's social care, or face other barriers.
Without looking it up. Inspectors ask for children in named groups.
- ☐ I can name a need I spotted early, and what I did about it.
- ☐ Where I have asked a specialist or external partner for advice, I have acted on it.
- ☐ I can describe a reasonable adjustment I have made for a particular child.
- ☐ I know which children receive the early years pupil premium, if any.

Curriculum and teaching

Graded on the five-point scale.

- ☐ I can say what key knowledge my children are learning, and in what order.
Inspectors look at whether the curriculum identifies and sequences key knowledge across the EYFS programmes.
- ☐ I can explain why my day is arranged the way it is.
- ☐ I can give an example of something I taught on purpose, rather than something that happened.
- ☐ I adjust what I do for children developing at different rates, and can give an example.
- ☐ I can name something about my own practice I set out to improve, and what I did.

Achievement

Graded on the five-point scale.

- ☐ For each child, I can say what they know and can do now that they could not six months ago.
- ☐ I can talk about each child's communication and language, because it underpins everything else.
- ☐ My observations carry a next step, and I can show where a next step changed what I did.

- ☐ I can say which child I am most concerned about, and what I am doing about it.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Graded on the five-point scale.

- ☐ Arrival, mealtimes, sleep and going out run as routines the children know.
- ☐ I have clear expectations of behaviour, and parents know what they are.
- ☐ I can describe how I respond when a child finds something hard, and why that way.
- ☐ I notice patterns in attendance, including for children who would lose most by missing days.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Graded on the five-point scale. [The EYFS welfare requirements sit here.](#)

- ☐ Safe sleeping: I can describe what I do, for every child, and especially under-tuos.
Inspectors give particular regard to the statutory guidance on safe sleeping.
- ☐ Food: I can describe each child's needs, stage, and any allergy or care plan.
- ☐ I can produce allergies, dietary needs and medical information rather than recite them.
- ☐ My accident and medication records are up to date today.
- ☐ My paediatric first aid certificate is current and I can lay hands on it.

Leadership and governance

Graded on the five-point scale. [As a childminder, this is you.](#)

- ☐ I can name one thing I have improved since my last inspection, and why I chose it.
- ☐ My own training is current, and I can say what I did last and what is next.
- ☐ My EYFS-required policies exist, I follow them, and I can produce them on paper or on screen.
- ☐ If I have an assistant, I can say how I know their practice is safe.
- ☐ My registration details with Ofsted are current, including who lives at the premises.

Records an inspector may ask to see

The toolkit tells inspectors to keep documentation to what statutory requirements or ordinary business produce, in any format, and says you should not produce documents for an inspection.

- ☐ Paediatric first aid arrangements.
- ☐ The EYFS-required policies and procedures.
On paper or on a screen. Inspectors may cover them in discussion instead.
- ☐ Accident records, and complaints records.
- ☐ Records of any refused places, and any log of discrimination incidents.
- ☐ Any LADO referral and how it was resolved, and any multi-agency plan.
- ☐ For an assistant or a volunteer in regulated activity, the record of their checks.
Inspectors do not need to see DBS checks for the childminder, known assistants or household members.

- ☐ The register, accurate and current.
Who is here, who was here, and when they arrived. Ordinary business records count.
 - ☐ Signed parental consents and contracts, each with the date given.
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Where this comes from

Early years inspection toolkit, operating guide and information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>

Education inspection framework, for use from November 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>

Inspection of early years register providers: requirements for Ofsted

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-register-providers-inspection-requirements-for-ofsted/inspection-of-early-years-register-providers-requirements-for-ofsted>

This is a reading of published guidance by a childminder, not advice from Ofsted, and your inspector will ask their own questions. Check anything you plan to act on at the source.

Written by Iram Tahir, registered childminder, for BeehiveKin. Free to copy and share, including in a local authority newsletter. The current version is always at beehivekin.com/ofsted-self-check.

Where these records can live

BeehiveKin keeps the contracts, the statutory consents, the daily register and the learning journal for childminders in England, on a phone. Accounts are opened by hand: ask at beehivekin.com/request-access.