



She is the best in the world!



What children think of their childminders



The National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland (NCB NI) together with the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) wanted to find out what happens when children go to a childminder's house, what are the best bits of being cared for by a childminder and what things might be improved. We did this because it had never been done before.

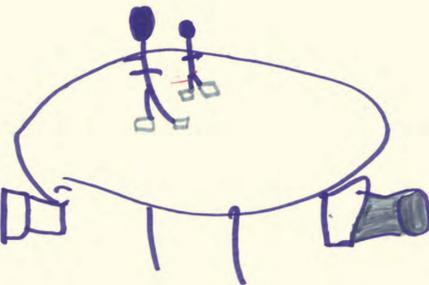


How did we get the information we needed?



We got the views of as many children, childminders and parents as possible using surveys, group chats and interviews. In total this was over 700 people! When we were talking to children we asked them to draw a picture of their childminders. These pictures were a good way for the children to show us what they did at their childminder's house and how they felt. Some talked to us along with their brother or sister.

We also got the views of children through the Kids Life and Times Survey (or KLT). Everyone in P7 can take part in the Kids Life and Times Survey. This year the survey asked children where they went after school. We were interested to know if they went to a childminder's house, what they did at their childminder's and how they felt about the way they were looked after. 161 children answered these questions.



Things children don't like about being at their childminder's house.



Some of the older children didn't really like going to their childminder's house. There were different reasons for this. Some older children found younger children annoying:

When you are doing your homework, they (the younger children) are running around screaming. (Girl, 10, Interview)

Some got bored because there was nobody of the same age to play with:



I feel ok (about) the way I'm looked after when school finishes but we are the oldest ones there and sometimes you can get bored (Girl, KLT)

I only feel a bit happy because I am the oldest and there is nothing for me to do but watch TV or play outside by myself as my brothers just play with their friends... (Girl, KLT)

There are no other kids my age... (Girl, KLT)

Others said there were no suitable toys for them to play with:

All the toys are babyish (Girl, KLT)

What we found out



Lots of children feel happy at their childminder's house. Here's why:

Some said that their childminder was a nice, helpful, kind and fun person:

I am happy about the way I am looked after, after school, because I have a nice and helpful childminder (Boy, KLT)

...I know her very well and she is really kind (Girl, KLT)

...I have lots of fun with my childminder and her baby, she is really nice, she is the best in the world (Girl, KLT)

I feel happy because my childminder is so kind and nice and buys us muffins on Thursday(s) (Girl, KLT)

Children liked the homely feel of their childminder's house:

When we go to (my childminders) it feels like going home. (Boy, 6, Interview)

I am happy because I can do the same stuff I can do when my mum and dad are home (Boy, KLT)

Some children felt very close to their childminder, almost like another family member:

...I like (my childminder)...And sometimes I love her. (Girl, 4, interview)

...my childminder treats me like I am her own (Girl, KLT)

...they look after me like they would to their family (Boy, KLT)

Lots of children said they felt safe and well cared for by their childminder:

I am happy when I stay with my childminder because I feel safe with her (Boy, KLT)

I feel happy because my childminder treats me well and makes me feel safe (Girl, KLT)

My childminder takes really good care of me (Boy, KLT)

What children do when they are at their childminder's house



Most children told us they had fun at their childminders and enjoyed doing lots of different things. Sometimes these were 'ordinary' things like baking, other times they enjoyed playing with toys or pets that were different to the ones they had in their own homes.

... she lets us bake fifteen sometimes. (Girl, 11, Interview)

I am happy because (there are) lots of toys and a garden with a swing, slide and see-saw (Boy, KLT)

I play on the trampoline; have my snacks, playing football, playing with Bruce (childminder's dog) (Boy, 6, Interview)

Many also said they enjoyed going to different places with their childminder:

...I get to go on trips and get to play football and gaelic (I love football and Gaelic) (Girl, KLT)

she is a great person to be around and lets us go to fun places (Boy, KLT)

Children also liked to spend time with their friends and brothers or sisters at their childminders:

... my best thing going to (my childminders) is when ... me and Ted are playing that game, because it's a really fun game...You only need two balls, two players... (Boy, 8, Interview)

I am happy because I get to do things with my friends (Girl, KLT)

(I like doing)... the things Thomas (older brother) is doing. (Boy, 4, Interview)

(I am happy at my childminders because) my little brother goes there (Boy, KLT)

... it is nice to see your family and friends after school because you haven't seen them all day. (Girl, KLT)

I get to play with my childminder's children and other children she looks after (Girl, KLT)

Some children liked making new friends at their childminders:

... you get to be with other children that you may not know and you can talk to them and feel free (Boy, KLT)

I feel happy about the way I am looked after when school finishes because I have made new friends. (Girl, KLT)

Homework time!
Lots of children told us that they did homework at their childminders and some said this made them feel happy. Sometimes childminders helped the children with their homework.

(I feel happy at my childminders because) ...I like being there and I can get my homework done so I will have more free time (Boy, KLT)

...my childminder is really nice and if I need help with homework she will always help me (Girl, KLT)

What happens next?



NCB have written down all of the things that the children and adults have told us into a book. We will be telling the people in charge of childminders all of the things we found out. We hope that this will help children to continue enjoying being at their childminders. We also hope that we can improve things for those children who said that they didn't really enjoy being at their childminders.



Do you want to find out more?

You can download the full and summary reports for the *Childminding in Northern Ireland: an exploration of practice, quality and the impact of vertical placements on children* project from <http://www.ncb.org.uk/northernireland>, <http://www.nicma.org> and <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk>. For more information on the project please contact Rachel Shannon on 028 9089 1730. Follow NCB NI on twitter @ncb_ni_tweets

Thank You

NCB and NICMA would like to say a big Thank You to all of the girls and boys who talked to us and who filled out the KLT survey. Without you we would not know what children think of being at a childminder's house. You have given us some very important information - so thank you very much!