

Insights into Building a Wraparound Childminding Business

As many parents have faced the challenges of balancing work and family life, the need for high-quality wraparound childcare in a home-based childminder setting has become increasingly important. This interview highlights the experiences of a childminder in Central Bedfordshire (an Early Adopter local authority) who has spent over a decade providing families with a home-based environment for children before and after school and during holiday periods.

Here is what they had to say about building a childminding business around wraparound childcare.

1. Could you tell us about your childminding provision and services?

I only provide wraparound childcare offering a breakfast club from 7:30am - 8:45am* with activities and breakfast and then I provide after school care, picking up from 3:20pm, and operating to 6pm Monday to Thursday and 4:45pm on Fridays. We have activities, outdoor play, snacks, and dinner. During school holidays, I work 2-3 days per week from 7:30am - 6pm. We spend most days outdoors visiting local attractions using my National Trust and English Heritage annual passes.

2. When did you start doing wraparound provision and why?

I have been a childminder for 11 years but in 2016, when both of my own children started school, the local lower school did not offer any wraparound care, but it was needed by working parents. So, I shifted my childminding business to focus purely on offering a wraparound service. I set up a Facebook business page to promote my services and the local school even added me to their website under their Wraparound Care section with my contact information. Originally, I was based out of my home and in 2016 I had a garden room built at my new home to accommodate my childminding business.

3. What are the benefits of providing only wraparound provision?

It allows me to work while my own children are in school so I can be home with them before and after. I earn a full-time wage working only part-time hours. I also have flexibility - an earlier finish on Fridays and only working 2-3 days during school holidays. I also find I don't have to complete extra assessments or paperwork beyond planning activities.

4. What are your thoughts on the National Wraparound Programme?

I think it is great the government is investing money into wraparound care to support parental employment. However, my concern is funding may go first to schools setting up their own provision, potentially taking work away from childminders. It should be made clear that childminders can successfully set up their own wraparound settings. The home environment and flexibility childminders offer is a unique selling point compared to school-based offers.

5. How many staff and children do you have? What were the steps to hire an assistant?

Due to demand, I employed an assistant in September 2023. This allowed me to offer more places while maintaining ratios. I had to get a letter of suitability from Ofsted, insurance, and parent consent. I'm responsible for ensuring my assistant is up to date on all policies and procedures. I currently have 21 children enrolled, 19 are aged 4-9 and 2 are aged 10-11. With my assistant, I can have up to 12 under 8 years old and 18 children in total at once.

6. What advice would you give someone interested in becoming a childminder or offering wraparound care?

I fully encourage people to become a childminder – it is rewarding family-friendly work despite being hard work at times. For wraparound care specifically, get the school's endorsement, demonstrate the benefits over school settings like varied activities and flexibility. Consider employing an assistant or teaming up with another childminder to offer more places. It is also useful to set up a page on social media, my Facebook page has been instrumental in getting new sign ups.

QUICK FACTS

1. Runs a breakfast club from 7:30am-8:45am and after-school care until 6pm weekdays (4:45pm on Fridays).*
2. Offers holiday care 2-3 days per week, taking children on outings using annual passes.
3. Provides a home-based setting with varied activities like arts/crafts, cooking, outdoor play.
4. Has a Facebook business page and is listed on the school's website for promotion.
5. Hired an assistant in Sept 2023 to accept more children while maintaining ratios.
6. Currently has 21 children enrolled, mostly ages 4-9, with a maximum of 18 at once.
7. Parents appreciate the flexibility, varied activities, and nurturing environment.

**Note: hours differ slightly from the Government wraparound definition due to local parental demand.*