

Becoming an Oldham Childminder

Working in partnership with Oldham Professional Independent
Childminders (OPIC) and Oldham Council

Mentor – Buddy Booklet



The Oldham Childminder Mentor and Buddy Scheme is a partnership between a new childminder (called the Buddy); a fully qualified and experienced Childminder from the Oldham Professional Independent Childminders Network (OPIC) (called Mentor) and Oldham Local Authority.

The aim of the scheme is;

- To develop the quality of childminding practice through mentor/buddy support with existing childminders who have outstanding or good practice
- To promote an ethos of mentoring, support and sharing good practice through the Oldham Professional Independent Childminder network

What is the Mentor/ Buddying scheme?

The scheme is a form of professional development which allows Early Years Practitioners to learn new skills from other childcare workers in a friendly, relaxed and familiar environment.

The scheme is about supporting new childminders following their training and set up their business by developing a network of contacts including the childminder support groups, the Oldham Professional Independent Childminders (OPIC) Facebook group and attending a variety of training and events offered by OPIC and the Local Authority.

Early Years Practitioners who have taken part in other Buddying Schemes and programmes have benefited by;

- becoming more reflective
- meeting other childminders in similar situations to share best practice to improve outcomes for children
- becoming more confident in every aspect of their role
- building on-going relationships with new colleagues
- enjoying supporting others and developing a satisfying role
- helping to overcome isolation as a new childminder

What is a Mentor?

A Mentor is an experienced childminder who is graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. The Mentor gives support and mentors on all aspects of becoming a self-employed childminder including training, what to expect at the Ofsted visit and how to be prepared.

What is a Buddy?

A Buddy is someone who has recently undertaken training in Preparing to Work in Home Based Childcare and the HABC Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid. The Buddy will have a recent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate.

The Mentor - Buddy Code of Practice

The Code of Practice is important to ensure that there is a professional and consistent approach to working in partnership together and to the same standards of best practice.

The Mentor will:

- make initial contact with the buddy
- support them in developing best practice
- discuss a support plan
- maintain confidentiality between themselves and the Buddy Partner unless there is a safeguarding issue
- offer the Buddy 2 visits, one to the mentor setting to gain experience of the enabling environment and one to the home of the Buddy

The Mentor cannot guarantee and/or be held responsible for the following:-

- the childminders grading by Ofsted
- how soon the childminder will obtain business
- promoting the childminders business

The Buddy Partner will:

- reply to initial contact
- maintain contact with mentor as agreed together
- maintain confidentiality at all times especially when visiting the mentor's setting unless there is a safeguarding issue
- be a good timekeeper when visiting the mentor's setting
- hold a valid and recent enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate

What is OPIC?

Oldham Professional Independent Childminders (OPIC) are a growing group of over 65 childminders from all areas of Oldham who meet regularly to discuss local and government matters that concern our business. OPIC offers support through meetings and one to one chats; training for example on Forest School and Story Sacks; days out such as Fun for the children with the Gruffalo Trail; activity days for children including a Christmas Party; and much more.

The OPIC Code of practice;

What do you expect from the OPIC Network? What do you expect from each other?

Help, support and networking

Relevant Information

Approachable with any problems

Motivation

Relevant Training / Courses

Updates and discussions

To respect each other's views and opinions

To feel valued

Confidentiality

Helpful support

Ideas

Sympathy

Get togethers

Listening to each other especially when someone is talking

Sharing ideas and good practice

Supporting each other

No patronizing

To build friendships

Chocolate Biscuits

Top Tips for new childminders:

1. Listen to as many childminders as you can as we all work in different ways
2. Join in with as many childminders from different areas as possible to gain knowledge and widen your experience
3. Start reading the EYFS and looking at different ways to record paperwork, ask childminders if you can look at their paper work and think about the pros and cons before you decide which one to use
4. Take time every week/month to do your paperwork and accounts, once you get behind it's hard to get back on top
5. Aim for a friendly but professional relationship with parents. This may sound harsh but remember you are friends but they are clients too
6. If you have a problem with a child/family write it down so that you can put a procedure in place so the same issues don't happen again with your next family
7. Make time for yourself and your family it can be a demanding job
8. Take your holidays, you deserve them
9. Stick to your guns on what days/hours you want to work
10. Join OPIC as the job can be stressful at times and the support from people doing the job can be very helpful

Contributed by members of OPIC

Who are the OPIC Mentors?

Sue Radcliffe

I live in Shaw and have been childminding since December 2003 and I absolutely love my job. I started childminding to stay at home with my youngest daughter. I have five children of my own four girls and a boy who are 23 to 33 years old.



I look after have children from 2 months to 16 years old. Over the years I have looked after 35 children and seeing those children and their families flourish has been amazing. We always keep in touch by having days out once or twice a year.

I would like to pass on my experience to other childminders as I believe we all learn through sharing good practice and ideas including myself.

Claire Sims

I live in the Fitton Hill area of Oldham. I became a childminder in 2003 so I could stay at home with my children as well as earning an income. I have three children, one girl and two boys between the ages of 10 and 20 years old.



The rewarding part of my job is watching children I care for grow and learn new things and allowing them to be independent and make decisions for themselves. I love my job and aim for all children to enjoy their time in my setting and be happy. I care for children from birth up to 16 years, my working hours are 6.45am – 5.30 pm.

Since 2014 I have adapted my home so I work outside for most of the year, which the children really enjoy! I have a covered area, chill room and classroom. I am excited to be a mentor and welcome all into the world of childminding.

Val Bailey

I live in Royton and I have been childminding since 2002. I started childminding when my teenagers were very young and my friend, who was a teacher asked me to care for her daughter. I consider it a privilege that parents entrust their children into my care. I love the outdoors and I provide a varied range of activities.



The children I care for range between 0 and 6yrs old. Children tend to come as babies and stay until they start school! I would like the opportunity to be a mentor to support new childminders and help them to understand their role and gain a love of childminding.

How to apply if you need support from a Mentor or want to become a Mentor?

Email Oldham Council Family Information Service familyinfo@oldham.gov.uk once you have completed training in Preparing to Work in Home Based Childcare and have your Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate and we will put you in touch with someone in your local area (where possible).

Potential areas for discussion with your Mentor;-

Themes/ topics for discussion

Helping new children settle - the importance of early attachments for children
Establishing day to day routines for children - routine planning
Working with parents/carers
Children's play needs at different stages of development
Providing play opportunities within the home
The importance of outdoor play
Healthy eating
The different areas of development
Stages of development and using 'Development Matters'
Meeting the needs of different ages of children
Managing behaviour
The importance of promoting children's speech, language and communication
Safeguarding policies and procedures
Self-protection measures
The diversity of children and families
How to promote inclusion
The role of childminder as a SENCO
Different ways of observing children
Recording the development of individual children
Planning next steps
Importance of working in partnership with parents/carers
Working with other professionals - the roles of other professionals and agencies
Ways of sharing information
Marketing; Budgeting and book keeping; Being self-employed; Record keeping

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There are probably many other questions and areas you wish to discuss with your mentor

A really helpful reading list:

Chilvers, D (2013) Creating and thinking critically – A practical guide to how babies and young children learn, Practical Pre-School

McTavish, A (2013) Playing and exploring – A practical guide to how babies and young children learn, Practical Pre-School Books

Moylett, H (2013) Active Learning – A practical guide to how babies and young children learn, Practical Pre-School Books

Tassoni, P (2012) Practical EYFS Handbook (2nd Ed) Pearson

The Buddy Reflective Journal/Diary

Keeping a journal/diary will enable you to reflect on your learning and where necessary plan your next steps and actions. For example if you have visited your Mentor's setting you will want to make a note of what you saw and discussed together and how it has supported your knowledge and practice. Reflecting and thinking about how what you have learnt and seen relates to your practice as a childminder. This is a helpful connection to make and one you may want to share with your Mentor.

Date	Reflections, thoughts, notes	Actions

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The Buddy – Mentor Log

Recording your contact and discussion is an aide-memoire helping you to reflect on practice and contributing to the learning process.

Date	Contact: Phone, email, text, person	Reason for contact	Outcome: information shared