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## Appendix 1: Childminder response breakdown by geography and multiple deprivation ranking

	Achieved Sample (230)	Target Sample	Population
Rural	35 %	34 %	34 %
Urban	65 %	66 %	66 %

### Multiple Deprivation Ranking

			Achieved Sample	
	Population %	Target Sample %	Frequency	%
001- 089	5.8	4.5	11	5
090 - 178	7.6	6.7	17	7
179 - 267	7.8	7.1	18	8
268 - 356	10.5	11.4	24	10
357 - 445	9.4	10	27	12
446 - 534	11	11.9	34	15
535 - 623	10.2	10.5	22	10
624 - 712	12.3	13.5	26	11
713 - 801	12.7	11.4	21	9
802 - 890	12.4	12.7	29	13

<b>No Data available</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>

## Appendix 2: Kids Life and Times Survey Questions

**These questions are about who looks after you most days when school finishes.**

Q11. Some P7 children are looked after by their parents when school finishes while other children are looked after by childminders, other relatives, in crèches or after-school clubs. What about you? Who looks after you most days when school finishes?

A parent or guardian	1	Skip to Q15
Another relative	2	Go to Q12
A childminder	3	
A neighbour or someone else who is not a relative	4	
Afterschool club	5	
Someone else (Please type who it is in the box below)	6	

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Q12. What is the main reason why you are looked after in this way?

Because my parent(s) are at work	1
Because I want to	2
To be with my friends	3
To do my homework	4
Because I have nowhere else to go	5

Something else (Please type it in the box below)	6
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Q13. Some kids are happy with where they go after school, but others would prefer to go somewhere else. What about you? How do you feel about the way you are looked after when school finishes?

Completely unhappy	1
A bit unhappy	2
Neither happy nor unhappy	3
A bit happy	4
Completely happy	5

Q14. Why do you feel happy or unhappy about the way you are looked after when school finishes?

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Q15. Thinking of the time between leaving school and 6 o'clock, do you do any of these things most days? (Please tick all that apply)

Sport	1
Drama	1
Dance	1

Music	1
Homework by myself	1
Homework with help from someone	1
Watch TV	1
Play with electronic games/computer	1
Play with board games	1
Play outside	1
Play with other children	1
Play by myself	1
Something else (Please type it in the box below)	1

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# NCB Research Quality Plan

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One of the key aims of NCB is to work from an evidence-based and child-centred perspective and we are committed to high quality and rigorous research. The quality of our research is maintained through: a) quality assurance procedures; b) formal project reviews; and c) staff training and development which are regularly reviewed and updated.

Our quality assurance procedures are summarised below, these are supported by detailed guidelines, which are available on request.

Intellectual leadership and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An experienced researcher acts as the project director on every project and takes responsibility for ensuring that the design, conduct and outputs of the project meet our quality and ethical standards.</li><li>• Typically our projects have an advisory or steering group comprising research, policy and/or practice experts who provide a critical perspective on: the suitability of the research design to address the aims of the study; the robustness of the methodology; and whether research conclusions are supported by the evidence collected.</li><li>• Full details of the methodology used in our studies are provided with the final report.</li></ul>



<p>Involving children and young people in the planning and process of research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The participation of children and young people in our research is informed by the wider NCB participation strategy and guidelines, and is underpinned by Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have a right to have a say in decisions that affect them.</li> <li>• Children and young people can be involved in NCB research at different stages (from developing a proposal to dissemination) and in different roles (from being part of a reference/advisory group for adult-led research to young people-led research).</li> <li>• Where children and young people are involved in our research as young researchers, evaluators or advisors in particular projects, they will receive training, ongoing support and appropriate reward and recognition in line with NCB policy for their contribution.</li> <li>• The involvement of children and young people in our research is evidence-based, ethical, has clear benefits for the participating young people as well as the research itself, and adheres to NCB principles and best practice.</li> <li>• Feedback on outcomes and impacts related to children and young people’s participation in research (for young people involved as well as for NCB and the research funder) is part of all project planning.</li> </ul>
<p>Children and young people as research participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people are experts in their own lives; we believe in valuing their perspective and promoting their voice through research commissioned to inform policy and practice. Involving children and young people in research results in a better understanding of their world and their needs.</li> <li>• To enable children to exercise their right to freedom of expression (UNCRC Article 13) and ensure the robustness of the data collected, research methods are suited to the age and communication needs of children and young people who take part in the research.</li> <li>• As outlined in the section on ethics, children must give their informed consent to participate and for those aged 16 and under, permission from a parent/carer must also be sought.</li> </ul>

<p>Liaison with clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A named person is identified as the main client contact point.</li> <li>• Appropriate deadlines for all outputs are agreed at the start of the project; potential delays are notified in good time and new timetables negotiated if necessary.</li> <li>• Regular progress reports are provided.</li> <li>• Key decisions regarding the overall research design are always discussed and agreed with the client. The sample design, data collection instruments and methods, analysis and report plans, as well as the report are also discussed and agreed with the client.</li> </ul>
<p>Project management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the start of each project, members of the project team meet to assign responsibilities and to devise a project plan.</li> <li>• The project team holds regular meetings to plan different research stages. In these meetings progress with the work is also assessed and possible risks (e.g. to the quality of the work, the timetable) are identified with a view of preventing them or identifying corrective actions.</li> </ul>
<p>Data collection instruments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection instruments are designed to meet clients' requirements and to collect data relevant to the research objectives. When appropriate, we consult with policy and/or practice experts and children and young people in designing the data collection instruments.</li> <li>• For in-depth interviews and focus groups we use topic guides that ensure that the research objectives of the project are covered consistently, while allowing for flexible responses to individual circumstances. Their structure encourages a natural flow to the interview or group discussion, enabling respondents to talk openly and fully about the subject matter.</li> <li>• For observation we develop a schedule which again ensures that all the main topics are covered consistently, while allowing flexibility to adapt to different circumstances.</li> <li>• Questionnaires for quantitative surveys are tested using a variety of methods. The testing methods we use depend on the complexity of the questionnaire and include pilots, expert panels and cognitive interviewing.</li> </ul>

Sample design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Purposive sampling is used for qualitative studies to ensure research participants reflect the diversity of the research population and include key sub-groups of interest.</li> <li>● For quantitative surveys we aim to use sampling frames that are as complete, up-to-date and accurate as possible. We normally recommend the use of probability sampling, which gives each unit a known chance of selection, allowing the use of statistical theory to make valid inferences from the sample to the research population.</li> <li>● We have extensive experience of recruiting and including in our research vulnerable and marginalised groups.</li> </ul>
Fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All our researchers have received training and have experience of conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups. Researchers, at all levels, receive feedback on their interviewing skills.</li> <li>● Everyone carrying out fieldwork on a project is fully briefed on the background and aims of the study and the topic guide.</li> <li>● In the early stages of qualitative fieldwork, researchers work in pairs or monitor recordings of fieldwork in order to ‘pilot’ the topic guide and ensure that fieldwork is carried out to consistent and high standards.</li> <li>● With respondents’ permission, qualitative interviews and focus groups are usually digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.</li> <li>● We work with specialist, high quality survey organisations on face-to-face and large-scale telephone and postal surveys. When telephone surveys are carried out in-house, staff working on the survey are fully briefed by the project team and their work is regularly monitored to ensure the consistency and quality of the data collected.</li> <li>● When conducting surveys we use a range of approaches to maximise the survey response and to reduce the non-response bias.</li> </ul>

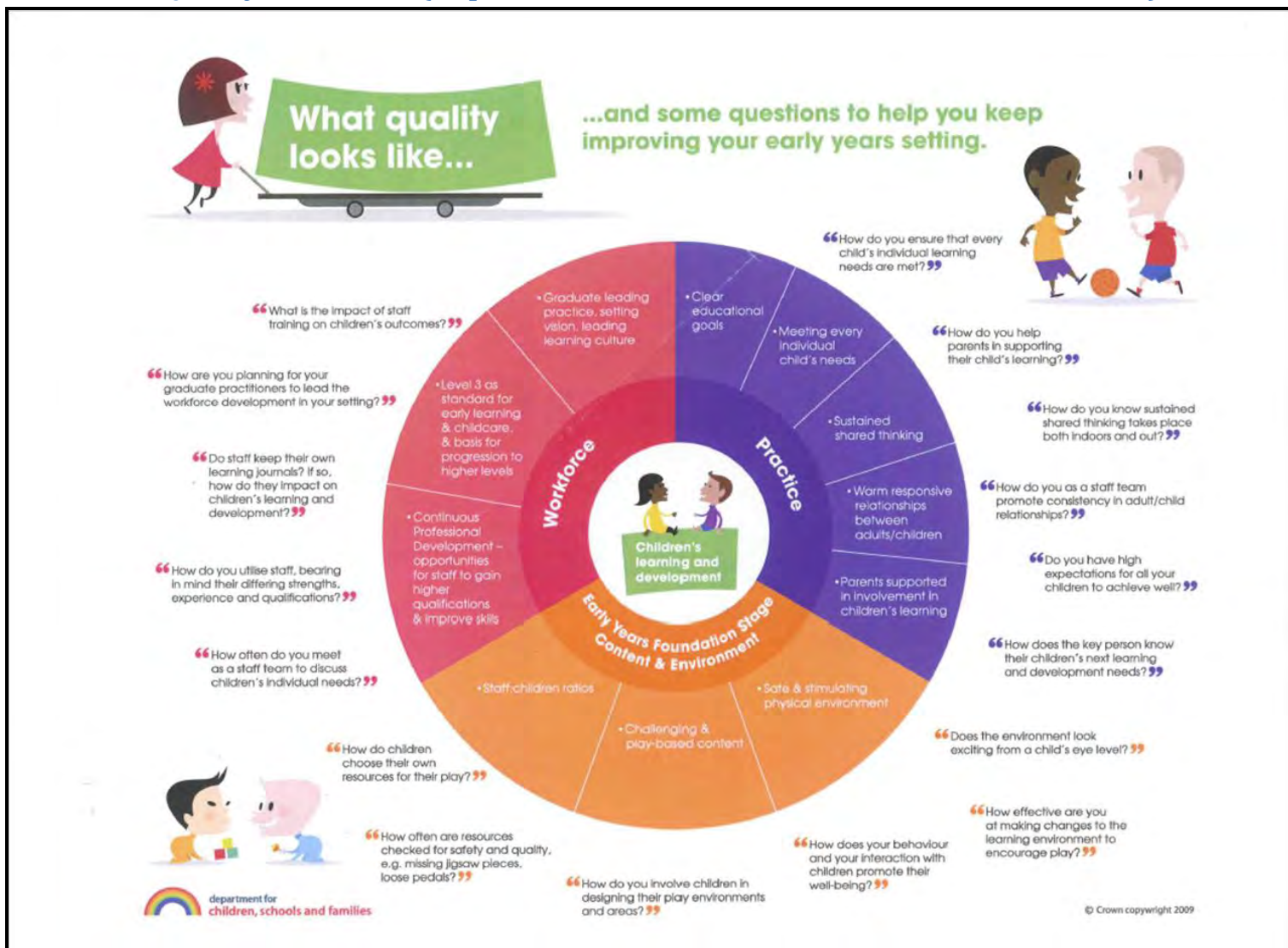
<p>Data analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data are analysed using NVivo. NVivo is software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research. The software enables effective and efficient content analysis as it allows the researcher to: generate coding using autocoding or queries; find themes; query data; link, annotate and create relationships; create models; and develop single project files so that data can be easily transported and shared with others.</li> <li>• Quantitative data sets are rigorously checked, for example, for routing errors, the accuracy of derived variables, and consistency in the treatment of missing cases. When carrying out secondary analysis, researchers gain a thorough understanding of the data collection instruments and how the data were collected. We use PASW (SPSS) to analyse quantitative data. Syntax is generated to create derived variables and to carry out the analysis, and syntax produced by one researcher is normally double checked by a colleague.</li> </ul>
<p>Literature reviews</p>	<p>Our work is informed and aims to build on the existing body of knowledge. Reviews of the relevant policy documents and research literature typically inform our studies from their design to the interpretation of the findings.</p> <p>When conducting systematic reviews we go through the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We agree with the client (and other experts when relevant) the precise scope of the review, inclusion and exclusion criteria (i.e. dates, countries, research design and standards), key search terms and keywords, and the full list of databases, websites, authors and other sources to be used.</li> <li>• We carry out a systematic search and keep a careful documentation of keywords used, number of hits and number of duplicates across databases.</li> <li>• We screen and code the literature against the inclusion/exclusion criteria to select the key items to be included in the review.</li> <li>• Write structured summary for each key item, which include a quality assessment based on robust research design.</li> </ul>

Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reports are written to be accurate, accessible, clear and relevant to policy and practice. Typically feedback on the draft report is provided by a peer reviewer and/or members of the project steering/advisory group.</li><li>• Details of the methodology used (e.g. description of the target population, sampling and fieldwork procedures, procedures followed in a systematic literature review) are provided in the report.</li><li>• The full range of data relevant to answering the research objectives is presented, including data to support and illustrate assertions in qualitative studies. For quantitative studies, results are reported in tables or charts that provide a full description of the variables analysed, the base for the analysis and its size. Only statistically significant results are reported in the text.</li><li>• The anonymity of respondents in the reporting of qualitative data is protected by anonymising case-studies and quotations; care is taken with the use of specific case details to ensure that respondents' identity cannot be inferred.</li></ul>
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Data security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCB is notified under the Data Protection Act. All staff are made aware of the obligations this places on us. Staff abide by relevant codes of practice relating to social research, which include explicit clauses on confidentiality. It is a disciplinary offence for any individual to access identifiable data that is not necessary for their work.</li><li>• Respondents' names and addresses are separated from transcripts, databases and outputs, and the ability to connect these is limited to the project team.</li><li>• Qualitative data are usually collected via a digital recorder. These files are downloaded from the recorder on return to the office and saved in a secure folder. Access to these files is restricted to the project team.</li><li>• Audio files and resulting transcripts are sent via a secure server. All external transcribers follow strict confidentiality and data security protocols. Transcripts are saved in secure folders.</li><li>• Access to quantitative data is also restricted to the project team until potentially disclosive variables are removed from the data set.</li><li>• Where hardcopy documents contain confidential data (e.g. transcripts), they are locked away securely.</li><li>• Unless otherwise agreed in advance, at the end of a project, primary data and samples recorded on paper are destroyed after a year as confidential waste. Data recorded electronically are kept securely for at least three years, unless we are contractually obliged to do otherwise.</li></ul>
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Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We adhere to the Social Research Association (SRA) Ethical Guidelines (<a href="http://www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/ethics03.pdf">http://www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/ethics03.pdf</a>), and will comply with any other ethical requirements governing our clients and collaborators where these are not in conflict.</li> <li>• We strive to protect research participants from any harm arising as a consequence of taking part in the research. We are alert to the possibility that participating in a study may have a significant impact on some participants, both immediately or some time later, especially in the case of a child or young person. When appropriate, research encounters will conclude with a careful debriefing and/or information about suitable sources of help - particularly where the participant has been discussing painful or difficult experiences.</li> <li>• All our work is underpinned by the principle that participation in research must be with fully informed consent. This means making it clear to participants what is expected of them at each stage, what implications their participation has, and that they can opt out at any stage if they so wish. If children aged 16 or under are involved in the research, both parents and the children are asked for consent.</li> <li>• Written information (e.g. letters, leaflets) is provided in a style and language that is appropriate to the research population, to explain the aims of the study, what it involves, how the research will be used and to provide reassurance about the confidentiality of the information collected.</li> <li>• All NCB staff receive training in Child Protection Policy and Procedures and are expected to adhere to these at all times. All staff are subject to enhanced checking by AccessNI criminal record checks.</li> <li>• We have an internal ethics board comprising senior NCB staff. The ethics board provides ethical advice and ensures consistency in the application of ethical principles to a range of research circumstances.</li> </ul>
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## Appendix 4: What Quality Looks Like (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009)





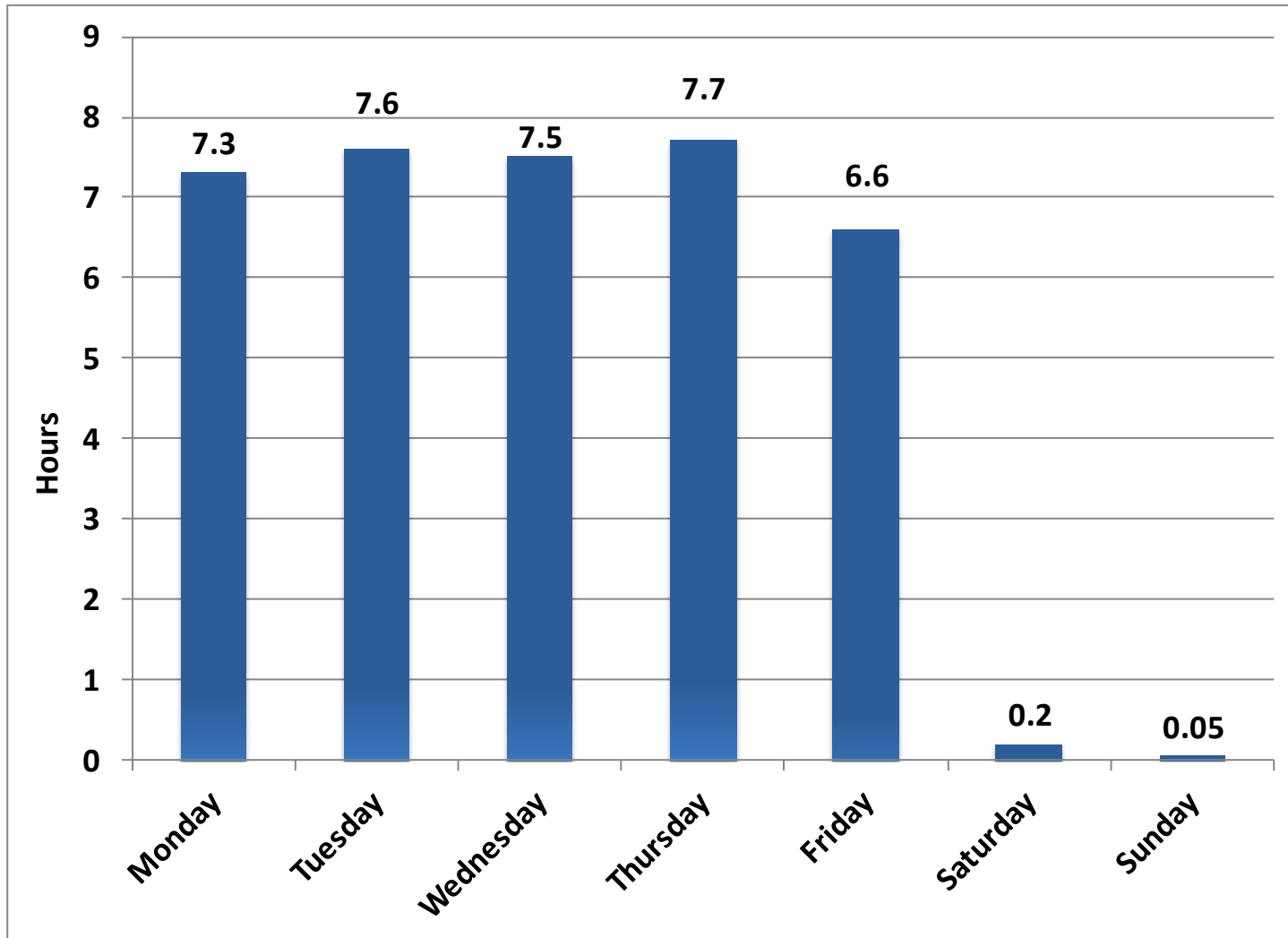
## Appendix 5: Childcare training and qualifications

Childcare Qualifications	Level	
<b>Early Years Degree</b>	<b>4</b>	Based on the concept of 'Educare', the degree aims to both investigate and further advance a multi-professional approach within the field of Early Years services in Northern Ireland and beyond. The course has been developed by a group of professionals in consultation with representatives from the voluntary sector and responds to government reports and legislation which demands co-ordination and collaboration in services for young children. The degree is also meeting, at graduate level, the training needs of both current and future practitioners and is thereby underlining the need for highly qualified personnel within the sector.
<b>NVQ Level 4 in Children's Care, Learning and Development</b>	<b>4</b>	The Level 4 NVQ in Children's Care, Learning and Development is aimed at those who occupy management roles and are working in settings or delivering services for children within the age range of 0-16 years. These roles might include centre managers, senior practitioners, childminding co-ordinators, pre-school advisers and others who may have an overall responsibility for the provision of services for children. This qualification is no longer open to new registrants.
<b>CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education</b>	<b>3-4</b>	This is a two year course and gives students knowledge of the physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs of different ages of children. Additional subjects include first aid, learning how to interact with parents and other professionals in childcare. Practical placements are an integral part of the course. Students who complete the course are well qualified to start working in a nursery and can also start working as a nanny.
<b>NVQ Level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development</b>	<b>3</b>	The NVQ in Children's Care, Learning and Development is aimed at individuals working in settings or delivering services for children within the age range of 0 – 16 years. The programme is accessible to those who have been working in the childcare sector for at least 18 months and have some supervisory responsibilities. Although there are no formal entry requirements to the programme, the candidate should be in a position to reflect on their practice and gather work-based evidence within paid employment. This

		qualification is no longer available for new registrants.
<b>NNEB Certificate/Diploma in Nursery Nursing (source Nutbrown doc)</b>	<b>3</b>	This is a 2 year course which focuses on children aged 0-7. Key study areas include children's growth and development; keeping children healthy; learning through play; social relationships; the rights and responsibilities of children and the family and the nursery nurse in employment.
<b>BTEC National Certificate, Diploma in Childhood Studies (Nursery nursing) - Level 3</b>	<b>3</b>	This course emphasises includes modules on teaching, nursing, social work and childcare. It is a full time two-year course, and thus distinguishable from the BTEC National Certificate in Childhood Studies which is a lower level one-year part time course offered to mature candidates. Students that complete the diploma are qualified to work either in a nursery or begin their career as a nanny.
<b>CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Home-based Childcare</b>	<b>3</b>	The Diploma in Home-based Childcare (DHC) is a level 3 qualification specially designed for childminders and nannies. Completing the DHC helps home-based childcarers develop the knowledge and understanding they need to provide high-quality care and early years education in a home environment. In 2006, the DHC replaced the CACHE level 3 Certificate in Childminding Practice (CCP). This qualification develops the skills and knowledge needed when supporting the care and development of children and young people in a home-based setting, working mainly in a solo capacity. It also covers the legislation and regulations governing home-based childcare.
<b>BTEC National Award, Certificate, Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development - Level 3</b>	<b>3</b>	This qualification is for those who wish to care for children from 0-16 years, and to open a line of progression to Higher Education such as primary teaching, social work, paediatric nursing and midwifery. This is an advanced level course, which includes work experience placements in nurseries, reception and infant classes, and special schools. The aim of the course is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to care for young children in a wide variety of settings (day nurseries, children's centres, reception class, infant class, nursery class, special school, child-minders, and family refuge centres).
<b>NVQ Level 2 in Children's</b>	<b>2</b>	The NVQ Level 2 in Children's Care, Learning and Development is for practitioners who work under supervision in Early Years and Childcare settings. It is ideal for individuals

<b>Care, Learning and Development</b>		currently working in any of the following roles: playgroup assistant, nursery assistant, crèche assistant, out of school childcare worker. This qualification will confirm occupational competence in a specialised childcare role.
<b>Certificate in Childminding Practice</b>	<b>3</b>	The Certificate in Childminding Practice CCP is made up of three units each having two assignments: Introducing Childminding Practice (ICP); Developing Childminding Practice (DCP); Extending Childminding Practice (ECP). Together these three courses compromise the Certificate in Childminding Practice, a level three course. They can also provide all the underpinning knowledge needed for the NVQ level three in Early Years Care and Education. This qualification is no longer open to new registrants.
<b>Introduction to Childminding Practice/ Introduction to Childcare Practice (ICP)</b>	<b>1</b>	ICP is a 12-hour course run over 2 days which is commonly undertaken by childminders as they undergo the registration process. The training program includes: keeping children safe; establishing routines for the childminding day; providing basic play and other activities for children in a home based setting; helping children settle into the childminding setting; using positive methods to manage children's behaviour; treating children 'with equal concern'; initiating relationships with parents; child protection; and starting a childminding business.
<b>Another childcare qualification</b>	-	-
<b>No Childcare qualifications</b>	-	-

Appendix 6: Average hours worked each day by childminders



## Appendix 7a: Childminders' questionnaire



### Childminding practice in Northern Ireland

#### Your views as a childminder

#### Section A – About your service and the children you care for

1. How many years have you worked as a childminder? (Tick **one** box only)

Length of time	
a) Less than a year	
b) Between 1 year and 1 year 11 months	
c) Between 2 years and 2 years 11 months	
d) Between 3 years and 3 years 11 months	
e) More than 4 years	

2. How many childcare places are you **registered** to provide? Please insert the number of places and age groups as stated on your registration certificate in the box provided.

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3. How many children are you currently **paid** to care for? (i.e. do **not** include your own or other children who you mind but who do not pay). Please write the number of children in the box provided.

4. Please tell us the ages of the children in Q3.

	Age
Child 1	
Child 2	
Child 3	
Child 4	
Child 5	
Child 6	
Child 7	
Child 8	
Child 9	
Child 10	

5. How many families are represented by the children in Q3? Please write the number of families in the box provided.

6. Do you care for any children with special needs or disabilities? (Tick **one** box only)

a) Yes  b) No  c) Don't know

7. Typically, how many hours do you work on each of the following days? (Enter number of hours for each day, enter 0 for days you don't normally work )

- a) Monday
- b) Tuesday
- c) Wednesday
- d) Thursday

- e) Friday
- f) Saturday
- g) Sunday

8. Do you offer care during the following times? (Tick **all** that apply)

- a) Early in the morning (i.e. before 8am)
- b) Late in the evening (i.e. after 6pm)
- c) Overnight



9. To what extent do you plan activities for the children in your care? (Tick **one** box only)

- a) All of the time
- b) Most of the time
- c) Some of the time
- d) Rarely/never

10. Approximately, how much time per day do children in your care spend in free play (i.e., not involved with any planned activities)? (Tick **one** box only)

- a) Less than one hour
- b) 1-2 hours
- c) 3-4 hours
- d) 4-5 hours
- e) more than 6 hours

11. What is your view of free play? Tick the statement that **best reflects** your opinion. (Tick **one** box only)

- a) Free play is essential for young children to learn
- b) Free play is a 'free for all' and isn't that beneficial to young children
- c) Some free play is good but there is a need for some structured activities too
- d) I don't have any particular view on free play

12. In a typical month, how often do children spend in the following activities (either indoors or outdoors)? (Tick **one** response only for each activity)

Activity	Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
a) Arts and crafts activities (e.g. painting, colouring, collage, beading etc)					
b) Puzzles					
c) Blocks/construction materials					
d) Sand/water play (during summer)					
e) Fantasy play/make-believe play					
f) Stories/reading					
g) Writing					
h) Counting					
i) Music					
j) Home-based activities (e.g. tidying up, cooking, folding clothes)					
k) Gross motor activities (e.g. running around, climbing, sliding, playing with a ball)					
l) Watching TV					
m) Other (please specify)					

13. Have you taken the children to any of the following places in the **last six months**? (Tick **one** response only for each place)

Places	Yes	No	N/A (Don't have access to it)
a) Local park/country park/woods			
b) Playground			
c) Zoo/farm			
d) Seaside			
e) Library			
f) Museum			
g) Playgroup or other clubs			
h) A Sure Start or other children's centre (e.g. for a Stay and Play session)			
i) Local shops			
j) Parent and toddler group			
k) Other 1 (please state)			
l) Other 2 (please state)			
m) Other 3 (please state)			

14. Here are some statements other childcare providers have made about caring and educating children. Please indicate how much you agree with each statement. (Tick **one** response only for each statement)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Children should be allowed to disagree with carers if they feel their own ideas are better					
b) Children learn best by doing things themselves rather than listening to others					
c) Children have a right to their own point of view and should be allowed to express it					
d) Children like to teach other children					
e) Carers should go along with the game when a child is pretending something					
f) What carers teach children is very important for their school success					
g) A child's ideas should be seriously considered in making decisions about how they spend their day					

15. How do you see your role as a childminder? Tick the statement below that **best represents** your opinion. (Tick only **one** box)

- a) I see myself as helping parents with the early education of their child through play and everyday activities
- b) I see myself as being here to provide mainly care (and not education) for the children
- c) I see myself as being here to provide both care and early education for the children

## Section B – The quality of childminding practice

16. Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion about the quality of care that a childminder, in general, provides compared to the care provided elsewhere? (Tick only **one** box)

- a) The quality of care provided in a childminder's home is **not as high** as in other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries; after-schools groups)
- b) The quality of care provided in a childminder's home is **higher** than other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries; after-schools groups)
- c) The quality of care provided in a childminder's home is **much the same** as that provided in other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries; after-schools groups)

Please give a reason for your answer in the box below.

17. In your opinion, how important are the following features of childcare provision in terms of the overall quality of care – on a scale of one to ten, where **one** is ‘not at all important’ and **ten** is ‘very important’. Keep in mind we want to know **your** opinion. (Circle **one** rating for each statement)

Features of childcare provision	Not at all Important										Very Important
a) Providing a safe physical environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
b) Communicating with parents about their children’s development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
c) Experience in looking after children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
d) Teaching children to get along with other children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
e) Sharing parents’ values about child rearing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
f) Qualifications and training in childcare	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
g) Teaching of cultural or religious values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
h) Caring for children in a home environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
i) Making children feel loved	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
j) Helping children develop and learn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
k) Preparing children for school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
l) Meeting individual children’s needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
m) Providing affordable care	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
n) Providing children with opportunities to make choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

## Section C - The impact of mixed age placements

*Mixed age placements occur when children of different ages are cared for in the one space, as happens in a childminder's house where there may be children aged 0-12 years.*

**18.** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are benefits of children being cared for in a mixed age group? (Tick **one** response for **each** potential benefit)

Potential benefit	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Younger children learn a lot from older children (e.g. attempting more difficult tasks as they try to imitate older children)					
b) Older children learn important social skills from being with younger children (e.g. patience, empathy, leadership)					
c) It is more like a natural family compared to settings where children are with same-age peers					
d) Younger children get to see and participate in everyday activities (e.g. shopping) from which they learn, which doesn't tend to happen in other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries)					
e) All of the children have a wider range of friends in terms of age and ability					
f) It encourages more cooperative and less competitive behaviour					
g) Parents can drop off/collect children of different ages at the same venue (e.g. toddlers and school goers)					

**19.** Please use this space to tell us about other benefits you can think of when children are cared for in a mixed age group.

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are challenges of children being cared for in a mixed age group? (Tick **one** response for **each** potential challenge)

Potential challenge	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Children prefer to be with other children of their own age					
b) Older children are too rough for younger children					
c) Older children try to bully younger children					
d) Older children become more babyish when they are with younger children					
e) The logistics of meeting the needs of different children (e.g. school collection for older children and nap or meal times for younger children)					
f) Having enough toys or equipment to suit all age groups can be difficult					

21. Please use this space to tell us about other challenges you can think of when children are cared for in a mixed age group.

22. Overall, do the advantages of mixed age placements outweigh the disadvantages?

Yes  No  Don't know

Please give a reason for your answer in the space below.



**Section D – Training and support**

**23.** Which, if any, of the following have provided you with childcare training since you started childminding? (Tick **all** that apply)

Training provider		
a) Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team		Go to Q25
b) Childcare Partnerships		Go to Q25
c) NICMA (Northern Ireland Childminding Association)		Go to Q25
d) Sure Start		Go to Q25
e) Playboard		Go to Q25
f) Early Years (formerly NIPPA)		Go to Q25
g) Further Education College		Go to Q25
h) Received training from another provider (please specify)		Go to Q25
i) I have not received any childcare training		Go to Q24

**24.** Why have you not availed of training from any of these providers? (Tick **all** that apply)

- a) Cost
- b) Scheduling – they are at times when I am working
- c) Location of training venue
- d) Not aware of training offered
- e) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

25. Are you a member of any of the following childcare/early education organisations? (Tick **all** that apply)

Organisation	
a) Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA)	
b) Playboard	
c) Early Years (formerly NIPPA)	
d) Other (please specify)	

26. Are you a member of any of the following childminding networks or groups? (Tick **all** that apply)

- a) Local childminding peer support group
- b) NICMA Childminding network attached to a SureStart Programme
- c) NICMA Buddy Group

27. Do you hold NICMA Quality First Accreditation? **Yes** go to Q28  **No** go to Q29

28. Do you think having this accreditation has been of benefit to you? **Yes**  **No**   
Please give a reason for your answer.

29. Since becoming a childminder, have you sought help or advice with **childcare practice** from any of the following sources? (Tick **one** box for each of the following options)

Sources	Yes	No	Not available in my area
a) Another childminder			
b) Childminding Development Officer/Childminding Network Co-ordinator			
c) NICMA's Childminding Information and Advice service/Web Site			
d) Health Visitor			
e) SureStart			
f) Early Years Social Worker			
g) Another source of help or advice related to childcare (please specify)			
h) Not sought any help or advice			

30. Thinking about all of the potential sources of support, overall, how satisfied are you with the level of support you receive for **childminding practice** from childcare organisations? (Tick **one** only)

- a) Very satisfied
- b) Quite satisfied
- c) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- d) Quite dissatisfied
- e) Very dissatisfied

31. Please give a reason for your answer.

- 32.** In England the government has introduced an early years curriculum (the Early Years Foundation Stage – EYFS) which childminders are obliged to implement. Do you think this is something that should happen in Northern Ireland?

Yes  No  Don't know

Please give a reason for your answer in the box below.

- 33.** Please use this space to tell us how the quality of childminding practice could be further enhanced in Northern Ireland.

## Section E - About you

- 34.** Which of these qualifications do you have? (Tick **all** that apply) If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent.

If you have qualifications you gained outside the UK, tick the box that indicates this and the nearest UK equivalents (if known).

Qualification	
a) 1-4 O Levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation diploma	
b) NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Essential Skills	
c) 5+ O Levels (passes)/CSEs (grade1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/2-3 AS Levels/VCEs, Higher Diploma	
d) NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma	
e) Apprenticeship	
f) 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma	
g) NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma	
h) Degree (for example, BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, Phd, PGCE)	
i) NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level, Foundation degree	
j) Professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy)	
k) Other vocational/work related qualifications	

l) Qualifications gained outside the UK	
m) No qualifications	

35. Do you have any of the following qualifications related to **childcare**? (Tick **all** that apply)

a)	Introduction to Childminding Practice / Introduction to Childcare Practice (ICP)	
b)	Certificate in Childminding Practice (CCP)	
c)	BTEC National Award, Certificate, Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development - Level 3	
d)	BTEC National Certificate, Diploma in Childhood Studies (Nursery Nursing) - Level 3	
e)	CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Home-based Childcare	
f)	CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education	
g)	NVQ Level 2 in Children's Care, Learning and Development	
h)	NVQ Level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development	
i)	NVQ Level 4 in Children's Care, Learning and Development	
j)	Early Years Degree	
k)	NNEB Certificate/Diploma in Nursery Nursing	
l)	Another childcare qualification (please specify in space below)	

36. Have you ever worked in a childcare or teaching position in any of the following other childcare or education settings? (Tick **all** that apply)

Setting	
a) Private day nursery	
b) Crèche	
c) Playgroup	
d) In a private house as a nanny/approved home childcarer	
e) Nursery school	
f) Primary school	
g) Other childcare or early education setting (please specify)	

37. Are you (tick **one** only)

Female?	
Male?	

38. What was your age at your last birthday?  years



**39.** Please indicate your nationality (tick **one** only)

British	
Irish	
Northern Irish	
Polish	
Lithuanian	
Other European (please specify)	
Other – rest of the world (please specify)	

**40.** Please indicate your ethnicity (tick **one** only)

White	
Chinese	
Irish Traveller	
Asian	
Black	
Other (please specify)	

41. How would you describe your religious background? Please tick **one** box only.

Protestant	
Roman Catholic	
Muslim	
Jewish	
Hindu	
Other(please specify)	
I do not belong to any particular religion	

42. I confirm that I have passed on the parent's questionnaires to parents who use my service  
(Tick the box to confirm, yes)

**Please now complete the final page of this questionnaire**

Many thanks for completing this survey. Please be assured that the information you have provided here will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be used to inform this research. We anticipate publishing the results in early 2014 on the NCB and NICMA websites.

In order to be entered into our draw for one of ten £100 high street vouchers, please complete the following details and send back your survey in the Freepost envelope provided **by 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012**. This sheet will be detached from the rest of the questionnaire so that responses remain anonymous.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Date (Please insert today's date here) \_\_\_\_\_

Please also indicate if you would be prepared to take part in a focus group discussion in relation to childminding practice to explore some of these issues in more depth. Tick **one** box only.

Yes, I would be willing to take part in a focus group

No, I am not interested in taking part in a focus group

Please indicate if you would be prepared to take part in publicity when the findings of the research are being published (there is no obligation to do so). Tick **one** box only.

Yes, I would be willing to take part in publicity

No, I am not willing to take part in publicity

If you have any questions or queries about this survey please do not hesitate to contact Teresa Geraghty on 028 90891730 or Email [tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk).

## Appendix 7b: Childminders' letter



Dear (Childminder's name)

**Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland – tell us what you think and have a chance to be one of ten childminders to win £100 in high street vouchers!**

The National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland (NCB NI) in partnership with the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) is conducting research on childminding practice. This research is sponsored by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Your name has been randomly selected from lists provided by the Health & Social Care Trusts and NICMA.

The aim of the research is to find out what childminders think about the following:

- the benefits and challenges of providing care for children in mixed aged group;
- what good quality childcare looks like in a childminding setting;
- how useful are specific childcare qualifications and
- the potential barriers to accessing childcare qualifications.

Enclosed is a questionnaire which we would like you to complete. The information you provide will only be used for this research. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and only the research team at NCB NI will have access to the completed surveys. The last page will be detached to preserve anonymity. Findings generated from the research will also be reported anonymously.

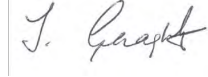
Please return this survey in the enclosed pre-paid envelope by **December 17, 2012** to be in with a chance of winning that £100 voucher. If you have any questions or queries about this survey please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 90891730 or email [tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk).

We would also like to ask you to give the enclosed parents' questionnaire, letter and flyer to the parents of the children you mind and ask them to return it **directly to NCB NI** in the pre-

paid envelope provided – see the enclosed information sheet for more details. If you require more parents' questionnaires please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks for your cooperation in this matter. We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Geraghty', written over a vertical line.

Teresa Geraghty

Senior Research & Development Officer

## Appendix 7c: Childminders' information sheet



### Information for childminders about the parents' questionnaires

Here are the questionnaires for your parents.

Please give **only one** questionnaire set (consisting of the questionnaire, parents' letter, flyer and freepost envelope) to a representative from each of the families who pay you to take care of their children.

Ask them to return it **directly to NCB NI** in the pre-paid envelope provided.

***Remind them that they could be one of ten parents to win a £100 high street voucher.***

The letter to the parents explains what they need to do. If you require more parents' questionnaires please do not hesitate to contact me.

This is the first piece of research to examine childminding practice in Northern Ireland – so it is really important that we hear from **both** childminders **and** parents so that we gain a better insight into this area of work. The more surveys we have returned the better the research will be.

If you have any questions or queries about this survey please do not hesitate to contact me (Teresa Geraghty) on 028 90891730 or email [tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk).

Many thanks for your cooperation.

Appendix 7d: Childminders' flyer (front cover)



**NICMA**  
The Childminding Association

**ncb**  
Northern Ireland

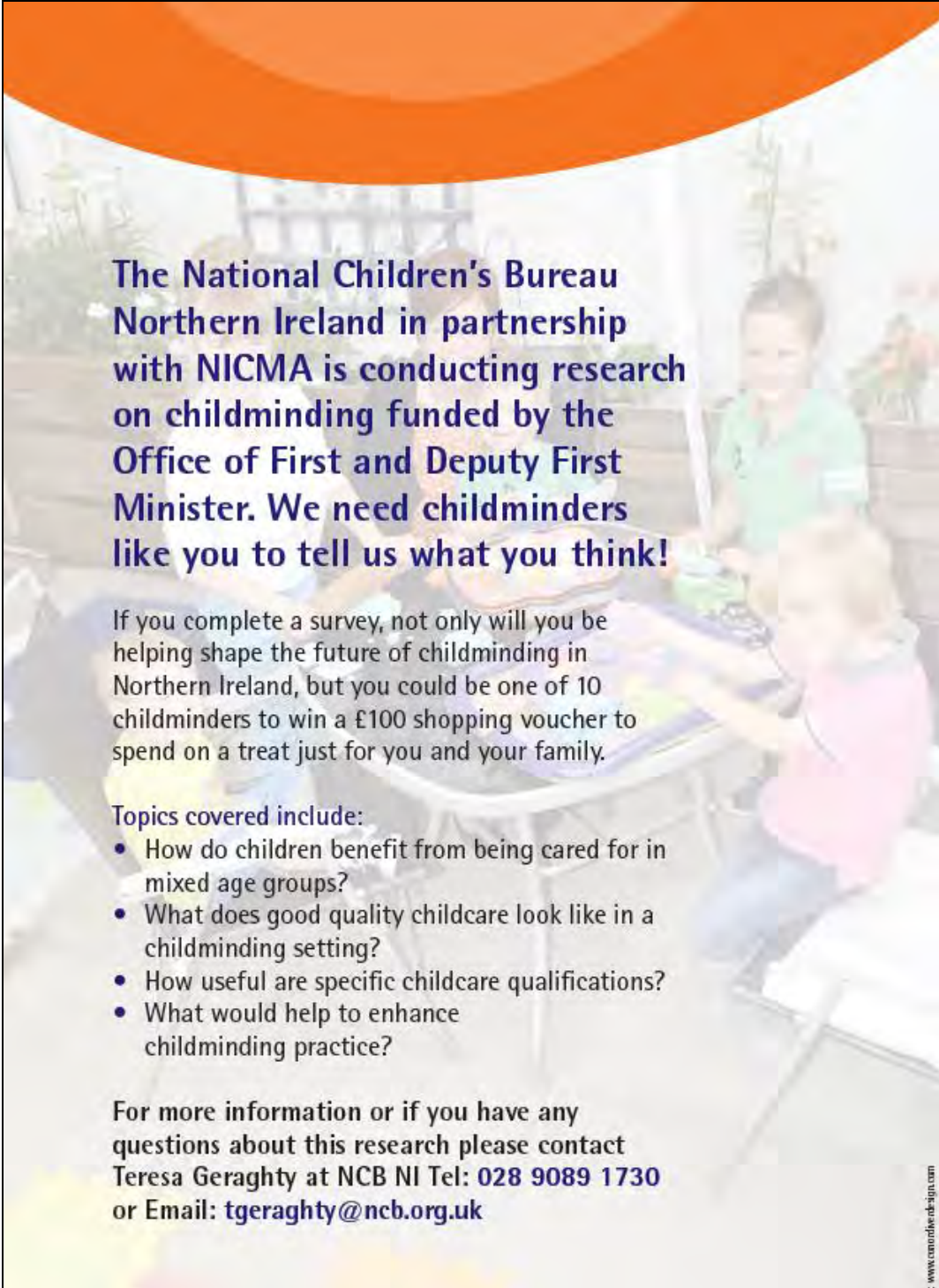
Office of the  
**First Minister and  
Deputy First Minister**  
[www.northern.gov.uk](http://www.northern.gov.uk)  
**DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE**

**Tell us what you think  
as a childminder and  
be in with a chance to  
win one of ten £100  
high street vouchers!**

**Childminding  
practice in  
Northern Ireland**



## Appendix 7d: Childminders' flyer (back cover)



**The National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland in partnership with NICMA is conducting research on childminding funded by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister. We need childminders like you to tell us what you think!**

If you complete a survey, not only will you be helping shape the future of childminding in Northern Ireland, but you could be one of 10 childminders to win a £100 shopping voucher to spend on a treat just for you and your family.

Topics covered include:

- How do children benefit from being cared for in mixed age groups?
- What does good quality childcare look like in a childminding setting?
- How useful are specific childcare qualifications?
- What would help to enhance childminding practice?

For more information or if you have any questions about this research please contact Teresa Geraghty at NCB NI Tel: **028 9089 1730** or Email: **tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk**

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## Appendix 8a: Parents' questionnaire



### Childminding practice in Northern Ireland

#### Your views as a parent

#### Section A – About your family and childminding arrangements

1. How many of your children are cared for by a registered childminder? (Write the number in the box provided)
2. What is/are the age/s of the child/children who is/are cared for by a childminder? (Write the children's ages in the boxes provided)

	Age of child
Child 1	
Child 2	
Child 3	
Child 4	
Child 5	
Child 6	

3. In a typical week what is the total number of hours you pay a childminder to care for all of your children? (Tick **one** box only)

- a) 70 hours or more
- b) 54-69 hours
- c) 41-53 hours
- d) 28 – 40 hours
- e) 16-27 hours
- f) 8-15 hours
- g) Less than 8 hours

4. How long have you had your child/children cared for with your **current** childminder? (Tick **one** box only)

Length of time	
a) Less than 1 year	
b) Between 1 and 2 years	
c) Between 2 and 3 years	
d) Between 3 and 4 years	
e) 5 years or more	

5. To what extent were the following reasons important to you in choosing childminding over other forms of childcare, e.g. a day nursery, after-schools group, nanny? (Tick **one** response for each reason)

Reason for choosing childminding	Not at all important	Quite important	Very important
a) Location - the childminder is close to where I live/work			
b) Cost - it is a more affordable form of childcare than other types			
c) I wanted my child to be in a home-like environment			
d) The childminder can look after all of my children			
e) There are no other childcare facilities where I live			
f) There are no places available in other childcare facilities where I live			
g) I have had a negative experience of other forms of childcare			
h) Flexibility - childminders have more flexible hours than other forms of childcare			
i) Recommendations from friends or family members			
j) Other (please state)			

6. Which of the reasons above is the **most** important to you? (Choose only **one**)

---

## Section B – What do you think of children of different ages being cared for together?

A childminder can look after children of very different ages, for example, from 0-12 years. This section of the survey asks your opinion on the potential benefits and drawbacks of children of different ages being cared for together.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are benefits of children being cared for in a mixed age group? (Tick **one** response for **each** potential benefit)

Potential benefit	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Younger children learn a lot from older children (e.g. attempting more difficult tasks as they try to imitate older children)					
b) Older children learn important social skills from being with younger children (e.g. patience, empathy, leadership)					
c) It is more like a natural family compared to settings where children are with same-age peers					
d) Younger children get to see and participate in everyday activities (e.g. shopping) from which they learn, which doesn't tend to happen in other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries)					
e) All of the children have a wider range of friends in terms of age and ability					
f) It encourages more cooperative and less competitive behaviour					
g) I can drop off/collect children of different ages at the same venue (e.g. toddlers and school goers)					

8. Please use this space to tell us about other benefits you can think of when children are cared for in a mixed age group.

--

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are drawbacks of children being cared for in a mixed age group? (Tick **one** response for **each** potential drawback)

Potential drawback	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Children prefer to be with other children of their own age					
b) Older children are too rough for younger children					
c) Older children try to bully younger children					
d) Older children become more babyish when they are with younger children					
e) Younger children are forced to sit in the car for long periods of time when school pick ups for older children are being done					
f) Younger children have their nap time interrupted for school pick ups					
g) The home-setting is less regulated (i.e. you don't know what kind of adults your children are interacting with during the day, e.g. childminder's relatives/friends)					
h) There are less toys or equipment to suit all age groups available at a childminder's compared with other settings					

10. Please use this space to tell us about other drawbacks you can think of when children are cared for in a mixed age group.

11. Overall, do the benefits of children of different ages being cared for together outweigh the disadvantages?

Yes  No  Don't know

Please give a reason for your answer.

### Section C - Quality of childminding practice

12. Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion about the quality of care that a childminder provides compared to the care provided elsewhere, e.g. day nurseries, after-school groups? (Tick only **one** statement)

Statement	
a) The quality of care provided in a childminder's home is <b>not as high</b> as in other settings	
b) The quality of care provided in a childminder's home is <b>higher</b> than that in other settings	
c) The quality of care provided in a childminder's home is <b>much the same</b> as that provided in other settings	

Please give a reason for your answer in the space below.

13. In your opinion, how important are the following features of childcare provision in terms of the overall quality of care – on a scale of one to ten, where one is ‘not at all important’ and ten is ‘very important’. Keep in mind we want to know **your** opinion. (Circle **one** rating for **each** statement)

Features of childcare provision	Not at all Important										Very Important
a) Providing a safe physical environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
b) Communicating with parents about their children’s development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
c) Experience in looking after children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
d) Teaching children to get along with other children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
e) Sharing parents’ values about child rearing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
f) Qualifications and training in childcare	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
g) Teaching of cultural or religious values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
h) Caring for children in a home environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
i) Making children feel loved	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
j) Helping children develop and learn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
k) Preparing children for school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
l) Meeting individual children’s needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
m) Providing affordable care	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	



Features of childcare provision	Not at all Important									Very Important
n) Providing children with opportunities to make choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

14. How do you see a childminder’s role? (Tick the statement below that **best represents** your opinion)

Statement	
a) I see a childminder’s role as helping to provide early education for my child through play and everyday activities	
b) I see a childminder’s role as being there to provide mainly care (and not education) for my child	
c) I see a childminder’s role as being there to provide both care and early education for my child	

15. Please use this space to suggest ways in which the quality of childminding practice could be enhanced in Northern Ireland.

**Section D – About you**

16. What is your postcode? (Please insert your full postcode in the box provided)

17. Are you (Tick **one** only)

Female?	
Male?	

18. What was your age at your last birthday?

Years

19. Please indicate your nationality. (Tick **one** only)

British	
Irish	
Northern Irish	
Polish	
Lithuanian	
Other European (please specify)	
Other – rest of the world (please specify)	

20. Please indicate your ethnicity. (Tick **one** only)

White	
Chinese	
Irish Traveller	
Asian	
Black	
Other (please specify)	

21. How would you describe your religious background? (Please tick **one** box only)

Protestant	
Roman Catholic	
Muslim	
Jewish	
Hindu	
Other (please specify)	
I do not belong to any particular religion	

22. Which of these qualifications do you have? Tick **every** box that applies if you have **any** of the qualifications listed. If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent.

If you have qualifications you gained outside the UK, tick the box that indicates this and the nearest UK equivalents (if known).

Qualification	
a) 1-4 O Levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation diploma	
b) NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Essential Skills	
c) 5+ O Levels (passes)/CSEs (grade1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/2-3 AS Levels/VCEs, Higher Diploma	
d) NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma	
e) Apprenticeship	
f) 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma	
g) NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma	
h) Degree (for example, BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, Phd, PGCE)	
i) NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level, Foundation degree	
j) Professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy)	
k) Other vocational/work related qualifications	
l) Qualifications gained outside the UK	
m) No qualifications	

Please now complete the final page of this questionnaire.

Many thanks for completing this survey. Please be assured that the information you have provided here will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be used to inform this research. We anticipate publishing the results in early 2014 on the NCB and NICMA websites.

In order to be entered into our draw for one of ten £100 high street vouchers, please complete the following details and send back your survey in the Freepost envelope provided **by 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012**. This sheet will be detached from the returned surveys to preserve anonymity.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Date (please insert today's date) \_\_\_\_\_

Please also indicate if you would be prepared to take part in a focus group discussion in relation to childminding practice to explore some of these issues in more depth. Tick **one** box only.

**Yes**, I would be willing to take part in a focus group

**No**, I am not interested in taking part in a focus group

Please indicate if you would be prepared to take part in publicity when the findings of the research are being published (there is no obligation to do so). Tick **one** box only.

**Yes**, I would be willing to take part in publicity

**No**, I am not willing to take part in publicity

If you have any questions or queries in relation to the survey please do not hesitate to contact Teresa Geraghty on 028 90891730 or email [tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk).

## Appendix 8b: Parents' letter



Dear Parent,

**Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland – tell us what you think and have a chance to be one of ten parents to win £100 in high street vouchers!**

The National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland (NCB NI) in partnership with the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) is conducting research on childminding practice. This research is sponsored by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The aim of the research is to find out what parents think about the following:

- why parents choose childminding over other forms of childcare;
- the benefits of childminding for children and
- what aspects of childminding are important to parents.

Enclosed is a questionnaire which we would like you to complete. The information you provide will only be used for this research. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and only the research team at NCB NI will have access to the completed surveys. The last page will be detached to preserve anonymity. Findings generated from the research will also be reported anonymously.

Please return your survey **directly to NCB NI** (do not give it back to the childminder) in the enclosed freepost envelope by **December 17, 2012** to be in with a chance of winning that £100 voucher. If you prefer you may complete the survey online at [www.ncb.org.uk/northernireland](http://www.ncb.org.uk/northernireland). If you choose this option you **must** insert the reference number given on the top left-hand corner of the paper version of the survey.

This is the first piece of research to examine childminding practice in Northern Ireland – so it is really important that we hear from **both** childminders **and** parents so that we gain a better insight into this area of work. The more surveys we have returned the better the research will be. Please therefore complete and return your survey by the closing date.

If you have any questions or queries about this survey please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 90891730 or email [tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk). Many thanks for your cooperation in this matter. We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Geraghty', enclosed in a thin blue rectangular border.

Teresa Geraghty

Senior Research & Development Officer



## Appendix 8c: Parents' flyer (front cover)



**NICMA**  
The Childminding Association

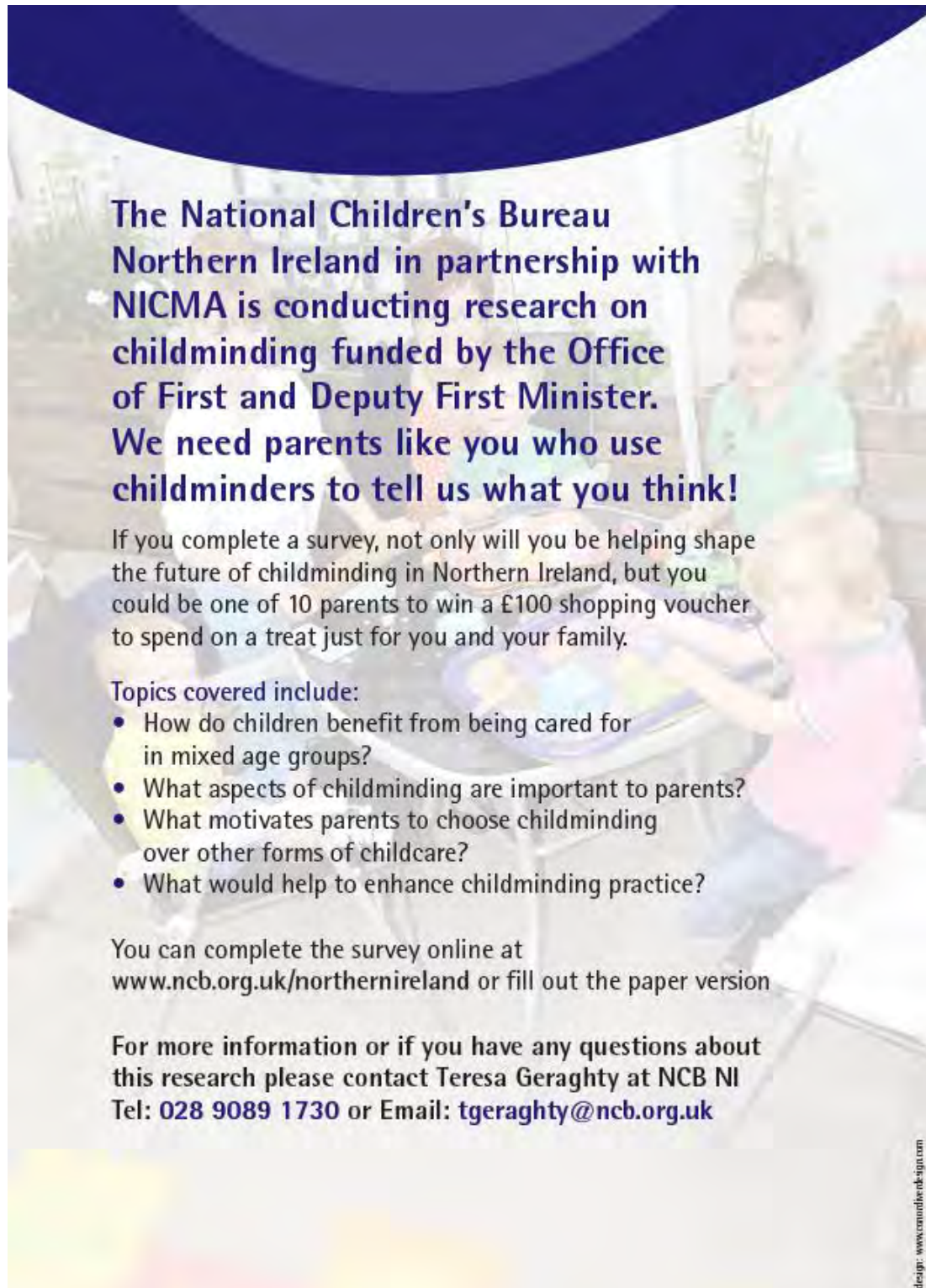
**ncb**  
Northern Ireland

Office of the  
**First Minister and  
Deputy First Minister**  
[www.omfmni.gov.uk](http://www.omfmni.gov.uk)  
DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE

Tell us what you think  
as a parent and be in  
with a chance to win  
one of ten **£100 high  
street vouchers!**

**Childminding  
practice in  
Northern Ireland**

## Appendix 8c: Parent's flyer (back cover)



**The National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland in partnership with NICMA is conducting research on childminding funded by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister. We need parents like you who use childminders to tell us what you think!**

If you complete a survey, not only will you be helping shape the future of childminding in Northern Ireland, but you could be one of 10 parents to win a £100 shopping voucher to spend on a treat just for you and your family.

Topics covered include:

- How do children benefit from being cared for in mixed age groups?
- What aspects of childminding are important to parents?
- What motivates parents to choose childminding over other forms of childcare?
- What would help to enhance childminding practice?

You can complete the survey online at [www.ncb.org.uk/northernireland](http://www.ncb.org.uk/northernireland) or fill out the paper version

For more information or if you have any questions about this research please contact Teresa Geraghty at NCB NI  
Tel: **028 9089 1730** or Email: [tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tgeraghty@ncb.org.uk)

design: [www.comindivdesign.com](http://www.comindivdesign.com)

## Appendix 9: Topic Guide for Childminders' Focus Groups

### **Quality**

How would you demonstrate to parents that childcare offered in your home is of a high quality?

77% of parents and childminders believe the quality of a childminders setting is HIGHER than in other childcare settings. Why do you think this is? (Probe to what extent this view is based on their experience of other childcare settings or perceptions)

Why do you think parents choose childminders over other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries)?

How do you assess your own performance as a childminder?

When we asked childminders how childminding practice in Northern Ireland could be enhanced, there were very strong views that unregistered childminding needed to be addressed. How could childminders be persuaded to become registered?

### **Care and education**

Close to 69% of both childminders and parents believe that a childminders role involves providing both care and early education. Do you find this figure surprising? Why/ why not?

(Possible follow-up) Childminders that did not choose this option were more likely to state that a childminders role involves providing '*only early education*', while parents who did not choose this option were more likely to state that a childminders role involves providing '*only care*', why do you think this is?

### **Practice**

80% of childminders plan activities either '*all of the time*' or '*most of the time*'. To what extent is good planning linked to good practice?

Do you incorporate free play into your activities? Do you view it as an important element of a child's early education? Why?/ Why not?

### **Vertical Grouping**

What are the main benefits for children who are cared for in a mixed age setting compared to other childcare settings, e.g. day-nursery?

Do you think children of different ages learn from each other at a childminders more than any other childcare setting? Why?/ Why not?

What are the most challenging aspects when caring for children of different ages? How do you overcome these challenges? (Probe resources and logistics issue if necessary)

What would help you overcome the challenges of caring for children of mixed ages?

### **Training and Qualifications**

Do you think it should be mandatory for childminders to receive childcare training and specific childcare qualifications before they are registered? Why?

What barriers exist when it comes to accessing specific childcare qualifications and training? How do you think these can be overcome?

If a friend was interested in becoming a childminder, what advice would you give them?

If a friend was interested in becoming a childminder, where would you tell them to go in order to receive advice and support?

In terms of the support childminders receive many childminders feel that peer support is very important (69% receive help and advice from other childminders), however on the other hand membership of childminding networks and support groups is quite low for childminders in NI (15% for local childminder peer support groups and 15% for NICMA childminding networks). Would you welcome more opportunities to become involved in peer support groups/networks?



## Appendix 10: Topic Guide for Parents' Focus Groups

### **Quality**

If a friend asks you to recommend a good quality childminder, what would you tell him/her to look out for?

How do you know if your child as had a good day at their childminders?

77% of both parents and childminders believe the quality of a childminders setting is HIGHER than in other childcare settings. Why do you think this is? Is this view based on your experiences of other childcare settings?

*(possible follow-on from previous question) Why did you choose a childminder over other forms of childcare (e.g. day nurseries)?*

Do you view childminders as having the same professional status as other childcare providers? (e.g. day nurseries, crèches, nannies)

Close to 69% of both childminders and parents believe that a childminders role involves providing both care and early education. Do you find this figure surprising? Why/ why not?

### **Vertical Grouping**

Are there any aspects of being cared for in a mixed aged setting compared to other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries) that your child particularly benefits from?

Do you think children of different ages learn from each other at a childminders more than any other childcare setting? Why?/ Why not?

Are there any drawbacks of being cared for in a mixed aged setting compared to other childcare settings (e.g. day nurseries)? *Probe logistical and resources issues if necessary)*

### **Training and Accreditation**

Were specific childcare qualifications and/or levels of childcare training important to you when choosing your current childminder over other childcare settings?

Do you know if your childminder holds any specific childcare qualifications?

Do you think it should be mandatory for childminders to have completed childcare training and hold specific childcare qualifications before they are registered? Why?

Unregistered childminding is an issue highlighted by childminders as a problem that needs to be addressed in order to enhance the quality of childminding practice in Northern Ireland. Why do you think parents use unregistered childminders?

## Appendix 11: Topic Guide for Children's Focus Groups

1. Can you draw me a picture of you at your childminders:
  - i. What's happening
  - ii. Who is in the picture (are they your friends)
  - iii. Are your friends at your childminders older or younger than you (what age are they)
  - iv. Do you like playing with them
  
2. What do you like best about coming to your childminders? (for older children: Do you like coming to your childminder's after school? Why/ why not?)
3. Is there anything you don't like about going to your childminders?
4. Do you like being with older/younger children at your childminders?
5. Do you like being with your siblings at your childminders?
6. How long have you been going to your childminders?
7. How do you feel at your childminders (use cards)
8. If your mum/ dad said to you that you weren't coming to the childminders anymore how would you feel? (use cards or can you draw me a picture of how you would feel?)
9. Where do your friends go after school? (to a childminders, after schools club?) Do they like going there?
10. If somebody was asking you about how could childminders improve things for children your age, what would you say to them?

## Appendix 12a: Childminders' focus group invite letter



Dear (Childminders name),

### Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Key preliminary findings and Focus Group Discussion Invite

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey on Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland. Key preliminary findings to date show that:

- 77% of childminders and parents believe the **quality** of care provided in a childminder's setting is **HIGHER** than in other childcare settings
- A significant number of childminders provide care late in the evening and overnight
- Over two-thirds of childminders and parents believe that a childminder's role involves providing **BOTH** care and education
- 47% of parents stated the most important reason for choosing a childminder over other forms of childcare is because of the 'Home-like environment' the setting offers
- 84% of parents and 79% of childminders stated that the **benefits of children of mixed ages being cared for together outweigh the drawbacks**. Childminders were more likely than parents to view logistical and resource issues as a challenge to providing care in mixed aged settings

We are pleased that you have agreed to participate in a focus group where you will have an opportunity to discuss the above and other findings in-depth. The focus group will last for approximately 1.5 hours and will consist of 8-10 childminders based in your area. **All focus group participants will receive a £20 high street voucher** and light refreshments will be provided.

The focus group will be held between April and June and we will contact you soon about the location and timing of the focus group. In the meantime, if you would like to discuss any of the above please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Rachel Shannon on 028 90891730.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Geraghty  
Senior Research & Development Officer



## Appendix 12b: Childminders' focus group invite letter for those who did not initially agree to participate in focus groups



Dear (Childminder's name),

### Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Key preliminary findings and Focus Group Discussion Invite

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey on Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland. Key preliminary findings to date show that:

- 77% of childminders and parents believe the **quality** of care provided in a childminders setting is **HIGHER** than in other childcare settings
- A significant number of childminders provide care late in the evening and overnight
- Over two-thirds of childminders and parents believe that a childminders role involves providing **BOTH** care and education
- 47% of parents stated the most important reason for choosing a childminder over other forms of childcare is because of the 'Home-like environment' the setting offers
- 84% of parents and 79% of childminders stated that the **benefits of children of mixed ages being cared for together outweigh the drawbacks**. Childminders were more likely than parents to view logistical and resource issues as a challenge to providing care in mixed aged settings

We will be holding a number of focus groups throughout Northern Ireland in order to discuss the above and other key findings in-depth. I am aware that you have expressed you are not interested in attending a focus group, however in light of the above findings perhaps you might reconsider? The focus group will last for approximately 1.5 hours and will consist of 8-10 childminders based in your area. The focus group will be held between April and June. **All focus group participants will receive a £20 high street voucher and light refreshments will be provided.**

If you would like to participate in the focus group please complete the attached reply slip and email it to [rshannon@ncb.org.uk](mailto:rshannon@ncb.org.uk) by **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March**. Alternatively, you can register your interest by posting the reply slip to NCB NI using the enclosed **freepost** SAE, or by contacting Rachel Shannon on 028 90 891730. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Rachel on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Geraghty (Senior Research & Development Officer)

## Focus Group Reply Slip

If you would like to participate in a focus group to discuss key issues surrounding Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland, please complete this reply slip and return it to NCB (National Children’s Bureau) NI by emailing [rshannon@ncb.org.uk](mailto:rshannon@ncb.org.uk) or by posting it using the enclosed freepost SAE. Alternatively you can register your interest by contacting Rachel Shannon at NCB directly on 028 90 891730. **The deadline for registering your interest to participate in a focus group is Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March.**

**YES I would like to attend a focus group discussion**

Full name.....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

### Contact Information

Telephone number: .....

Email address: .....

**When is it most suitable for you to attend a focus group (please tick):**

A weekday evening (after 7pm)

Saturday morning

## Appendix 12c: Childminders' venue letter



The childminding association



Dear (Childminder's name),

**Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Focus Group Invite**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group on childminding practice in Northern Ireland. The focus group will give you an opportunity to discuss the key findings from the survey with other childminders based in your area. Please find attached a list of the focus groups we hope to hold throughout Northern Ireland. **Please indicate the focus group venue that suits you best to attend.**

Please note that in order to run each focus group we require at least 6 participants. Therefore, if we do not receive enough interest for your chosen venue, we may amalgamate focus groups and suggest that you attend a different venue. However, should this issue arise we will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

The focus group will last for approximately 1.5 hours. Tea, coffee and sandwiches will be provided and **each participant will receive a £20 shopping voucher as a thank you for taking part.**

Please return the reply slip overleaf by **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April** using the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

I will be in touch with you shortly after this date to confirm the focus group. In the meantime, if you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Rachel Shannon on 028 90 891730.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Geraghty

Senior Research & Development Officer

### Childminders Focus Group: Reply Slip

Please find a list of focus groups below. Please tick the focus group venue you would like to attend.

Town	Date	Time	Venue	Please Tick ONE ✓
Belfast	30-April	7.30-9pm	NCB, Albany House, Great Victoria Street, Belfast	
Bangor	07-May	7.30-9pm	Marine Court Hotel	
Ballynahinch	08-May	7.30-9pm	Millbrook Lodge Hotel	
Carrickfergus	09-May	7.30-9pm	Clarion Hotel	
Enniskillen	11-May	2pm	St Macartin's Hall, Enniskillen (to coincide with NICMA council meeting)	
Banbridge	13-May	7.30-9pm	Belmont Hotel	
Magherafelt	15-May	7.30-9pm	The Terrace Hotel	
Derry-Londonderry	20-May	7.30-9pm	Playtrail, Racecourse Road	
Ballymoney	22-May	7.30-9pm	Town Hall	

We will contact you soon with further details about the focus group. Please provide us with your contact details below:

**Name:**.....

**Address:**.....

**Contact Telephone Number:** .....

**Email address:** .....

Please inform us of any special dietary or access requirements you have in the space below:

Please return this reply slip to the National Children's Bureau NI in the enclosed freepost envelope by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April.

## Appendix 12d: Parents' focus group invite letter



The childminding association



Dear (parents name),

### Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Key preliminary findings and Focus Group Discussion Invite

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey on Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland. Key preliminary findings to date show that:

- 77% of childminders and parents believe the **quality** of care provided in a childminder's setting is **HIGHER** than in other childcare settings
- A significant number of childminders provide care late in the evening and overnight
- Over two-thirds of childminders and parents believe that a childminder's role involves providing **BOTH** care and education
- 47% of parents stated the most important reason for choosing a childminder over other forms of childcare is because of the 'Home-like environment' the setting offers
- 84% of parents and 79% of childminders stated that the **benefits of children of mixed ages being cared for together outweigh the drawbacks**. Childminders were more likely than parents to view logistical and resource issues as a challenge to providing care in mixed aged settings

We are pleased that you have agreed to participate in a focus group where you will have an opportunity to discuss the above and other findings in-depth. The focus group will last for approximately 1.5 hours and will consist of 8-10 parents based in your area, whose children are also cared for by childminders. **All focus group participants will receive a £20 high street voucher** and light refreshments will be provided.

The focus group will be held between April and June and we will contact you soon about the location and timing of the focus group. In the meantime, if you would like to discuss any of the above please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Rachel Shannon on 028 90891730.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Geraghty  
Senior Research & Development Officer

## Appendix 12e: Parents' focus group invite letter for those who did not initially agree to participate in focus groups



Dear Parent,

**Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Key preliminary findings and Focus Group Discussion Invite**

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey on Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland. Key preliminary findings to date show that:

- 77% of childminders and parents believe the **quality** of care provided in a childminders setting is **HIGHER** than in other childcare settings
- A significant number of childminders provide care late in the evening and overnight
- Over two-thirds of childminders and parents believe that a childminders role involves providing **BOTH** care and education
- 47% of parents stated the most important reason for choosing a childminder over other forms of childcare is because of the 'Home-like environment' the setting offers
- 84% of parents and 79% of childminders stated that the **benefits of children of mixed ages being cared for together outweigh the drawbacks**. Childminders were more likely than parents to view logistical and resource issues as a challenge to providing care in mixed aged settings

We will be holding a number of focus groups throughout Northern Ireland in order to discuss the above and other key findings in-depth. I am aware that you have expressed you are not interested in attending a focus group, however in light of the above findings perhaps you might reconsider? The focus group will last for approximately 1.5 hours and will consist of 8-10 parents based in your area, whose children are also cared for by childminders. The focus group will be held between April and June. **All focus group participants will receive a £20 high street voucher and light refreshments will be provided.**

If you would like to participate in the focus group please complete the attached reply slip and email it to [rshannon@ncb.org.uk](mailto:rshannon@ncb.org.uk) by **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March**. Alternatively, you can register your interest by posting the reply slip to NCB NI using the enclosed **freepost** SAE, or by contacting Rachel Shannon on 028 90 891730. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Rachel on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Geraghty (Senior Research & Development Officer)

## Focus Group Reply Slip

If you would like to participate in a focus group to discuss key issues surrounding Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland, please complete this reply slip and return it to NCB (National Children’s Bureau) NI by emailing [rshannon@ncb.org.uk](mailto:rshannon@ncb.org.uk) or by posting it using the enclosed freepost SAE. Alternatively you can register your interest by contacting Rachel Shannon at NCB directly on 028 90 891730. **The deadline for registering your interest to participate in a focus group is Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March.**

**YES I would like to attend a focus group discussion**

Full name.....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

### Contact Information

Telephone number: .....

Email address: .....

**When is it most suitable for you to attend a focus group (please tick):**

A weekday evening (after 7pm)

Saturday morning

## Appendix 12f: Parents' focus group venue letter



The childminding association



Dear Parent ,

**Re: Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Focus Group Invite**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group on childminding practice in Northern Ireland. The focus group will give you an opportunity to discuss the key findings from the survey, with other parents based in your area. Please find attached a list of the focus groups we hope to hold throughout Northern Ireland. **Please indicate the focus group venue that suits you best to attend.** If you have a friend who also uses a *registered childminder* please feel free to bring them along to the focus group (and enter their name on the reply slip).

Please note that in order to run each focus group we require at least 6 participants. Therefore, if we do not receive enough interest for your chosen venue, we may amalgamate focus groups and suggest that you attend a different venue. However, should this issue arise we will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

The focus group will last for approximately 1.5 hours. Tea, coffee and sandwiches will be provided and **each participant will receive a £20 shopping voucher** as a thank you for taking part.

Please return the reply slip overleaf by **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April** using the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

I will be in touch with you shortly after this date to confirm the focus group. In the meantime, if you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Rachel Shannon on 028 90 891730.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Geraghty  
Senior Research & Development Officer



### Parents Focus Group: Reply Slip

Please find a list of focus groups below. Please tick the focus group venue you would like to attend.

Town	Date	Time	Venue	Please Tick ONE ✓
Belfast	23-May	7.30-9pm	NCB, Albany House, Great Victoria Street, Belfast	
Portadown	29-May	7.30-9pm	Seagoe Hotel	
Derry-Londonderry	30-May	7.30-9pm	Playtrail, Racecourse Road	
Enniskillen	3-June	7.30-9pm	Killyhevlin Hotel	
Bangor	11-June	7.30-9pm	Marine Court Hotel	
Magherafelt	18-June	7.30-9pm	The Terrace Hotel	
Ballymoney	20-June	7.30-9pm	Town Hall	

I intend to bring a friend, who also uses a registered childminder, along to the focus group:

Name of friend: .....

We will contact you soon with further details about the focus group. Please provide us with your contact details below:

Name:.....

Address:.....

Contact Telephone Number:

.....

Email address: .....

Please inform us of any special dietary or access requirements you have in the space below:

Please return this reply slip to the National Children’s Bureau NI in the enclosed freepost envelope by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April.

## Appendix 13: Children's interview information sheet and consent form

Who do we want to talk to and why?

We have already surveyed some parents and childminders. We also want to know what children like you think about going to a childminder's house and being cared for there. For example, what is good about it? What do you like best about it? Is there anything you don't like about it?



How will we collect the information and how will we use it?

To find out what you think, we'd like to talk to you and ask you a few questions like the ones we've mentioned. We will write down what you say and will also record you on tape. Then we will write down what we have found out but we won't use anyone's real name and we won't tell anyone else (including your parents or your childminder) what you said. We will just tell people what children in general said. We will destroy the recordings after 2 years.

What will we do with the information we collect?

All of the information we collect will be used to try and make things better for everyone who is involved in childminding – children, parents and childminders. We will use the information we collect to talk to other people who give training and support to childminders to explain how they can help make things better. We will tell the government (the people in charge of Northern Ireland) how they can help make things better. We will try to get the people who plan things like childcare, to listen to what you have said.



Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part. We would like to hear about what you think, but it is up to you to decide if you want to or not. Either way it is OK with us.

Also if you want to stop at any time you can, even if we have already started to talk to you. If this happens we won't use any of your information.

Thanks!!

Thanks for taking the time to read this leaflet.

If you do take part in a focus group we will give you a small gift to say thank you.



Decision Time!!!

If you would like to take part then tick this box:

Yes I want to take part in the research (please tick)

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Consent:

I give consent for my child to take part in the NCB NI/ NICMA research into childminding practice:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

CM ref (for office use only) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this slip to the National Children's Bureau at your earliest convenience using the enclosed freepost envelope.

Childminding Practice in Northern Ireland: Information and consent form for parents and children

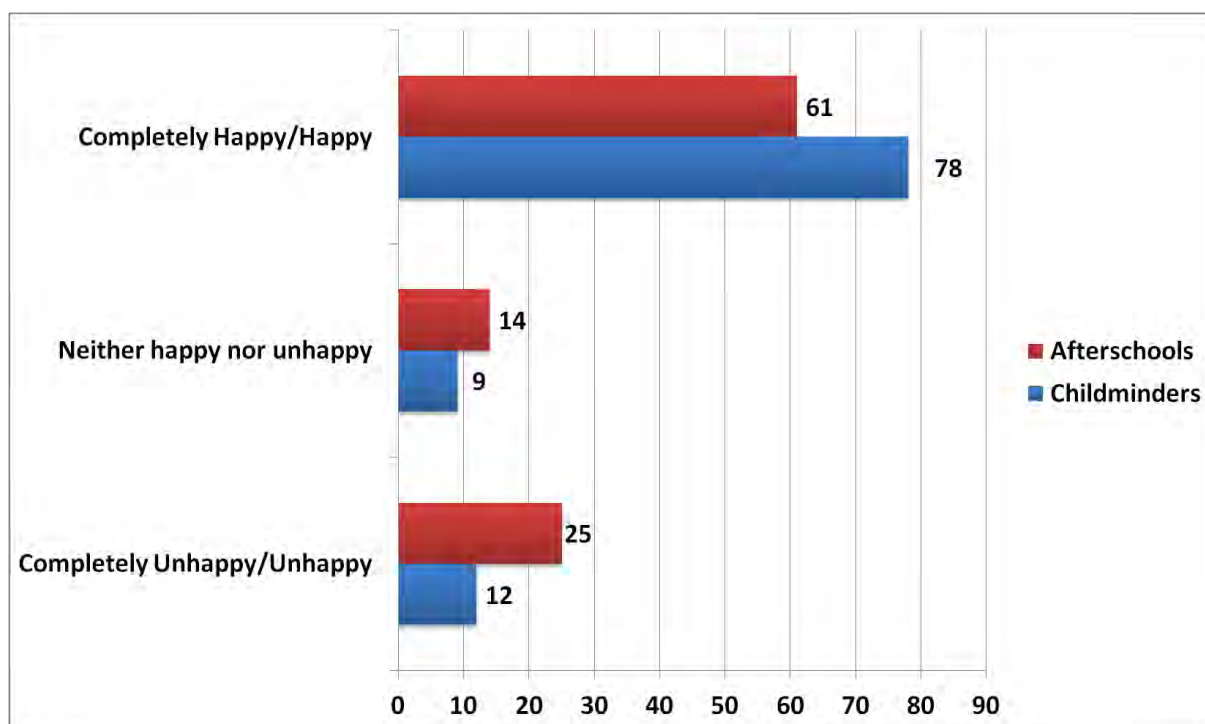


What is the research about?

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) in partnership with the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) is carrying out research on childminding practice in Northern Ireland. The Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) gave us the money to do this research. We want to find out what happens when children go to a childminders. What is good about it, what might be improved and how.

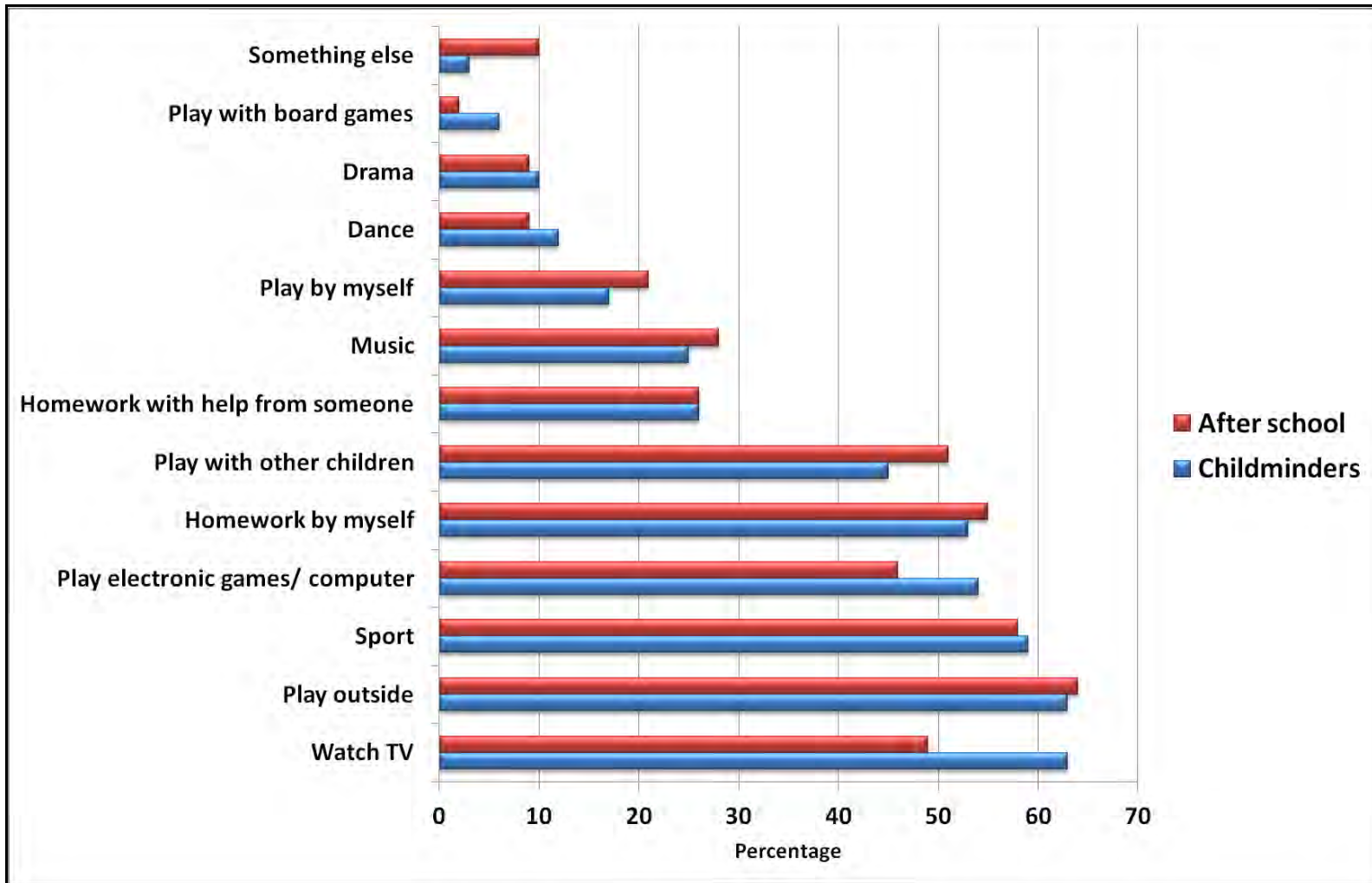


## Appendix 14: Kids Life and Times findings



Childminders  $n=161$ ; Afterschools  $n=116$

Question 13: How children feel about going to a childminders and afterschools setting when school finishes



Question 15: Activities children undertake at childminders and after schools clubs settings most days