

Childminding Babies: A Review of the Global Evidence on Conceptualising, Measuring and Supporting Quality in Childminding Provision for 0–2 Year Olds

The project's aims

This research project, 'Achieving high-quality provision for babies among childminders in England', aims to kickstart the conversation about high-quality provision for children aged 0–2 years old in childminding provision.

The research will consist of a rapid evidence review, surveys and focus groups.

The rapid evidence review

Our rapid evidence review comprised analysis of 29 academic articles and four grey literature items. Analysis focused on three key areas:

- How quality is conceptualised
- How quality is measured
- How quality is supported for 0–2 year old provision in childminding contexts.

Headline findings



Conceptualising quality: Childminding offers a distinctive, relationship-centred form of provision that may be particularly valuable for 0–2 year olds and their families. Despite this, babies in childminding remain largely overlooked in research and policy.



Measuring quality: Existing quality measures do not fully capture babies' experiences in childminding. More child-centred and context-sensitive approaches are needed that reflect the distinctive nature of home-based provision and what matters most to babies and families.



Supporting quality: Improving quality requires investment in tailored professional support for childminders, including mentoring, coaching and peer networks. Moreover, childminder wellbeing is a quality issue, underlining the need to address isolation, emotional labour and workload pressures.

Policy recommendations



Recognise babies in childminding as a distinct policy priority.

Current policy discussions about children under two should not focus exclusively on centre-based provision. Childminding should be routinely included in discussions about babies' experiences, workforce development and quality improvement.



Avoid adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to quality.

Policies relating to quality assurance, inspection and quality improvement should recognise childminding as a distinct form of provision rather than treating it as a smaller version of nursery care.



Invest in growing childminders' professional networks.

The literature highlights the risks associated with isolation and points towards the value of networks, mentoring, supervision, communities of practice and peer support.



Recognise childminder wellbeing as a quality issue.

Policies designed to improve quality for babies should explicitly consider childminders' workload, stress and emotional wellbeing, particularly given the highly relational nature of their work.



Develop a clearer statement of purpose for childminding provision for babies.

As investment in provision for children under two grows, central government must define with greater clarity what childminding uniquely contributes to babies' development, positioning them as integral to wider policy work with babies.

Full report available at: childmindingbabies.blog/rapid-evidence-review

Research team and funding

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For more information on the project, reports, and recommendations, visit childmindingbabies.blog

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