

NVQs meeting the needs of our children

Northern Ireland Childminding Association



The Business Benefits

The Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) recognises the benefits they have received from involvement in the NVQ process:

Childminders are recognised and valued as skilled, qualified professionals

NICMA is now widely recognised as a quality training provider

The programme has created a demand from their members and other agencies for NVQ training and assessment

To date over 200 childminders have completed their NVQ

The NVQ has initiated an interest in further accredited training and development of their members

The full story inside



Bridget Nodder

“NICMA’s main purpose is to promote the development of children by providing quality daycare & education within registered, home based settings.”

Northern Ireland

Childminding Association

The Northern Ireland Childminding Association is a membership organisation and registered charity which works to support childminders, parents and children. With over 2200 registered childminders and 500 parent associate members, the Association is the largest provider of full and part time day care in the province. The purpose of the Association is to promote the development of children by providing quality childcare and education in a registered home based setting.

The Association strives to:

Promote childminding as a quality childcare and education service

Provide training in childcare and education

Encourage legal childminding

Provide a childcare information and advice service to childminders, parents and those involved in childcare

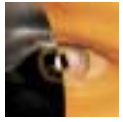
Provide a support network for registered childminders.

NICMA’s vision for the future is one where all children are cared for and provided with the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, enjoyable home environment and where childminders are recognised and valued as skilled, qualified professionals.

The emphasis on training and qualifications for childminders is vital, as thousands of children and families depend on registered childminders. Training has a central role to play in promoting high standards and quality in family day care. The right sort of training benefits not only the childminder, but the children and parents as well. Good quality childminding requires a multitude of skills and knowledge to meet the care and educational needs of individual children, as well as the skills required to operate a small business and communicate with adults.

NICMA aims to provide members of staff and volunteers with the training they need in order to provide a quality home based childcare and education service.

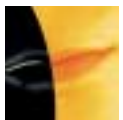
The NVQ Programme



The Northern Ireland
Childminding
Association first

became involved in the NVQ process in 1995 when they became a founder member of the Care Assessment Centre, Northern Ireland, linked to City & Guilds.

They received funding from the European Social Fund Employment Initiative "N.O.W" (New Opportunities for Women) to enable childminders to access NVQ training and assessment. Initially there was a small take up, but the interest grew as more childminders achieved their awards.



The majority of
childminders,
although usually well

experienced in caring for the early years sector, had no formal training or qualifications. The implementation of the NVQ therefore helped them achieve accreditation for the skills they already possessed and helped them acquire the further skills necessary to provide a quality childcare and education service.

A home study package for level 2 and level 3 was devised which included a mentor, assessor and support group. Initially there were 4 qualified peripatetic assessors and 2 internal verifiers, but due to the success of the programme this has now increased to 16 assessors and 5 internal verifiers.



NICMA recognises
that training must fit
in with the unique job

and hours worked by registered childminders and as such they offer NVQs in a variety of ways including; distance learning, college based in the evenings, home study linked to a mentor and study classes in the evenings.

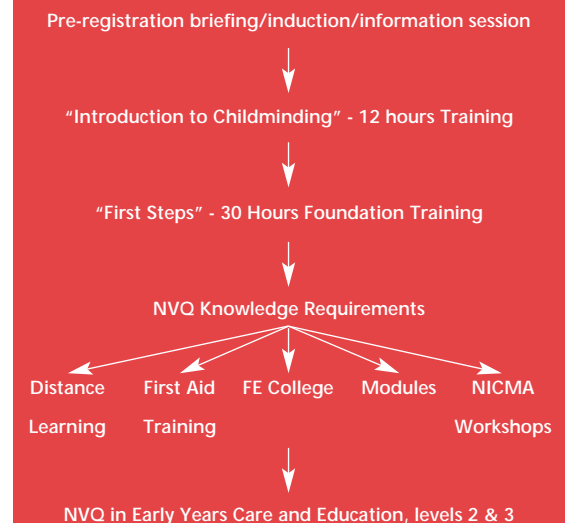


The introduction of
NVQs has been a
great success and

surpassed the expectations of NICMA with many NVQ candidates continuing their personal development through City & Guilds 730/6 and NVQ levels 3 and 4 in Learning & Development.

employer case studies

NICMA's Training Framework



“NVQs ensure that we now have an ever expanding qualified workforce caring for the children in our society.”

Employee Benefits

The benefits of introducing NVQ programmes to NICMA and its members are as follows:

Enhanced skills, confidence and self-esteem of childminders

Increased childminders' awareness of the benefits of training

For the first time childminders are able to achieve a recognised qualification within their own setting

Increased staffing levels and qualifications

The Future

Within the Children (N.I.) Order 1995, it is not a mandatory requirement of registration for childminders to possess a relevant childcare qualification. However, in recognition of the wide knowledge and complex skills required by registered childminders NICMA believes that high quality, accessible, affordable and relevant training should be available to all registered childminders. NICMA's vision for the future is one where all children are cared for and provided with the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, enjoyable home and where childminders are recognised and valued as skilled, qualified professionals. The NVQ process matches these requirements completely and it is therefore NICMA's wish to continue this process in the future.

For further information on NVQ implementation and general NVQ information please contact:

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