

workbook for childminders

BUILDING ON YOUR OWN CAPABILITY



WHAT IS THE PROJECT: BUILDING STRONG FAMILY DAY CARE?

In the project we are supporting strong family day care by investing in the preparation for the profession and the guidance of childminders who are in the profession.

The project has two objectives:

- To support prospective childminders by creating an introductory course and assembling information on the job at www.gezinsopvanginfo.be
- To support childminders by developing tools for coaches (mentors): the workbook “Building on your own capability” and inspirational stories and materials about communities of practise and other forms of collegial learning.

The project runs from January 2011 to December 2013. VBJK and CEGO are realising the project in close cooperation with the people in the field. This project and product are being financed by the European Social Fund and the Flemish government.

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COLOPHON

Colophon

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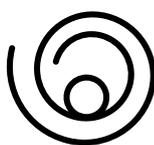
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vbjk

Centre for Innovation
in the Early Years
Centre d'Innovation de
la Petite Enfance

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GETTING STARTED WITH THIS WORKBOOK

As a childminder, you share with the parents the care and education of their child. This is a beautiful, but also a challenging job. You fulfil several roles: educating and caring for the children, working in partnership with the parents and organising the childcare. In order to be able to handle all the tasks, questions or problems, it is important that you are sufficiently capable.

In front of you is your own workbook with numerous exercises. By doing these exercises, you map out what your strengths and concerns are. This is a starting point to get into action and enhance your capability.

Good luck in charting your own capability!

WHO IS THIS WORKBOOK FOR?

This workbook is for both prospective and working childminders.

ARE YOU A PROSPECTIVE CHILDMINDER?

Then, with this workbook, you can examine the opportunities and challenges that the job of childminder holds for you at this time. In this way, you can make a well-considered decision to become a childminder. Have you decided to start? With this workbook, you have a good starting point to develop yourself further as a childminder and enhance your capability.

ARE YOU ALREADY WORKING AS A CHILDMINDER?

Then, with this workbook, you can investigate what is going well for you in the job and what the questions or problems are that you are struggling with. This helps you talk about these things with your coach or mentor.

WHAT CAN YOU FIND IN THIS WORKBOOK?

The workbook consists of three parts: the building blocks, the sketch and the PDP, or personal development plan.

Building blocks	The building blocks are things in yourself and in your environment which support you in your job or make the job difficult. In the workbook, you will find an exercise for each building block. There are two versions: one for prospective childminders and one for working childminders. By doing the exercise belonging to the building block, you will be able to find out what, at this moment, your strengths and concerns are.
Sketch	<p>On the sketch, you create an overview of your strengths and concerns in the various building blocks.</p> <p> Highlights your strengths. You can depend on these as a (future) childminder.</p> <p> Points out your areas of concern. You can work on these to enhance your capability.</p> <p>It is literally a sketch: an unfinished drawing, intended to make something clear in a simple way. It shows how your situation is now. Next month it can look different. Therefore, it makes sense to occasionally do the exercises again and discuss it.</p>
PDP	PDP means: Personal Development Plan. In the PDP, you determine, together with your mentor, what actions you want to take in the coming period to develop yourself and enhance your knowledge and skills.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS WORKBOOK?

You could get started by doing the exercises in the workbook by yourself. But it is more interesting to also talk to others about the exercises and your findings. You could do this with fellow childminders or a coach. Some advantages are:

- Indicating strengths and concerns from the exercises is easier in conversation with a supervisor or coach.
- By talking about the exercises, you sometimes discover new things about yourself.
- In conversation with fellow childminders, you get practical tips that you can start to use immediately.
- It is easier to convert the sketch with strengths and concerns into action if you discuss this with someone.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CAPABILITY?

Capability is your ability to take on and handle all tasks, questions or problems related to your job. Some elements support you in the job, other elements are obstacles in practising the job. The balance between both determines your capability.

WHAT INFLUENCES YOUR CAPABILITY AS A CHILDMINDER?

Conversations with experienced childminders and research show that, in particular, the following elements affect your capability as childminder:

- The extent to which you feel good (in the job).
- Your motivation or your reasons for working as a childminder.
- Your physical condition and your health.
- Your personal characteristics, such as your attitude, your perspective towards children and parents, your knowledge and skills.
- Your experience and education.
- The extent to which the combination of job and family life runs smoothly.
- Your own network or the extent to which you will find support from others.

These are also the building blocks in this workbook.

Each of these building blocks can support you in your job. Here are some examples:

- A training course in the care, learning and development of young children can increase your capability as a childminder.
- If all your family members experience your job as a childminder as positive, this often makes your job easier.
- If you have regular contact and support from other childminders or from a mentor (coach), it becomes easier to contact them in difficult situations and talk through any concern you have.

At the same time, each of these building blocks can make the job difficult. Some examples are:

- Having no experience and training in caring for young children can make you insecure so that you lack confidence in your ability to become a childminder.
- If you have older children of your own, they may not like your job because they want more peace and privacy during exam periods.
- If you do not have enough support from a mentor (coach), difficult situations can become very taxing.



BUILDING BLOCKS

The **building blocks** are elements in yourself and in your environment which support you in your job or make the job difficult. You will find an exercise for each building block. In this way, you will be able to find out what, at this moment, your strengths and concerns are.

These are the building blocks:



1. Well-being in the job



2. Motivation



3. Health and physical condition



4. Key competences



5. Me and the job content



6. Family



7. Not alone



8. Training and experience



BUILDING BLOCK 1: WELL-BEING IN THE JOB

HOW DO I FEEL IN THE JOB AT THIS MOMENT?

How you feel in the job at any given moment is a snapshot. Everyone has moments in his work during which he or she feels more or less satisfied. However, it is important to occasionally reflect on how you feel in the job. This affects your work as a childminder. A childminder is usually alone with a group of children. In difficult times, he or she cannot immediately turn to a colleague for advice. Taking good care of yourself is, therefore, especially important. In this exercise, you examine how you feel at this moment in the job. What do you enjoy and what do you find difficult?

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: WHAT WORDS FIT YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE JOB?

Shown on the right are different words and expressions. Think back to the last month. **What words or phrases are best suited to your feelings about the job at this moment?** Indicate or circle what suits you. You can also add your own words or phrases.

STEP 2: IN WHAT SITUATION?

For each of the designated words or phrases, ask yourself the question: in what situations do I feel like this? Write the words that fit you at the bottom of the worksheet. For each word, search for one or more situations that would be appropriate. Briefly describe them. These situations are a good starting point for discussions with your mentor or other childminders. Together, you can find ways to improve how you feel in the job during those moments or how to approach them differently.

STEP 3: THE SKETCH

Write the main results of the exercise in the sketch. These two questions will help you with this.



What makes you happy in the job?



What do you need to change to feel good in the job?

SAMPLE SKETCH

Marta has worked for nine years as a childminder. She feels that she usually has a good relationship with the children. Recently, she has been caring for a baby who cries a lot. It seems like she just cannot give the baby a feeling of security. Recently, she was criticised by a parent who felt that she was not stimulating their toddler enough. This comment has hit her hard. Due to these occurrences, she now feels very insecure in her job: is she actually a good childminder? At night, she often feels tired, but in the morning she gets up with renewed energy, ready for the children.

1. WELL-BEING IN THE JOB



What makes you happy in the job?

*The fun and warm relationship with the children.
A good night's sleep and a good chat.*



What do you need to change to feel good in the job?

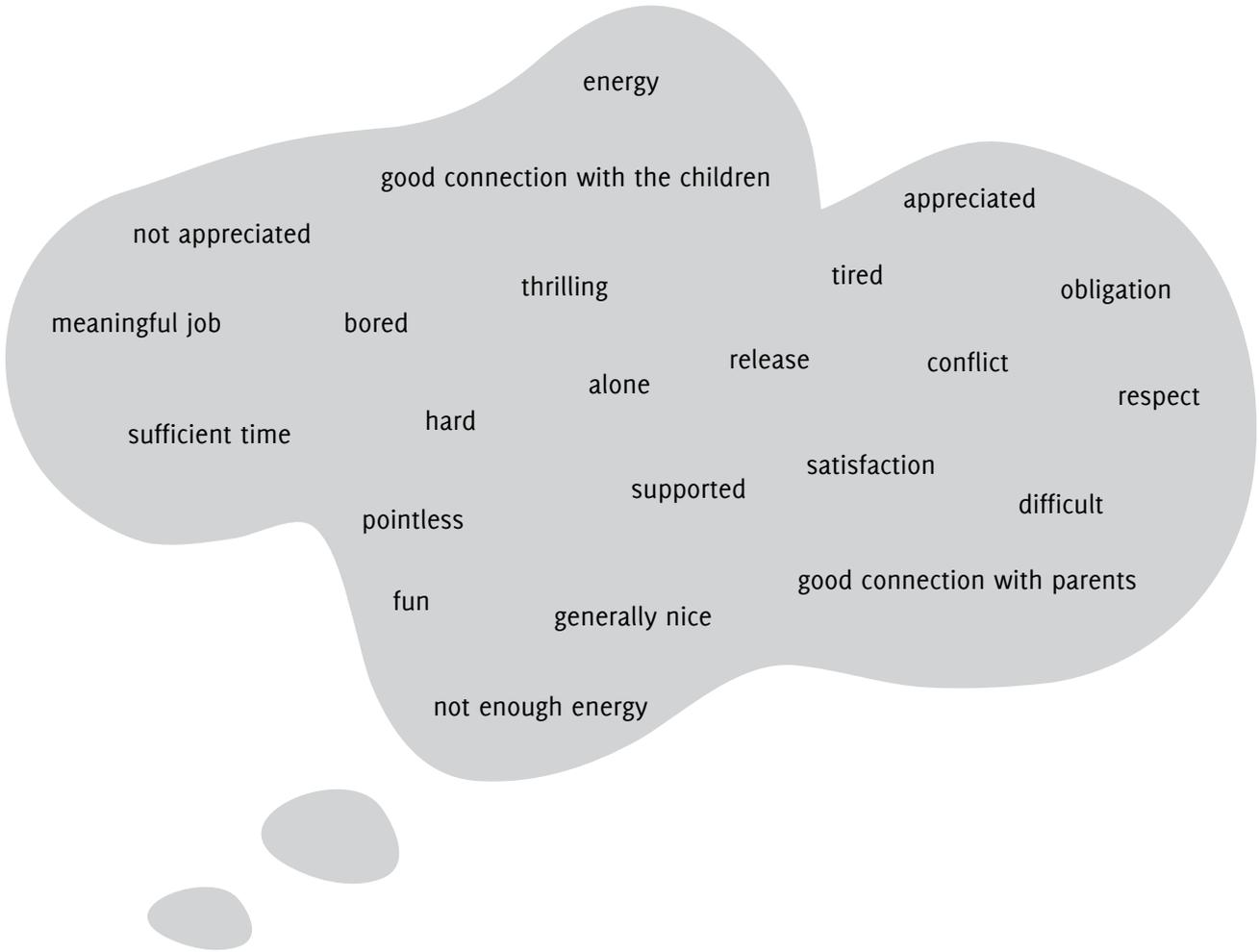
*Some additional support in the situation to meet the crying baby's needs.
The ability not to get upset if parents make a remark or criticise me.*



Date:



Exercise: How do i feel in the job at this moment?



IN WHAT SITUATION/SITUATIONS DO/DID YOU FEEL LIKE THIS?

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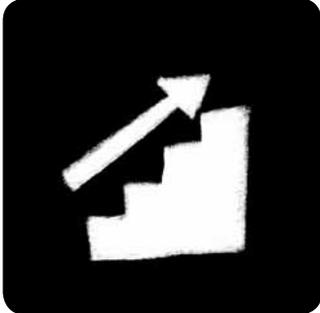
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BUILDING BLOCK 2: MOTIVATION

WHY DO I CHOOSE TO BE A CHILDMINDER?

When you started as a childminder, you chose this job for one or more reasons. This helps determine what is important to you in the job. What is important to you may also change over time. Why have you chosen this job at this time? And what are disadvantages for you at this time?

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS JOB?

On the next page, you will find several reasons to work as a childminder. Give, for every reason, what **you currently** feel about these reasons: important, so-so, not important ... Do this by colouring in the circles: the more important you think the reason is, the more circles you colour. If a reason is not important for you at all, then just leave the circles uncoloured. Is there a reason you do not find on this list? If so, write it in below.

Finally, circle the three most important reasons to work as a childminder.

STEP 2: DISADVANTAGES OF THE JOB?

The job of childminder has many advantages. But the job can also have disadvantages. Think about what you consider to be the disadvantages and how important they are for you. 'Important' disadvantages deserve attention: they should, namely, not become too major. To stay motivated, it is important that the advantages 'outweigh' the disadvantages.

Note the disadvantages that you find important.

TIP: The list in the appendix indicates possible advantages and disadvantages of the job. Take the list and indicate possible advantages and disadvantages in which you recognise yourself.

STEP 3: THE SKETCH

Write in the sketch the main findings of the exercise. These questions will help you with this.



What are the main reasons for you to (continue to) work as a childminder?



What are for you the main drawbacks of the job?

SAMPLE SKETCH

Marty has been working as a childminder for 15 years. She first chose this job in order to be able to better combine the care for her own children with her work. Meanwhile, her children are grown up. She is the proud grandmother of two grandchildren. She still loves working with young children, but also believes it is important to help her son's family. One day a week, she would like to pick up her grandchildren from school and spend the evening with them. At the same time she does not want to let down the parents of the children she cares for.

2. MOTIVATION



What are your reasons to (continue to) work as a childminder?
Working with young children.



What are, for you, the disadvantages of the job?
My work as a childminder is difficult to combine with my role as a grandmother.



Date:



Exercise: Why do I choose to be a childminder?

I love the contact with other people. 0 0 0 0

I am home for my family. 0 0 0 0

I can do my housework during the day. 0 0 0 0

I have job security. 0 0 0 0

It is a profession where you have a lot of independence. 0 0 0 0

I enjoy working with children. 0 0 0 0

This job gives me a good income. 0 0 0 0

I enjoy working at home. 0 0 0 0

Another reason: 0 0 0 0

Another reason: 0 0 0 0

FOR ME, THESE ARE DISADVANTAGES OF THE JOB:

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APPENDIX: Possible advantages and disadvantages



Any reason to work as a childminder holds certain advantages but also some disadvantages. Below, you will find some examples for each reason. You can also add to the list yourself.

1. I love the contact with other people.

ADVANTAGES

- Every morning and every evening you have contact with the parents.
- You meet fellow childminders.
- The contacts with the young parents, keep you young at heart.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- For a large part of the day, you are alone with the children.
- A feeling of social isolation is one of the most common reasons to stop as a childminder.
- Parents' expectations about childcare can differ strongly from what you, as a person and educator, believe. This is challenging and sometimes difficult.
- ...

2. I am home for my family.

ADVANTAGES

- Your own children learn to share toys, learn to be more independent and to bear more responsibility.
- You can have your own children home after school or if they are ill.
- Your children have more playmates.
- You become more independent.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- Because of the long hours you have less time to spend with your family.
- There is less privacy for your family.
- It is not always possible to take your own children to school or pick them up.
- You cannot close the door of your office behind you at the end of the day and forget about work until the next day.
- ...

3. I can do my housework during the day.

ADVANTAGES

- You can involve children in domestic routines as a learning opportunity: children often enjoy doing household chores, for example: putting the clothes in the washing machine, helping to hang clothes on a drying rack, dusting and cleaning, etc.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- Childminding is a full-fledged, real job. As with any other job, it means that the household tasks must be done before or after your working hours.
- ...



4. I have job security.

ADVANTAGES

- The job requires no or little qualifications.
- There is great demand for childminders.
- You get the chance to gain experience and to take educational or training courses.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- Starting as a childminder requires a lot of investment. For example, you need to baby-proof your home and buy cots and toys. Your income fluctuates. It is determined by the number of children that you care for.
- It is a demanding job. Getting started is especially difficult.
- ...

5. It is a profession where you have a lot of independence.

ADVANTAGES

- Working as a childminder requires a lot of independence: it is, for the most part, up to you how you do it.
- You can receive coaching and support.
- You can choose your own hours.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- You are solely responsible for a group of children. This can weigh heavily on you.
- You are dependent on others: the children and the parents decide how your day goes.
- The job offers little flexibility (in other words, you're stuck in a fixed schedule). For example, you cannot just take a day off.
- ...

6. I enjoy working with children.

ADVANTAGES

- Childminders who choose the profession for this reason usually enjoy the job and also provide good quality work.
- You are actively engaged with the children. You play, dance and sing with them.
- You see the children grow from baby to toddler. You can make an important contribution to this growth process.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- Being solely responsible for a group of young children all day long can be tough.
- You cannot fully determine the composition of your group yourself. The group composition (e.g. age, health needs and character of the children) is, to a great extent, determining for how smoothly the childminding goes.
- You not only work with the children, but also with the parents. Sometimes, there are annoyances or conflicts with parents.
- ...



7. This job provides me with a good income.

ADVANTAGES

- For registered childminders there are some (tax) benefits.
- As a self-employed childminder, you yourself decide what to charge.
- At the moment, there is a great demand for childcare.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- Your income fluctuates. It depends on the number of children that you care for and this is not always possible to predict in advance.
- You have no protection as an 'employee'.
- If you are a self-employed childminder, it is up to you to fully manage your income and expenditures.
- Your income depends on the demand for childcare.
- ...

8. I enjoy working at home.

ADVANTAGES

- You do not 'lose' any time travelling or fighting traffic going to work.
- You are your own boss: you organise the work yourself and you can largely determine your own approach.
- There is a lot of variety in your work. You have different tasks. The group of children and parents changes over time.
- ...

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES

- You cannot shut the door of your office behind you and forget your work until the next day.
- Working at home all day with a group of children is sometimes lonely.
- The care of the children creates more clutter in the house. You also need to make your home suitable and safe for childcare.
- ...





BUILDING BLOCK 3: HEALTH AND PHYSICAL CONDITION

HOW FIT AND HEALTHY DO I FEEL FOR THE JOB?

Working with young children is hard on your body. In this work, you often have to bend, lift, squat and carry. The most common physical symptoms in people who work in childcare are complaints to the back, neck, shoulders and arms. In this exercise, you take a closer look at your health and fitness in relation to the job. In this way, you can discuss your physical symptoms and addressing any problems.

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: MAPPING OUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Have you, in the last 12 months, experienced pain while performing your job? If so, colour the affected body parts on the figure orange if you sometimes suffer from pain. Colour them red if this often happens.

STEP 2: THE SKETCH

Write in the sketch the main results of the exercise. These two questions will help you with this.



What are you doing today to take care of your body?



What are your concerns or questions about your health and fitness in relation to your job?

SAMPLE SKETCH

John works as a childminder. In the past he suffered from back pain. By doing sports and adjusting his posture, the complaints have now largely disappeared.

3. HEALTH AND FITNESS



What are you doing today to take care of your body?

Sports. I always pay attention to how I lift the children.



What are your concerns or questions about your health and fitness?

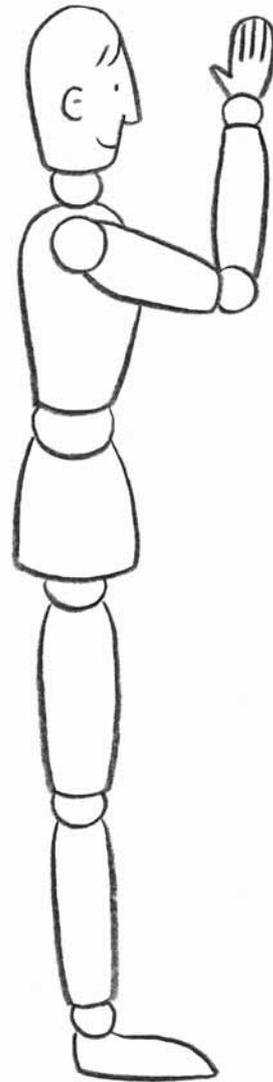
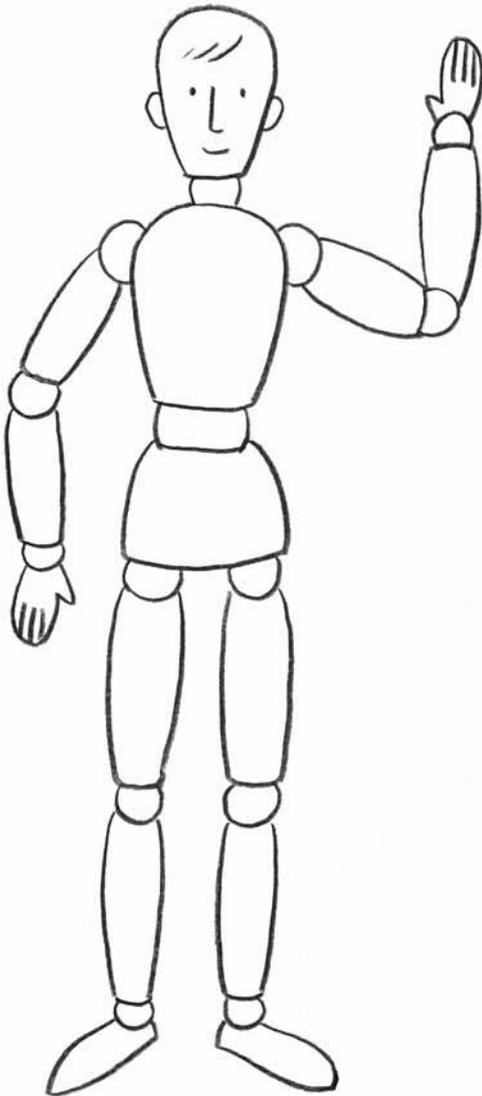
I find changing diapers difficult for my back. Can I change something so that it is less difficult?



Date:



Exercise: How fit and healthy do I feel for the job?







BUILDING BLOCK 4: KEY COMPETENCES

DO I POSSESS THE KEY COMPETENCES OF A CHILDMINDER?

Who you are, your attitude, your perspective towards children and parents, your knowledge and skills, help determine the quality of your work. Some characteristics are especially important: they are necessary for high quality family care. These are also known as the 'key competences' of a childminder. To what extent are you using these key competences today? What needs more attention?

The key competences of a childminder:

- Engagement with the children
- Good communicative skills
- A professional attitude
- Independence
- Ability to cope with stress
- Creativity

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU USE THE KEY COMPETENCES?

Read the statements for the key competences. These are examples of what such competences mean for your work with children and parents.

To what extent do you recognise yourself in these statements? Colour the number of circles that best suits you.

1 = not at all, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = almost always.

Consider one or more situations you experienced yourself, illustrating your 'score.'

STEP 2: THE SKETCH

Write in the sketch the most important results of the exercise. These two questions will help you with this.



What key competences have you already mastered?



What are your questions or areas of concern after doing this exercise?

SAMPLE SKETCH

Evy estimates that she already possesses and can utilize the key competences 'engaged with children' and 'professional attitude'. She especially loves to learn and loves to go to training courses.

When she is criticised by someone, she finds it hard to stay calm. She then quickly closes down or bursts into tears. Sometimes she also panics if too much comes at her at once.

4. KEY COMPETENCES



What key competences have you already mastered?

Engagement with children.

A professional attitude: extra training courses!



What are your questions or areas of concern with respect to the key competences?

How can I handle conflicts with parents?

How do I plan well so that the pressure does not get to be too much for me?



Date:



Exercise: To what extent do I use the key competences?

Engagement with children

0 0 0 0

- I see what interests children.
- I explore children's interests and offer activities that respond to them.
- I have no problem making contact with children.
- I have positive interactions with children to promote sustained shared thinking.
- I deal with children in a positive manner.
- I find it easy to build a relationship of trust with children.
- I feel the needs of each child and I am responsive to them.
- I comfort children who are unhappy.

An example:

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Good communicative skills

0 0 0 0

- I can clearly convey my own message (my opinion, information, feelings, questions) to others.
- I listen to others.
- I will not be drawn into conversations and discussions.
- I connect easily with others.
- I deal positively with criticism from others.

An example:

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A professional attitude

0 0 0 0

- I keep appointments and adhere to agreements.
- I automatically pay attention to safety, health and hygiene.
- I take responsibility for my own actions and their consequences.
- In case of difficulties or conflicts, I talk to the people in question.
- I do not pass on personal information.
- I can identify what I have or have not mastered well.
- I am open to feedback about my actions or approach.
- I look for ways to improve my work method.
- I use the ideas or knowledge of others.

An example:

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Independence

0 0 0 0

- I, myself, see what must be done.
- I can perform several tasks simultaneously.
- I react calmly to unexpected or unpleasant events.
- With proper planning, I can get through busy times easily.
- If there is a problem, I tackle it.

An example:

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Ability to cope with stress

0 0 0 0

- I can work under pressure (children who need attention at the same time, emergencies, ...).
- I know what gives me stress and how I can deal with it.
- I know what to do to relax, even during the work day.
- I take signals from my body seriously.
- I can stop thinking about my work.
- I can say “no” when someone asks me something.
- I can handle, in a positive manner, feelings such as anger, impatience or frustration.
- I am not easily flustered.

An example:

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Creativity

0 0 0 0

- I find solutions myself if there are (minor) problems.
- I think of fun games and activities for the children.
- I look for ways to engage the children in daily activities such as setting the table, preparing a meal or doing the laundry.
- I am quite original.
- I can look at a situation or problem from a different perspective.

An example:

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BUILDING BLOCK 5: ME AND THE JOB CONTENT

WHAT AM I GOOD AT? WHAT INTERESTS ME?

A childminder has various roles. He/she is:



a care-giver for young children,



a professional educator,



a child-rearing partner of the parents,



a manager,



a networker and researcher.

In order to perform these roles well, you must have certain qualities and skills. In this exercise, you will explore the different roles. What are you good at? What interests you to a greater or lesser degree?

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: EACH ROLE IN DETAIL

On the following pages you will find more information about the different roles of a childminder. You can read what qualities and skills are associated with the role. What about your qualities and skills? What role interests you to a greater or lesser degree? Indicate on the worksheet, by colouring the circles as you think best suits you. Under each skill are examples that clarify what is meant. You can write all your ideas, questions or comments on the back of the worksheet.

STEP 2: THE SKETCH

Finished all the worksheets? Then put all the sheets together. Write the most important results of the exercise in the sketch. These two questions will help you with this.



What are your talents?

You can discover your own talents by searching for those parts of the job on the worksheets that you are good at and that most interest you.



What do you want to learn?

These are the parts of the job in which you find yourself less adept at this time but feel that you would like to learn about (things that do, in fact, interest you).

SAMPLE SKETCH

Vivienne has been working as a childminder for three years. After doing the exercise, Vivienne realises that she is strong in planning and organising. She is someone who likes to learn. She loves to talk and discuss with others and makes contact easily.

Working with parents remains sometimes difficult for her. Her parents are a very mixed group. Sometimes, she finds it hard to understand the behaviour of a parent. She would like to be able to do this better.

5. ME AND THE JOB CONTENT



What are your talents?

I am good at planning and organising.

I am a social person and I love to learn new things.



What do you want to learn?

How to handle the different parents?



Date:



Exercise: What am I good at? What interests me?
Childminder as professional educator

o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You sense what young children need to feel safe and to feel good.</p> <p><i>If a baby cries, you comfort him by holding the baby close to you.</i></p> <p><i>Before you take a pacifier away from a child, you first explain that it is time to put the pacifier away and you put it away together.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You see and feel what interests a child. You know how you can stimulate him or her when playing.</p> <p><i>A baby who is just starting to crawl gets the chance to crawl around a lot.</i></p> <p><i>For a toddler who is interested in cars, you think up games with cars.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You offer all kinds of games and challenging activities.</p> <p><i>In an activity with clay, you encourage children to explore and investigate how clay (and other sensory materials) feels and what you can do with it to promote sensory learning.</i></p> <p><i>In summer, the children play with water outside.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You play enthusiastically with the children.</p> <p><i>You sing songs with the children or you taste the delicious soup they are making.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You offer the children structure, but you are also flexible in adapting where necessary.</p> <p><i>Each day has a fixed format. Thus, you always read a book when the babies sleep. However, you have no qualms about changing this format if necessary (you take the lead from the children when planning activities).</i></p> <p><i>At nap time, you use a ritual: first a fresh diaper, sing a lullaby, a big hug and then sleep.</i></p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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o = sometimes oo = generally ooo = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>The children are given the opportunity to follow their own interests and to discover things themselves. <i>Children are given opportunities for physical exercise and play both indoors and outdoors.</i> <i>A child who does not want to participate, you invite but you do not force to take part in the activity.</i></p>	ooo	ooo
	<p>You explain to children what is happening and what they may and may not do while they are with you. <i>During diaper changing, you continually interact with the children, even with the littlest ones.</i> <i>You involve children in putting together rules and boundaries within the setting (e.g. you explain to the children that they cannot play with the doors because someone could get hurt).</i></p>	ooo	ooo
	<p>You react in a positive way to displays of challenging behaviour. <i>In conflicts you express the feelings of the children. You encourage children to resolve conflict situations themselves.</i> <i>In situations whereby children often cry, you work closely with the parents to work out the cause of this and what you can do to help.</i></p>	ooo	ooo
	<p>You create nice and cosy moments for the children. In this way, the children develop a good relationship with each other and with you. <i>Mealtime is a warm and friendly social occasion.</i> <i>From time to time, you can all be silly together.</i></p>	ooo	ooo

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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Date:



Exercise: What am I good at? What interests me?
Childminder as child-rearing partner of the parents

o = sometimes oo = generally ooo = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You are raising the children together with the parents. This means that you have a respectful and open attitude towards parents. This is not always easy because everyone has his/her own parenting style. You always look for ways to take their preferred parenting style and ideas into account. If this is not possible, you search for a solution together with them.</p> <p><i>Jacob's parents are vegetarians. They also want Jacob to eat vegetarian. Together, you search for a way for Jacob to eat vegetarian in a healthy way.</i></p> <p><i>Abiba is 5 months old. Her mother has the habit of carrying her baby with her in a baby carrier. You respect this and look for a way to give Abiba sufficient warmth and security in your own way.</i></p>	ooo	ooo
	<p>You talk to the parents about the daily experiences with their child. You exchange information with them.</p> <p><i>When parents come for their child, you exchange information about what their child has done that day.</i></p> <p><i>You show parents pictures of their child in daycare.</i></p> <p><i>If a child is not eating well, you ask how eating is going at home. You ask what the parent does when their child will not eat and work together to try and resolve the problem.</i></p>	ooo	ooo

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
 <p>As a childminder, you will occasionally be confronted with difficult situations. You are then able to discuss concerns and issues in an open and constructive way with the parent(s). <i>You're worried about a child who still cannot sit. You discuss your concern with the parents. You get annoyed by parents who are always late. You talk about this with them.</i></p>		o o o	o o o
 <p>You carry out an interview with new parents. You introduce yourself, discuss their questions and expectations and give them the information they need. <i>You make an appointment with new parents at a quiet moment and take the time to get acquainted. You show them around the setting where the children are cared for. You make sure that they feel welcomed, valued and at ease to ask questions.</i></p>		o o o	o o o
 <p>Before you start caring for a new child, you set up a settling-in period during which you, the child and the parents get to know each other. <i>When starting with a new child, you invite the parents to come visit with their child one or more times. They can soak up the atmosphere. You can thus become well acquainted with their child. You watch how the parent comforts his / her child, how the parent feeds his / her child, what the child likes, etc.</i></p>		o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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Date:



Exercise: What am I good at? What interests me?
Childminder as care-giver

o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>Every day, you provide healthy food and you make meal times pleasant for the babies and toddlers.</p> <p><i>You are responsible for providing a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet: different kinds of vegetables, fish or meat alternate with each other.</i></p> <p><i>During mealtime, you talk to the children. It's a pleasant social occasion. You follow the individual feeding routines for babies.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You care for the children. You use these moments to give the children personal attention.</p> <p><i>You talk to the babies when changing them.</i></p> <p><i>You encourage the toddlers in a positive way to go on the potty (if they are ready to be potty trained and this is in agreement with the parents).</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You apply the recommendations on preventing SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).</p> <p><i>You know the recommendations for avoiding SIDS.</i></p> <p><i>You are always vigilant and put babies to sleep in the correct position.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You provide a safe environment by preventing hazardous situations and assuring continued surveillance.</p> <p><i>You know what the most common accidents in young children are. You furnish the space so that these accidents are avoided as much as possible. You carry out regular risk assessments both indoors and outdoors to ensure safety and welfare of the children.</i></p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You apply the basic rules of hygiene, and do what is necessary to prevent infections.</p> <p><i>You wash your hands regularly and in the proper manner.</i></p> <p><i>All toys and equipment are washed regularly in accordance with good hygiene practise. Bottle feeding is prepared in a hygienically correct manner.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You know how best to respond to accidents. You can apply first aid and life-saving measures in young children.</p> <p><i>You react calmly and decide whether you need to notify the parents, physician and / or a mentor.</i></p> <p><i>You know how to properly disinfect and care for a wound.</i></p> <p><i>You know what to do if a baby chokes.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>If a child is ill, you are able to recognise this, to administer the proper care and to assess the severity of the situation.</p> <p><i>You know what signals to watch for to see if it is serious or not.</i></p> <p><i>You know when you can and cannot allow a sick child to come.</i></p> <p><i>You explain this clearly to parents.</i></p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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Date:

Exercise: What am I good at? What interests me?
Childminder as organizer



o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You do the administrative tasks. If you are a self-employed childminder, you are fully responsible for taking care of your own administration.</p> <p><i>You do the bookkeeping (e.g. tax, national insurance payments, self assessment tax returns, etc,...).</i></p> <p><i>You take out appropriate insurance policies.</i></p> <p><i>You set up schedules and holiday arrangements in a written contract.</i></p> <p><i>You keep careful records of each child (e.g. in a child's personal record form).</i></p> <p><i>You make up invoices and collect payments (e.g. in a cash and attendance book).</i></p> <p>If you are affiliated with a service or network and this organisation takes on several of these tasks, you have to make clear arrangements with the service or network about the responsibilities of each.</p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You ensure a good daily and weekly schedule. <i>Play and quiet moments alternate with each other.</i> <i>You organise yourself effectively so that you have time to pay sufficient and appropriate attention to children and parents at drop-off and collection times.</i> <i>You plan your day and week in such a way that, alongside of all the practical tasks, you also have time to play with the children, read a book or do crafts with them</i> <i>If a baby comes for the first time, you adjust your planning so you can give the baby extra attention.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You know your own boundaries and you keep a close eye on them. <i>You know what working hours are realistic for you in your situation. You are not afraid to speak in a respectful way to parents if they do not comply with the agreed care hours.</i> <i>You know how many babies and toddlers you can handle at one time. You make sure that you do not exceed that number.</i></p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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Date:



Exercise: What am I good at? What interests me?
Childminder as researcher and networker

o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You regularly reflect on your childminding practice. On this basis, you take action to improve your work and how you function. <i>In the evenings, you take time to go through your work day: What went well? What did not? What would you handle differently?</i> <i>You make use of work tools available to evaluate your own functioning.</i> <i>You talk every now and then with a coach (mentor). You take into account their concerns and comments.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You keep abreast by reading up on information on the profession. <i>Now and then you consult Early Years websites.</i> <i>You read a magazine article about a topic that interests you.</i> <i>You participate in an information evening organised by an association or a childminder network.</i></p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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o = sometimes o o = generally o o o = almost always

		I'm good at	interests me
	<p>You continue to further develop yourself as a childminder. <i>You continue your professional development by undertaking relevant training courses (e.g. a training course about stimulating children in their language development). You participate in a learning group with other childminders. You take a training course at a centre for adult education.</i></p>	o o o	o o o
	<p>You make and maintain contacts with other childminders, parents, coaches, specialists, etc. This allows you to share experiences, seek advice, evaluate your own work, find a sympathetic ear, increase your knowledge, etc. <i>You are part of a childminder network, organised by the local county or others. If you have any questions or difficult situations, you seek advice from other persons or organisations.</i></p>	o o o	o o o

These are my ideas, questions or comments:

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BUILDING BLOCK 6: FAMILY

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS FOR MY FAMILY?

This exercise is primarily intended for childminders who have a family or a partner and care for children in their own homes. If you care for children in your home, then your job directly affects your family, and vice versa. What are the pros and cons of childcare for your family?

For this exercise, it is best to talk to your family members and housemates. How do they experience the childcare? They will be able to tell you many valuable things. Talking with them about the childcare can also ensure that they continue to support you in your work.

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: WHAT PROS AND CONS DO I SEE?

Write down the names of your family members or housemates in the schedule. Examine what all the pros and cons of the childcare could be for him or her at this time.

Also consider what will change in your family in the coming period. Think, for example, of changes in your partner's work situation, the school / studies of your children, the birth of a child or the health of your own parents. Do these changes create new pluses and minuses?

STEP 2: WHAT PROS AND CONS DO MY FAMILY MEMBERS/HOUSEMATES SEE?

Then, start a discussion with your family members/housemates. Ask them what they themselves think about the childcare at the moment. What pros and cons do they see right now? What solutions can they think of for specific problems? Enter their information in the diagram.

EXAMPLE

- *Daughter Gina: she does not like it that she has to share her room with the children her mother cares for. She gets very annoyed about this.*
- *Son Junior: My son will soon start studying at the University. He will need peace and quiet at home to be able to concentrate on his studies.*
- *Son Obain: he used to enjoy the bustle of the children being cared for. He is now 11 years old and he is annoyed by the fuss and noise. He sometimes reacts in an angry or irritated manner at the kids.*
- *Partner and stepdaughter: recently, my new partner and his daughter have come to live with me. They have to get used to the fact that children and parents are walking around in our house when they come home from work / school.*
- *Son Mevlüt: my son sometimes spontaneously goes to play with the children. He never used to do that. He and the children clearly enjoy those moments.*

STEP 3: THE SKETCH

Write in the sketch the main results of the exercise. These two questions will help you with this.



At this time, what are, for you and your family the main advantages of the job of childminder?



With respect to your family, what changes or downsides of the job are you most worried about or raise the most questions?

SAMPLE SKETCH

Adinda has two children, a toddler of 2 1/2 and a 5-year old pre-schooler. The youngest will soon start in school. Her husband works in a shift system.

6. FAMILY



What are the advantages of the job for your family?

*I can take care of my own children during school vacations.
Playmates for my children.*



What are the changes or disadvantages that you question?

*Bringing and fetching the children to/from school.
Peace and quiet for my family after the school/workday.*



Date:



Exercise: What are the pros and cons for my family?

What are possible solutions for the negatives?					
These are the pros and cons that my family members see:					
These are the pros and cons that I see:					
Who?					



Who?	These are the pros and cons that I see:	These are the pros and cons that my family members see:	What are possible solutions for the negatives?



BUILDING BLOCK 7: NOT ALONE

WHO CAN I TURN TO?

As a childminder you are usually alone with a group of children. That's why it is important to be able to rely on other people or organisations. Think of fellow childminders, a mentor or a counseling service, professional social workers (e.g. a family doctor or children centre), but also family, friends or acquaintances.

From some, you will find practical help; others offer a listening ear or give useful information or advice. Who can you go to in your job?



How do you do the exercise?

STEP 1: MAP OUT WHO YOU CAN GO TO

Map out who you can go to for:

- Practical help,
- A sympathetic ear,
- Information, ideas and advice.

TIP: *In the EXTRA in this exercise, there are some sample situations. Whom would (could) you call in this situation? This will help you on your way to completing the diagram.*

STEP 2: WHO OR WHAT SUPPORTS YOU THE MOST IN YOUR JOB?

From whom or from what organisation do you experience the most support in your job? Who makes a real difference for you in your job? Indicate the person or organisation.

STEP 3: WHAT SUPPORT OR HELP ARE YOU NOT RECEIVING?

Go through the different types of support: practical help, a sympathetic ear and information, ideas or advice. Do you think you have enough people or organisations to go to? If yes, colour the face green. If no, colour the face orange.

TIP: *Think back to problems or situations where you missed help or support. This can help you to discover how you can be better supported in your job.*

STEP 4: THE SKETCH

Write in the sketch the main findings of the exercise. These two questions will help you with this.



Which individuals or organisations strongly support you in your job?



What kinds of support or help do you miss at this moment?

SAMPLE SKETCH

Jason has been working as a childminder for 2 years. In emergency situations, he knows he can go to his neighbour who works at home. He did this once when his own son had to go to the doctor urgently. That went very well. He also often talks to his partner about his questions and doubts in the job. For serious questions about a child, he does appeal to his mentor. Now and then, he would like to talk about work with colleagues. Sometimes he misses specialist advice on how to respond best to certain problems.

7. NOT ALONE



Which individuals or organisations strongly support you in your job?
Neighbour, partner, mentor.



What kinds of support or help do you miss at this moment?
*I would like to get to know other childminders to talk about the job.
I would like to find an organisation I can ask for specialist advice.*



Date:



Exercise: Who can I go to?



PRACTICAL HELP

I can go to:

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SYMPATHETIC EAR

I can go to:

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INFORMATION, IDEAS OR ADVICE

I can go to:

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APPENDIX: Some examples

TO WHOM DO YOU TURN IN THESE SITUATIONS?



PRACTICAL HELP:

- One of the children has a serious head injury after a fall. You must go to the doctor with him immediately. Who is your emergency back-up? Do the parents agree with this? Who notifies the parents?
- You want to create a sandbox for the kids in your garden, but you yourself are not so handy. Who do you call on?
- You would like to do a painting activity with the toddlers. Here you would like some assistance. Who do you ask to help?



A SYMPATHETIC EAR:

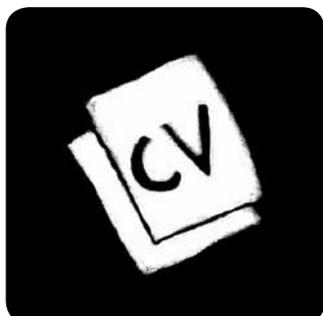
- You are a bit 'down' and are looking for someone to make you feel better.
- Parents are regularly too late to pick up their child. You would like to hear how other childminders cope with this problem.
- You are caring for a very fussy baby. This is very tricky. To whom can you turn to talk about this?
- It gives you energy to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of the job. Who do you talk to?



INFORMATION, IDEAS OR ADVICE:

- A child in your group bites other children. You want to know how best to react. Who can you turn to?
- You have concerns about a child's development. You do not know how to tell this to the parents. Who can support you in this?
- You are looking for inspiration about activities for toddlers. Where do you go or with whom do you talk?
- Parents ask if they can postpone payment. Do you allow this or not?
- You would like to know what you're doing right and what you can improve on. Who can you turn to for feedback?





BUILDING BLOCK 8: TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

WHAT TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE HELP ME IN MY JOB?

Every childminder has its own 'backpack' out of which he/she takes knowledge and ideas for the job. You can fill that backpack by taking part in workshops and training courses. This is important because, by taking workshops and training courses, you increase your knowledge and skills as a childminder. Also, your work and life experiences fill your backpack. If you were active in the youth movement, you learned how to make a group of children enthusiastic about something. If you have children yourself, then you even use your own experience as a parent now and then. If you work as a volunteer in an association or local fair trade shop, then you might have useful experience in working with others. Also, participating in a workgroup or a network meeting with fellow childminders can fill your backpack. What education, training or experiences are in your backpack?

How do you do the exercise?



STEP 1: WHAT IS IN YOUR BACKPACK?

Map out what experience, education and training you already have in your backpack.

An example:

This training or experience is in my backpack:
Training about a child monitoring system.

When did this happen? Enter a date, year or period.
2009

What did I learn?
Since then, I take time occasionally to sit on the sidelines to watch a particular child properly. I talk more to parents about what their child is doing when he/she is with me.

TIP: If you take a training course at a later time or have a new experience that is relevant to the job of childminder, enter it in your workbook. Also, add the supporting documents (e.g. training certificates, diplomas, certificates of experience) to this folder. In this way, at any given time you have a good overview of your training and experience relevant to the job.

STEP 2: THE SKETCH

Write in the sketch the main findings of the exercise. These two questions will help you with this.



What education, training or experience helps you most as a childminder today?



What knowledge or experience do you want to add to your backpack? Which courses, training or experience do you need most urgently as a childminder?

SAMPLE SKETCH

Samira spent several years at home for her own children. Her sister's children also came to her three days a week for 2 years. This experience has helped her when she went to work as a childminder. For example, she knows very well what little children like and how she can comfort them. But working with parents was entirely new to her. She now really needs to know more about that.

8. EDUCATION AND TRAINING



What training or experience helps you most today?

The experience with my own children and the care of my sister's children.



What training or experience do you need the most?

Training about communicating with parents.



Date:



Exercise: What training and experience help me in my job?

This training or experience is in my backpack:
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When did this happen? (Enter a date, year or period.)
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What did I learn?
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This training or experience is in my backpack:
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When did this happen? (Enter a date, year or period.)
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What did I learn?
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This training or experience is in my backpack:
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When did this happen? (Enter a date, year or period.)
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What did I learn?
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This training or experience is in my backpack:

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When did this happen? (Enter a date, year or period.)

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What did I learn?

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This training or experience is in my backpack:

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When did this happen? (Enter a date, year or period.)

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What did I learn?

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This training or experience is in my backpack:

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When did this happen? (Enter a date, year or period.)

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What did I learn?

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SKETCH

On the **Sketch worksheet**, you make an overview of your strengths and concerns for the various building blocks.



Points out your **strengths**. You can rely on these as a (future) childminder.



Points out your **concerns**. You can work on these to strengthen your capability.

It is literally a sketch, an incomplete drawing, intended to clarify something in a simple manner. It shows how things are going now. Even next month, things can be very different. It is, therefore, a good idea to redo the exercise now and then and to discuss it.

1. WELL-BEING IN THE JOB



★ What makes you happy in the job?

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✎ What do you need to change to feel good in the job?

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2. MOTIVATION



★ What are your reasons to (continue to) work as a childminder?

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✎ What are, for you, the disadvantages of the job?

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3. HEALTH AND PHYSICAL CONDITION



★ What are you doing today to take care of your body?

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✎ What are your concerns or questions about your health?

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4. KEY COMPETENCES



★ What key competences have you already mastered?

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✎ What are your questions or areas of concerns with respect to the key competences?

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5. ME AND THE JOB CONTENT



★ What are your talents?

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✎ What do you want to learn?

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6. FAMILY



★ What are the advantages of the job for your family?

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✎ What are the changes or disadvantages that you question?

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7. NOT ALONE



★ Which individuals or organisations support you in your job?

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✎ What kinds of support or help do you miss at this moment?

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8. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE



★ What training/experience helps you most today?

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✎ What training or experience do you need the most?

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PDP

PDP means: **Personal Development Plan**. In the PDP, you determine, together with your mentor, the actions you want to take in the coming period to develop yourself and strengthen your capability.

MY PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The sketch is ready. You have a list of your strengths and challenges as a childminder. In this step, you plan actions, based on the sketch, to strengthen your capability as a childminder. This is best done in consultation with a mentor. He / she can help you formulate and choose appropriate actions.

How do you do the exercise?

STEP 1: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

In the sketch, you wrote down several points of concern. What issues do you tackle first in the coming year? Make choices! You cannot tackle everything at once.

Note the points of concern that you choose in your personal development plan (PDP) in 'Target'. Describe the point of concern as a goal: what precisely do you want to achieve?

STEP 2: FORMULATING ACTIONS

What must you do for this? Find out what you must do to reach your goal. Several actions are possible.

Think for example of:

- talking to or doing an internship with a childminder,
- taking a training course,
- collecting and working through additional information and research,
- joining a network of childminders,
- thinking of solutions to problems, together with your family
- consulting experts.

Write down the actions that you have chosen in your personal development plan.

STEP 3: PLAN ACTION

Make your actions more concrete by developing an action plan: when do you take which action? Make up a feasible schedule.

STEP 4: WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Consider what support or resources you need to perform the actions. These questions can help you:

- How much time is necessary? How do you make time for this?
- Who can you talk in the interim to discuss questions or problems?
- Are there any costs associated with carrying out the actions?

STEP 5: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THIS?

Plan when and with whom you will discuss your PDP. This motivates you to really take your actions seriously. Thus, you make the time to evaluate, adapt or choose new actions. Some questions you can ask are:

- Have I been able to carry out the actions? Why or why not?
- Am I satisfied with the outcome of the action?
- No? What is the cause? How can I do it different or better?

Date:

My Personal Development Plan

TARGET

What do you want to achieve?

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ACTION(S)

What steps do you need to take?

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PLANNING

When are you going to carry out the actions?

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WHAT SUPPORT OR RESOURCES DO YOU NEED?

For example: time that you must set aside for this, registration fee for a course or training session, teaching aids such as a magazine, book or study curriculum, ...

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EVALUATION

When and with whom do you evaluate the actions?

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TARGET

What do you want to achieve?

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ACTION(S)

What steps do you need to take?

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PLANNING

When are you going to carry out the actions?

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WHAT SUPPORT OR RESOURCES DO YOU NEED?

For example: time that you must set aside for this, registration fee for a course or training session, teaching aids such as a magazine, book or study curriculum, ...

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EVALUATION

When and with whom do you evaluate the actions?

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In this workbook, you, as a (prospective) childminder/family day care worker, can find a number of exercises. They will help you to investigate your own capability: how do you feel in the job? What is going well at this time? What concerns do you have? The result of the exercises is a sketch of your strengths and areas of concern and an action plan. This is a good starting point to build on your own capability! Both new and experienced childminders will find this an extremely useful tool to use.

