

Senga's Little Stars Child Minding

Kirkcaldy

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 February 2024

Service provided by:
Senga Barrie

Service provider number:
SP2012983742

Service no:
CS2012309550

About the service

Senga Barrie operates a childminding service registered as Senga's Little Stars, from their home in Kirkcaldy, Fife. The childminder may provide care to a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than six are under 12 years, of whom no more than three are not yet attending Primary School and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family and household.

The service offers children a dedicated playroom, on the first floor, where they can choose from a variety of toys and activities. There is access to toilet facilities on this level. The living-dining area of the home provides children with space to play, rest and relax. The large, enclosed outdoor space to the rear of the property offers children a secure area to play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 30 January 2024 between 10:30 and 12:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children in the service
- reviewed digital responses from three families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were busy and having fun as they enjoyed leading their play and learning.
- Children were cared for in a homely environment.
- The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play.
- The childminder should develop formal ways to evaluate the service.
- The childminder should ensure they engage in mandatory and relevant training opportunities to keep their knowledge and understanding current.
- Children's personal plans should be reviewed with families and updated at least once every six months.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and relaxed as they experienced a warm approach to their care, which supported their wellbeing. Families told us that they were happy with the care their child received. One family said, "Senga is flexible and has been able to make some changes to our times if we have needed to." This supported families, and ensured children were cared for by someone they had an attachment to and was familiar to them.

Positive relationships with families meant that the childminder knew them, and their children well. The childminder had created individual personal plans for children which contained some important information, such as medical needs and emergency contacts. This helped to ensure children received appropriate care and were kept safe. Additional information to support children's individual care and learning needs were shared informally by the childminder and families. Personal plans should continue to be developed to include the views of children. They should be formally reviewed, updated and signed by parents at least once every six months. This would ensure children's needs are being fully met, their wishes and choices respected, and ensure consistency and continuity of care. (See area for improvement 1).

Nappy changing routines should be reviewed by the childminder. We discussed the importance of promoting children's privacy and dignity, and ensuring appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used at these times. We highlighted Care Inspectorate guidance: Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services to support this. (See area for improvement 2).

Families provided packed lunches and snacks for children. Although we did not observe snack or mealtimes, the childminder spoke of the importance of sitting with children to keep them safe. These daily routines also promoted positive social experiences for children, and offered further opportunities to develop secure attachments.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

The childminder was responsive in their approach to offering play and learning opportunities, based on children's interests. One child was present during the inspection. They were busy and having fun as they enjoyed leading their play and learning. They independently accessed a variety of activities offered in response to their interests, as well as their age and stage of development. The experienced childminder supported the child to extend their thinking and deepen their learning with the use of effective questions. For example, they asked the child, "what piece do you need now? What colour comes next? Where does that shape go?" We discussed how more loose parts and open-ended resources would promote children's creativity and support them to develop problem solving skills.

The childminder should now adopt a more formal approach to recording planning. Observations of children's learning should be documented and shared with families, along with their proposed next steps in learning. This will ensure children's individual needs are fully met and their progress is identified as they are encouraged to reach their full potential. (See area for improvement 3).

The local community was used to extend children's experiences. Children's literacy and language skills were supported when they visited the library. They also had opportunities to meet up with other adults and children when they attended group sessions in the local church hall. As a result children's opportunities for play and learning were improved as they developed connections to their community.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's overall wellbeing the childminder should further develop the use of children's personal plans to include the views of children. Information shared by families should be recorded, and plans should be reviewed and signed by parents at least once every six months.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'my personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15).

2. To reduce the risk of infection and ensure children's rights are respected, the childminder should review nappy changing routines to support and promote children's privacy and dignity, and ensure infection prevention and control procedures are followed.

This is to ensure I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support, and is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

3. To ensure children are making good progress the childminder should develop ways to record and share observations of children's learning. These should highlight children's achievements and their proposed next steps.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me, and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I am supported to achieve my potential.' (HSCS 1.27)

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a homely environment which was comfortable, welcoming and offered them space to play and relax. One family told us, "It's a friendly, caring and relaxed home from home setting to make my children feel at ease."

The childminder had given consideration to the different age and stage of children who attended the service. There were activities and resources which younger children could independently access throughout the day in the living room. The childminder had also created a quiet space for older children in a room on the first floor. They could choose to use the room to relax and build Lego models undisturbed, for example, after a busy day at school. The layout supported children to lead their learning gave them a message that they mattered.

The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play. There was a variety of resources for them to explore, which supported children's play and learning experiences. This meant children had access to fresh air and regular exercise as they learned the benefits of an active lifestyle.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments should be developed to ensure children's safety is promoted. The childminder should use their templates to assess risk throughout the setting. This would ensure potential risks were identified and minimised, as children enjoyed the variety of experiences offered by the service. (See area for improvement 1). We also suggested ways of involving children in creating some benefit/risk style assessments. This would promote opportunities for them to assess risk and develop important life skills.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. They asked families for permission before taking photographs and shared their policies with families using the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's safety is promoted the childminder should further develop risk assessments by adding detail as they consider risks and how these will be mitigated. These should include, but are not limited to, risk assessments for pets, outings, garden area and the upstairs playroom.

This is to ensure I experience a high quality environment and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'My environment is secure and safe.' (HSCS 5.19).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

We found that the childminder used informal ways to evaluate their service. Positive relationships had been established with children and families, and their views were important to the childminder. These were mainly gathered and shared informally during daily chats as children were dropped off and collected. Regular communication meant children and families could influence the care provided. As a result the childminder understood what was important to ensure they met the needs of children and families.

The childminder should develop formal ways to evaluate the service. We highlighted best practice guidance which could help with this. For example, A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare, and the Care Inspectorate bitesize resources. This could support the childminder to reflect and record what is working well in their service and what could be improved. This could also support children and families to have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the service. (See area for improvement 1).

We discussed the importance of documenting an improvement plan, and sharing this with children and families. This would provide an opportunity for them to share the successes and achievements of the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children receive high quality care and support from the continued development of the service, the childminder should develop quality assurance and self-evaluation processes. Procedures should be created that include ways to formally gather families' views. This will help to identify areas for improvement that will impact positively on outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 4.1 -Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children had developed positive relationships with the childminder. These were evident in the warm and relaxed interactions we witnessed. Care Inspectorate questionnaires were sent to families to help us gather their views on the service provided by the childminder. When asked what they liked about the service children told us they liked playing with their friends and loved playing with Marley, the dog. One child said, "Senga is very kind and looks after us." As a result children's emotional wellbeing benefitted from secure attachments

The experienced childminder demonstrated an understanding of how children develop and learn. They were a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and had some links with other childminders in the area. We discussed how the childminder could make use of their membership to access further training opportunities to build on their existing knowledge. The self-evaluation process may help to inform this, and ensure that additional training is meaningful and relevant to the service. The childminder should record their learning, and reflect and evaluate the impact it had on their service, and on outcomes for children. This will help them to develop a clear learning action plan. The childminder should ensure mandatory training, such as Child Protection, is kept up to date. (See area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To provide the best possible outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure they engage in mandatory and relevant training opportunities to keep their knowledge and understanding current. This should include, but is not limited to, Child Protection training.

This is to ensure I have confidence in the people who support and care for me, and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards(HSCS) which state, 'I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11).

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support the health of the children and to prevent the spread of infection the childminder should ensure that children wash their hands before eating snacks and meals.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 2: A Safe Environment.

This area for improvement was made on 1 June 2017.

Action taken since then

Mealtimes and handwashing were not observed during inspection due to time of inspection and only one young child being present at that time. Childminders policy stated that children would wash hands at key times. This alongside discussions with childminder satisfied us that appropriate handwashing routines were in place.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should review all the policies of the service. She should ensure that they reflect best practice guidance and are shared with parents.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service

This area for improvement was made on 1 June 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had done some work with children around house rules. They should now review, update and develop new policies, such as medication and complaints policies.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should ensure that she completes training in the protection of children to safe guard their health and wellbeing. The childminder must ensure that the service policy is regularly reviewed and shared with parents. The policy should contain details of the local agencies who would offer support and advice in the event of a concern arising.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service.

This area for improvement was made on 1 June 2017.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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