

Country Kids Limited Child Minding

Ellon

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 February 2024

Service provided by:
Country Kids Limited Country Kids
Limited

Service provider number:
SP2005944602

Service no:
CS2010254581

About the service

Country Kids Limited is a childminding service which has been registered with the care inspectorate since January 2012. The childminder may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age:

- of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years;
- of whom no more than 4 are not yet attending primary school and;
- of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

2. Where a childminder is working together with an assistant they may care for a maximum of 12 children up to 16 years of age:

- of whom no more than 8 are not yet attending primary school and;
- of whom no more than 2 are under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

3. Where a childminder is working together with two assistants they may care for a maximum of 15 children up to 16 years of age:

- of whom no more than 10 are not yet attending primary school and;
- of whom no more than 2 are under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is delivered from the childminder's home in a rural part of Aberdeenshire. During the inspection children had access to a playroom, kitchen, bathroom and outside areas. Another playroom would usually also be available but was currently being refurbished. The childminder employs two assistants.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 February 2024 between 09:00 and 17:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 using the service and three of their parents/carers
- reviewed three responses to our request for feedback from parents via MS Forms
- spoke with the manager and staff
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Strong attachments had been established between the childminder, their assistants and the children which supported children to feel confident and cared for.
- The childminder had high aspirations for the children in their care. They showed an excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop, supporting them to reach their full potential.
- Children enjoyed premises that were dedicated to the childminding service. Rooms were bright and airy and well-ventilated supporting children's health and wellbeing.
- The childminder was exceptional in involving children in the development of the service and their views and choices were respected ensuring they had a voice in all matters that affected them.
- The childminder and their assistants knew children very well and had built positive working relationships with families.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Strong bonds were apparent between the staff and children which supported children to feel confident and cared for. Staff knew children very well and this supported these attachments as well as promoting the ability to identify and meet children's needs. Parents we contacted were very happy with the care provided one commented that, "It's very obvious to us that our child is very loved, respected and well looked after. We love that all ages play together and have learnt to be a family" and "It's a very personal setting where the carers get to know each child on an individual basis and cater for their specific needs, likes and dislikes".

Children's privacy and dignity was protected as these kind and nurturing interactions continued when they were being supported in their personal care such as toileting or nappy changing. When children were washing their hands or wiping their noses staff were respectful and promoted children's independence.

Children's health was supported by the provision of snacks and meals that were in line with nutritional guidance. Children were involved in the planning of menus and on some days the preparation of food. A children's chefs club was used to promote this experience and support children to try different foods. While all children had access to this twice weekly experience, we suggested it would be good to provide similar opportunities for their participation every day.

Children enjoyed mealtimes which were a relaxed and unhurried sociable experience. Staff sat with children and supported their independence and choice by encouraging them to self-serve their food and drink. Staff showed skill in encouraging all the children to participate in the discussions taking place. This promoted children's confidence as well as their language and communication skills.

Very detailed personal plans were used to support children's care and identify how to meet their needs. These were formally reviewed every six months. Handover times were used as an opportunity to share any changes with parents, ensuring that information was up to date and relevant.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder had high aspirations for the children in their care. They showed an excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop, supporting them to reach their full potential. One parent told us that, "The care, play, and learning at Country Kids are nothing short of exceptional. I'm genuinely impressed by the careful attention paid to each child".

Children were very happy and had lots of fun as they confidently and independently explored the resources and activities available to them within the playroom and outdoors. Children were deeply engaged in their play which offered a variety of high quality experiences such as reading, drawing, measuring and problem solving. For example, there was a wide variety of loose parts (loose parts are open-ended and natural materials), construction toys and real-life resources, which were easily accessible to children. This supported children's independence and freedom of choice. Children also enjoyed the drama and movement activities delivered by the visiting drama teacher. Daily outdoor play supported children's health, wellbeing

and learning. Outdoor resources provided opportunities for imaginative play, large construction play and physical activity such as climbing and running.

Child led planning was a major strength of the service. Children's individual learning folders were used to support the childminder plan developmentally, challenging play experiences for the children. Children had expressed an interest in foods from different countries and this was the basis for the development of a children's "chefs club" and learning about different countries such as France and Turkey. Parents were involved in this by bringing items such as postcards and recipes from visits and holidays. This meant that children's play was meaningful, personal, interesting and strongly influenced by their voices.

Children's skills in 'literacy and numeracy experiences were skilfully threaded through all elements of children's play and learning. This included opportunities for children to recognise their names, individual and group story and song times and counting. A recent interest in post had been used to consider addresses, weights, and intentional writing. Links with the local library and book bug activities further promoted children's interest in books and literacy. As a result, children were progressing their knowledge, communication, imagination and development of mathematic concepts.

Observations, photographs and children's comments were also used by the childminder to record and track their learning and development. These folders were regularly shared with parents to keep them informed about their children's progress and achievements. Children also enjoyed looking through the folders and revisiting their experiences and learning.

Children were encouraged to be responsible with some children taking on roles such as first aider and fire officer. A child with an interest in building had been supported to assemble the new storage units. These exceptional activities provided children with challenge and opportunities to feel proud, included and valued.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children enjoyed premises that were dedicated to the childminding service. Rooms were bright and airy and well-ventilated supporting children's health and wellbeing. The service was furnished to a high standard giving a strong message to children that they mattered. Parents commented positively on the setting with one telling us, "The setting is amazing. We like that we can see our money being reinvested into the setting, all the toys and activities are of a very high quality".

The indoor and outdoor areas were sensitively structured, taking account of children's stage of development and interest. For example, a cabin was available for school age children to access which they had helped to decorate. There were opportunities for older children such as climbing and den building. Resources were easily accessible for children, promoting their choice and independence. Spaces and resources reflected children's current interests, displays of things from other countries and children's artwork. For example, we saw Turkish marbling art, French words and looking at French artists.

Children's safety was promoted as the premises and outdoor areas were secure and very well maintained. Children were supported to understand the importance of using resources safely and appropriately. This promoted their awareness of personal safety and consideration for others.

Risk assessments had been carried out balancing the benefits of activities with the identification of any hazards. Details were included of any actions that were taken to reduce any risk to an acceptable level. This supported staff to know what to do to promote children's safety. Staff were proactive in their ongoing risk assessment, for example, moving tables to create more space and encouraging children to find enough space for their activities.

Records were kept of accidents or incidents in most cases and parents were verbally informed of any bumps or other minor injuries. However, in discussions it became clear that one accident had not been appropriately recorded. We advised that this should be done so that all accidents can be included in the childminder's audit and inform future risk assessments and support children's safety.

Children's health was supported by infection prevention and control (IPC) processes and a policy was in place to support these. This included the cleaning of table tops and high touch areas and staff handwashing. Staff had not consistently adhered to the policy during our observations. The childminder was confident that these were oversights but agreed to discuss with the team to support consistently high IPC procedures that were in line with guidance and their policy.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder's vision, values and aims were detailed and shared with parents and staff. This promoted a shared understanding of what was important for the service to meet the needs of children. Parents were exceptionally happy with the way the service was delivered in line with the vision statement. They commented that, "The leadership at Country Kids is, without a doubt, a cornerstone in its success" and "Country Kids is a really great facility and we feel very lucky to be part of the setting".

The childminder was exceptional in involving children in the development of the service and their views and choices were respected ensuring they had a voice in all matters that affected them. For example, children had influenced the colour choice of the kitchen and the storage furniture for the room which was being refurbished. Older children had a cabin which they had decorated and decided what furnishings and activities should be included. This supported children to feel listened to and valued.

Parents told us that they felt involved in the development of the service with opportunities to put forward ideas. We found strong examples where the childminder had actively sought and been responsive to the views of families. This had secured positive outcomes for children. For example, strengthening communication about children's care, play and learning in response to a parents comment that they felt information could be better.

The childminder was passionate and highly committed to the ongoing improvement and development of the service. They used a variety of ways to gain feedback from parents and children, such as questionnaires, surveys, daily chats and social media. Children shared their views and ideas using mind maps and daily conversations. The childminder considered any feedback and used this information to continually improve the service provided. An example of this would be the introduction of photo books following from parental feedback asking for more photos of their child's experiences. Children had opportunities to be involved in

these by choosing the photos. One child had enjoyed this and so the childminder was encouraging them to be involved further by including them in the arrangements of photos in the floorbooks.

Robust quality assurance processes enabled the childminder to maintain and develop a quality provision for children and families. A deep knowledge of best practice documents supported self-evaluation. For example, national guidance had been used within the evaluation processes. This ensured the childminder understood what was working well and what needed to be done next to improve outcomes for children. As a result, children experienced high quality care and support.

Children's play and learning was at the heart of improvement planning, ensuring children were progressing their skills and knowledge. A detailed improvement plan supported the development of the service. This included actions to be carried out and a review of the impact of changes on children's experiences and outcomes. This meant that the childminder and their assistants could work together to progress areas where they had identified that changes could be made. Parents were kept informed of the areas being developed and progress made, encouraging their feelings of inclusion.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The childminder recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed. This meant that there were enough staff available to care for and meet the needs of children. The small staff team had a range of experience and skills. They worked well together with each working to their strengths and interests to promote positive experiences for children throughout the day.

The childminder provided enough time at drop off and pick up times to chat with children and their parents. This promoted positive transitions for children and gave opportunities for information sharing to promote a continuity of care.

Children's care was promoted as the childminder and their assistants understood the need for high levels of interaction to support children's wellbeing. They knew the children very well and this supported these interactions. Parents told us that, "The staff team are lovely and are well loved by our child. It is obvious that they love the children and have got to know them on a personal level."

The small cohesive team worked well together to support children. They communicated with each other with consideration and respect, providing positive role models for children. This contributed to a happy relaxed atmosphere for children to enjoy. One parent commented that they were a "Friendly bubbly enthusiastic team who genuinely care for my child".

The childminder and assistants kept record of their professional development and training. They shared information with each other to promote a high standard of provision. For example, sharing information from training courses such as child protection. This meant that children received care and support based on relevant and up to date guidance.

Children and families benefitted from the childminders knowledge and understanding of factors which may impact on children's wellbeing. The childminder was confident in discussing how support could be offered

at these times. The childminder and the assistants understanding of child protection procedures supported them to keep children safe.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

The childminder must ensure that children experience high quality care and support based on individual needs, guidance and best practice. In order to do this you must;

(1) Ensure that you, the childminder, meet conditions of registration in relation to the number of adults working in the service at all times.

(2) Ensure that no children have their movements restricted through any form of restraint.

To be completed by: 29 September 2023

This is in order to comply with: Health and Social Care Standard 4.23: I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed. Regulation 15(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011 No. 210 Social Care)

This requirement was made on 22 August 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

During the inspection visit we sampled random dates within the childminder's register and diary, this recorded days and times children were present and days that staff were present. It showed that the childminder was consistently working within the registration conditions.

A record of times when staff were present was available on the individual timesheets for each staff member.

No child had their movements restricted during our visit. We observed children moving freely between activities indoors and outdoors.

This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent
3.2 Leadership of play and learning	5 - Very Good
3.3 Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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