

The Kidz Stop - Linlithgow Day Care of Children

17 Main Street
Linlithgow
EH49 7PW

Telephone: 01506 239 295

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 January 2024

Service provided by:
The Kidz Stop Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2004004701

Service no:
CS2011304206

About the service

The Kidz Stop - Linlithgow is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to 60 children aged from three months to entry into primary school, with no more than 18 being aged under 2 years at any one time.

The service is provided from a two-storey detached building in Linlithgow and offers funded early learning and childcare to eligible children. The accommodation consists of four separate playrooms for different ages of children. Children benefit from a secure garden for outdoor play.

Local bus routes service the area and it is close to local shops, amenities, and parks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 09 January 2024 between 09:15 and 18:15. We returned to complete the inspection on Wednesday 10 January 2024 between 10:00 and 14:00. 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 using the service
- received feedback from 22 families from our digital feedback form
- spoke with staff and the manager
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care and learning of the children and the management of the service.

Feedback was given to the manager and provider on Wednesday 31 January 2024.

Key messages

Children were cared for with warmth and compassion by kind adults who took an interest in what was right for them.

A rich and stimulating environment and experiences offered children space to explore, discover and experiment at their own pace, within a calm home from home setting.

Improvements should be made to children's personal plans to ensure they remain fully reflective of children's care, particularly around strategies to support children with additional support needs.

Children had a good range of play experiences available to them, however outdoor play should be enhanced and resources checked for quality.

More regular feedback to families on children's learning, development and experiences throughout the day should be improved to ensure a collaborative approach to learning, and give opportunities to track children's development over time.

Quality assurance including self evaluation were progressing, resulting in a process of improvement over time which was improving outcomes for children.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences. Staff interacted with warmth and kindness and were responsive to children making them feel loved and heard. Staff routinely sang, talked, and read to the children which promoted an inviting, happy, relaxed and calm environment. It was clear that staff knew the children in their care well. For example, some children had returned from holiday and staff knew where they had been or who they had visited and engaged them in conversation around this. All families who responded to our questionnaire either agreed or strongly agreed that staff knew their child well, including what they liked and what was important for their care. These strong bonds between staff and children meant children felt safe and that their thoughts and opinions were heard. One parent told us, "Everyone is very welcoming. My child runs into nursery no matter who answers the door and I think that speaks highly of the relationships they create with the children." Another said, "the staff are incredible, our child is clearly very comfortable with them."

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried opportunities for children to eat and learn new skills at their own pace. Staff helped ensure children were kept safe, for example, around any allergy requirements, as well as promoting the development of communication and language skills. Staff empowered children to develop age and stage appropriate independence skills, giving them choice and autonomy. Some families questioned the sugar content of snacks, though the service was following national guidelines. Moving forward, the service could further engage families in feedback around lunch and snack provision so that their ideas, thoughts, and suggestions could be used to inform food experiences in the future.

Children's overall wellbeing was generally being supported by personal planning. These were accessible to children which meant they could enjoy looking at these with peers and reflect on past learning experiences. They were mostly detailed with children's wishes and needs, and some had planned strategies which were monitored for success and reviewed regularly with parents. Transition recording when children moved between rooms was clear which meant staff had key information required to support new children, making them feel safe and nurtured. A new system was in development to enable all staff to have quick and effective access to support measures in place for specific children, for example, their favourite songs. This meant that staff could quickly utilise strategies needed to support individual children allowing for a consistent approach across the team.

However, there were some gaps and inconsistencies in personal planning, particularly around the recording of strategies for children with additional support needs and the impact of them. This meant there were missed opportunities to be more pro-active around children's care and support, and in the consistent monitoring of the impact of any strategies used. Moving forward, staff should ensure that personal planning remains fully reflective of children's care. This would ensure children's evolving needs are consistently planned for and met, and that they are fully supported to achieve their potential (see area for improvement 1).

Quality indicator: 1.3 Play and learning

Children were meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning through a rich environment which promoted their choice and independence. For example, children were able to independently access stories online using accessible 'quick response' (QR) codes and technology. This enhanced literacy and digital skills and provided a sense of fun. Children had opportunities throughout the nursery to engage in fun, interesting and motivating experiences for learning and development. Examples were sensory experiences with natural resources and a light box in the toddler's room, and through themes such as 'People who help us' in pre-school rooms. This gave children authentic opportunities to learn around the topic as parents or carers who were involved in careers such as the police and army visited the nursery to engage with children. This collaborative approach to learning captured children's interest and was contributing to improved outcomes for children in learning.

Children were given opportunities to develop language and literacy skills through books, drawing and mark making resources, and similarly, numeracy and maths skills were being developed through the availability of clocks, scales and games. Well considered and creative approaches successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. For example, during inspection, staff took advantage of the weather conditions and froze polar animals in balloons, giving children opportunities to use tools to break the ice and find the animal. This encouraged rich discussion and engaged children in a range of learning opportunities. One parent told us, "It is like a home from home. My child is so well looked after, and their learning is nurtured." Another said, "all staff are impressive. They provide the children with new experiences and have supported our child with the expected arrival of a new sibling." Staff continued to reflect on experiences and discussed how they could improve their skills to secure children's progress and provide further challenge. Moving forward, they should continue to develop more intentional learning for older children, motivating learning provocations and appropriate challenge.

All children had opportunities to go outside on both days of the inspection, which enhanced their wellbeing and allowed for development in motor skills. Babies and toddlers went out for walks in buggies or walking as appropriate for them, which enhanced connections to their communities. However, some families felt more could be done of this for all children. One asked for, "More outside play and more walks" while another suggested "more trips to the lagoon or park."

Planning approaches included a mix of child and adult led experiences and were responsive to children's current interests and life experiences. Moving forward, staff should more clearly articulate intended learning experiences so they can monitor children's successes and achievements of them. This would enable staff to effectively track children's learning and help them to plan next steps. Children could then be fully supported to reach their potential.

Improvements in regular high-quality observations and ensuring they are shared with families should now be a focus moving forward. Many families told us they would like more feedback on their children's day, experiences planned, and on their overall progress in learning. One said, "I would love to know what is planned for the children, and what types of activities my children are involved in." When asked what the service could do better, one told us, "An online journal to keep up to date with my child's day and progress," while another asked, "if we can get more information or activities/learning process for my child, that would be more helpful." The service had planned to introduce an online platform to fill this gap. This would enable the service to better track individual learning, and to work together with families to promote collaborative work to secure progress in children's outcomes.

Areas for improvement

1. In order to maximise children's wellbeing and overall development, the service should ensure children's care and support is planned, recorded, provided and consistently monitored for success. This would guide and support staff to ensure children's evolving needs were consistently planned for and met, and that they could reach their potential.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me.' (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were welcomed into a stimulating, calm and purposeful environment. Children's artwork and photographs were displayed throughout the setting which gave a strong message to children and parents that they mattered by celebrating their thoughts and ideas. One parent told us, "The rooms are engaging, homely and clean. It's a joy to go into the setting and see our child's work displayed."

Distinct areas had been set up to facilitate a range of age and stage appropriate play and learning experiences. These promoted a range of numeracy and literacy opportunities, such as notebooks and recipe books in the home corner and measuring tapes and rulers in the construction area. Playrooms could be further improved by staff reflecting on the core provision required for each room and adding resources to further invite curiosity and intrigue. This would enable children to further lead their own learning, particularly in the pre-school room and the baby room. Some examples were consideration of resources in the sand tray being appropriate in size and use, and extending the variety of resources to add to the arts and crafts area to enable children to fully create and explore. Some areas were not well replenished throughout the day, resulting in missed opportunities for play and learning, particularly on the first day of inspection. On the second day of inspection this had been improved upon, which meant play and learning opportunities were more varied.

The garden area needed improvements to provide children with opportunities to explore and learn outdoors. This was an ongoing area of development for the service. The service should continue to explore how to maximise the use of these areas and to ensure resources are of high quality for children. This would ensure the area continued to offer rich and stimulating opportunities for children to develop their play and learning with appropriate resources and materials to support them.

There were well functioning arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting, which meant children were kept safe. All parents or carers who responded to our questionnaire either agreed or strongly agreed they felt their child was safe whilst in the setting. At times, some rooms felt cold. Moving forward, staff should check on temperatures throughout the day within rooms to ensure babies and children are comfortable and make appropriate adjustments where needed.

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had a clear, shared vision and aims which was positively informing daily practice. Staff enthusiastically discussed their roles within the improvement plan and how they were moving forwards with improvements within their respective rooms. For example, by reflecting on children's interests and making changes as a result; and using environmental room audits to make improvements to the depth and breadth of play provision. This meant staff were effectively using quality assurance processes to improve outcomes for children. Some resource changes had been implemented as a result of this, however as stated earlier in this report this was not yet fully effective in all playrooms. Staff should continue to implement any actions that arise as a result of quality assurance and evaluate the impact of them. This would ensure improvements continue to align with children's evolving care needs and interests.

Families' views were actively sought and used to inform the development of the service, and feedback was given so that they knew what action had been taken in response. The manager shared a policy of the month with families so they could contribute their views. This meant families and children's views were valued and used as a starting point to inform improvements in the setting. One parent told us, "I have been really impressed with the leadership at the nursery. Contact before my child joined was fantastic and we were offered the opportunity to visit as often as we wanted, and the staff and leadership team have always been very supportive. They take the time to listen and engage in meaningful discussion to ensure the best learning environment for my child. They contact us regularly with any concerns and are always there to talk to. I am confident that the leadership team always have the child's best interest at the heart of everything they do."

The manager effectively led the staff team and was committed to sustaining and improving quality experiences and outcomes for all children. Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, were progressing well and leading to improvements. For example, the monitoring of staff practice. Staff told us that with the support of the manager they had become more reflective practitioners and had access to training opportunities which would continue to develop their practice to improve outcomes for children. They were encouraged to take leadership roles and offered support to do these well. This resulted in an empowered staff team, with a shared purpose of supporting children to reach their potential.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Deployment and levels of staff were effective in ensuring good quality outcomes for children. Children were cared for by enough staff to meet their needs. Staff were welcoming, calm and vigilant, and communicated and supported each other when they had to leave the room or to facilitate children's personal care needs. Arrangements were in place to cover busier times of the day such as lunch times which contributed to keeping children safe and nurtured as their needs were met by the right number of staff.

Deployment at other busier times of the day, such as arrival and departure times, were pro-actively managed to enable staff to speak individually to parents about their child's day, or to greet children as they arrived, making them feel welcomed. One parent told us, "The staff are all incredibly lovely and really take time to talk to me about my child's day." Another told us that their child, "enjoys being greeted at the door when he arrives."

Children benefitted from a well-established team, many of whom had worked at the setting for some time. Staff worked well together and supported each other. This promoted a happy and open atmosphere within the nursery. This ethos reflected on to children making them feel happy and cared for. As noted previously within this report, a continued dedication to working collaboratively on children's experiences and the planning of these, will help the team progress with a consistent approach moving forward.

Families were positive about the staff team in feedback to us. When asked what they liked about the service, every family felt the staff were a real strength and consistently commented on the nurture and care of the team. One told us that their child, "thrives (in this setting). They enjoy going every day, asks to see their keyworker at the weekend, and is really settled in the toddler room with his peers. I've never had any concerns about his care but from my interactions with all staff I know if I did have any concerns they would be dealt with respectfully and in the best interest of my child."

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

1. Staff should continue to develop children's personal plans to show how their individual needs are being supported and any outcomes noted.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: '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) and 'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected'. (HSCS 1.23).

This area for improvement was made on 17 January 2019.

Action taken since then

The service have introduced a six weekly review after any child starts. They have 6 monthly update, which includes any next steps and how they will be achieved. This information is shared with parents before parents evening and then they update the 'all about me' section. Staff completed trackers for each child to see how they were progressing in their development and parental input is sought more formally during the 6 monthly review.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should take appropriate action to eliminate the odour from the toddler room toilets.

This is to ensure that the environment is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'The environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells' (HSCS 5.18).

This area for improvement was made on 17 January 2019.

Action taken since then

A new extractor fan had been installed and the nappy bins were changed regularly throughout the day. We noted that smells within these areas had been eliminated.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The manager should continue to support staff in their professional development so that as a team, their skills and knowledge are embedded in practice which will help develop the service and support positive outcomes for children.

This is to ensure confidence in the people who support me is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state:

'I have confidence in the people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 17 January 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff were well supported by the new manager and spoke about how their practice had improved as a result. Staff told us that with the support of the manager they had become more reflective practitioners, had access to training and were generally supported in the daily life of the nursery. They had been involved in self-evaluation and were supported to improve the service. They were encouraged to take leadership roles and offered support to do these well. Staff were able to discuss training they had been on and the impact of it.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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