

Aunty Lou's Childminding Child Minding

Turriff

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 March 2024

Service provided by:
Louise Marler-Paterson

Service provider number:
SP2016987816

Service no:
CS2016345391

About the service

Aunty Lou's Childminding is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, 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. Overnight care can be provided but minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

The service is provided from the childminder's home within a housing development on the outskirts of the rural town of Turriff, Aberdeenshire. The areas used by the children were the kitchen-dining room, designated playroom, and ground floor bathroom. Children have access to the front garden which was secure and equipped to be child-friendly. The rear garden with summer house and ground level trampoline provided further opportunities for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 March 2024. 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, 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
- spoke with six of their parents/carers
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder was welcoming and friendly and supported children with caring and nurturing interactions.
- Whilst the childminder knew the children's personalities and care needs well, some children's personal plans had not been reviewed with parents. This was actioned immediately after inspection to support their care needs and help keep children safe.
- Children were able to play and rest in a welcoming and clean environment. This included inviting outdoor play spaces which were resourced with a good range of toys, games, and play equipment.
- Children benefitted from learning experiences and positive interactions which supported their progress and development.
- The childminder was committed to continuous improvement of their service. They were beginning to use guidance to support self evaluation and responded immediately to suggestions made during inspection.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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?

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 happy and settled in the childminder's care. They were chatty, confident, and enjoyed exploring and playing. Parents told us:

- "It's a warm, welcoming environment and it's excellent for the children to learn and develop. A home-from-home for my child who loves going there."
- "I wouldn't want my kids to be anywhere else. Lou is nurturing, patient, fair, and always takes time and care to plan relevant seasonal activities for all ages."

Children were well supported in their personal care. The childminder was kind in their interactions and children's dignity and privacy was respected. Strategies, such as singing songs and reading books, were used to help children toilet training. This encouraged children's independence and confidence and helped them relax and feel at ease. Handwashing was embedded in practice to help keep children safe and well.

The childminder knew the children and their families well. Information was shared through daily chats, text messages, and What's App. This promoted working together to meet children's individual care needs. However, some children's personal plans were not up-to-date and were not reflective of children's current needs. Written information to support children with allergies or medical needs was not available to ensure their safety, health, and wellbeing. This was actioned after inspection and all forms were immediately updated.

Children enjoyed a variety of snacks and meals. The childminder provided a selection of fruit for snack and homemade soups or sandwiches for lunch. Children with allergies or food intolerances were offered alternatives suitable for their individual requirements. Children sat on high chairs enabling the childminder to provide the support and help needed to keep them safe and well. Children were offered water and milk to drink, supporting good dental health.

Children's sleep patterns from home were followed by the childminder. Children were able to rest and relax when out for walks in a pushchair. We discussed the importance of comfortable and safe sleep and the childminder advised small sofa beds and a travel cot were available for use.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were offered a variety of play resources to support and develop their learning. Toys and games were age-appropriate and included a pretend kitchen with accessories and a wooden problem-solving table. These were enjoyed by the younger children who had fun exploring and playing. Older children had been involved in painting activities, supporting their creativity and imagination. Parents 'strongly agreed' that children were provided with a good range of toys and quality play materials.

Children had fun interacting and playing with the childminder. The childminder modelled good listening and talking skills by getting down to the children's level. Children giggled and chatted during role play and enjoyed pretending to be princesses. The childminder read stories with the children, supporting early language and literacy skills.

Opportunities for numeracy development were embedded in children's play experiences. Children had fun counting ducks and deciding which were smaller and larger. An impromptu game using bean bags promoted discussion around colours and shape.

Children's current interests and curiosities were used to plan fun experiences. The SHANARRI (safe, healthy, active, nurturing, achieving, responsible, respected, and included) wellbeing indicators were used when recording children's achievements. This helped the childminder plan fun experiences that supported children's progress and development.

Children's emotional and physical health and wellbeing was promoted through opportunities to play outdoors. They had fun playing on the trampoline and exploring the outdoor toys. Plants and seeds were ready to be planted, helping children to develop their understanding of the natural world.

The childminder made good use of the local environment and amenities and went for walks with the children. This ensured the children were getting to know their local environment, helping them grow into responsible, confident individuals. Older children took part in Lego activities at the local library. Trips to adventure parks and local cafes were enjoyed during the holidays.

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.

Children were able to play and rest in a homely and welcoming environment. The children played in the kitchen with an adjacent playroom. This was attractively furnished with toys and games and comfortable seating for quiet play and rest. A seating area in the kitchen provided opportunities for children to eat together, as well as develop their creativity through arts and crafts.

Children were kept safe and well in a clean environment. Infection prevention and control procedures were followed when supporting children in their personal care. Disposable aprons and gloves were available for use in the event of dealing with bodily fluids to help keep everyone safe and well. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times, such as before eating and after going to the toilet. They were provided with disposable towels to help prevent illness through cross-contamination.

Children were kept safe and well in an environment where potential risks had been identified. Risk assessments had been completed for both the indoor and outdoor play environments and for some activities, such as sledging. This meant children's experiences were not compromised in order to keep them safe. A robust risk assessment was not in place for young children walking to the rear of the garden. We suggested this would be beneficial and this was actioned immediately after inspection.

Children's health and wellbeing benefited from opportunities to play outside. The attractive rear garden area supported children's physical development with opportunities for the children to jump and play on the trampoline. This was sunk into the ground for safety. Children could choose from a variety of plant pots and gardening equipment to plant seeds and vegetables. This design looked appealing and safe for play.

A large summer house was welcoming and spacious. Older children made good use of this space which housed Lego and other resources suitable for their age and stage of development. A range of loose parts

were available to encourage children's imagination and creativity. Children's artwork was displayed on the walls, giving them a sense of belonging.

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.

The aims of the service included providing a stimulating, nurtured home-from-home environment in which children are learning through play and activities. This was shared with families, helping them understand what to expect from the service.

Children and their families were kept safe and well by a range of relevant policies and procedures. Changes to the promoting positive behaviour policy were needed in line with current thinking and best practice. The child protection policy did not reference current guidance, 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2021'. The childminder actioned this immediately. This demonstrated their commitment to provide a good service to meet the needs of the children and families attending.

There was some potential for children and families to become involved in the service and influence change. Positive relationships built with families meant parents felt confident to raise any concerns. Questionnaires had been issued to gather parent views and the feedback was very positive. A parent commented, "I am very well informed and lines of communication are always open". Children were at ease in the childminder's company and older children were able to voice their own opinions and views. Recent discussions with parents led to improved relationships between the children.

Quality assurance procedures and self evaluation were used to evaluate and develop the service. The childminder was aware of the document 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' and was beginning to use this to evaluate their service. The childminder felt they provided a very good service which met the needs of the families and children attending but recognised additional training would be beneficial to improve their knowledge and skills.

Through discussion, the childminder recognised the importance of quality assurance and evaluation to support positive change and continuous development of the service provision. They acknowledged that due to time constraints they found it difficult to review and update children's personal plans and undertake professional development. In order to support this, they had reduced their childminding hours.

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.

Children's wellbeing was supported through respectful and compassionate interactions. The childminder had a good relationship with the minded children and chatted and talked to them in a kind and friendly manner. They regularly checked to ensure they were happy and that their needs were met. This approach supported children to feel valued and secure and contributed to a positive ethos where children enjoyed attending the service.

Children and their families benefitted from a childminder who was committed to providing quality care. They were qualified in early learning and childcare which was evident in the positive learning experiences on

offer. They had attended training and development on promoting STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and children had taken part in a range of experiments as a result.

The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of how to keep children safe and well. Their clean and tidy home was reflective of their good knowledge and understanding of infection prevention and control. They had completed a first aid course to ensure their knowledge and skills when dealing with a minor accident were current and up-to-date. They were confident when discussing their processes to protect children and chronologies were used to record and monitor significant effects in a child's life. Parents told us the childminder was very supportive and provided them with the help and care they needed.

The childminder used information from the organisation Minding Kids to support their practice. This led to improved communication with parents.

The childminder was well supported in their practice by other childminders, both locally and nationally, using social media. They shared information and sourced training to help improve outcomes for children. To support the childminder further with their professional development, we signposted them to a range of resources on the Care Inspectorate Hub. Regularly accessing resources and best practice documents will help ensure good outcomes for children.

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	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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