

Simons, Paula Child Minding

Irvine

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 August 2024

Service provided by:
Paula Simons

Service provider number:
SP2013985348

Service no:
CS2013320803

About the service

Paula Simons provides a childminding service from their family home which is located in the town of Irvine, North Ayrshire. The service is close to local schools, shops and parks.

Children are cared for in an open plan living area that leads to a kitchen and a large enclosed outdoor play area. Children have access to a downstairs toilet.

The service is currently 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. The numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own family. At the time of inspection, five children were attending the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 31 July and 1 August 2024 between 12 noon and 15:00. 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 six people using the service and two of their families
- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed and sampled documents
- Reviewed family questionnaires.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and secure
- Children were well cared for and supported
- The childminder was responsive to children's interests
- Children had a broad range of play experiences
- Outdoor learning was a strength of the service
- To support children's wellbeing and development, the childminder should keep up to date with good practice guidance
- To support children's wellbeing, the childminder should undertake training.

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?	3 - Adequate
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 as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurture care and support.

Children were happy, settled and confident in the care of the childminder who knew them well. The childminder had formed positive relationships with children. They offered praise and encouragement and acknowledged children's achievements. Children were confident and comfortable in the childminder's care and they were happy to share their thoughts and ideas. The childminder engaged children in different conversations in an enthusiastic and playful manner. They listened to children and extended their conversations through memories and asking questions. This helped promote children's confidence and self-esteem.

The childminder was kind, caring and nurturing towards the children. They comforted children when they needed emotional support by offering cuddles and giving them the time they needed to regulate their emotions. This helped support their emotional wellbeing. Nappy changing routines were sensitively carried out and the childminder used playful interactions when providing personal care. This ensured children felt safe and well supported.

Children had the opportunity to rest and relax throughout the day. They had free flow access to the living area which meant they could sit on comfortable sofas and choose quieter activities. A portable travel cot was available for younger children if they needed to sleep. This meant that children's emotional wellbeing needs were met.

Mealtimes were a relaxed, unhurried sociable experience. Children often ate lunch in the outdoor gazebo which was enclosed and located close to the kitchen. Meals were prepared by childminder and reflected children's preferences and choices. The childminder chatted with the children about their day and encouraged them to finish their food and drink their water. A selection of fresh fruit was available throughout the day. This meant that children were encouraged to make healthy life style choices.

The childminder knew children well. This was supported by information contained within personal plans such as their care needs, interests and preferences. We discussed how personal plans could be improved to better support children's health and wellbeing. The childminder agreed to review the plans with families and use a different template which contained more detailed information about individual children. This would support the childminder to monitor children's progress and development.

The childminder was skilled in helping children resolve minor conflict. They role modelled by listening to children's issues and spoke with them in a calm and respectful manner. This helped defuse potential situations and supported children to work towards a solution. The childminder spoke with the children about respectful relationships and reminded them to think about their friend's feelings and point of view. As a result, children were developing their skills in conflict resolution which supported their wellbeing.

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning.

Children were actively engaged in their learning. They were leading their own play and had access to a broad range of play equipment and resources to choose from. They played together and co-operated with each other participating in team games and having fun with their friends. The childminder encouraged older children to play with the younger children and share resources. This helped develop children's social skills.

Children mostly played outdoors and were able to play with small imaginative games, building blocks and dressing up clothes to support their role play. Younger children were happy to play independently with resources available that were suitable for their ages and stages of development. Older children were challenged as they played with giant sized 'Jenga'. This encouraged the use of mathematical language, decision making and problem solving. As a result, children were making progress in their learning. We suggested that the childminder develop resources to further support children's play and learning.

The childminder joined in with the children's play, for example they showed children how to play lawn bowls. They explained the rules of the game and showed them how to bowl and aim for the jack. This was a new challenge for the children. They were practicing their shots and celebrating their achievements when they hit the jack. This encouraged children to take turns and helped develop their hand and eye co-ordination.

Children's interests, preferences and stages of development were well supported. The childminder considered children's learning needs and purchased specific resources such as games and art and craft materials to ensure children were engaged in activities that interested them.

The childminder kept basic records about children's progress to plan activities. We discussed how this could be developed to ensure that the childminder provided children with activities and resources that would help to extend their learning.

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

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder's home was warm, welcoming and well maintained. It was open, bright and well ventilated. The external door to the outdoor space was opened and children could move between indoor and outdoor spaces. This gave them a choice about where they wanted to play. A coat stand was accessible in the hallway for children to hang their jackets. This provided children with a sense of belonging.

Children had access to a comfortable living area which meant they could rest and relax if they needed to and participate in quiet activities. They were able to enjoy activities such as arts and crafts and small construction games at a low level table with child sized chairs. They played on the floor and enjoyed reading books and playing floor games. As a result, children were having fun.

Children could participate in a range of play experiences in the spacious outdoor garden. They had access some resources which included large blocks, construction sets, imaginative toys and ride on bikes. Children were playing ball games such as throw and catch and football and having fun playing on the swings and chute. Younger children played in the mud kitchen which enabled them to develop their imagination and

curiosity. This helped promote children's creative, imaginative and physical skills. We asked that the childminder develop further resources in this area to support children's play.

An outing to the nature reserve was a rich learning experience. This was a regular trip and children clearly enjoyed the experience as they talked enthusiastically about hugging trees. They were learning about the natural environment including wild life animals, flowers and insects. The childminder was showing children butterflies, caterpillars and finding rabbit holes. The children were excited and talking about the rabbit warrens and the underground tunnels. This sparked children's curiosity and helped develop their language skills.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The childminder aimed to provide a safe, caring and happy environment for children. This was evident during the inspection visit. We observed happy children who were safe and well cared for by the childminder. This helped promote children's health and wellbeing.

Whilst the childminder promoted fun experiences for children, they had not undertaken any training or self-directed study to support children's wellbeing. For example, they had not attended first aid or child protection training. We made an area for improvement about this following the last inspection. This area for improvement has been continued.

The childminder had some basic policies and procedures in place to support their practice and share with parents. These had not been updated to reflect current good practice. To support children's wellbeing, we asked the childminder to review these. We previously made an area for improvement about this. This area for improvement has been repeated.

Children were encouraged to be kind, caring and respectful towards each other. This was role modelled by the childminder through their positive interactions and relationships with children. The childminder wanted to ensure that children had happy and lasting memories of their experience at the service and that learning was fun and lifelong. As a result, children benefited from the childminder who was committed to ensuring children experienced quality care and learning.

Families told us that overall they had good relationships with the childminder and that they were welcomed in to the home to discuss their children's care, play and learning. Ongoing communication with families provided them with opportunities to share information about their child's care needs and any changes to their routine or family circumstances. Digital methods were also used to keep families informed of children's play experiences. One family asked for more information about their children's daily experience.

Families had recently completed a questionnaire which provided feedback on the quality of the service. Small suggestions for improvement were made and the childminder responded positively to their feedback. This meant that families were involved in improving outcomes for children.

The childminder informally sought children's views. During the inspection visit, children asked the childminder if they could go fishing. The childminder responded by obtaining fishing nets and planned a trip

for the next day. We asked the childminder to record children's suggestions and their feedback to support continuous improvement. This would allow children to influence improvements within the service.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values.

The childminder was kind, caring and supportive towards children in their care. They were responsive and nurturing towards younger children who needed emotional support and they recognised and understood children's stages of development. This ensured children's individual needs were supported.

Children were happy and confident in the care of the childminder and this was evident through their positive interactions and respectful relationships. For example, the childminder spoke with children about setting boundaries within the home environment. Children responded confidently and understood the expectations. This helped children develop a sense of security.

The childminder was passionate about outdoor learning. They provided children with different opportunities and experiences to learn about nature and participate in wider community events. Children told us how they enjoyed the recent trip to a local seaside town to see the Waverley paddle steamer, and that they built a dam on the beach and ate ice cream. This meant that children were having positive outdoor learning experiences.

The childminder was knowledgeable about children's stages of development and knew how to support their play and learning. We spoke with the childminder about the benefits of keeping their skills and knowledge up-to-date to help support best practice. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate HUB which contains current guidance documents such as 'Growing my potential'. This would help support them to develop the service and improve outcomes for children.

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

In order to keep up to date with developments in childcare practice, the childminder should identify and attend suitable training opportunities and/or undertake appropriate self-directed study. This should include child protection training as a priority.

This area for improvement was made on 10 May 2021.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not undertaken any training or self-directed study to support their practice.

This area for improvement is **not met**.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support the childminder in providing a quality service, she should continue to review and update her policies and procedures to reflect current good practice guidance. This information should be made available to parents.

This area for improvement was made on 10 May 2021.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not reviewed or updated their policies and procedures to reflect current good practice.

This area for development is **not 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?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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