

# Happy Hippos Childminding Child Minding

Broxburn

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
20 August 2024

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2020991153

**Service no:**  
CS2020379395

## About the service

Happy Hippos Childminding is a childminding service provided by Marscha Ross, from their home in Broxburn, West Lothian. The service can care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. These numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own family.

Children have use of the living room, kitchen and upstairs bathroom. A secure back garden is also available. The service is close to local parks, schools, nurseries and local amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 August 2024 between 09:30 and 11:15. 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:

- spent time with two children
- received feedback from three family members
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were happy and confident in the childminder's home, exploring their play independently.
- Children's needs, rights and choices were met because the childminder had developed detailed personal plans that recorded their learning and specific strategies relevant to their unique abilities.
- Children enjoyed a good range of play and learning experiences, including in the local community, that helped them to develop skills for life.
- The childminder was warm, caring and nurturing, responding sensitively to children's actions, emotions and words.
- The childminder had met three areas for improvement since the last inspection which showed good capacity to improve.
- We encouraged the childminder to develop detailed risk assessments in line with best practice to fully ensure children remain safe and healthy.
- The childminder could build their confidence and skills in quality assurance and self-evaluation to promote a culture of continuous improvement.

## 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 happy and confident across their daily experiences. The childminder worked closely with families to offer children consistency and continuity in their care routines. Children and families' views and ideas were respected so that their needs were met, promoting positive holistic wellbeing. The childminder was attuned to children's actions, emotions and words and responded sensitively to these. As a result, children had opportunities to be independent and make choices. The childminder was kind and caring, offering nurturing care and support. Children's routines were planned to ensure they built positive sleep habits, further promoting their wellbeing. Children's nappy changing and toilet learning routines were carried out safely to keep children healthy. We encouraged the childminder to consider how children's privacy and dignity is maintained during these routines while also keeping them safe and healthy. The childminder could consider the risks and the benefits across the routine for children so that children's individual needs are fully met.

Each child was recognised as an individual with unique needs, rights and choices. One parent said, "Marscha is a very approachable and intuitive person. She can read (child's) moods and adjust day to day activities as needed." The childminder had developed personal plans that recorded significant events and learning alongside observations of children's play. These were shared with families and included photos for children to see and celebrate their achievements. For some children, the childminder had included additional information which identified any specific strategies that would support their individual needs. The childminder had worked with families and other professionals to ensure that this information helped them to give children the right support at the right time to meet their needs, rights and choices. Families told us they were happy with their child's routines and personal plans, adding that they felt included and respected by the childminder. This included when children needed medication to remain safe and healthy.

Children enjoyed social and relaxed mealtime experiences that promoted positive relationships with food. Children were able to choose what they wanted for snack and parents provided packed lunches that were enjoyed together at the kitchen table. Children were offered water often to ensure they remained hydrated and the childminder provided fruit and other healthy options for snacks. We encouraged the childminder to revisit NHS Health Scotland nutritional guidance, 'Setting the Table', to further enhance the food options available in line with best practice. This will ensure children's health and wellbeing is promoted through balanced, nutritious eating habits.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were encouraged to be creative and imaginative in their play. The childminder respected their interests and choices, offering them freedom and independence to make their own artwork and choose their own experiences. Children enjoyed a good range of play, both in the childminder's home and in the community. They had plenty of opportunities to play outside, enjoying fresh air while being active. Families told us they were very happy with the play experiences offered, especially sensory play and time spent in the local woods. Children were supported to take risks and explore their own capabilities, helping them to develop skills for life.

They enjoyed planting and growing in the vegetable patch and spent time in wooded areas so they built an appreciation for the natural world. Children also visited the library and local toddler groups to begin building connections with the community. In addition, they were encouraged to think about others in the community, picking up litter and creating a woodland treasure hunt for other children to enjoy. As a result, children enjoyed good play and learning experiences that supported them to achieve their potential while encouraging them to be compassionate to others.

The childminder had developed a 'floorbook' which included photos of children's play, their ideas and contributions as well as artwork. This record celebrated children's achievements and reminded children of the fun and exciting experiences they had enjoyed. The childminder used some observations to identify where children's learning could be further supported and this was discussed with families so they felt included in their child's learning journey. For example, young children's personal plans included targets for their literacy and numeracy development which would support their wellbeing later in life. As a result, children were building their confidence and self-esteem by learning new things and sharing these with the childminder, friends and family.

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of **good** for this key question, where we identified strengths and some improvements would maximise children's wellbeing.

#### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children enjoyed a warm, comfortable and homely setting that was welcoming and supportive of their needs. Children's artwork was displayed throughout the home, celebrating their unique talents and helping children to know that they were an important part of the setting. This also offered opportunities to promote children's imaginations through the childminder's passion for creativity. Children also had access to a good range of resources, including open-ended materials that helped children to problem solve. They accessed these resources confidently and independently which respected their right to choose their own play.

The setting was mostly safe, clean and well-maintained. The childminder had implemented appropriate infection prevention and control measures to reduce the risk of the spread of infection. Children were encouraged to wash their hands frequently and the childminder had developed a cleaning rota to follow that covered relevant areas that children explored. Additional baby gates had been installed to ensure children were well supervised in the home and changes had been made to the garden space to make this safer. Children now enjoyed planting and growing in raised vegetable patches which had replaced some of the riskier areas identified at the last inspection. As a result, children were able to play confidently and independently in a safe environment. We shared the recently published Public Health Scotland document, 'Health protection in children and young people settings, including education' with the childminder. This will ensure that the setting is planned to meet best practice guidance, for example, ensuring that exclusion periods for any relevant illnesses are implemented.

The childminder spoke confidently about how children's care, play and learning was planned to remove avoidable hazards and reduce the risk of harm. There were basic risk assessments in place for the home and a more detailed risk assessment for visiting the local woods. Children were also kept safe because the childminder understood and respected children's individual needs and considered these when planning to keep children safe and healthy. We encouraged the childminder to reflect these measures in more detailed risk assessments for other aspects of the setting, including for individual children.

We shared the Care Inspectorate practice notes, 'Keeping Children Safe', to support the childminder's understanding and offer other ideas to enhance children's experiences.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We found important strengths that clearly outweighed areas for improvement in this key question. This contributed to positive outcomes for children and, therefore, we made an evaluation of **good**.

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We made three areas for improvement at the last inspection. All of these had been met, which showed the childminder had good capacity to improve. Children's care, play and learning experiences were of a good quality and families were happy with their experiences. The childminder's vision to offer a home-from-home environment for children helped everyone to feel included and welcomed. The childminder listened carefully to children and families' ideas and had asked for their feedback. One parent told us, "Once a month, a proper meeting is set up where everything is reviewed and agreed." Feedback about the service was positive and children were happy, confident and content. The childminder could now consider how to provide children and families with more opportunities to offer feedback, using relevant resources shared during the inspection.

The childminder had developed an improvement plan based on feedback from the last inspection and this detailed the actions the childminder had planned and taken to improve children's experiences. There were opportunities to improve quality assurance and self-evaluation so there is a culture of continuous improvement. We encouraged the childminder to use the Care Inspectorate's quality framework to create meaningful links between the improvement plan and national expectations for children's experiences. This will ensure children experience high quality care, play and learning that continues to improve over time.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as **good**, where performance impacted positively on children's outcomes and this outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children enjoyed warm and nurturing care and support because the childminder responded sensitively to their needs, rights and choices. There were strong relationships between children, families and the childminder which promoted positive outcomes. One parent told us the childminder is "friendly, flexible, makes our (child) feel like one of the family." The childminder was approachable and welcoming, helping people to feel relaxed and comfortable from the start. One family had shared a poem with the childminder that was openly displayed in the childminder's home. This detailed the positive nurture and care they had experienced, showing the trusting relationships that had been built. Some children had been attending the service since they were babies and this prolonged opportunity to get to know each other ensured children's needs were being met.

The childminder had undertaken recent training, for example, in first aid. They had also attended learning about play in the local community, helping to enhance their skills and abilities in ways that improved children's learning. The childminder was committed to learning new things, with plans to begin a new qualification in care and education soon. This offered a good opportunity for the childminder to further

develop their knowledge and experience in promoting positive outcomes for children and families. We encouraged the childminder to consider how this learning is recorded and used as a tool to reflect on their childminding service to maximise the impact of this development on children's outcomes.

## 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 contribute to children's learning needs being met, the childminder should ensure individual learning is evaluated and progress captured.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 May 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Children's personal plans held information about how children were developing and learning. There were observations of children's play alongside clear strategies to support children's holistic wellbeing. We were satisfied that sufficient progress had been made.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should monitor and risk assess the outdoor play space to ensure children are safe in their environment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32) 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 May 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Children were kept safe in the outdoor play space because the childminder had made changes to the layout. Children now had access to raised beds for growing which replaced the uneven surfaces and overgrown areas that posed a risk to children at the last inspection. The childminder spoke confidently about how children were kept safe outdoors. We suggested that the childminder develop more formal risk assessments and we have reported on this under key question two, 'How good is our setting?' We were satisfied that sufficient progress had been made.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 3

To promote a culture of continuous improvement and enable the quality of the service to be evaluated, the provider should develop approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance.

This is to ensure confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having a robust and transparent quality assurance process' (HSCS 4.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 May 2023.**

### Action taken since then

The childminder had developed a service improvement plan to address areas for improvement and make changes to practice. This clearly stated the actions the childminder planned to take and how this would keep children safe and healthy. We encouraged the childminder to now link the improvement plan to the quality framework so that relevant best practice is used to inform any changes. We were satisfied that sufficient progress had been made.

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](http://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
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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