

Heather's Hungry Caterpillars Child Minding Service Child Minding

Kilwinning

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
17 September 2024

Service provided by:
Heather Howe

Service provider number:
SP2011982302

Service no:
CS2015338752

About the service

Heather Howe provides a childminding service from their family home in the town of Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. The service is close to local shops, schools, parks and beaches.

Children are cared for in a designated playroom and an 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 attended the service.

About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place on 16 September between 10:15 and 13:45 and 17 September between 12:00 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 children using the service and their families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed and sampled documents
- reviewed families questionnaires.

Key messages

- Children were happy safe and secure in the childminder's care
- The childminder had a kind, caring and nurturing approach
- Children were engaged in their learning and having fun
- Children had access to a range of play and learning experiences
- The childminder had formed positive relationships with families
- Children benefited from positive outdoor learning experiences
- The childminder should continue to develop their skills and knowledge through training. This will help improve 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very 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?

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 Nurture care and support

Children were happy, safe and secure in the childminder's care. They were confident as they moved around the areas of the home, playing together and having fun with their friends. The childminder encouraged children to play co-operatively, share resources and be kind to each other. As a result, children were developing their social and emotional skills.

The childminder had formed positive relationships with children and we observed warm, kind interactions between the children and childminder. The childminder was responsive to children's care needs and ensured they were settled and comfortable within the home environment. This helped ensure children felt safe and secure.

Meal times were relaxed, unhurried and sociable experiences. Children sat at a child sized table to enjoy their lunch and snack. The childminder sat with the children and enjoyed a healthy lunch together. They were chatting about their day and the childminder encouraged children to eat their meals before offering fruit and yogurt. Children had their own water bottles which helped them stay hydrated. This helped promote healthy lifestyle choices.

Sleep routines were well established and the childminder worked with families to ensure young children's emotional wellbeing was supported. We asked the childminder to use the travel cot more and further discuss this with families in relation to safer sleep guidance. This would ensure all children had the opportunity for safe sleep and rest.

The childminder knew children well. Personal plans reflected children's interest, preferences and stages of development. Health and wellbeing indicators were used to support children's needs and ensured the appropriate level of care and support was provided. Families were fully involved in developing and reviewing their child's personal plan. This ensured continuity of care.

Children's right to privacy was promoted and respected during personal care routines. Younger children were supported and the childminder was responsive to their individual routine. Older children were encouraged to use the toilet independently. The childminder offered praise and encouragement when they had managed their own self-care. This helped promote children's independence and confidence.

The childminder had scheduled child protection training. They were confident and knowledgeable in relation to keeping children safe and knew how to respond to any care or safeguarding concerns. This helped keep children safe.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play and learning. They chose resources that interested them and were leading their own play. Children were playing with small world figures; construction sets and role playing in the 'kitchen.' This meant that they were involved in play that was meaningful.

The childminder joined in with children's play. They made play dough together and children had fun during the experience. They were making 'gingerbread' using cutters and utensils to explore the playdough and develop their imaginative skills. The childminder extended children's learning through effective questioning skills to help explore their ideas. This helped develop children's creative skills.

There was a broad selection of wooden resources such as an abacus and puzzles to support children's learning. The childminder sat with the children as they wanted to make necklaces with wooden beads. It was challenging for the children and the childminder encouraged them to thread the beads independently and persevere. This helped them build resilience and develop their confidence. Other resources included games to help children to sort and match, and learn about different colours, shapes and sizes. This promoted children's skills in language and numeracy.

The childminder knew children well. They understood each child's stage of development and wanted to support children's learning through play. They followed children's interests and were familiar with developmental milestones used to track children's progress and development. We asked the childminder to identify and record children's next steps in their learning to show how children develop their skills over time. This will help improve outcomes for children.

Families were regularly updated about their children's daily play and learning experiences. We spoke with the childminder about the number of photographs taken to meet families' expectations and how photographic evidence is more valuable when children's progress and achievements are significant. This will help ensure children's progress is recognised at key points.

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

The childminder's home was warm, welcoming and spacious with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Internal safety gates and a secure outdoor area ensured that children were safe. This helped ensure that children's health and safety needs were met.

Children were cared for in a designated playroom which was well set up and designed to support their play and learning. They could choose resources that were accessible in a storage unit and bookcase. They played on the floor and were able to move around the playroom to access a range of imaginative resources such as the play kitchen and dolls house. This meant that children could choose where they wanted to play.

The childminder recognised that young children needed time in the afternoon to participate in quieter activities. They spoke about creating a cosy corner within the playroom to enable children to rest, relax and read. This will help support children's emotional wellbeing.

Children's play was extended through the use of the spacious hallway. This space provided children with different play experiences and allowed them to move around the floor using push along cars and trucks. They were playing co-operatively, laughing and leading their own play. As a result, children were having fun.

The outdoor play area was accessible through the kitchen. The area was used on occasions and children could play with a small range of resources such as balance bikes, physical apparatus and balls. This enabled children to develop their physical skills and balance.

The childminder took children to toddler groups and other local services such as the library, beach and play parks. They met with other childminders which enabled children to play together and enjoy lunch at the cafe. This helped children make connections with their local community.

Regular opportunities were provided for children to enjoy the natural outdoor environment and green spaces. Visits to country parks meant that children could participate in energetic play and learn about nature reserves and wildlife animals. Other places of interest included taking children to the transport museum which involved using public transport. This meant that children benefited from positive outdoor learning experiences.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Families told us they had good relationships with the childminder and that they were welcomed into the home to discuss their children's care, play and learning. Ongoing communication including digital methods provided families with opportunities to share information about their child's care needs and any changes to their routine or family circumstances. One family commented, "I always go into the childminders home at pick up to discuss her day and what the activities and learning have been for that day".

Information was available for families prior to starting the service as well as a range of policies and procedures. These had not been updated to reflect current practice. Some risk assessments had been reviewed which meant children were safe. We asked the childminder to review and update their documents. This will help ensure children's health and wellbeing needs are met.

The childminder was committed to providing a quality service. They had developed aims of the service which were to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where children felt happy and secure. We observed happy children who were safe and well cared for by the childminder. This ensured children were safe, secure and well supported.

The childminder often asked families about the quality of their children's play experiences at the service and for suggestions about how this could be improved. We asked the childminder to seek the views of families about how the other aspects of the service could be improved and use their feedback and suggestions to make improvements. This will help ensure families influence the ongoing developments of the service.

The childminder was in partnership with the local authority and scheduled to attend training to help identify improvements within the service. The childminder had started to plan some improvements, for example streamlining their documentation. This would help develop the service and support more positive outcomes for children.

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 had a kind, caring and nurturing approach. We observed the childminder responding to children's care needs and ensure they were well supported. They spoke with children about being kind and caring towards each other and role modelled positive interactions in a calm manner. Their kind and nurturing approach ensured children felt safe and valued.

The childminder was skilled and experienced. They knew children well and had formed positive relationships with individual children in their care. They had a good understanding of child development and supported children's needs and stages of development. For example, they were settling a baby into the service and the childminder was taking time to get to know the child and form a close bond with them. This meant that children received personalised care that was right for them.

The childminder had undertaken a qualification several years ago and was keen to further develop their knowledge and skills. They had completed some training courses over recent years and planned to undertake child protection and first aid in the coming months. We discussed the value of participating in courses to further develop their skills and knowledge in relation to current practice and guidance. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate Hub, to access bitesize videos and best practice documents. This would support the childminder to update their knowledge.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and was involved in a local childminder network. This provided opportunities for the childminders to share ideas about their practice and support each other.

Positive and trusting relationships had been formed with families. The childminder was committed to ensuring children were well cared for and supported. Feedback from families was positive and children experienced quality care, play and learning. One family commented, "Could not be happier with the service, love & care is provided to my children along with so many fun things".

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
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