

Miller, Eileen Child Minding

Auchterarder

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 December 2024

Service provided by:
Miller Eileen

Service provider number:
SP2003905380

Service no:
CS2003009973

About the service

Eileen Miller provides the childminding service and is registered to provide care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16.

The childminder uses her home for the provision of the service. The house is in a quiet residential area of Auchterarder. It is close to local parks and amenities.

Children use the ground floor of the home which includes a living room, kitchen/diner, hallway, and toilet. The rear garden is enclosed and easily accessed from patio doors in the kitchen/dining area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 December 2024 between 16:00 and 19:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspectors 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 two children using the service and reviewed four responses to our questionnaire from their family members
- spoke with the provider
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, calm, and caring interactions from the childminder which helped them to feel valued, respected, and loved.
- The childminder had worked hard to improve outcomes and their practice since the last inspection. Children and families' views were sought and valued by the childminder and methods used to gather feedback had improved.
- The childminder should continue to review and update their policies and procedures in line with relevant best practice documents to help families know what to expect from the service and to fully underpin their practice and the service they provide.
- Strong relationships with families had been formed which created a welcoming and inclusive ethos within the service.
- The childminder was knowledgeable on children's current circumstances, likes and preferences which enabled them to provide care that was individualised and right for each child.
- The childminder was committed to improving their professional knowledge and skills. We found they had gained confidence and able to discuss recently published guidance and how this had impacted positively on their service.

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?	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 quality indicator 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 and the childminder had developed positive attachments and relationships which contributed to children feeling confident and settled. This helped to create a trusting, and welcoming environment where children felt included and had a sense of belonging. Children experienced warm and respectful interactions as the childminder sensitively listened to children and responded to their cues when seeking support and reassurance. This supported children to feel valued, safe, and loved.

Children benefitted from effective personal planning as the childminder routinely gathered important information from families. In addition to the children's plans the childminder communicated daily with families using individual diaries. This meant they were knowledgeable on children's current circumstances, likes and preferences and enabled the childminder to provide care that was individualised and right for each child. This approach contributed to children being confident and happy in the childminder's care. Very positive relationships with families have been formed, they told us, 'It's like a home from home for my child, feels happy and comfortable there', 'It feels like she is family' and 'We both feel comfortable with Eileen. She knows my child just as well as I do now.'

Children experienced mealtimes that were sociable and unhurried. The childminder and children sat together at the kitchen table which meant they experienced a relaxed atmosphere in which to eat and drink. The childminder cooked nutritious and well-balanced meals for the children at lunchtime and if parents wished they could provide their child with another meal for the end of the day. Since the previous inspection, the childminder had improved the mealtime experience for children. They were offered real cutlery and plates and choice from plates of bread, fruits, and vegetables. Allergies were managed well, and the childminder could confidently discuss how they would respond to a choking episode which contributed to keeping children safe.

Children felt valued and respected in the service as their personal care was meaningfully supported. The childminder promoted their privacy and dignity and sensitively talked them through their intimate care routine.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were being met as the appropriate procedure and permissions were in place for the safe administration of medication. The childminder was knowledgeable on how to share initial concerns on children's welfare and confident in child protection procedures.

Quality indicator 1.3-Play and learning.

The childminder had a selection of toys and resources available which were appropriate for the children's age and stage of development. The childminder told us they regularly rotated their resources as space was limited and planned what they would put out based on children's current interests. We saw a child played happily with a wooden farm and enthusiastically showed us the different toy animals. This promoted learning through play as children were fully engaged in the toys and activities offered to them. A parent told

us, 'We love how the toys are swapped around daily so it always feels like there is something new to play with.'

The childminder captured children's experiences in individual floor books. They included children's contributions, drawings and photographs evidenced the fun activities they participated in. A developmental tracking sheet was in place and the childminder recorded in date format when children had achieved a developmental milestone. We suggested ways in which the childminder could further develop this system. For example, identifying children's next steps and taking observations to evidence their progress and successes and share these with families. This will help children to be consistently and effectively supported to reach their full potential.

Literacy opportunities were promoted well as children had a range of books, cause and affect toys and mark making opportunities to support early writing skills. Numeracy opportunities were woven into daily experiences, for example, through counting songs and games. This provided children with good opportunities to develop skills in these areas.

Children enjoyed regular activities in the local area. For example, they visited a nearby park, the local library and enjoyed walks and trips to the local shops. This supported the children to maintain positive connections with their local community. Families were very happy with their children's outdoor experiences and told us, 'In the summer they are outdoors all the time & go to the park too. All year round they go on great walks and down to the water' and 'My child loves the fresh air; Eileen often takes them out for farm walks and to the park.'

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.

Children experienced a homely and welcoming environment. The kitchen dining area provided ample space for children to play on the floor, at the table or they could easily access the soft furnishings in the lounge to relax and rest. Children were settled in the childminder's home and confidently moved between the two rooms and played contently throughout the inspection.

Children were provided with choice as a range of activities, books and resources were accessible from storage units. We acknowledged the childminder had enhanced their provision of natural, loose parts and real-life experiences since the last inspection. For example, there were more wooden toys and baskets of interesting objects. We encouraged the childminder to consider how they could be more visible and accessible to children and offered daily. This would enable children to access these types of resources independently which would further support their imagination and curiosities further.

The childminder routinely checked the house before the arrival of the children and appropriate risk assessments were in place to minimise potential hazards and remove any risks to children which contributed to keeping them safe.

The childminder recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with daily opportunities for free flow access between the kitchen dining room and garden. The garden was an interesting space for children. There were opportunities to explore, grow flowers and vegetables and develop their gross motor

skills on larger play equipment. This enabled children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy.

Children were protected as the childminders home was well maintained, and effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. For example, the childminder's home was clean, tidy, and welcoming. We heard the childminder sensitively support a child to wash their hands, before eating and they wore the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) when changing a nappy. These approaches helped minimise the potential spread of infection and kept children safe and secure.

Since the previous inspection, the childminder had purchased a travel cot and had enhanced her knowledge on safer sleeping practices for children who required a sleep during the day. This meant children were provided with a comfortable surface on which to rest and relax and helped to keep them safe and secure while they slept.

The childminder was a member of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) which meant they were knowledgeable on keeping children and family's information confidential and stored it securely within their home.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator 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 childminder could confidently discuss the vision they had for their service, and it was evident they were meeting their values as we observed a warm, kind, and caring approach towards the children and their families. Families held the childminder in high regard, their comments included: 'Eileen gives us complete peace of mind our child is in a happy safe in a caring environment. They have so much fun they love going to Eileen's,' 'Eileen genuinely cares for the children, and it shows. My child loves going to Eileen and is always happy and confident while with her' and 'She's fantastic.'

The childminder had worked hard to improve their practice and outcomes since the last inspection. Children and families' views were sought and valued by the childminder and methods used to gather feedback had improved. Further information can be found in section 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since or last inspection. All families who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed they were involved in the service in a meaningful way. This told us families felt that their feedback and opinions were listened to and respected. Through our discussions it was evident the childminder was reflecting more on their practice; they had started to use self-evaluation systems and kept a diary of development plans for the service. We found these entries were mostly about activities, when to update personal plans and when to send out a questionnaire to families. We discussed how this method of planning was not always leading to improvements within the service. Further information can be found in section 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since or last inspection.'

At the previous inspection we asked the childminder to review and update their policies and procedures in line with best practice documents. This had been actioned and the childminder now had a wide range of policies and procedures to underpin the service they provided. Further information can be found in section 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since or last inspection.'

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

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

4.1. Staff skills knowledge and values.

The childminder had many years' experiences of childminding and children benefitted from their warm, friendly manner and calm approach. The childminder skilfully promoted manners and was confident in using effective questioning to scaffold younger children's learning. Additionally, the childminder sensitively diverted children's attention when needed and minor disputes over toys were resolved effectively. This told us they had a good understanding of the children in their care and how best to meet their individual needs.

The childminder read emails and updates from the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and a national childminding group platform to keep her informed of developments within the sector. Additionally, they met with other local childminders to share practice, have professional discussions, and had attended training together. The childminder told us they valued these positive working relationships and support and found it useful to discuss new guidance and how they would implement it into their practice.

The childminder was committed to improving their professional knowledge and skills. Since the previous inspection they had refreshed their understanding of first aid and child protection procedures. We found they were more confident and able to discuss recently published guidance and how this impacted their practice. We encouraged the childminder to continue to engage in professional development and self-directed reading and research to help support them further to improve their practice and outcomes for children and families. We signposted the childminder to a range of current best practice guidance to support them on their improvement journey.

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 ensure continuous improvement the provider should further develop quality assurance and self-evaluation processes to identify service developments.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) actively seeking the views from families and children to inform improvement
- b) implement a quality assurance process to identify what is working well and what could be improved.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership' (HSCS 4.7) and 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 4 October 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder now used a range of methods to gather feedback from children and families. For example, they used daily discussions at home time, a digital platform and regular service questionnaires. We acknowledged improvement and asked the childminder moving forward to consider how they could gather more informative information on how the service could be better for children and families.

Additionally the childminder was reflecting on what was working well within the service and what could be improved. They had started to implement a formalised self-evaluation approach and use their reflections and feedback from families to inform improvement planning. This was in the early stages and we discussed how feedback and reflection could be used to support the childminder better to identify developments needed and the impact of any changes they make and how this supports positive outcomes for children and families.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To underpin service delivery, improve practice and inform families of what to expect from the service, the provider should implement, review and update policies and procedures in line with relevant best practice documents.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 4 October 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had improved their range of policies and procedures since the previous inspection. We discussed how some still required more detail to fully underpin the service the childminder was providing. For example, exclusion periods for sickness, notifying the Care Inspectorate within 24 hours should a child go missing from the service and the procedure should a child make an allegation about a member of the childminders family. Overall there was a significant improvement in the information contained in the service policies and procedures.

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	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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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