

Pennytree Childminding Child Minding

Kirkcaldy

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 February 2025

Service provided by:
Aida Morrice

Service provider number:
SP2023000063

Service no:
CS2023000087

About the service

Pennytree Childminding operates a service from their home in a residential area of Kirkcaldy, Fife. The childminder may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family.

The service offers children two dedicated spacious playrooms where they can choose to play with a variety of toys and books. Children also have access to kitchen area and use this space to eat their snacks, supported by the childminder. At the rear of the service there is a large secure garden for children to access. The service is close to local amenities including parks and the local nursery and school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 4 February 2025 from 10:15 to 12:15 and Wednesday 5 February 2025 15:15 to 16:30. 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 .

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with six children
- reviewed feedback from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder's respectful, holistic and nurturing approaches to children's wellbeing and right to play, supported children's emotional resilience.
- Children were welcomed into spacious and well-ventilated play rooms where they had access to a variety of resources and comfortable spaces to play and rest.
- The childminder had begun to identify strengths and areas that could be improved within the service.
- Quality of care for children would be enhanced through the childminder developing knowledge and understanding of current best practice guidance.

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?	3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

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

Children were nurtured through daily experiences. The childminder was caring and respectful to children. They gave children time to process information, which supported them to make their own decisions and age appropriate responsibilities. They used open ended questions skilfully to encourage children to be creative whilst extending interests and curiosities. This resulted in children feeling content and thriving within a caring and nurturing environment.

Strong relationships had been formed between minded children and the childminder. Parents told us they were welcomed into the service and how they were supported by the childminder. One parent said "Often we talk about what my child struggles with in school and she helps her develop whilst in her care" whilst another parent shared "The childminder works with the families and encourages the children to play together and have fun".

All children had personal plans that reflected important information about their care needs, likes and dislikes. Parents completed these when their child first joined the service. The childminder had created sections within the personal plans to obtain more concise information to support positive transitions into the service. We suggested that personal plans should be reviewed regularly with children and families to include children's views and opinions and a record of parents involvement (**see area for improvement**).

Mealtimes were a nurturing, relaxed experience. Recent consultation with families had resulted in them providing snacks for children, which children were enjoying. The childminder was mindful of children's needs for example, a child finished their snacks from home and were still hungry, an additional snack was provided for the child. The childminder sat and chatted with children as they ate, providing a positive and sociable mealtime experience.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were supported to make choices about their play and could independently access a range of toys and resources. These were suited to their individual interests and stages of development. For example children engaged in imaginative play with the small animals, whilst another child created a model using the blocks. There was ample space for the experiences to be extended in the playroom, we observed children playing alongside each other and together. Children were happy, content and engaged in play.

Language, literacy and numeracy opportunities were woven through the service and were promoted by the childminder through stories, rhymes and songs. Books were accessible for all children and opportunities for mark making available which accommodated all age groups. Children were encouraged to be critical thinkers and develop independence and problem-solving skills.

The childminder shared children's experiences and progress verbally with families at pick up and drop off times and through photographs on social media app. This enabled families to be involved in their child's

experiences. We observed comments on these photographs from families acknowledging the learning and shared ideas about further considering individual children's development and possible next steps.

The childminder's holistic and nurturing approaches to children's wellbeing and right to play, supported children's emotional wellbeing. Through nurturing conversations children were encouraged to resolve situations and be confident in their decision making. Children felt safe and confident in showing and reflecting upon their emotions.

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should include the views of children and families within children's personal plans. These should be reviewed at least every six months.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'My personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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

The setting was comfortable, clean and well furnished. Children were welcomed into a spacious and well-ventilated play rooms where they had access to a variety of resources and comfortable spaces to play and rest in. The childminder continued to build on the resources available for the children, for example they had recently introduced a loose parts tray and more open ended resources. All resources were accessible for the children in the service. There was ample space for extending play and experiences. As a result children had access to a variety of resources which supported their imagination and creativity.

Children had access to a large fully enclosed and secure garden at the rear of the service. The childminder informed us that children had some opportunities to play outside in the garden area, we saw some photographs of the children outside playing with loose parts. The childminder had plans for the garden and how to enhance this space in consultation with children and families to create a secret garden which would increase opportunities to risk taking and problem solving. The childminder was aware of the importance of children spending time outdoors to promote health and wellbeing.

The childminder identified and removed risks within their home. For example broken toys were instantly removed. Risk assessments supported the childminder to identify risks and put mitigations in place to keep children safe. These measures reduced the risks to children and supported children to play safely.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place to support a safe environment. The home and equipment were clean and well maintained. Children's wellbeing was supported by a range of measures to limit the spread of infection such as ventilation and good hand washing routines. Although we did not see a nappy change, the childminder talked through a procedure that considered children's dignity and risk of infection. The childminder took a respectful approach to children's personal care which promoted privacy and respect.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this key question as **adequate**. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

The childminder had a friendly, nurturing and welcoming approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships and partnership working. The childminder spoke daily with parents to exchange key information. Photos and messages were shared regularly through social media apps which supported parents to be involved in their child's experience and celebrate achievements and milestones.

Families had some opportunities to give feedback on the service, for example through reviews on social media, comments on photographs and daily discussions. The aims of the service had been shared with families through a detailed information pack, which highlighted the expectations and aspirations for the service. Consultation with families was being developed, we discussed ways to build on this to enable the childminder to meaningfully involve them in developing and improving the service.

There were no formal systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service. The childminder had begun to identify areas of strength and areas that could be improved. For example the childminder had identified the garden as an area of development to further benefit children's health and wellbeing. The childminder should continue to evaluate the service and make effective improvements for children (**see area for improvement**).

When we arrived at the service unannounced, we found the childminder was looking after a neighbour's baby. The childminder advised us that the baby was not a minded child. The childminder had however requested a variation to change the service conditions of registration, to allow for the baby to be cared for as a minded child in the future. This variation had not yet been assessed by the Care Inspectorate. At that visit, there were no minded children present. We carried out a second visit which was announced, on the following day, when we spent time with minded children.

We explained the importance of the childminder operating within their conditions of registration at all times.

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should formally develop quality assurance systems to evaluate their service. This will help identify what they do well and areas for development and inform their improvement plan.

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

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

We evaluated this key question as **adequate**. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

The childminder was warm, kind and compassionate in their interactions with children. They knew children in their care very well and had developed positive relationships with children and families. The childminder spoke about the intensive support that they offered families to help with aspects of age and stage development, for example supporting a child to settle into the service and build positive attachments. They created a friendly and welcoming environment for children and families enabling them to feel valued and secure.

The childminder demonstrated sufficient knowledge to take appropriate actions in the event of a child protection concern. Children would benefit from the childminder updating their training to ensure their knowledge and understanding of relevant guidance is current. This would further contribute to keeping children safe.

The childminder had not maintained training or professional reading to support and develop their knowledge, understanding and practice. Children would benefit from the childminder developing their approach to continuous professional development to support improvements in practice and improve outcomes for children and families. We signposted the childminder to A Quality Framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare and My childminding experience on the Care Inspectorate Hub (**see area for improvement**).

Areas for improvement

1. To provide the best possible outcomes for children the childminder should ensure that they engage in relevant training opportunities to keep their knowledge, understanding and practice current.

This is to ensure I have confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which stated that 'I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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