

Curious Kiddos Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 April 2025

Service provided by:
Rachel Swan

Service provider number:
SP2023000717

Service no:
CS2024000084

About the service

Rachel Swan is the provider of Curious Kiddos, registered as a childminding service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than six are under 12 years, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate and this includes Adam Black who is employed as an assistant. The service is not registered to provide overnight care. The parts of the premises not to be used are all rooms on the upper level.

The childminder provides this service from her home in a suburb in Aberdeen. The accommodation used for childminding is on one level and comprises of a lounge, kitchen and bathroom. The childminder is not currently using her rear garden for childminding. The front garden is occasionally used. Outdoor play is usually provided by accessing green spaces and a playpark all very close to the childminder's home. The property is close to local amenities including schools and shops, and there is good access to public transport.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 29 April 2025 from 12:30 to 18:40. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration. This was the first inspection of the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spent time with the three children attending the service at the time of the inspection
- Spoke with the childminder
- Spoke with the childminding assistant
- Observed the children and their interactions with the childminder
- Reviewed documents
- Reviewed written feedback from three families.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- Safety of the physical environment
- The quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- Children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Warm, caring relationships had been established which helped the children to feel confident, safe and secure.
- Children's health and wellbeing needs were very well supported.
- Children benefitted from engaging in a range of creative and well planned play experiences which supported them to have fun and experience joy.
- Children were welcomed into a warm, homely and safe environment.
- The childminder's strong commitment to continually improving the service had ensured very positive outcomes for the children.
- The childminder created an ethos of continuous professional development through training opportunities which ensured that practice was consistently of a high standard.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

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.

Children felt nurtured by the childminder and the childminding assistant who comforted them with hugs, sat at their level and spoke with them in a gentle and calm voice. The children readily approached both the childminder and the childminding assistant throughout the inspection. This showed that positive and trusting relationships had been developed. A parent told us that, "Rachel very quickly developed a strong bond with my daughter" and another that, "Rachel is very caring and welcoming." A parent told us that the children also enjoyed spending time with Adam, the childminding assistant, who provided support for short periods of time on a regular basis.

Lunchtime was a lovely, relaxed and engaging experience. Parents and carers provided their children's lunch, however the childminder ensured that it was attractively displayed. The children and childminder all sat together and engaged in conversation. Discussion with the childminder indicated that she was very conscious of ensuring that all food was prepared according to the different ages and stages of the children to reduce the risk of choking.

Comprehensive personal plans which outlined the children's needs and how these were to be supported were developed in partnership with parents and carers. These provided a holistic overview of each child. Parents and carers met with the childminder on a six monthly basis to review these to ensure that all key information was accurate and up to date. Parents confirmed that they were fully involved in planning for their child's care. One parent told us that, "my involvement in my child's care and plan is integral, and the consistent communication I have with Rachel allows for a collaborative approach to my child's ongoing development." Where children had a health need there was very detailed information in place regarding how to respond, including administering of medication and action to be taken in event of an emergency.

As part of the initial getting to know each other stage and getting the key information she needed about the child, the childminder often visited the family in their own home. This provided greater flexibility for families and also gave the childminder an opportunity to see the child in their own surroundings. This served as a starting point to developing a holistic knowledge of the child.

The childminder was very clear about best practice in relation to the management of medication. Medication was appropriately labelled, stored securely in a medicine cabinet and checked on a monthly basis. A clear administration policy was in place underpinned by best practice guidance.

Effective arrangements were in place for sleeping children including sleep mats, individual bedding, a darkened room and appropriate temperature. Sleep routines were clearly written out, and information provided about individual preferences such as whether children liked a particular comforter or liked to have their back stroked.

1.3 Play and learning

The childminder had a very good understanding of child development, which meant experiences and play were based on children's development and individual learning needs. Children were actively involved in leading their play, ensuring a child centred approach which was at the heart of the service. One parent told us that the childminder, "... took time to get to know my children's needs and likes and has tried to incorporate these into her activities." Discussion with the childminder indicated that she worked with parents on identifying areas to focus on with the children. She was able to highlight current areas being supported such as building confidence with walking and potty training, and how these were progressing.

Children were out and about on a daily basis, often visiting the park and some lovely green spaces that were all very close by. The children enjoyed a visit to the park during the inspection. There were lots of natural opportunities taken by the childminder to support and extend children's learning on the walk to the park, about keeping safe and talking about things the children could see. During holiday periods the childminder took the children on extended outings outwith the Aberdeen area. These included a splash park, soft play centres and strawberry picking.

The childminder had a very good understanding of how to support children's play and learning through fun activities. They had recently collected tadpoles and explored them before freeing them back into their own habitat. They were also hatching caterpillars at the time of the inspection and learning about lifecycles. The childminder supported children's individual interests so that they had experiences that were particularly meaningful and engaging for them. The children really enjoyed a messy play activity during the inspection which provided a rich sensory experience. Parents expressed that they were very happy with the range of experiences their child had. One parent told us, "Rachel frequently shares details of my child's daily activities and adventures. I appreciate the variety of enriching experiences she provides, which consistently incorporate educational elements that support my child's growth and learning."

Learning journals had recently been developed for each child and gave a very good overview of their learning, progress made and any next steps to support their learning further. Photographs gave a very clear picture of children's enjoyment and engagement. The childminder made reference to best practice, using these to help her to support the children's learning. We suggested highlighting when next steps have been achieved to ensure progress was effectively captured.

Children's language was supported through opportunities to sing songs and read stories together throughout the day. The childminder also kept her language simple and used repetition to help support the younger children with their language development.

The childminder was currently exploring how to further support the play and learning needs of older children who attend the setting. Increasing the selection of books for older children was currently being progressed.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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.

Children were welcomed into a warm and homely environment. The childminder's home was safe for children to explore and play, helping them to feel secure. Discussions with the childminder indicated that she had carefully considered risks and taken appropriate action. The childminder maintained her home to a high standard, ensuring that it was clean, tidy and well organised. Parents all fed back to us that they found the environment to be safe, secure and well maintained. One parent told us, "I have complete confidence in my child's safety with Rachel and within her secure home environment. She has diligently taken all necessary safety precautions and gone above and beyond what is required."

High chairs and child sized dining chairs and table ensured that children were comfortable and kept safe during meal and snack times. A nappy changing station was situated under the stairs in the hall way. This allowed the childminder to supervise children in the lounge whilst effectively supporting personal care. Positioning of the nappy changing station and of the childminder ensured that children's dignity and privacy were fully respected. The childminder followed best practice guidelines for nappy changing and we found the experience to be very positive and nurturing.

Appropriate procedures were in place to control infection. Children were, for example, supported to wash their hands using best practice handwashing guidance. Children used the same towel for hand drying, however when children had a cough or cold then they were provided with individual towels. We suggested individual face cloths or towels could be used at all times to further support children's health. Children's hands were not washed after contact with a dog and we discussed the importance of ensuring this was consistently undertaken to support children's health.

The childminder was not currently using her rear garden for childminding as it was fully paved and therefore did not provide a soft or natural surface for young children's play. Instead, outdoor play was usually provided by accessing green spaces and a playpark all very close to the childminder's home. It was clear from reviewing the childminder's photographs that outdoor play was undertaken on a very regular basis. A parent told us that, "Rachel frequently takes my child to a variety of stimulating environments such as the park, walks, and the woods, providing diverse experiences and learning opportunities."

Some good quality and interesting resources were in place for children to use. Currently these were in baskets which were taken down to floor level for the children to make choices. The childminder was planning to change her furniture to support easier access to resources. This would further enhance opportunities for children to make choices. Books were nicely presented and accessible to the children.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement is well led

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.

The childminder had a clear vision for her service. Clear and detailed information about the childminder's aims and objectives were outlined in a welcome information pack for parents and carers and was consistent with what we saw in practice.

The childminder encouraged and welcomed informal feedback on a daily basis when children were being dropped off or collected. We saw very positive engagement between the childminder and parents during the inspection visit. Six monthly review meetings were also set up to ensure protected time for parents and the

childminder to review all documentation and consider whether changes were needed to ensure their children's needs were being met. This also provided an opportunity for parents and carers to provide feedback on how the service could continue to be improved. The childminder was able to provide examples of feedback obtained and positive action she had taken in response, for example, building up resources for older children.

Although the childminder did not have a written improvement plan she was very committed to continually improving her service. Since registration she had reviewed all the services policies and procedures and had made some changes to reflect her practice. She ensured that these reflected current best practice. Learning journals had been recently developed for all children and gave a very good account of their play and learning.

The childminder was in the process of further developing children's personal plans to reflect the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) to enhance already very positive supporting documents. In addition the childminder had recently applied for and received a variation to add a childminding assistant to her business. The addition of an assistant enabled the children to be offered more and different experiences. The assistant was also able to undertake transportation to and from school and nursery. This allowed the childminder and other children to continue with their play rather than it being interrupted.

The childminder was aware of and using the quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children to support her practice. Developing a written improvement plan, which takes account of the framework and feedback from children and their families would support the childminder to keep track of improvement goals and progress made.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

4.3 staff deployment

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.

The childminder and assistant worked very well together to ensure that children's needs were consistently met. The addition, a childminding assistant for a short period of the day enabled a more flexible service to be provided. The assistant was tasked with collecting older children from school and nursery. This allowed the younger children to continue with their play or their rest. The assistant also supported visits to the park and this allowed children to have choice in what they wanted to do. Parents and carers were aware of the roles and responsibilities of the assistant and had signed their agreement. Positive feedback had been received in relation to the current arrangements.

The childminder had ensured that the assistant had the knowledge required to enable him to undertake his role well. We found that both the childminder and assistant had a very good knowledge of each child, their individual needs and how they were to be supported. The assistant had undertaken training appropriate to his role, including first aid and child protection. The childminder had undertaken extensive training and was very passionate about continual professional development. She had a very good knowledge of children's development and how to support their care, play and learning. This was based on relevant experience she had prior to becoming a childminder, training she had undertaken and best practice documentation she had studied.

At times when the assistant was present the childminder provided clear and effective guidance and support. Both the childminder and the assistant were highly motivated to provide a high quality service. This was reflected in the very positive outcomes for the children.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the childminders registration.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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