

Caz's Kidz Child Minding

Falkirk

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 May 2025

Service provided by:
Caroline Hamilton

Service provider number:
SP2010979284

Service no:
CS2010271044

About the service

'Caz's kids' offers a childminding service and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

The service is provided from the childminder's family home in a residential area of Falkirk. The service is close to local amenities such as shops and a park. The service is delivered from the ground floor of the family home and children have access to a dedicated playroom and bathroom and a large garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 May 2025 between 13:40 and 18.00. Feedback was given to the childminder on 30 May 2025. 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 information gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with four children and four of their family members
- observed practice and children's experiences and how they were supported with their care, play and routines
- reviewed feedback from nine families using MS forms
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, relaxed and confident in the childminder's care.
- The childminder understood the importance of having a respectful approach to her practice, which enabled the children to feel safe and loved.
- Children were well supported to learn and develop through play. They were encouraged to experience fun, creativity and challenge in their play.
- Outdoor play was a key-strength of the service. Children clearly benefitted from the free flow access to outdoors, choosing to spend most of the day in the woods and the garden.
- There was scope to develop the setting's provision further by introducing more open-ended resources and natural materials.
- The childminder's warm and enabling attitude ensured children truly enjoyed their time in the service and were happy and thriving.
- The childminder demonstrated their commitment to start updating her skills and knowledge. She felt motivated and inspired to look for professional development opportunities, which would enhance outcomes for children further.

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

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 experienced consistently warm and kind interactions, which supported their sense of belonging. The childminder understood the importance of having a respectful approach to her practice, which enabled the children to feel safe and loved in her care. As a result, children were happy, relaxed and confident throughout the inspection. Parents told us: 'I really trust Caroline with my child. You can tell she loves her job and the kids love her. I don't worry when she has him as she is really good with updates and pictures too'.

The childminder was responsive to the children's changing needs throughout the day, skilfully observing and responding to the younger children's cues when they sought cuddles and affection. She supported the children to settle in a calm and reassuring way, showing genuine nurture and offering tailored support. As a result, children were building strong and secure attachments to the childminder. A parent shared with us: 'It is not uncommon for me to arrive in the evenings to continue to sit and watch my child enjoy her interaction with others as she is content and often wants to stay longer even once I arrive. This time allows me to catch up if required with my CM on anything we need to with respect to her day and development'.

Children were supported with their personal care routines in a calm and sensitive manner, which respected their independence, dignity and privacy.

Although the childminder knew children well, personal plans were not regularly reviewed. We discussed with the childminder the need to meaningfully record and review with families the children's personal interests, preferences and needs. (See area for improvement 1).

To this effect, we signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate 'Guide for providers on personal planning', which provides examples of what relevant information should be included.

Mealtimes were a sociable and relaxed experience. Children were involved in the snack preparation, choosing what to eat and helping the childminder to wash and chop the fruit on offer. There was scope to embed this further, and we signposted the childminder to the new 'Setting the table' guidance which contains good examples of snack menus. Easy access to water throughout the day meant that children kept hydrated. This promoted their overall health.

The childminder understood the importance of offering the children rest opportunities and regularly discussed the children's sleep routines and needs with the parents. A parent confirmed: 'I let Caroline know how he has slept and she always accommodates when he needs to nap during the day'.

While there was no child needing medication at the time of inspection, there was a system in place to safely record medication administration. Children were also kept safe as the childminder accurately recorded incidents and accidents and communicated these to parents.

The childminder had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping children protected. There was a written procedure for protecting children which was available for parents.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were well supported to learn and develop through play. They benefitted from the childminder's approach to play, which was child-centred and responsive to children's interests and wishes. For example, the childminder encouraged children to lead their learning and choose freely between the indoors and outdoors play experiences. The childminder listened respectfully and responded with warmth and enthusiasm to children's requests, making activities enjoyable and fun.

Children were encouraged to experience fun, creativity and challenge in their play. On the day of the inspection, children enjoyed arts and crafts and messy play indoors with opportunities for scooping materials, and filling and emptying containers. Outdoors, children explored the large, enclosed garden accessing the mud kitchen, playing with toy buggies and dolls, going on the climbing frame and swings as well as exploring a sand pit with diggers.

Outdoor play was a key-strength of the service. Children clearly benefitted from the free flow access to outdoors, choosing to spend most of the day in the woods and the garden. As a result, they were having fun while connecting with nature and the local environment.

Children's engagement in a variety of activities was evident in an activity book with colourful photos, which the children revisited with the childminder. Young children eagerly showed us pictures of them jumping in big puddles on an outing the day before. Older children shared with us their favourite trips to visitor attractions, beaches, woods and nearby towns.

We discussed ways in which the activity folder could become a floorbook which include children's drawings, photos and voices. This would tell a meaningful story about how children's play and learning unfolded from their point of view.

Younger children benefitted from opportunities to develop early literacy and numeracy skills, and these were naturally woven into the play experiences, which kept the children engaged for good periods of time. Older children told us they enjoyed doing science experiments with the childminder in the recent past and showed us examples of exciting and fun activities, which clearly sparked their curiosity and critical thinking skills. We encouraged the childminder to resume and extend these activities which would help both sets of children to test their ideas further.

Significant experiences and learning were shared with parents via a social media app. This enabled families to be involved in their children's learning and development, with updates on their achievements. This process also helped the childminder to plan experiences to support individual children's interests. A parent told us: '[childminder's name] knows what my children like to play with/do and often does experiences linked to occasions or my children's interests that they have shared'.

There were some approaches in place to evaluate children's progress and achievements. We discussed with the childminder the importance of recording significant observations of the children at play and tracking and assessing their development. This would help identify what next steps are needed to support children in their learning further. (See area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure all children have an up to date personal plan that details their individual needs, choices and progress. This information should be used by the childminder to care for and support children effectively. Plans should be reviewed by parents to reflect children's current needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as my care 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).

2. To contribute to children's learning needs being met, the childminder should ensure progress is recorded and evaluated and next steps are clearly identified. This should include, but is not limited to:

a) recording observations of children's learning to capture progress and achievements

b) plan appropriate next steps to support progression in children's learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19); and 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a warm, homely and clean environment. A wide sofa gave children a comfortable space where they could rest, relax and read books. A large table enabled children to move around and engage in their chosen activities, while French doors gave direct access to the outdoor garden, offering plenty of light, space and ventilation. This also promoted children's ownership of their day as they independently chose where they wanted to play.

We discussed with the childminder how children's independence could be enhanced further by ensuring more resources are easily accessible and placed at the child's level. The childminder was responsive to our suggestions and shared with us her plans and ideas to embed this approach.

Indoors, children benefitted from developmentally appropriate resources such as vehicles, blocks, puzzles and objects for pretend and messy play. Outdoors, the environment offered core resources such as sand, paint, and water. This indicated the childminder's knowledge of what children needed to explore and flourish. The childminder agreed that there was scope to develop the setting's provision further by introducing more open-ended resources and natural materials. These would invite more intrigue and curiosity, sparking children's imagination as well as critical thinking skills further. (See area for improvement 1).

The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of infection prevention and control practices and as a result children benefitted from a clean, clutter-free and hygienic environment. This included the toilet and bathroom sink after use and the kitchen table before and after meals.

Overall, resources and equipment were safe and well-maintained. However, we identified a few indoor items which could potentially pose hazards to children's safety. We asked the childminder to remove these and regularly review the indoors and outdoors spaces to make sure they remain safe and hazard-free. (See area for improvement 2).

Children knew how to keep safe as the childminder encouraged them to risk-assess while out and about in the wider community. This supported children to feel confident, take ownership of their play and fully engage in risky play opportunities. The childminder also spoke about appropriate supervision of children which further supported their safety.

Safe storage of children's personal information and the childminders understanding of confidentiality promoted family's privacy and dignity.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's development, imagination and creative play, the childminder should develop the resources available to stimulate and challenge children in their play. This should include, but is not limited to, increasing the range of loose parts, open ended and natural materials.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

2. The provider should ensure that children are cared for in an environment that is safe and secure. To do this, the provider should at a minimum:

a) complete a full review of the premises, identifying where all potential risks and hazards may exist for children and take appropriate action to address these (remove the hazards)

b) regularly review and update the measures they have in place to keep children safe.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We made an evaluation of adequate for this key question. We identified strengths that had a positive impact; however, key areas of performance need to improve.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder spoke passionately about the vision, values and aims of her service, stating she wanted the children to feel part of her family. She was committed to offer a fun, loving and caring environment where children and parents felt welcome and valued. This was evident in the care and support provided to the children and in the childminder's warm interactions with both children and their parents. This showed that she had established strong, positive relationship with them. We asked the childminder to consider reviewing her values and aims in consultation with the families who attend the setting. This would make sure her vision fully takes into account the families' views and the values that matter to them.

The childminder told us she informally consulted with parents on her plans to improve her service and that parents shared some ideas too. This gave them some opportunity to contribute to evaluations and identify improvements. We discussed with the childminder the need to develop this consultation approach further to ensure that families can positively and consistently influence the development of the service.

We also discussed the importance of having a system in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement. The childminder had not undertaken any self-evaluation processes to recognise what they do well and what they aimed to work further on. Embedding a self-evaluation approach to practice would support improved experiences and outcomes for children and their families. (See area for improvement 1).

We shared ways in which the childminder could develop approaches to self-evaluation and improvement with children and families, and she was open to our advice. Regular and recorded opportunities for feedback and reflection on what works well and what could be further developed will help the childminder to monitor progress and impact on children's experiences, supporting the continuous improvement of the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To enable children to benefit from a service that is focussed on improvement and committed to providing high quality care, the childminder should develop quality assurance systems to monitor, review and support continuous improvement of the service.

To further improve outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure they use relevant best practice documents and tools to inform and improve their practice. Using these to build current knowledge, the childminder could consider what the service does well and what could be better. Useful documents and websites can be found at <http://hub.careinspectorate.com>

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23) and 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?**3 - Adequate**

We found that improvements need to be made by building on identified strengths to consistently promote positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as adequate.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder's consistently caring and sensitive approach to practice meant that children felt valued, secure and loved. The nurturing relationships with the children and the strong partnership with the families contributed to create a positive and inclusive care setting. A parent echoed: '[childminder's name] is such a genuine, kind, generous and skilled childminder. My kids all love her and are excited to see her each week. They feel safe, secure, comfortable and confident with her. I find [childminder's name] to be very approachable and her communication about my children is excellent. She knows them all so well and I'm so happy to place my kids in her care'.

The childminder's warm and enabling attitude ensured children truly enjoyed their time in the service and were happy and thriving. Children benefitted from a childminder who recognised the importance of fun in children's play and tailored the support to suit each child's individual needs. This effectively enhanced the children's experiences and meant children were genuinely excited to spend time in her care. All families told us they had developed a strong connection with the childminder and that they were very happy with the care and support their child received in the service. Some parents added: 'I have been using [childminder's name] services since my daughter was around 1.5yrs old. She is now 7. She loves going to [childminder's name] We have a great relationship, and I completely trust [childminder's name] with my child. She is a fantastic childminder but also a really lovely person'.

The childminder had not undertaken training and learning to develop her professional practice in recent years. As a result, there were some gaps in the childminder's knowledge and understanding of current early learning and childcare best practice. The childminder agreed with our findings and demonstrated her commitment to start updating her skills and knowledge. She told us she now felt motivated and inspired to look for professional development opportunities and apply her learning to practice, which would enhance outcomes for children. (See area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support positive outcomes for children the childminder should identify and access training and professional learning to develop their skills and ensure their knowledge is up to date with best practice and guidance. They should record learning and demonstrate ways in which it has improved experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, and are able to reflect on their practice' (HSCS 3.14).

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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