

Walker, Elaine

Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 24 July 2018

Service provided by:
Elaine Walker

Service provider number:
SP2003903163

Care service number:
CS2003005359

The service

Introduction

The service registered with the Care Inspectorate in April 2011.

Elaine Walker is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children under 16 years with a maximum of 6 children under 12 years, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Overnight service will not be provided. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those stated on the registration certificate.

The service is located in a quiet residential setting in Stirling. The service is run from the ground floor of the home, with access to a safely enclosed back garden. The house is well maintained and well organised to meet the needs of children.

The aims and objectives of the service include:

- "To create a warm, welcoming environment where all children and their families can feel comfortable and valued
- To develop a positive partnership between families and myself in which their contribution to their children's development is valued
- To promote mutual respect and understanding of each other regardless of race, gender, culture, disability, class, belief, lifestyle or family circumstance."

What we did during our inspection

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people – and what they can do to improve. Getting it Right for Every Child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

During the inspection process, we gathered evidence from various sources, including the following:

- the childminder's policies that she shared with parents, including settling in, medication and child protection
- children's records and registration information
- the childminder's training certificates and other documentation
- discussions with the childminder
- observations of the childminder's interactions with the children present at the time of inspection
- the toys, equipment and play spaces available for children.

Views of people using the service

The childminder and the child who was present during the inspection had a very trusting and caring relationship which helped the child to feel safe and secure. The child was very happy and confident in the setting, smiling when asked about how much they enjoyed being with the childminder. We saw cuddles and fun interactions throughout and the child showed off the toys available, describing what they did when spending time in the childminder's care. Comments included:

"You can pretty much play anything you want... At the park, we can do anything we like. Tig, hide and seek, anything! There are lots of trees to play hide and seek."

We sent out Care Standards Questionnaires before we visited the service. Parents who returned the questionnaires were generally happy with the service provided. They told us:

"Lots of puzzles, crafts and listening games keeps my child busy and stimulated."

"Very happy with level of care. No complaints. Great relationship with my child."

"The house has a safe and secure garden. There are a variety of toys and activities for all ages to ensure children are engaged. Particularly like that the TV is not used, but children take part in activities/games."

"We have noticed the amount of milk/food (our child) consumes has increased positively since being with Elaine. Elaine and the children eat together at the table which provides a good role model."

"Our child has responded well to the daily routine at Elaine's that we have adapted our own routines at home to match. Our child feels safe and secure within these routines and shows an understanding of what will happen next. Our child thrives under Elaine's care."

"Elaine observes her children and provides equipment that suits their needs and development. Our child loves the treasure basket which provides her with heuristic play."

"Our child is thriving in Elaine's care. Elaine has a gentle and kind manner. I happily leave my child in her 'home from home'... Our child is always happy to go to Elaine's and always smiles when she realizes where we are. We couldn't be happier with the service Elaine provides. She has quickly become a member of our family and we are thankful that she warmly welcomes our child and us into hers."

Self assessment

The childminder had completed a self assessment which outlined some of the strengths and areas for improvement in her service.

What the service did well

The childminder had created a safe, welcoming and inclusive service which helped children and families to feel respected and secure. The 'home from home' environment contributed to a family and community orientated ethos where everyone was valued as an individual with unique needs, wishes and choices. The childminder was targeted in her approach to remaining up to date with best practice, choosing areas of interest which would impact positively on improving outcomes for children. The nurturing and compassionate interactions we observed supported children to develop and achieve their potential.

What the service could do better

We made no requirements or recommendations as a result of this inspection. We asked the childminder to review personal plans for children at least once in every six months or when there is a significant change in a child's circumstances. In addition, we discussed further best practice guidance which the childminder could use to further enhance her practice and support the review of the service policies and procedures.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were being offered a wide variety of play experiences while in the childminder's care. The childminder told us that she planned mini projects with the children to help them learn more about the natural world and support their learning in school. A recent project on butterflies had offered an exciting and engaging learning opportunity for all of the children in the service, exploring the natural world and understanding the life cycle from caterpillar to butterfly. Children were enthused by this and, in the short period of time some children attended, they were still able to learn something new and develop their understanding in a playful way.

The childminder recognised each child as an individual and described their unique personalities with genuine warmth and compassion. She was able to tell us how she met each child's needs, wishes and choices in her day to day work. When children started in the service, she met with families to understand their own experiences and recognise them as experts in their own child's life and development, including supporting breast feeding within her home. She worked to build a routine with the family which suited each child and helped them to achieve their potential in line with her very good understanding of child development. While we could see that the childminder knew children well and responded to children's needs effectively, this was not yet updated once in every six months. We discussed how the childminder could introduce systems to show how children have progressed in her service more effectively in their personal plans.

Healthy lifestyles were actively promoted in the service. Children were involved in choosing and preparing snacks which were mainly fruit and a healthy carbohydrate such as toast. When children returned from school, they were able to choose their own snacks and those children who attended all day were provided packed lunches from home. The childminder told us that she had recently been working with one of the families in her service to extend the range of food one child ate through baby led weaning and this supported the child to develop positive attitudes towards their diet from the earliest age. In addition to the childminder's work on nutrition, active and physical play were essential and well respected aspects of the service she provided. Children were actively encouraged to play outside every day and regular visits to local parks and wooded areas gave them opportunities to engage in risky and physical play on a regular basis, whatever the weather.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

There was a warm, welcoming and family orientated ethos in the service. The 'home from home' environment the childminder had created was helping children and families to feel included as well as contributing to children's holistic wellbeing. The interactions the childminder had with children supported this ethos, creating a compassionate and respectful environment where everyone was valued as an individual. Families told us that they felt like a part of the family with the childminder and this strong sense of community helped to create an atmosphere where children's self-esteem and confidence was built upon effectively.

The childminder used the local community very well to enhance children's learning and enrich their experiences. They were supported to feel like citizens in their own local area, visiting parks, building relationships with other families and attending community events which supported the growth and prosperity of the area. In addition to this, the visits they made to nature walks and wooded areas were helping children to develop an appreciation of the natural world. The childminder planned these visits in response to children's interests as well as to support their education at school. This joint working with the school helped children to achieve their potential.

The childminder's home was well maintained and safe for children to play and explore freely. Children were given choice over what they played with and where they played, including access to indoor or outdoor play throughout. The shed in the back garden had a wide variety of resources for children to choose from and they were able to engage in a variety of play experiences as a result. Children were encouraged to be independent in their choices, showing respect for their own views and opinions. In addition, younger children benefitted from play resources which allowed them to explore their senses and build sound knowledge of their surroundings at their own pace.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Families felt included and respected in the service and they were very positive about the impact that the childminder had on improving outcomes for their own children as well as their home life. The childminder used a range of ways to communicate with parents, based on their own preferences and in response to their feedback. Families felt well informed about their child's care and we could see that their feedback and social involvement in the service helped to create a family orientated environment where everyone felt included. Information was available for parents to understand the day to day running of the service and these could be requested at any time. We reviewed some of the policies in the service and found that these were not yet up to date with current guidance, for example, the complaints policy did not hold full information about how to contact the Care Inspectorate if the family wished to do so. We asked that the childminder review this policy along with her other policies to ensure these are in line with best practice guidance and legislation. This will ensure that children and families receive clear information about the service they can expect to receive.

The childminder had built a reputation as a professional and friendly service within her local community. Her dedication and commitment to improving outcomes for children as well as her very good understanding of child development supported her to be an effective and competent childminder. She worked with other childminders in the area to share ideas and also had links with other early learning and childcare workers within the local authority which allowed her to keep her practice up to date. Her previous work in other areas of the sector gave her the skills and abilities to understand the curriculum frameworks children were engaging with and this allowed her to support their learning and development effectively.

The childminder was engaged in her own professional development and told us about a range of specialist training she had undertaken to understand particular needs in her service. Her recent research into outdoor play had improved the service she offered and her plans to look into new initiatives such as 'mindfulness' for holistic wellbeing gave a positive impression of her commitment to the future of the service. We suggested that the childminder may also want to spend time looking at other best practice guidance such as 'My Childminding Experience', a resource to share ideas between childminders registered in Scotland, which can be found on the Care Inspectorate Hub (www.hub.careinspectorate.com). In addition, we asked that she consider using the Scottish Government resource, 'My Childminding Pathway', as an additional resource for reflecting on the service she provides. This may give her further insight into the strengths of the service as well as areas for improvement which may not yet be identified.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 – very good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
10 Apr 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
26 Apr 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
1 Apr 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed

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