

Ellen Hunter and Dionne Hunter Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 20 December 2018

Service provided by:
Ellen Hunter and Dionne Hunter a
Partnership

Service provider number:
SP2009010737

Care service number:
CS2009236460

Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

This service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

Ellen Hunter and Dionne Hunter are registered to provide care to a maximum of 10 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of 8 will be under 12, of whom no more than 5 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminders' family.

Ellen Hunter and Dionne Hunter are both providers of the service and will be known as 'the childminders' throughout this report. A named assistant occasionally works within the service.

The service operates from one of the childminder's family home, close to local shops, schools, parks, public transport and other amenities. The areas of the house used for childminding include the living room, kitchen, downstairs playroom, toilet and a large garden to the rear of the house.

The childminders' aims include: 'To ensure minded children are always kept safe and are happy in their environment.'

What we did during our inspection

We completed this report following an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 December 2018 between 09:30 and 12:15. The inspection was carried out by a Care Inspectorate early years inspector.

During this inspection, we gathered evidence from various sources. This included speaking to the childminders and the minded child present. We observed the care given by the childminders and looked at a number of documents including planning information, children's records and the methods in place for evaluating the service. We also looked at the childminding environment and considered the experiences of the children.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). This is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

Views of people using the service

One minded child, aged 18 months, was present during the inspection. The child was very happy, relaxed and confident in the childminders' care. Nurturing interactions demonstrated a strong and caring relationship had formed.

Throughout the inspection, the child was busy playing and laughing as they enjoyed the toys and activities on offer. The child happily showed us what they were playing with, demonstrating their feeling of safety and security in the childminding setting.

We sent six care standards questionnaires to the childminders to give to families who used the service. Four were completed and returned to us before the inspection visit. All four parents strongly agreed they were happy with the quality of care their children received in the service.

Throughout the questionnaires, parents responded positively indicating they and their children experienced a professional and child-led care service. Their comments included:

"I think the children have so much fun. My child is always excited about going and isn't always happy about leaving. It's like a family."

"Dionne and Ellen are fantastic. My son absolutely adores them both and thoroughly enjoys his time with them."

"They are very approachable."

"There are various activities carried out from arts and crafts, painting/colouring, outdoor trips, also helping to tidy up toys, encouraging my child to feel involved in caring about the environment he plays in. My son loves helping set out the table at lunch time, enjoys helping out."

"My son has developed very well, he is much more confident than he was at the beginning."

"I have no concerns about leaving my child in the Hunters' care. The house is always warm, welcoming and friendly. All the children seem very happy and well cared for."

"Dionne and Ellen always have the children's best interests at the heart of their childcare practice."

"The kids are very well looked after, valued and involved within this service."

Self assessment

The childminders submitted a detailed and fully completed self assessment to us before the inspection took place. We were satisfied with the information provided which included areas of strength and areas for further development.

What the service did well

Children were cared for in an extremely caring and nurturing environment where their individual needs and interests remained a high priority. Respectful and inclusive relationships with children and their families promoted open communication and the involvement of all in securing improvements.

What the service could do better

To enhance evaluation and secure future improvements, the childminders could develop their current quality assurance methods.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Throughout the inspection, the child experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from both childminders. The child confidently approached them to give cuddles and show affection. It was evident the child had developed a strong, trusting bond with both childminders and felt safe and secure in their care.

The childminders knew the children exceptionally well; as they fondly spoke about each child they demonstrated a sound knowledge of their individual needs, interests and personalities. Children continued to develop and achieve as the childminders remained in tune with their individual development and skilfully identified how they could support them. Daily experiences and activities were planned well to meet the children's needs and ensure their continued enjoyment in the setting.

Individual care and support plans were maintained to a high standard with the strong involvement of parents. The level of parental inclusion in the service was a major strength. Relationships remained extremely positive ensuring open and effective information sharing about children's needs, development and identified strategies of support. Strong family links led to continuity of care between the home and childminders, further promoting individual development and wellbeing.

Another key strength was the high level of respect and opportunities for children to express their views and remain fully involved in planning and decision-making on matters that affected them. Children were continually empowered to take responsibility and ownership of their time spent in the childminders' care. This promoted children's feeling of being valued, listened to, understood, and a sense of belonging in the service.

Enabling children to develop leadership roles had encouraged inclusion, pride, confidence and independence. For example, typing up minutes of group and planning meetings, becoming 'safety officers', 'eco leaders' and 'happy helpers'.

Children's physical and emotional wellbeing was an important part of the service. Open access to the large garden area and daily walks and visits to play parks gave children choice and opportunities to remain active. Outside play remained interesting and inviting as various toys, games and resources enabled children to develop, learn and discover new physical skills.

Children's strong involvement in planning, buying, preparing and serving healthy snacks and meals encouraged their interest and learning of healthy eating and further promoted positive attitudes and lifestyles.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children were cared for in a nurturing, safe, stimulating, clean and homely environment. Throughout the inspection, the child experienced a caring and relaxed atmosphere as they enjoyed the toys and activities available. This demonstrated a pleasant care setting where children were encouraged to feel well cared for and comfortable.

Individual spaces where children could store their belongings promoted their feeling of being welcomed and included in the household.

Childminding areas within the house were spacious, enabling children to choose where they wanted to play. They could access toys, games and activities with ease, supporting choice and respect for individual interests.

Comfy areas where children could rest, relax, be alone or sit and chat with their friends supported their emotional wellbeing. This also gave opportunities for children to speak confidentially to the childminders if they wanted. Older children had a separate room where they could engage in older games and activities. This showed them the childminders trusted them and respected their need for space and privacy.

A calm and pleasant environment was promoted as the childminders encouraged positive behaviours, friendships and sensitively supported children experiencing distressed behaviours.

Children's learning of being kind and responsible was promoted through positive role modelling, general discussions and helping children to understand the importance of being kind, caring and listening to each other. Children were encouraged to celebrate the achievements of others and work together to resolve disputes, further promoting an inclusive and respectful care setting.

The childminders had a sound knowledge and understanding of the benefits of allowing children to take part in risky play. This promoted children's curiosity, exploration and creativity as they explored and discovered their abilities and boundaries. Children developed risk assessments; further encouraging their learning of keeping themselves and others safe.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 – excellent

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

One named assistant was employed to work in the service. She only worked occasionally, however continued to know the children well as she lived in the childminding premises.

The childminders took time to share relevant information with the assistant that was necessary to continue meeting the needs of the children.

The assistant had attended basic training that would support her in caring for the children when she was present in the service. The childminders passed on their learning from other training events and professional documents.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 – very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Parental participation was actively encouraged through regular and open communication. Children and families' views were valued and had positively impacted on the quality of experiences. Parents told us the childminders listened to them and acted on any requests and suggestions made. This demonstrated a very respectful and inclusive care setting.

The childminders had developed a good understanding of Getting it right for every child and the eight wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included). This was evident in their practice and supported the development and wellbeing of the children in their care.

The childminders had attended some relevant training to support them in their role of supporting children. They remained reflective of their work and the experiences of children and their families. To continue and build on the high quality care and support provided, the childminders should continue to seek training and become familiar with up-to-date and current guidance. This should include refreshing their knowledge of child protection.

We spoke about current guidance including the Loose Parts Play toolkit and My Creative Journey. These documents can be found on The Hub section of our website. Gaining a sound knowledge of these documents, and using their learning in practice, will help the childminders to enhance current experiences and promote children's thinking, exploration and creativity through open-ended play materials.

Current evaluation methods supported improvement, however, these could be enhanced to ensure continual high quality in all aspects of the service. Developing a quality assurance plan will support the childminders to identify strengths, areas for improvements and build realistic and effective action plans.

The childminders' sound understanding of the importance of positive attachments and emotional resilience had led to children's strong feeling of being well cared for and of security in the minding setting. Supporting children individually had promoted their continued achievement and development as they remained happy and settled with a sense of belonging.

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	
13 Jan 2017	Announced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	6 - Excellent
14 Jan 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	6 - Excellent
18 Jan 2013	Announced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
23 Jun 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	Not assessed

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