

Hamilton, Susan

Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 25 October 2019

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2005946010

Care service number:
CS2005092226

Introduction

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

Susan Hamilton, who is referred to as the childminder throughout this report, provides the service.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 8 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 6 children are under the age of 12 years, and of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

From 21 March 2016 to 29 July, each Monday and Friday from 11.20am to 12.40pm only, the care service may be provided to a maximum of 8 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 6 children are under the age of 12 years, and of whom no more than 4 are not yet attending primary school and whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

Any other conditions unique to the service:

Overnight service will not be provided.

Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those stated on the registration certificate.

Children's use of the garden area must be supervised.

The childminder had a set of aims and objective for her service which included:

"To offer a safe, friendly and fun environment where children can experience stimulating and exciting activities to suit their individual needs".

Susan Hamilton operates her childminding service from her family home in central Dunfermline. It is a spacious, modern semi-detached house close to local amenities including the park and school. Children have access to the rooms on the ground floor and the large back garden.

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection. We arrived at the childminder's home at 09.00 on the morning of 25 October 2019. The childminder was not at home. We returned later in the morning and the inspection took place between 11.45 and 13.45. The inspection was carried out by a Care Inspectorate early years locum inspector.

During the inspection process we gathered evidence through discussion with the childminder, observed her interactions with the one child present, considered the range of resources and activities available, inspected the areas of the premises used and relevant sections of records, policies and procedures and other documents. We took account of comments from parents in three Care Inspectorate questionnaires which were returned prior to the inspection. We observed one young child during the inspection. We talked with the child's parent when she arrived to pick up her child.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), 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 the 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. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

Views of people using the service

At the time of the inspection eight children in total used the service. One preschool child was present throughout the inspection. We observed the child was happy, relaxed and engrossed in a wide range of play activities. We talked with the child's parent when she arrived to pick up her child. She told us:

"I trust her (Susan) a lot. Its a cosy house - lots of toys. I've told about and see the changes she has made with the toys. We always chat in the morning and share information. I like the verbal, the photos and I take a picture of the diary and share it."

We received three Care Standard Questionnaires (CSQs) prior to the inspection. All three indicated they strongly agreed with the statement 'Overall, I am happy with the quality of care my child receives at this service.'

They also wrote:

- * We have regular discussions at drop off/pick up and regular WhatsApp and text messages. Susan sends regular emails and newsletters to keep us updated and emails us for updates re medication etc for the children.
- * Daily conversations, diary and agreement on any issues, concerns with child. Regular review of folder and various consent forms.
- * My child eats really well at Susan's and is given choices - she gets healthy, nutritious food.
- * Susan provides them with a variety of healthy after school snacks as well as treats on occasions as appropriate. (One of our children) has a nut allergy and Susan is always careful about that.
- * Susan provides after school and holiday care for my children. She ensures they always have plenty time outdoors - in the garden, local park, play parks, and her own large garden. She always has plenty of activities to keep them entertained.
- * Always fun and educational play available.
- * Susan has a great range of equipment and toys both indoors and outdoors for all ranges of ages. Her house and garden are always very clean and feels very safe. There are external gates for both the garden and driveway.
- * Susan is a fantastic childminder. She shows great care for children and is respectful of their choices. My children have been encouraged to be polite and kind to others. I highly recommend Susan. She is open, friendly, encouraging, kind and is extremely skilled in her childminding duties.
- * Could not be happier with the love, care and support Susan provides for our children. We don't know what we would do without her! She treats our children like one of her own and never fails to amaze us with her energy, happiness and thoughtfulness. She's one in a million.
- * We have a great relationship and we can approach her with anything.
- * Susan provides an absolutely first-class childminding service. She has been our childminder for eight years now and provides after school and holiday care for our two children. She provides a happy, secure and nurturing environment for all the children. She balances the needs of the different age range of children she cares for really well. She is always reviewing and improving her service. We are very impressed that Susan has been undertaking an additional qualification in childcare and giving up her own free time to enhance her knowledge of this important subject.
- * Our children are very happy with Susan and she works very hard to provide such a caring, fun experience for them. We are all very lucky to have her.

Self assessment

The childminder gave detailed information about the service she provided for children and families.

What the service did well

The childminder had very good relationships with parents and an excellent knowledge of children's individual needs. As a result of seeking training to support her professional development she has completed an HNC in Childhood Practice. This has resulted in the introduction of more authentic, natural, open-ended resources which have transformed the quality and depth of children's play.

What the service could do better

The childminder should continue to provide and develop the high quality service she offers to families. She spoke eloquently and enthusiastically about the impact of the changes she has made to her service. We suggested she develop a record of her training, noting how this had influenced her practice and supported the evaluation of her service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
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

We found the childminder was committed to providing positive outcomes for the children in her care. We found her practice to be nurturing, respectful and inclusive, taking into account the wishes and expectations of parents and children.

The childminder gave parents the time they needed to talk about their children and share information. This ensured the childminder was familiar with small changes to children's routines providing very good continuity of care. Sending regular photographs, using WhatsApp and daily diaries added to the ongoing, effective information sharing. Parents could see and had commented on the changes to their children's play, how enthusiastic and engaged their children were with the natural resources and the wide range of play experiences available to them. These experiences stimulated imagination, curiosity, enquiry and cooperation.

The child present during the inspection was busy, happy and confident in the childminder's care. She chose and played with a wide variety of interesting resources.

The childminder used a range of paperwork which formed children's personal plans. This included registration information, contact and medical details, allergies, intolerances and photographs. The childminder recorded significant observations of children's holistic learning and development linked to SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. These celebrated children's successes and identified next steps. For example, working on confidence whilst making sure 'child' feels listened to.

In line with current legislation, children's personal plans were reviewed a minimum of once every six months with parents.

The childminder provided home cooked food and fresh fruit and vegetables ensuring children had a healthy diet. She catered for children's allergies and intolerances. Some parents chose to provide their child's food. The childminder is registered as a food business with the local authority environmental health department and follows their guidance and hygiene procedures to ensure safe food preparation.

The childminder was up-to-date with the latest best practice in regards to Child Protection as was her child protection policy. She spoke openly to parents about her responsibility in keeping children safe from harm and the procedures she would follow should she have any concerns.

Medication was administered safely should the need arise with all appropriate paperwork in place.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

From our observations we saw the childminder provided a safe, hygienic, smoke free, clean and tidy environment for the children.

The childminder was very conscientious and aware of risks to be avoided and of risk taking, involving children in the assessment of what was safe, within their capabilities or would pose a challenge. There were up to date risk assessments in place for the house, garden and outings.

The children had access to the whole ground floor of the home and the childminder reassessed and adjusted the environment, respecting the ages and stages of development of the children. The living room and dining room both contained cosy seating creating a homely environment where children could relax, play and be comfortable. Children could independently access the downstairs toilet. The large hallway contained a cosy library area and ample floor space for setting up the train set or car mat.

Indoor resources were well organised, interestingly displayed and could be easily accessed by the children. The childminder had reassessed the toys and resources she had gathered over the years. She had discussed getting rid of the plastic with the parents and children. Introducing toys and resources made of natural materials has had a very positive impact on children's play.

The home had a large, fully enclosed garden to the rear of the property which gave children daily opportunities for active, energetic play. There were areas of the garden to run, jump, climb, hide and play. As discussed, and recommended at the last inspection, the childminder had familiarised herself with best practice guidance documents to enhance the quality of outdoor play for the children. She had introduced natural, open ended resources and observed how this had stimulated children's imaginations and developed their problem-solving skills and created new interests and challenges. The children were regularly involved in encouraging and supporting wildlife into the garden and took part in national initiatives such as the RSPB big garden birdwatch.

The childminder's registration had a condition stating 'children's use of the garden must be supervised'. Children were involved in risk assessments of the garden. The childminder is considering applying for a variation to this condition.

Parents commented on the use of the local environment, with local parks and library being within easy walking distance of the childminder's home.

There were appropriate systems in place to record any accidents and incidents. The childminder shared written evidence of any accidents or incidents and the action taken, with parents.

We did not observe a nappy change, however, the childminder was able to talk about her nappy changing routine.

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

The childminder was committed to providing a well-managed service.

We found her practice was very respectful and inclusive of the children and families who used the service and all records carefully kept up to date and stored appropriately. As the childminder used technology to share information and store records, she had registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) to ensure she followed correct procedures.

The childminder was a member the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). She received their newsletters which provided her with information about changes to and latest developments in childminding practice. Since studying for an HNC in childhood practice, the childminder has become more knowledgeable regarding legislation and guidelines such as Health and Social Care Standards, the Scottish Government publication Building the Ambition, Loose Parts Play and the wide range of best practice guidance available on the HUB section of the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Government websites.

The childminder was responsible for identifying her own areas for development, whilst considering the needs of the children attending her service. Through discussion during the inspection, we found the childminder was proactive and responsive to her training to support her in developing her service. We could see the impact of her knowledge and experience in the quality of her interactions and relationship with the child present and the observations and way she described the other children in her care. This deeper reflection and evaluation of her service had a significant impact on the quality of service.

We suggested the childminder develop a chronological record of her training, noting how this had influenced her practice.

There had been no concerns or complaints about the service.

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

Recommendation 1

The childminder should take account of current national guidance when reviewing and improving outside play resources. There should be a provision of suitable resources to meet the ages and stages of development of the children which would enhance problem solving skills and develop imaginative play.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 5 - Quality of Experience and Standard 11 - Access to resources

This recommendation was made on 14 November 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder had followed best practice guidance on the provision of resources to enhance problem solving skills and develop imaginative play. The service now provided a wide range of natural, open-ended resources for indoor and outdoor play.

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	
11 Oct 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
9 Dec 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
20 Dec 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
21 Sep 2010	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
28 Jul 2008	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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