

Childminding with Sarah

Child Minding

Inverurie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 October 2022

Service provided by:
Sarah West

Service provider number:
SP2020991412

Service no:
CS2020381471

About the service

Childminding with Sarah provides a childminding service from her property in a residential area of Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder/household.

The service is close to a local primary school, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the kitchen/diner, living room with play area and the downstairs toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 October 2022 between 16.30 and 18.30. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children and three of their family members
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder had developed good relationships with the children and their families.
- The childminder knew the children well and took an interest in their play and hobbies.
- Play was child-led, going with the interests of the children indoors and outside.
- The childminder had fun with the children encouraging and supporting their play.
- The childminder had attended a number of courses and was keen to progress her professional development.
- The childminder should take time to reflect on her professional development and practice in order to improve outcomes for children.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

We saw that positive relationships had been formed between the childminder and the children who had fun together. There was lots of laughter, encouragement and celebrating success. The childminder was kind, nurturing and patient in her approach, resulting in the children feeling relaxed and comfortable in her care.

The childminder knew the children well and talked confidently about their interests, personalities and any sensitivities they may have. She discussed how she had supported these. Parents felt the childminder knew the children well, and showed an interest in their hobbies and interests. Parents spoke about the childminder supporting their children to try new foods which they wouldn't eat at home. They told us their children enjoyed having the opportunity to be outdoors after school by playing in the park and in the garden. This contributed to the children's health and wellbeing.

Snack was observed to be a relaxed and unhurried experience with the children sitting at the table chatting together. The foods on offer were nutritious and allowed the children choice. We directed the childminder to best practice guidance and discussed the benefits of allowing and encouraging the children to help with the preparation of snack; including spreading using cutlery. She recognised the benefits of these approaches which would help children achieve and become more independent and responsible.

The childminder had records in place for all the children in her care which included any medical needs and allergies. These were completed with parents and updated regularly in order to meet the children's needs. The childminder should now develop these further to include information on the children interests, likes and dislikes in order to support wellbeing and progress. We discussed the benefits of having chronologies in place to capture significant events in children's lives. This would highlight that the childminder is aware of potential safeguarding and wellbeing issues arising in the children's lives and any action taken (**see area for improvement 1**).

We discussed the storage of medication with the childminder and how this should be managed in line with best practice guidance. The childminder's medication policy stated how she would safely manage the administration to ensure children's health and wellbeing.

We didn't see any children resting during our visit. The childminder explained that the children were welcome to use the sofas in the lounge if they would like to relax or have some quiet time. This provided opportunities for children to physically rest and unwind.

Parents felt there was a good communication system in place. The use of technology and verbally passing on important information at pick up as well as day to day activities meant the parents felt well informed.

1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were engaged in play. We saw that the play was child-led and children were able to choose from a range of toys and resources on offer. This contributed to the children being confident and happy.

The childminder was responsive to the children's needs. While outside playing with the basketball, the childminder took an interest in the play, encouraging the children, using open questions to add challenge to what they were doing. The childminder extended the play suggesting they took the cones out to dribble the ball around. This gave the children an opportunity to widen their skill set.

The childminder told us she enjoyed playing games with the children to support their learning and have fun. Parents also told us the children enjoyed playing games together. We discussed with the childminder the benefits of adding some 'Loose parts' to the setting to encourage creative and imaginative play. We directed the childminder to best practice guidance around this to support her explore this with the children.

The childminder was able to discuss children's development and how she was supporting them in their learning through the experiences on offer. She spoke about supporting children with literacy and recognised the importance of doing this in a sensitive manner in order to make it a pleasant experience. This took into account children's sensitivities and made the experiences fun.

The childminder recognised the importance of being outside, in particular, to support the children's health and wellbeing. The children often enjoyed time in the adventure playground and woods at school on their way home. Parents told us that their children particularly enjoyed this time and liked playing with the other children. One of the children told us they had been collecting conkers on their walk home, which they were keen to show us. This provided opportunities for the children to develop physically and learn about nature and the world around them.

We discussed using mind maps with the children to plan activities. This would document the children's voice and take into account their interests, making them feel involved and included.

Areas for improvement

1. 1. To ensure each child receives appropriate care and support and their needs are met, the childminder should:

- a) develop and implement personal plans for all children that reflect their current needs and provide clear guidance on how they will meet each child's needs;
- b) review the personal plans every six months, or when there are any significant changes to ensure information recorded is still effectively meeting each child's needs.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "My care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The environment was well maintained and secure. Parents told us that they felt the childminder provided a safe environment for their children to flourish in, and have fun.

The children had the use of the downstairs of the house. This included the lounge with a carpeted play area at one end, dining kitchen and toilet. Children were observed to move around the environment with confidence and had the choice of where to play.

The play area was set up thoughtfully with shelves and easily accessible boxes for the children to choose what they wanted to play with. A variety of resources to support different play experiences and age ranges were on offer. There were sofas for the children to rest and relax on. Patio doors allowed direct access to the outdoors. These all helped create a welcoming feel to the service.

Outdoors the children had access to an enclosed back garden on two levels, with a patio at the bottom and grass area on the top. There was a climbing frame with a slide and swings, a trampoline, basketball hoop and balls, play house, vehicles and table and chairs. During our visit the children had free flow access to garden and most chose to play outdoors. The environment reflected children's interests and they had ample space to move around.

Risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor environments to support the safety and wellbeing of the children. These documented potential risks and measures in place to support a safe environment. Documentation for accidents and incidents were in place although they hadn't been needed to date. The childminder was aware of the need to share these with parents and retain a copy. We discussed keeping a record of these for auditing purposes.

Infection control measures provided a safe environment for children. Although we did not see handwashing during our visit, the childminder discussed their routine. Daily cleaning also took place after the children left. This ensured the risk of infection was minimised. The back door remained open for ventilation.

Children's personal information was stored securely in a locked filing cabinet upstairs, which complied with relevant best practice.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

The aims of the service had been shared with families. We discussed the benefit of gathering the views of the children and families which would capture what was important to all, in order to develop a shared vision, values and aims.

The childminder actively sought the children's ideas to inform activities on offer. However, she had yet to formally gather views from families and children on her service. The childminder understood the importance of this in order to inform planning and the development of the service.

Successes and achievements were shared with families regularly at pick up. Parents commented that they liked this relaxed approach. The childminder should think about how she could support next steps and use this as a starting point for future improvements.

The childminder had no evidence of self evaluation. However, she was able to discuss how she reflected on the quality of the service provided and used these reflections to bring about positive changes to outcomes for children and families. For example: she recognised the importance of daily outdoor play to cater for needs of those children who thrived in the outdoor environment. We discussed with the childminder using best practice guidance, such as the quality framework, in order to reflect more formally on the service (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To support improvement to the service and ensure good outcomes for children, the childminder should ensure quality assurance systems, including the use of quality audit tools, are fully embedded into practice.

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

"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?

4 - Good

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder was kind, warm and responsive in her approach, which enabled the children to feel valued and secure. We found the childminder to be enthusiastic and motivated during our discussions and was keen to make improvements to her service.

The childminder joined in children's play and recognised the importance of making it fun. We observed sensitive and responsive interactions as she responded to a child looking for her praise and encouragement.

The childminder made good use of professional development opportunities and had carried out a number of training courses online through a recognised childcare platform. We discussed reflecting on these courses and the childminder was able to discuss how these had improved outcomes for children in her care.

The childminder had completed training on promoting positive behaviour and it was clear that a mutual respect had developed with the children, as we saw the childminder giving praise and encouragement. The childminder should now consider implementing a means of documenting her training and reflection in order to highlight improvement and further development.

The childminder referred to, and used best practice guidance to shape and inform her practice. She made reference to: 'Setting the Table' guidance and recognised the importance of having fresh water out for the children. This contributed to the children's health and wellbeing.

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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