

Tomassi, Audrey Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
27 January 2023

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2006957621

Service no:
CS2006117071

About the service

Audrey Tomassi is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age 16, of whom a maximum of 6 will be under 12, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is delivered from the childminder's home in the Restalrig area of Edinburgh, which is close to local amenities and transport routes. The downstairs areas of the property are used for childminding and include the open plan kitchen/dining/living room space, playroom, family bathroom and access to the garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an announced inspection with short notice carried out on Monday 23 January between 09:00 and 12:00. 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 intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service
- received comments from two parents by email
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- looked at documentation relating to the care of children and the running of the service.

We gave feedback to the childminder by telephone call on Friday 27 January 2023.

Key messages

Children's wellbeing was promoted by the childminder's warm and responsive interactions.

The childminder needs to ensure that all children have a personal plan to enable the childminder to support children's care, wellbeing and learning needs.

To improve outcomes for children and ensure ongoing development in the service, the childminder should develop quality assurance processes to influence positive change to the outcomes for children and families.

A home from home environment provided children with a safe and comfortable place to play.

The childminder could develop their skill in observing and recording children's development and learning through play. This would support children to progress in learning at a pace that is right for them to reach their full potential.

To further enhance practice to ensure best outcomes for children under the age of three, the childminder should continue to access online development opportunities.

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?	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?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this quality theme as adequate. Whilst we identified strengths, these just outweighed areas to be improved.

QI 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were settled, and had fun when playing with the friendly childminder, who supported their wellbeing. As a result they were happy and confidently relaxed in the childminder's care.

Mealtime was an unhurried and relaxed experience for children. Parents supplied children's meals, which contained healthy food options. This contributed to a healthy balanced diet. The childminder sat and ate with the children, chatting to them and supporting positive relationships. To improve this experience the television should not be on in the background. Television during mealtimes can limit important opportunities for sociable mealtimes, where children can develop good eating habits and communication skills. Similarly, the childminder should consider not having the television on in the background when children are playing. This would encourage higher quality play opportunities for children to develop attention and concentration skills.

At the last two inspections the childminder was asked to improve children's personal plans. This was to ensure that important information was gathered and outlined how children's individual needs would be met. This area for improvement had not progressed, which meant children's overall care was not planned for or monitored using the personal planning approach. As a result we have restated this area for improvement. The childminder should develop their understanding about the purpose of personal plans and introduce plans for all children which are meaningful, working documents. The childminder should use the Care Inspectorate guidance: Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare (Care Inspectorate, 2021) to enhance their knowledge (**see area for improvement 1**).

QI 1.3 Play and learning

The childminder supported children to develop literacy and numeracy skills through singing songs, counting during play, and reading stories. One parent told us, "My child has made so much progress since being at Audrey's. Their talking has come on so much, along with their social skills and confidence."

All children who attended the service were under the age of three years old. The childminder had no plans to introduce older children to the setting. The Care Inspectorate have published a practice note to promote important aspects of high-quality provision for younger children. This guidance note: 'Growing my potential' (Care Inspectorate, 2022) would support the childminder to focus on extending play experiences to focus further on the specific needs of this age group. This would enhance opportunities for children to explore and discover as they grow and develop. For example, the childminder could introduce more open-ended resources such as bags, boxes, and containers to put smaller items in, move and empty out. This would support children's natural curiosity and inquiry. Similarly, there was scope to introduce more sensory play with sand, water, paint, and playdough to allow children to experiment and explore different materials.

Children were enabled to make independent choices about how and where they wanted to play. They freely moved from the garden to the lounge and onto the playroom to choose dolls to put into the pushchairs that they were enjoying in the garden.

Moving forward, the childminder could develop their skills in observing and recording children's development and learning through play. They should use their observations to reflect and plan new learning opportunities to support children's individual learning needs. This would make sure that future play experiences remained sufficiently challenging for young children as they grow and develop. This would enable children to extend their thinking and problem-solving skills **(see area for improvement 2)**.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing needs, children's personal plan information should be developed to ensure that all necessary information is gathered and outlines how their individual care and support needs are to be met. Reviews should take place a minimum of once every six months in consultation with parents.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'My personal 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 ensure that future play experiences remain sufficiently challenging for young children as they grow and develop, the childminder should develop their skills in planning, observing, and recording children's development and learning through play. This should include, but not be limited to, using the best practice guidance: Realising the Ambition: Being me (Education Scotland, 2020) and Growing my potential (Care Inspectorate, 2022). The childminder should use their observations to reflect and plan new learning opportunities in consultation with children and parents.

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).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Q1 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The comfortable and welcoming environment met children's needs and interests. The home was light, clean and spacious with a calm and happy atmosphere. The setting was well maintained and clean which kept children safe and protected.

A secure garden was accessible from the living area. This allowed children to choose to have daily access to outdoors, which was promoted by the childminder who appreciated the benefits for children being outside. As a result, children had opportunities to be energetic and develop their physical confidence.

The designated playroom housed a variety of accessible play resources for children to develop a breadth of skills. This included small world play such as trains, and role play toys such as play kitchen and dolls. Such play resources encouraged children's developing imagination skills.

Trips out in the community, included biweekly visits to the local toddler group to meet up with other childminders and minded children. Such experiences helped children to make new friends, develop social and communication skills and appreciate the benefits of being part of their local community. Children also benefitted from regular walks in the community which parents appreciated. One parent who provided feedback told us, "Audrey takes the kids out for walks nearly every day, teaching them to behave on the road and going to different playparks to develop their gross motor skills."

Measures were in place to reduce the spread of infection. Effective handwashing took place at regular times throughout the day. The childminder was willing to reintroduce separate hand towels for children to dry their hands to enhance practice around preventing and controlling the spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this quality theme as adequate. Whilst we identified strengths, these just outweighed areas to be improved.

QI 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The vision and values of the service reflected the home from home environment. The childminder knew families well and effective communication strengthened these positive relationships. A parent told us, "Audrey is only ever a phone call, message or visit away. I know if I ever had any concerns she would reply anytime."

To enhance opportunities for children, the childminder should be open to guidance offered during inspection. This could allow them to make improvements at a good pace and implement current good practice guidance. For example, advice and guidance around the approach to personal planning should be acted upon. This would ensure that children's health and wellbeing needs were fully supported.

The childminder should consider introducing a self-evaluation approach to support the journey of improvement to enhance children's care, learning and development needs. To support improvement planning, the childminder could access good practice guidance: 'A quality framework for daycare, childminding and school aged children' (Care Inspectorate, 2022) and 'Your Childminding Journey' (Care Inspectorate, 2017). This would help the childminder to consider what is working well to support children, and to identify areas for improvement to provide a high-quality service. This could support children to be given the best opportunities to learn and develop. The childminder should consider recording improvements made to highlight how these enhanced outcomes for children. This would support them to reflect and evaluate the service and respond to changing needs (**see area for improvement 1**).

The childminder told us that they sought the views of children and families using methods such as verbal communication. Parents who provided feedback told us that they were happy with the service provided, telling us, "There is nothing more for me to say other than that Audrey is an amazing childminder and person. She loves every child she has and makes them feel so happy and comfortable at her house." The childminder had previously used questionnaires to seek parent's views. We encouraged them to continue to consider different ways that they could regularly consult with parents and children. This would support a culture of ongoing improvement and help children and parents to feel valued and included.

Moving forward, we advised the childminder to organise systems and keep children's records up to date and reviewed in line with regulation.

This would ensure that children's health, care, and wellbeing needs were appropriately met. Policies and procedures should be easily accessible so they are available to guide the childminder and parents as needed.

Areas for improvement

1. To continue to improve outcomes for children, approaches to improvement planning and self-evaluation should be developed. This should include, but not be limited to, the childminder becoming familiar with best practice guidance: 'A quality framework for daycare, childminding and school aged children' (Care Inspectorate, 2022) and 'Your Childminding Journey' (Care Inspectorate, 2017). The childminder should use this guidance to support the approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. The childminder should then apply this knowledge in practice to improve 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 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 evaluated this quality theme as adequate. Whilst we identified strengths, these just outweighed areas to be improved.

QI 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder's approach was calming and fun, which contributed to a pleasant place for children to be. As a result, children were happy and enjoying their play when in the childminder's care.

The childminder had engaged in some online training courses, which included renewing their first aid training. This helped to keep children safe and to prevent the escalation of illness or injury. To further enhance practice to ensure best outcomes for children, the childminder should continue to access development opportunities. This would support the childminder to stay up to date with best practice, current guidance, and legislation. The childminder was unsure of the steps that they would take to report any child protection or safeguarding issues. Therefore, an initial focus around renewing child protection training would limit potential for the childminder to miss protection concerns (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder would benefit from keeping a learning record reflecting on any training and learning and the impact it can have on their practice. This would support the childminder to identify any gaps in their practice and consider how learning can be implemented to enhance outcomes for children and families. Plans for professional learning should be based on self-evaluation, the needs of the service and the children who attend (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children have consistently positive outcomes, the childminder should demonstrate a commitment to participate in professional learning opportunities. This would improve their practice and outcomes for children. To keep children safe and protected from harm, an initial focus should be on Child Protection training.

This should include, but not be limited to, the childminder familiarising themselves with the range of best practice documents. The childminder should record their learning to support them to reflect and plan how they will improve their practice as a result of their learning.

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, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This is to ensure the childminder's skills and knowledge is consistent with best practice guidance documents; Realising the Ambition (Education Scotland, 2020), Your Childminding Journey (Care Inspectorate, 2017) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Policy and practice materials (Scottish Government, 2022).

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's health and wellbeing needs, children's personal plan information should be developed to ensure that all necessary information is gathered and outlines how their individual care needs are to be met. Reviews should take place a minimum of once every six months in consultation with parents.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) 1.15 which state that 'My personal 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).

This area for improvement was made on 13 September 2019.

Action taken since then

Children's personal plan information had not been developed. This meant that plans did not contain all necessary information required to ensure that children's individual care needs were being met.

This area for improvement has been restated under **QI 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support**.

This area for improvement had not been met.

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
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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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