

MacKay, Maureen Child Minding

Dundee

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 February 2023

Service provided by:
Maureen MacKay

Service provider number:
SP2003909278

Service no:
CS2003014966

About the service

Maureen MacKay provides a childminding service from her home in Dundee. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of five will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those stated on the registration certificate. Overnight care will not be provided. Children must be under the direct supervision of the childminder when using the shared garden.

The service is based in a residential area of Dundee and is close to local parks, schools and shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 February 2023 between 08:30 and 12:00. The inspection was carried out by an 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 three children using the service and three of their family members
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from positive, nurturing relationships with the childminder, who knew them well and was responsive to their needs.
- Children had regular access to the local community exploring walks, playgroups and visits to the library.
- Play was child led and children's choices were respected, valued and acted upon.
- Risk assessments should be developed, reviewed and updated, at least annually, to reflect the provision provided.
- The childminder should develop self-evaluation processes to formalise the continuous improvement of the service using best practice documentation.
- Personal plans should be developed and updated at least every six months with children and their families to ensure information held is current. These should reflect children's ongoing learning, development and next steps.

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?	4 - Good
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?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from the childminder's warm and nurturing approach and were happy in her care. Strong relationships had been built between all children and the childminder. This resulted in children feeling secure, comfortable and happy in the setting. The childminder interacted with children and responded to their needs with a calm approach. The childminder had a good understanding of the importance of developing positive relationships, offering lots of cuddles and caring interactions. One parent commented, 'Her caring, kind and highly nurturing approach is exactly what I think all children deserve in order to grow and develop'. This meant that children felt valued and loved.

The childminder spoke confidently about each child that she cared for and knew them well as individuals. One parent commented, 'She is very relaxed and welcoming and has formed a great bond with my daughter'. Personal plans were in place for all children, however the information held was not consistent and lacked detail to meet children's needs. The childminder should ensure that personal plans contain all of the relevant information required to maintain children's wellbeing. The childminder shared that personal plans are updated every six months, however, we found no evidence to support this. One parent commented that they were unsure about how often their child's personal plan is updated. Personal plans should be updated at a minimum of every six months with children and parents, in line with legislation. The childminder was receptive to this feedback and recognised how these improvements could be made. To support this development, we directed the childminder to the document, 'Guide for providers on personal planning: early learning and childcare'. This would provide opportunities to capture learning, development and next steps. (See area for improvement 1)

Children experienced a sociable snack time together, which provided a valuable time to promote conversations. Nutritious foods were provided for snack, however we reminded the childminder of the importance of providing these at all times of the day. We signposted the childminder to the document, 'Safer food, better business for childminders' to support the planning for snack. This would further support children's health and wellbeing.

Whilst the childminder had not needed to administer medication recently, we reviewed the medication paperwork and suggested this should be updated. This should include recording specific information related to any medication received for administration. We signposted the childminder to the document, 'Management of medication in daycare and childminding services'. This would ensure robust medication procedures were in place.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were leading their own play and freely accessed the resources available to them. Children were busy in their play and were having fun developing their own ideas. One child was observed developing their imagination as they played with the cars, crashing them together and acting out voices for the vehicles. Children shared fun and laughter together as they accessed the tent, exploring their curiosities as they hid and peeked out of the entrance. This meant that children experienced the freedom to explore and play together.

Literacy and numeracy were naturally promoted, as the childminder joined the children in play. The childminder encouraged children to count the toes on the teddy, name animals and make animal noises. The childminder modelled words alongside children in play, repeated their spoken phrases and extended their interests. For example, the childminder helped younger children to engage in safe play when taking the babies for a walk. These experiences supported children to develop their emerging skills and learning.

Children's choices were consistently respected throughout their experiences. The childminder was responsive to children's interests within play and facilitated these well. When playing with the bin lorry, the childminder nurtured children's interest in filling and emptying the bins into the lorry. Children engaged in this play for a sustained period, revisiting the joy of exploring the resources. This meant that children were empowered to lead their own play.

Outings supported children to develop their confidence and social skills. The childminder made use of the community, with photos evidencing visits to play parks and local playgroups. This supported the children to access a different range of toys and play experiences, further developing their social skills.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children's needs, wishes and choices are met, the childminder should further develop personal plans and review these at least every six months with children and parents.

This should include, but is not limited to;

- recording children's routines and health needs
- recording and evaluating children's progress
- identifying next steps in their learning and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care 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).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder had created a relaxed, homely and welcoming atmosphere. Children were happy and comfortable in the environment, as they freely moved between the living room and hallway. Although not currently in use, a dedicated playroom provided children with access to a range of resources to choose from. The childminder shared that resources were rotated on a weekly basis, dependent on children's interests and choice. For example, on exploring the playroom, one child expressed an interest in playing with the bin lorry, which was then brought out to extend their play. The positive environment meant that children had the space, comfort and freedom to explore and develop their own ideas.

Furnishings were comfortable, in a good state of repair and appropriate to the children in attendance. A low level table and chairs gave children independence at mealtimes and during activities. A shared enclosed front and back garden were available for children to play in, however were not currently in use due to their

unsafe nature. To maintain children's social wellbeing, the childminder made good use of visits to playgroups in the community. One parent commented that they felt the childminder could do more outdoor activities. This would ensure children had regular access to fresh air and exercise to support their health and wellbeing.

The front door was kept locked and the kitchen door was mostly kept closed, which maintained children's safety. We discussed the importance of effective hand washing to reduce the risk of the spread of infection. The childminder was effective in their own hand washing, however, children should ensure they wash their hands before snack and after having their nappy changed. Areas used for childminding were well maintained and visually risk assessed, which meant they were safe for children. The childminder should develop risk assessments for inside her home, trips and outings detailing the potential risks and actions taken to minimise these. This would help to ensure the continued safety of the children. (See area for improvement 1)

The childminder carried out monthly fire evacuations with the children. These were carried out on different days to ensure all children were involved. Smoke alarms were regularly checked. This further supported children's safety and security, as they learned what to do in an emergency.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and protected from potential risk of harm. The childminder should develop specific risk assessments for inside the home, the garden and places visited in the community. These should identify any potential risks and actions taken to maintain children's safety. Risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event' (HSCS 4.14).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had developed positive relationships with families and information was shared with them informally at drop off and collection times. Digital messaging was used to effectively communicate with families. One parent commented, 'Maureen is great at keeping in touch. Throughout the day she will send me pictures and messages and this acts as a great record of their time shared together'. We suggested developing formal methods to gather parent and children's views, at least annually, to support the development of the service provided. For example, the childminder could involve children and families in establishing a vision, values and aims which reflect the service provided. This would provide parents and children with meaningful opportunities to be involved in shaping the provision.

There was no improvement plan or action plan in place to promote ongoing developments within the service. We suggested that this could be developed to highlight any areas for improvement and review the impact of any changes introduced. This would promote continuous improvement within the service and provide opportunities to reflect on best practice documentation. We signposted the childminder to 'A quality framework for daycare, childminding and school aged children' to further develop their understanding of

best practice documentation. This would ensure positive outcomes for children and families, as the service provided would reflect on their needs and wishes. (See are for improvement 1)

Whilst there were policies in place, there was a need for the childminder to review and update these in line with best practice guidance and documentation. We suggested changes to the child protection, health and safety and behaviour policies to ensure these reflect current and best practice. A missing child policy should be created to maintain children's safety, detailing procedures the childminder would follow. Effective policies should reflect the service intention and clearly set out the childminder's roles and responsibilities. This would maintain children's wellbeing and safety.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that quality assurance processes impact positively on outcomes for children, they should be developed to help identify and inform improvement planning.

This should include, but is not limited to,

- developing self-evaluation processes
- actively seeking views from families and children
- updating policies and procedures
- reflecting on best practice guidance.

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) and 'I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership (HSCS 4.7).

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder recognised that a kind, caring and consistent approach helped children to feel safe and secure, which led to positive outcomes. Children were happy, confident and motivated whilst in the childminder's care. Children enjoyed spending time with the childminder, as they showed a genuine interest and enthusiasm in their conversation and play. The childminder praised children's achievements, such as when toilet training, which valued children's development and successes. This meant that children felt safe, secure and loved in a nurturing environment.

The childminder was skilled at building positive relationships with families, which created a warm and welcoming ethos. A flexible approach supported families' needs. Knowledge of children's home lives was used to support and soothe children, as the childminder spoke with them about their families. One parent commented positively on the relationship that both they and their child had established with the childminder, 'The care Maureen offers is so loving and homelike, it really is just the best provision'. As a result, the responsive care provided meant that children's changing needs were catered for.

The childminder was committed to their ongoing professional development. They had completed training in key areas, such as, child protection, improving children's learning through play, first aid essentials and the

importance of self-evaluation. We suggested that the childminder record any learning and evaluate the impact on their own practice, including the impact on children. This would provide a meaningful reflection on any learning participated in and ensure it impacted the ongoing development of the service provided.

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

The childminding should extend her recording for individual children to further enhance outcomes and opportunities, this could include:

- a clearer personal plan for all children
- extending systems for noting children's progress and achievements
- linking observations and recording to activity planning to support children's next steps in learning.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 27 April 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had made some improvements to children's personal plan information; however, this was not consistent and not all information held reflected children's needs. The childminder was not recording any formal observations on children's learning or identifying next steps. An area for improvement has been re-established.

Previous area for improvement 2

To help ensure the protection of children it is recommended that the childminder updates her child protection training by attending or undertaking a course relevant to her work with children.

National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 27 April 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had completed Child Protection training. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder needed to extend her knowledge and develop the service through training, self-directed learning and reading to further improve outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early education and childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 5: Quality of Experience, Standard 12: Confidence in Staff and Standard 14: Well-Managed Service

This area for improvement was made on 27 April 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had participated in a range of training. The childminder should continue to keep up to date with training and best practice. We suggested evaluating any training to reflect the childminder's learning and the impact on children in their care. This area for improvement has 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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