

Happy Days Child Minding

Airdrie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 October 2023

Service provided by:
Caroline Walls Trading as Happy Days
Caroline Walls Trading as Happy Days

Service provider number:
SP2010979879

Service no:
CS2010272885

About the service

Happy Days childcare service, is a childminding service which is provided from the childminder's home in a quiet residential area of Airdrie, North Lanarkshire.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at anyone time up to the age of 16 years of age, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

Childminding takes place on the lower floor of the home with children having access to a spacious conservatory, front room and toilet. Children also had access to a large enclosed rear garden. The service is close to parks, shops and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 12 October 2023, between 09:15 and 12:30. 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:

- observed children's play experiences
- observed interactions between the children and the childminder
- spoke with the childminder
- looked around the home and garden
- reviewed service documents and records
- reviewed feedback from five parents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, settled and relaxed in the childminder's care. The childminder was very responsive to children, providing caring interactions.
- Children's play and learning was supported by the childminder's knowledge of child development.
- Children were cared for in a warm, comfortable and homely environment which helped them feel welcome, safe and secure.
- Regular outdoor play supported children's wellbeing and provided opportunities to explore a natural environment.
- The childminder was committed and passionate about her role. She communicated well with families to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- The childminder was experienced, skilled and knowledgeable and showed a commitment to the continual improvement of the service.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The childminder was warm, caring, kind and compassionate. Throughout our visit, we observed the childminder naturally respond to the needs of the children in their care. Kind words, smiles and cuddles made the children feel nurtured, safe and secure. We could see the children had formed trusting relationships with the childminder. Families told us they were extremely happy with the care and support their children received. Parents told us "I feel confident that {child's name} is in the best hands" and "Caroline goes above and beyond to ensure all children in her care feel safe, happy and nurtured."

The childminder had a natural rapport with the children. We observed the childminder playful in their interactions with the children as they respectfully listened to children valuing what they had to say and including them in decision making. For example, making decisions in their play experiences. It was clear the childminder valued children and enjoyed caring for them.

Personal plans supported children's wellbeing and development and helped the childminder to meet children's needs. The childminder knew children well and confidently described their needs, preferences and stages of development. Children's experiences were recorded within online platforms and were shared and updated with parents regularly. These recognised children's achievements and recorded their developmental progress. There was photographic evidence, which was shared with parents, of the wide range of activities that children accessed. These showed the depth and sustained nature of play which some children took part in. One parent told us "I feel Caroline's teaching has made a huge contribution to [child's name] development and interpersonal skills."

Children enjoyed a positive, sociable, unhurried meal experience. Their social development was supported as they chatted and ate with the childminder. They benefitted from healthy and varied choices which included fruit, vegetables and homemade soup.

Although the children attending the service at the time of our inspection did not require medication to be administered, we found the childminder knew their responsibility regarding the safe administration of medication. This meant that if children did require medication, we were satisfied this would be administered safely with appropriate information record systems to support.

Clear policies and procedures were in place to protect children from harm. The childminder understood the role they played in keeping children safe. The childminder had undertaken child protection training and were confident in the procedures they would follow should they have any concerns about a child.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

There was a good balance of children's choice and adult led activities to support children's play and learning. Children were enabled to make the most of their time at the service. This included opportunities to play with a range of resources as well as being able to rest and relax when this was needed.

Children were meaningfully involved in leading their own learning. Toys and materials were easily accessible, helping them make choices about what they wanted to do. This helped ensure that children's play was relevant to them and met their interests. One parent told us "everything is a learning activity through play."

We observed sensitive and supportive interactions, which were appropriate to the age and stage of development and supported children's play and learning. Children were supported to engage in a variety of play experiences that developed their skills in language, literacy and numeracy. For example, children were sequencing wooden numbers in number order.

The childminder took time when speaking to children, adapting her interactions to children's developmental stage. Daily story times and singing times provided opportunities for children to repeat and practice words, which helped children to learn and develop language and listening skills.

The childminder understood the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and promoted this very well in their service. One parent told us the childminder "makes excellent use of both indoors and outdoor spaces."

Children had regular opportunity for outdoor play, helping their physical development as they played energetically or attended toddlers and messy play groups included in their local community. Trips within the wider community supported children to play and learn in new environments whilst having fun. This included visits to woodlands to explore their natural environment.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a safe, welcoming and homely environment contributing to children feeling happy and secure. The environment had been organised to allow children to move around freely with space to play on the floor. A large conservatory offered children space to have meals and snacks or engage in play activities suitable for sitting at a table. One parent told us "Caroline's setting is absolutely amazing, her home is immaculate and she has great outdoor play facilities."

Children had access to a range of age-appropriate toys and games. Toys were stored where children could access them independently. This contributed positively to children's confidence and independence. The childminder had started to introduce natural materials to promote children's curiosity, creativity and imagination. They should continue to develop opportunities for loose parts play, both indoors and outdoors, to further enhance opportunities for children to explore their natural creativity and curiosity. We signposted the childminder to the 'Loose Parts Toolkit.'

Children benefitted from an enclosed, well resourced garden. The childminder told us that children enjoyed being outdoors in all weathers, thus supporting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They had access to climbing equipment, balance bikes and a well resourced mud kitchen. Parents described the garden as "spacious and well laid out with a range of toys for children to explore."

We found risk assessments in place which supported the safety, health and wellbeing of children, they included indoor, outdoor and wider community assessments. The childminder had robust infection prevention and control measures in place which provided high levels of safety for children, regular handwashing and daily cleaning of toys and surfaces supported the wellbeing and safety of children. This followed best practice guidance.

The childminder was clear in management of the service knowing which records must be kept and was registered with the Information Commissioners Office. This ensured children records were kept and safely stored. Children's information was stored to maintain confidentiality, respectful of their privacy.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder was committed and dedicated to providing a high-quality service. The childminder had developed positive relationships with everyone within the service, ensuring families felt included.

To support the ongoing development of the service, we found the opinions of children and families were regularly sought, daily chats, an app and feedback questionnaires were meaningfully used to make them feel they had a voice and belong. Families told us they were very happy with the service and would not change anything. One parent said, "Caroline is fantastic at what she does. I can't recommend her highly enough."

Successes and achievements were communicated with families, strengthening partnership working that met children's needs. The childminder used a variety of ways to communicate with families. For example, text messages, private Facebook page and chats during drop off and pick ups. Families were happy with information received about their child's experiences and their learning progress. This helped ensure children's needs were met through the sharing of valuable information.

We found detailed and meaningful policies that were well-presented, clear and relevant. The policies detailed how the childminder operated their service and had been shared with families. Sharing this information helps to establish clear expectations of the service provision and promotes transparency. Policies included, complaints, safety and child protection. We found these were in line with current guidance and regularly reviewed and updated.

The childminder was aware of "A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school aged children." They should continue to further embed this document within their evaluation process.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4:1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder's approach to providing care, support and nurture, was caring and responsive to each child's needs. We observed the childminder interact and engage lovingly with the children in her care, offering cuddles, supporting their play, having fun and responding to their wishes.

The childminder's warmth, kindness and compassion enabled children and their parents to feel valued. Strong connections with families ensured individual support that made children feel loved. Parents told us, "Caroline is professional, caring and goes above and beyond" and "the care and compassion that Caroline puts in with children, I know they are safe and cared for."

Children were supported in their play and development of social skills and showed enthusiasm when the childminder joined in with their play. The childminder recognised and valued the importance of play and this was evident through their active play opportunities. Recognising the importance of fun in children's play enables their learning to be taken forward in a way that is meaningful to them.

We found the childminder had a very clear understanding of how children develop and learn. The childminder used current professional guidance, research and training which linked directly to the needs of individual children in her care. We observed the childminder referenced the Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition to support children's play and learning.

The childminder regularly liaised with others in the sector. For example, the local nursery and a network of childminders. This provided opportunities to gain ideas, develop knowledge and reflect on practice, contributing to continuous improvements for children.

Training and development enabled the childminder to keep up-to-date with their practice. We found the childminder participated in core assurance training including first aid, safeguarding and child protection, demonstrating her commitment to children's safety, wellbeing and security. We have suggested that the childminder should now record post training evaluations to include a reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities have supported them to develop their practice, support children's wellbeing or further outcomes for children.

The childminder had a very good understanding of her professional responsibilities. They worked within their conditions of registration and ensured children's safety by gaining insurance, keeping registers, and maintaining the premises to a high standard.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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