

# Childminding with Amy Child Minding

Buckie

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
25 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Amy Simmers

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023000034

**Service no:**  
CS2023000043

## About the service

Childminding with Amy is registered to provide a childminding service to a maximum of four children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family.

The childminder's home is in a rural location near Buckie in Moray. Children are cared for in a playroom within the home and have access to a large, fully enclosed garden. They have access to the family kitchen, the bathroom and the living room.

Two children were present at the time of the inspection.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 November 2025 between 09:20 and 14:20. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received one response to our request for feedback from families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

## Key messages

- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children experienced very warm and caring interactions from the childminder.
- The setting made good use of the outdoors, at their home and in the wider community.
- The childminder should now take time to evaluate improvements, documenting the impact of these on 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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

## Leadership 4 - Good

### Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The ethos of the setting reflected the childminder's values by providing a safe, nurturing, and inspiring home-from-home environment for children and families. The childminder was in the process of updating these values as part of their identified improvements to ensure they accurately represented the setting. To support this process, questionnaires had been sent to families to gather their views. This inclusive approach ensured that everyone was involved and felt valued, reinforcing a sense of partnership between the childminder and families.

Self-evaluation was becoming more purposeful and supported the childminder in delivering high-quality care and learning tailored to the individual needs of children and their families. Feedback was gathered mainly through informal conversations with parents, which the childminder felt were the most meaningful. In addition, a section had been added to the Minding Kids App to allow parents to provide feedback. Responses received were positive and did not include suggestions for improvement. We discussed further ways the childminder could use the app to gather feedback that would inform ongoing improvements. The childminder was developing a reflective approach to self-evaluation and demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement. By exploring additional methods to gather feedback, they will be well placed to strengthen parental involvement and enhance the quality of care and learning.

Parents told us they were meaningfully involved in developing the setting. One parent shared: "[The childminder] is always open to have discussions about ideas I may have but also asks for advice." This open and collaborative approach helped parents feel valued and respected as partners in their child's care and learning.

The childminder's quality assurance processes supported continuous improvement. They engaged well with best practice guidance, including the new quality framework, to self-evaluate and enhance their service. For example, through reflection, the childminder identified the need to update their child protection and infection prevention and control training to maintain children's safety. Plans were already in place to complete this training. This proactive approach demonstrated a strong commitment to improvement and support positive outcomes for children in the childminder's care. The childminder was beginning to use effective quality assurance processes and reflective practice to identify areas for development, ensuring the service remained safe, responsive, and aligned with best practice guidance.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Play, learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The childminder had recently completed a relevant qualification and expressed a strong interest in theoretical aspects of child development, particularly language development. This interest led them to undertake Bookbug training, which they reported had further enhanced their knowledge and understanding. The childminder was actively using this training to support children's language development. For example, they highlighted that sharing stories helped to develop children's language and social skills, and believed that reading together also strengthened bonds between the childminder and the children. The childminder demonstrated a proactive approach to professional development and effectively applied new learning into practice, which was positively impacting children's language and social development.

Young children were engaged in a variety of play experiences and enjoyed extended periods of uninterrupted play. Given their age and stage of development, play was often fleeting, but children had opportunities to lead their play, explore, and be curious. The childminder's skilled interactions supported and effectively extended play. For example, one child explored coloured and noisy wooden shapes, shaking them the childminder commented, "It's a noisy one," before picking up a coloured shape and being encouraged to look through it. This interaction supported curiosity and understanding of cause and effect. Another child showed interest in tweezers, the childminder asked, "What does that do?" They modelled their use and invited the child to try, setting out bowls and loose parts, encouraging exploration. The child copied the childminder, using tweezers to lift pom-poms and bottle tops, commenting on colours and receiving praise. The child enjoyed manipulating the tweezers, comparing them to a lobster, which promoted language, problem-solving, and fine motor skills. The childminder provided a rich, responsive play environment and used skilled, intentional interactions to extend learning, supporting children's curiosity, language development, and fine motor skills.

Parents told us that their children always benefited from a range of opportunities and fun experiences that met their individual needs and supported their development, including outdoor play. One parent said: "Since my [child] has started, [they have] had an opportunity to play outdoors each session. These include in the childminder's garden with the outdoor toys provided, at local groups such as Waddle Toddle which is an outdoor-based group my [child] regularly attends with the childminder, and at local outdoor gardens such as the natural play garden at Gordon Castle." During the inspection, children did not spend time outdoors; however, we saw photographs of children engaging in outdoor experiences and parents confirmed these opportunities. This supported evidence that outdoor play was a regular part of the childminder's practice.

The childminder evaluated children's development, progress, and achievements using a floor book and regular observations. This approach enabled them to gather meaningful information about each child's learning journey and use it to inform planning and share updates with parents. The floor book incorporated wellbeing indicators using character references and promoted these through experiences. It included both self-reflection and photographs of activities and supporting documentation of children's experiences and the childminder's own self-evaluation. The childminder explained they were continuing to explore how best to use this tool. In addition, the childminder used developmental overviews provided by the local authority to track progress and increasingly utilised the Mind Kids App to share experiences and learning with parents. We viewed the app, which contained photos alongside captions and observations. We discussed the benefits of keeping observations in one place to monitor progression and support parents in working towards goals and next steps. This system allowed milestones and significant achievements to be recorded effectively.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

### Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children benefited from consistent, warm and responsive care that supported their wellbeing. The childminder offered comfort during times of need, such as when children were teething or startled. Children regularly sought reassurance through cuddles, sitting on the childminder's knee or wrapping their arms around them, reflecting a strong and trusting bond. The childminder was highly attuned to non-verbal cues and responded promptly to support care and play. For example, when a child appeared unsure about a basket of toys, the childminder encouraged exploration, helping the child engage confidently. These nurturing interactions promoted feelings of safety, respect, and emotional security.

Consistent care routines, including personal care and sleep times, provided children with a strong sense of safety and security. The childminder approached these routines in a respectful and nurturing manner, using them as opportunities to strengthen relationships and build trust. Close collaboration with families ensured continuity of care; for example, when a child was teething, the childminder adapted routines to offer additional comfort and support. These practices promoted emotional security and stability, contributing positively to children's health and wellbeing.

Daily routines, such as mealtimes, were calm and unhurried, with the childminder sitting alongside the children. This approach ensured close supervision while creating opportunities for social interaction and language development. For example, a conversation about a penguin toy led to children discussing putting up their Christmas trees, demonstrating how mealtimes supported communication and shared experiences. The childminder was attentive to children's preferences and emotional needs, adapting food choices to provide comfort and support. We discussed ways to further encourage independence during mealtimes as children grow and develop, such as involving them in serving food or making simple choices. This would help develop their understanding of nutrition and build important life skills for the future.

Effective personal planning was in place for all children and was regularly updated in partnership with parents. To strengthen practice, updates should be presented clearly to ensure shared understanding. Plans had recently been enhanced by incorporating wellbeing indicators, enabling the childminder to gather more meaningful information about each child's development and needs. Through play experiences, the childminder promoted the wellbeing characters supporting children's understanding of their health and wellbeing.

Parents were welcomed into the setting daily, creating opportunities for meaningful conversations and supporting children's settling routines. For example, children often wanted to share something with their parents or seek comfort during transitions, which strengthened relationships and communication. The childminder also used the Minding Kids App to provide daily updates on meals, sleep, and activities. Initially introduced as a trial earlier in the year, feedback from parents was positive, and the system has been continued. This approach was working well to promote effective, consistent communication between the childminder and families. Parents spoke positively about their relationship with the childminder and been made to feel welcome. One parent said, "[The childminder] has created a great relationship with myself through several meetings prior to my [child] starting creating an easy settling in process. [The childminder] asked questions and got to know me and this has created a great communication between us."

## 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 continue to enhance outcomes for children and support a culture of continuous improvement, self-evaluation should be further developed. Self-evaluation processes should identify strengths and areas for further improvement, and should meaningfully involve children and families.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 18 March 2025.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had been using the new quality framework to support self-evaluation, which helped them identify both strengths and areas for improvement. This reflective process led to the creation of an improvement plan, and developments were already having a positive impact on outcomes for children.

**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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).



## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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