



My Childminding Experience

Sharing good practice in how childminding services can benefit children

Foreword



I am delighted to introduce My Childminding Experience, which shares and celebrates examples of how children of all ages are benefiting from being cared for by childminders across Scotland. Childminders provide unique, homely and family-based experiences for children that are different from group-based services. With the current expansion of funded early learning and childcare, more children will be experiencing registered services for longer periods. The Care Inspectorate's Review of Scotland's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion encouraged local

authorities to include childminders as well as playgroups and nurseries when planning and commissioning high quality and flexible services for children and their parents. We want this resource to highlight these distinctive benefits to parents and local authorities making choices about the most suitable type of service for children.

My Childminding Experience is part of a suite of resources that the Care Inspectorate is developing to promote innovation and improvement across all early learning and childcare provision. For example, last year My World Outdoors focused on improving children's experiences of outdoor play and later this year Our Creative Journey will focus on how children benefit from expressive arts. By highlighting good practice, we want to be a positive catalyst for change and improve the impact that all services have on outcomes for children. For these resources, we are developing a different collaborative model, style and tone. We are increasingly collaborating with external partners and I am pleased that the Scottish Childminding Association has co-produced this resource with us.

We also want to capture the lived experience of children and illustrate the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators in a practical and helpful way. Rather than just sharing good practice in our own words, we are involving practitioners, children and parents to tell their own stories. This approach is aligned with Scotland's new Health and Social Care Standards, which set out what human rights and wellbeing look like from the perspective of an individual experiencing care and support.

Karen Reid

Karen Reid

Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate



Working in the childminding sector is one of the most inspiring and rewarding jobs and I am always proud to champion childminders as part of our professional childcare workforce in Scotland. Childminders are truly skilled at providing the best start in life for their minded children.

As Chief Executive of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), I am privileged to be part of the professional childminding sector in Scotland. Over many years, SCMA has steered the development of the sector and during this time we have been instrumental in guiding its evolution to a respected career choice for those entering the early learning and childcare sector.

The aim of My Childminding Experience is ultimately to raise the profile of childminding in Scotland – to childminders, parents and local authorities. As you will read in this publication, childminders consistently provide high quality services and by highlighting specific examples of good practice we showcase the quality of childminding services on offer throughout Scotland.

Most children will experience early learning and childcare before they start school. SCMA champions a 'blended childcare' approach to early learning and childcare to meet the needs of families and ensure the best start in life for children. As advocates of blended childcare, childminders offer their minded children different experiences, while always being a consistent presence in their daily life and making sure children feel secure and nurtured. This is of vital importance, not least because children's experiences in their first few years of life have a major impact on their development.

As the only organisation dedicated to supporting childminding in Scotland, it has been a delight to co-produce My Childminding Experience with the Care Inspectorate. This excellent publication highlights some of the very best work of childminders, combining personal stories, theory and examples of best practice. I hope you enjoy reading this resource and wherever possible please share its content, so that together we raise awareness of the work of childminders who continue to make a difference to the wellbeing and development of Scotland's children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MAGGIE SIMPSON". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Maggie Simpson

Chief Executive, Scottish Childminding Association

Reflection on my own childminding experiences: a personal story



There have been two childminders in my life – Amanda and Maggie – and my admiration and gratitude to both is boundless. As a 38-year-old ex-headteacher and educational writer, I soon discovered that childcare was a demanding full-time job and unfortunately (despite overwhelming love for my one-year-old daughter, Beth) I wasn't very good at it. Amanda, however, was a 'natural mum' who'd chosen childminding as a career because she too had a one-year-old daughter.

She took over care of Beth for several hours a day, meaning that I could return to work part-time. Beth had the benefit of a part-time 'sister' and I became a much better mother, just by watching them all together and copying Amanda's childcare techniques.

When Beth was five, Amanda moved out of our area and Maggie, another brilliant childminder, took her place. For the next 10 years, she collected Beth from school each day and acted as surrogate mum until I finished work. Beth adored her and she became a close family friend, always there with advice and support – not least when work took me away from home and Beth needed somewhere to stay for the night. That work eventually led me into research about child development, which confirmed my belief that childminders are increasingly important in a world where most parents work full-time. Their contribution to the health and happiness of many, many children is incalculable and we should value it.

Sue Palmer

Author of many books on child development in the modern world

We are very grateful to the children, parents, childminders and support workers who have shared their stories. We are particularly grateful to the parents who have agreed to be open about their experiences and challenges, and the positive impact childminding has had on them and their children. In some cases, we have changed or not used people's names to protect their privacy.

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1. Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates and inspects all of Scotland's early learning and childcare registered services individually. Our Early Learning and Childcare Statistics 2016 publication reports that on 31 December 2016 there were 5,669 childminders registered in Scotland, which compares to 3,733 children's daycare registrations.¹ Childminders make up 60% of all early learning and childcare registrations. They also make up the largest number of registered services compared with any other type of registered care service including adult care. Childminders care for an estimated 33,440 children, which compares to 145,440 children cared for by nurseries and 218,790 children by all children's daycare. This means that childminders look after 15% of all children attending early learning and childcare.

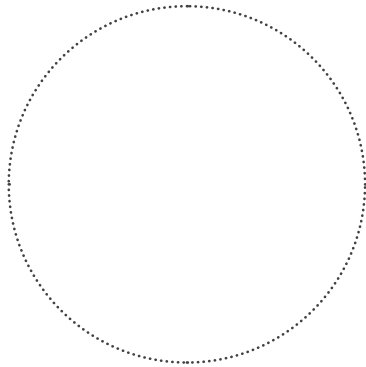
We also find that childminders generally provide high quality services. As with all other types of care service, childminders are inspected against a framework using a six-point scale with grades from 1 for 'unsatisfactory' to 6 for 'outstanding'. Childminders are given grades for the quality of 'care and support', 'environment' and for 'management and leadership', with a grade for 'staffing' if an assistant is employed. Early learning and childcare (ELC) services generally achieve high grades. Although the different kinds of early learning and childcare provide different services with varying expectations, many childminders provide high-performing services: 48.7% of childminders were found to have grades of 'very good' and 'excellent' for all themes in 2016/17.

As the scrutiny and improvement body for all early learning and childcare, the Care Inspectorate has a unique and comprehensive oversight of the range of experiences available to children from registered services. We know a lot about the quality of childminding services from our regulatory activity and we want to share this knowledge in a way that contributes to improving outcomes for children. During the 2016/17 inspection year for example, we carried out 1,876 inspections of childminders, as well as supporting 536 childminding registrations and 1,408 variations to conditions of registration, and carrying out 132 complaint investigations. By highlighting specific examples of good practice that we find from all our regulatory visits, we can help to improve the general quality of childminding. This reflects the Care Inspectorate's statutory responsibility as an improvement as well as a scrutiny and assurance body. Rather than just ensure that all services comply with a minimum standard, we want to work in genuine partnership with the early learning and childcare sector to help services aspire to be the best they can be and have the greatest impact on children's lives.

This resource is intended to be both practical and inspiring for the greatest number of people and we have therefore chosen examples from across Scotland, including rural as well as urban settings and deprived as well as affluent communities. We have also tried to reflect the wide range of ages of the children being cared for, from babies through to children of secondary school age, and the different needs and backgrounds of children cared for by childminders.

My Childminding Experience develops the same model as the Care Inspectorate's recent resource, My World Outdoors, which shares and celebrates the benefits of outdoor play for children.² Rather than

issuing technical guidance, we have worked alongside SCMA to enable childminding practitioners to tell their own stories of how they are creating a positive impact on children's lives. For this practice resource, we have developed the model further by focusing more on individual children and involving them and their families directly in narrating their experiences. In developing the practice examples, the extent to which individual children and parents were identified and named was carefully considered and formal permission obtained in each case. Like My World Outdoors, My Childminding Experience is published as a printable document, but also a live resource with practice examples regularly updated on the Care Inspectorate's website in the Hub section.



2. Personal stories

Following the model of sharing personal stories, Care Inspectorate staff offer their own experiences of childminding.

How times change

Many moons ago, I left the private childcare business I had started up and joined Lothian Regional Council as an Early Years Registration and Inspection Officer. Following a lengthy induction period in the office, I finally ventured out to inspect services on my own. As a young rookie and the first male early years inspector, I felt nervous and anxious to do a good job. However I was not only suited and booted, I was also armed with a clipboard and a long checklist to be completed. One of the first services I inspected was a very experienced childminder who was looking after three children aged under five years. The father of one of the children present had been looked after by the same childminder when he was a child.

I began to feel a bit calmer once I had started going through my checklist of records, policies and health and safety measures. I was quite relieved when I spotted a socket cover missing. Registered services were expected to introduce written complaints procedures at that time, so I felt positively pleased with myself when I was able to make a formal requirement for this childminder to produce one. I was a bit thrown when the childminder said: "You just tell me the minimum I need to write down to pass the inspection, Mr Mathias, and I can get on with the children."

By the time I left that childminder's house, I had received a thorough education in childcare practice and how childminding can make a real difference to the lives of children and their parents. Observing the quality of the relationships, the strength of the children's bond with the childminder, the affection between the children, the way that the childminder quietly encouraged the children's curiosity and interests through play, the childminder's informal chat with parents that contained so much respectful advice, taught me more in a couple of hours than any amount of office-based induction. The children and parents lucky enough to have found this childminder were clearly benefiting on several different levels from the wealth of knowledge and experience she had to impart. She was also a pillar of the local childcare network and families using her service over the years were able to gain a lot from this. But the main lesson I learned from this experience was that my checklist did not reflect the depth and quality of what I was assessing and that there was a lot more to running a good service than paperwork or health and safety.

Henry Mathias

The Care Inspectorate's Strategic Lead for the Health and Social Care Standards

A current inspector's story

During my career in and around childcare I have had many experiences with childminding. When my own son was very young I decided that the right thing for us as a family was for me to stay at home and provide a childminding service. I wanted to be able to provide a caring and fun environment for the children I cared for. Of course it had its challenges and sometimes it was difficult to manage the needs of children of different ages. Occasionally it could feel isolating, but this was always small in comparison to the fun, laughter and relationships I had with the children and their parents. My days were filled with music, stories, walks, paint, baking and days out with three children enthusiastic to try new things and have fun. In between there were nappies, potty training, meal and snack preparation and lots of cuddles. The days went so quickly. The children grew up and moved on. So, it was also time for me to move on and this now meant I had to find suitable childcare for my child.

Understanding the needs of my son, I decided a childminder was best for him. I chose someone who was able to provide what I could have if I was at home. My childminder was local, and this meant my son could access the clubs and friends he would have done if was at home. This was an important aspect for me and I was really happy to find a childminder who not only could offer this but was just as keen for my son to experience these opportunities. He had great fun at this childminder and, as some may experience, often did not want to come home. I was reassured as I knew my child was being well cared for and having a fun time in a safe and loving environment.

Now, as an inspector I use my experiences to inform how I carry out inspections. People who go into a childminding career want to do a good job. As inspectors we want to support good practice and work with childminders to make experiences for children and their family positive with good outcomes. I understand that turning up unannounced for an inspection can be a shock, but we want to see the service as it runs normally. I can then work with services to maintain and develop good practice or work with them to improve practice. I enjoy the opportunity to travel the country seeing the good work of childminders. It is especially encouraging to see childminders are part of providing children with high quality early learning and childcare experiences out there.

Linda Wood
Senior Inspector

3. Wellbeing indicators

Early learning and childcare organisations and practitioners have told us that using the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicator headings of Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included is relevant and useful. This matches developments in how inspections are carried out, with childminders now being routinely inspected against the wellbeing indicators. Traditionally childminders and other registered care services were inspected mainly through measuring compliance with tangible inputs such as records, policies and health and safety. The Care Inspectorate has been changing the inspection model by assessing the quality of children's experiences and the impact of the service on children's outcomes. Describing children's experiences through the GIRFEC lens is also aligned with the outcome-based model of Scotland's new Health and Social Care Standards.³

The practice examples featured here illustrate how individual children's experiences with childminders have specifically helped them to be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. Each story has been chosen because it primarily illustrates one of the wellbeing indicators. At the same time we recognise the indicators should not be viewed in isolation and a holistic approach to wellbeing should be developed, so we have shown when more than one indicator is illustrated.

We also set out below how the wellbeing indicators could generally be met for all children cared for by childminders.



Subject to the same formal regulation as other registered services, childminders are individually registered and inspected. Each childminder is inspected on a current frequency of up to four years, with more frequent inspections if there are any concerns about the standard of care being provided. In between inspections, the Care Inspectorate continues to have an oversight of each childminder and can intervene or arrange an additional inspection if we receive a complaint, notification or any other intelligence that causes concern.

At a childminder's, a child generally experiences care in a smaller group than at a nursery, playgroup or out of school care. This can affect how secure a child feels, which can be particularly important for some children. While not necessarily meaning that a child always receives more attention in the care of a childminder, there is greater potential for this.

Healthy



Childminders are usually responsible for a small group of children and this can allow flexibility and a different range of activities on offer. For example, it may be easy to organise healthy activities such as exploring the natural environment and swimming with a small group than a large group.

Achieving



Children usually experience less formal care at a childminder's, but the practice of helping children to achieve agreed developmental and learning outcomes should be no less planned, structured or effective relative to a nursery or playgroup. Children who attend a childminder also have a personal plan for setting out and monitoring their developmental and learning goals, as required in other settings. It would also be wrong to assume that children at childminders are cared for by people with fewer qualifications and less knowledge than at daycare. Many childminders have considerable knowledge and experience working with children and many are also qualified. In addition, the Care Inspectorate expects childminders to meet relevant Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and we have produced *Your Childminding Journey: a learning and development resource*, on behalf of Scottish Government.⁴

Many of the experiences featured here in *My Childminding Experience* highlight how childminding can help children to develop all-round resilience and confidence in themselves, as well as specific skills. Young children who need help to transition confidently from life at home to starting at a formal nursery or school class can particularly benefit from being placed with a childminder.

Nurtured



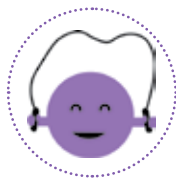
Evidence from inspections shows that one of the main strengths of childminding is the quality of the relationship that develops between the adult and the child. Attending a 'home from home' and receiving relatively high levels of attention from a consistent adult is conducive to meeting children's needs for security and warm, loving care. The Care Inspectorate grades services against four quality themes: care and support, management and leadership, environment and staffing. For all early learning and childcare services, the quality of care and support was the highest graded theme of the four quality themes in 2016. The quality of care and support provided by childminders was found to be high (65.9% of childminders graded very good or excellent for quality of care and support). Professor Iram Siraj's 2015 independent review of the early learning and childcare workforce for

Scottish Government endorses this view and describes childminding as often providing “a highly nurturing experience with a strong bond developing between childminder and child”.⁵

The Siraj review gives reasons why childminding is the preferred choice for many parents, including the small, home-like setting, a desire to have the same person look after their child for the whole day, an appreciation of the opportunity provided for children to interact with those of different ages, a perception that childminding is better suited to their child’s temperament and the low adult to child ratios, with one-to-one care for children under the age of one year in Scotland.

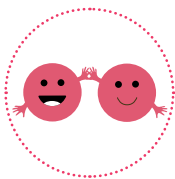
This review also cites Stephen and Minty’s research highlighting the benefits of community childminding, such as one-to-one attention and “a less formal and more nurturing relationship between childminder and child”. We have come a long way from the 1980s when it was common to hear the view that parents returning to work preferred to use nurseries because they did not want their child becoming too attached to a childminder.

Active



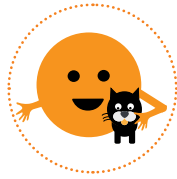
A different range of activities and play opportunities can be possible with a childminder compared to larger groups of children. For example, a greater variety and frequency of trips and outings are possible with a small number of children and the opportunity for children to access a more adventurous play experience.

Respected



Experiencing highly personalised care within a relatively small group is conducive to children’s individual personalities being recognised and respected in both childminding and daycare of children settings. Childminders have a particular opportunity to create loving and lasting relationships with the children in their care, which can help children develop a strong sense of self and individuality. Similarly, childminding creates good opportunities for children to be closely involved in planning daily routines and organising activities. Having a mixed age group can also build children’s confidence and encourage empathy in the older children as they support the younger children to develop social skills.

Responsible



Being looked after within a small group, frequently with a mixed age range, lends itself to children learning to play and share with others. Helping children to be independent and involved in agreeing and managing boundaries and risks can be more manageable in a small group and there are often opportunities to learn from older children. Similarly, children at a childminder can have opportunities to take part in everyday tasks to help in running the service and this can help them become more responsible for themselves and others.

Childminders are also often uniquely embedded in the local community and can play a significant role helping children participate in the community and become responsible citizens.

Included



Childminders can help both children and their parents/carers to be included in the community and the local childcare network and they can ease transitions with the local toddler group, playgroup, nursery or school. Childminders can provide significant support and advice to parents. This is relevant for all families, but particularly ones that are isolated or excluded.

Through community childminding schemes, many local authorities have traditionally recognised the value of childminders providing supportive, nurturing environments for children, particularly where such support may be missing elsewhere in a child's life.

4. A recognised professional

Childminding has become a recognised profession rather than perceived as just 'minding' children. Now childminding quite rightly sits alongside other types of early learning and childcare and brings its own distinctive strengths as a specialised service for children and their parents. With practitioners working from home normally on their own and with no outward sign that registered care is being provided, childminding can have a relatively low profile and can go unrecognised and unsung. This resource hopes to raise the profile and status of this often hidden army of sole professionals and to share, celebrate and boost their major contribution to the lives of children and families in Scotland.

Regulation and inspection continues to play an important role in helping to professionalise childminding and improve the quality of care provided by childminders. The Siraj review made recommendations about improving the learning pathway for childminders including giving improved access to qualifications. This has led to the Scottish Government commissioning the development of quality statements for childminding, which covers their journey from pre-registration through their career in childminding. The Care Inspectorate was funded to develop *Your Childminding Journey*: a learning and development resource, which is aimed at establishing evidence of professional learning and supporting the training and professional development of childminders.

Childminding can also be an empowering and fulfilling form of self-employment. Childminders are autonomous practitioners with the ability to be flexible, innovative and creative in how they work with children. They can be part of a professional network supported by a strong membership organisation and local support groups. Childminding can also provide stable and sustainable employment in its own right, as well as supporting the economy by enabling parents to work.

5. A flexible friend

Childminders provide an accessible and flexible service for parents. They typically have longer opening hours than many nurseries and other kinds of service and are available during school holidays. So, for many working parents childminding is often the most realistic option. Childminding makes a significant contribution to parents having choice and flexibility around early learning and childcare. Most childminders can also care for a wide age range of children, including babies and children up to the age of 16 years. For many parents living in remote rural areas, whatever their childcare needs, childminding is the only practical choice available.

6. Planning and commissioning

My Childminding Experience is primarily aimed at childminding practitioners, but it has also been written for other professionals involved in early learning and childcare. For example, we hope it will be used by people completing and delivering qualifications and training, as well as the wide range of organisations supporting children and families. This resource has also been specifically written for local authorities and other public bodies responsible for planning, commissioning and funding early learning and childcare. As Scotland invests unprecedented resources into expanding provision, we hope that this publication will inform and influence the future development of early learning and childcare.

For some young children, provision of early learning and childcare through a childminder may be the best option to meet their particular needs, regardless of where they live. The Care Inspectorate recognises the unique benefits of home-based care, particularly in providing continuity and promoting attachment for young children. In 2016 we published a Review of Scotland's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion, which provided a national analysis of the success of local authorities in implementing Parts 6, 7 and 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014).⁶ This year we published a follow-up Report on the Progress of Expanded Provision during 2015-16.⁷ My Childminding Experience complements these publications by giving further evidence to support local authorities commissioning childminders to provide funded places. The reports set out the case for local authorities to consider commissioning childminding as the best type of care to meet the needs of some children aged three and four years, as well as eligible two-year-olds.

Only a small number of childminding services are currently in partnership to provide funded places. There could be an increased use of childminders to better deliver funded early learning and childcare, not least in remote and rural areas where other demand is insufficient or the pattern of local needs make group settings unfeasible. There are some models where childminders not only provide early learning and childcare as a sole provider but also offer blended provision with an establishment-based setting. It is important that local authorities understand the potential of childminders in developing local commissioning approaches, recognising that childminders are registered, regulated and inspected in order to ensure the quality of their setting is high and the childminder's commitment to continuous improvement.

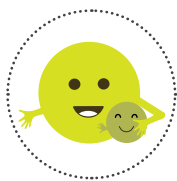
Flexible provision using the skills of childminders and other partner providers to support parents with non-standard working hours already exists to some extent. Blended models of care shared between childminders and nursery settings enables children to have a more individual combination of care in group care and a home setting. For some families, a mixture of provision including support by skilled early learning and childcare practitioners in the home may be more effective in reducing risks in the longer term particularly where the parent works long or unsociable hours.

We know that there are some key underlying issues which increase the risk of abuse, neglect and poorer outcomes for children including the impact of alcohol, drugs, mental illness, poverty, violence and domestic abuse. Instead of fitting families facing such complexities into a prescribed model of intervention and care, there is a need to think more creatively about what supports, at the times when most needed, would work best for them.





7. Practice examples



7.1 Safe

Argyll and Bute Council: A local authority supporting childminding and partnership working for vulnerable children

Linda Morrison, Early Years Worker, Community Childminding, Argyll and Bute Council:

“The Community Childminding Service provides specialist support to families living in Argyll and Bute. This service, established 16 years ago, is free and discretionary. It assists families with very young children who are experiencing a particularly difficult time. The service provides short-term support to families whose situations may include postnatal or clinical depression, stress, exhaustion, and isolation, health issues for parent and child, drug/alcohol abuse, child protection and help to parent positively.

“Community childminders meet the Care Inspectorate grades of ‘good’ or above and have undertaken additional training to help them work with families who have been referred to the service by health visitors or social workers. The commissioning team is involved in issuing contracts which ensure standards are met.

“Argyll and Bute offers early learning and childcare (ELC) for two-year-olds currently with childminders and community childminders and can also provide ELC for the two-year-olds through the Partner Childminding Arrangements.

“The service follows the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child, Argyll and Bute’s Family Pathway, Building the Ambition, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, Pre-birth to Three, and My World Outdoors. Argyll and Bute’s Early Years Service has produced a Learning and Development Resource which can assist childminders to provide a quality service and recognise the developmental stages a child has reached. The child’s wellbeing indicators are to the fore when assessing child development and keeping the child safe.

“The community childminder’s best asset, apart from their knowledge of child development and life experience, is their ability to build a rapport with parents, gain trust and be able to offer a ‘soft parenting’ approach. The rest and respite afforded to parents allows them to achieve a life balance, take stock of their situation and value the opportunity to proceed with lifestyle changes or child behaviour management programmes, as their situation dictates. They are often able to regain self-esteem, confidence and control of their life.

“Community childminders have a solid value base and seek to improve family situations in a focused, knowledgeable and unselfish way. Their qualities of common sense, humour and empathy towards parents with young children make such a lasting difference to the outcomes for children, evidenced by the increased confidence and self-esteem of both child and parent.

“A few of the community childminders have been team members for 15 or 16 years and their work is extremely valuable, in that the outcomes for children have been positive, and there has been less need for statutory services to become or remain involved. Registered childminders are one of Argyll and Bute’s most valuable assets.”



Caron Beveridge, Health Team Leader, and Heather Spriggs, Christy Niven, Emma Yule, Health Visitors:

“Following assessment and discussion around pressures and needs identified with the family, the Health Visitor would make a referral to the Community Childminding Service using the GIRFEC process to support the referral. If referrals are urgent, then a call can be made to the Coordinator.

“The Health Visiting Team is encouraged by the prompt level of response received from the service following referrals being made. Feedback and a good working relationship is established between Health Visitors and Community Childminding Service Coordinator Linda Morrison, which allows for a holistic approach and greatly helps a continuity of care for the children and families using this essential non-means tested service.

“This essential service makes a considerable difference to both children and the family unit in many ways. The community childminding service has a significant impact on the daily lives of the families that are fortunate enough to have this service and frequently it is the key factor in diverting a crisis for families.

“The service allows for a network of support to reduce physical and emotional isolation and to allow parents respite to connect with community resources and opportunities that aid with improving and supporting mental and physical health needs and directly optimise family dynamics. This also allows for the child to be integrated within the local community peer environment through play opportunities which overcome any social, educational, physical and economic inequalities or barriers that may present.

“The Community Childminding contribution to the children’s planning meetings is sensitive and appropriate, and support is tailored to the individualised needs of families through a holistic approach with the Health Visitor service.”

The childminder (name not used to maintain confidentiality) was inspected in 2016 with grades of ‘very good’ for the quality of care and support, environment and management and leadership. Inspectors noted that she had appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that children’s wellbeing was safeguarded. She had recently participated in child protection training and was very clear about her responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from harm at all times.

The childminder says:

"I decided to become a registered childminder after moving to a new area away from family and friends and unable to return to my previous employment. This allowed me to work from home and care for my own young children. I anticipated this would only be temporary work until my children were older and settled into school but that was over 25 years ago and I am still minding children. During this time the Community Childminding Service was introduced and shortly after it started I became part of the team. My employment now mainly involves working as a community childminder with children up to three years old.

"Children can be referred for a wide range of reasons including parental health issues, particularly postnatal depression, family breakup or drug and domestic abuse. Often the service is an intervention to prevent escalation of a potential crisis which may impact on the child's safety and wellbeing. Every case is individual with different needs and although it can often be challenging I feel that this diversity makes the work more interesting and enjoyable.

"A social worker or health worker usually requests a placement for community childminding and the coordinator of the service then contacts me with the referral details. One particular referral was requested by the health visitor for a 21-month-old child who I will refer to as Amy (her name has been changed to maintain confidentiality). The circumstances leading to the need for childcare were that the family had recently moved back to the area and had been accommodated by the local authority. The family consisted of mum and dad who were both very young, inexperienced parents and the household was very chaotic. Both parents had unstable backgrounds as they had been through the care system and also living in the home was a sick elderly relative for whom the mum was the main carer. One full day was requested to give mum time to catch up on routine chores. Socialisation was also required for Amy.

"For new referrals, an introductory meeting takes place in the family home and at this point I am still a stranger to them and they are being asked to hand their child over to me. Unlike a normal childminding situation the parent is not able to choose the childminder allocated to them. I can empathise with parents as I know I would have felt very apprehensive in the same circumstances. So I try to develop a good rapport and gain their trust from the onset. At the initial meeting about Amy, I met with the health visitor who introduced me to mum. While she was possibly suspicious of people in authority, she was willing to accept help and we agreed days and times of care. Although it was quite a difficult meeting I felt supported by the health visitor.

"Due to family circumstances, Amy's placement was subsequently extended to two days a week. I cared for Amy for 15 months and during this time I gradually built up a good relationship with mum who would discuss her concerns with me. When there were communication problems, I was able to report these to the community childminding coordinator who subsequently spoke to the social worker

to try and rectify the situation. At these times I felt confident that the issue would be handled sensitively so as not to damage the trust mum had placed in me.

“During her time with me, Amy settled well and she was able to participate in various stimulating activities and learning experiences which she wouldn’t have had access to at home. Her social skills improved and she interacted well with two other children of the same age, always showing excitement when she met with them. However, I did notice that her speech wasn’t developing as quickly as expected. To communicate she would prod me and point to something rather than speak. She often didn’t respond when being spoken to and I suspected that she had a hearing problem. I spoke to mum and the health visitor about this. Amy’s speech has now improved after it was established that she did have impaired hearing that was treatable.

“Amy left my setting and transferred to nursery when she turned three years old. When she first started with me she was a quiet, subdued child but over time her confidence grew and she seemed much happier. I was able to provide her with a safe, secure environment with a set routine at a time when the family was going through a difficult period. I was also able to assess and promote all areas of her development. This particular case was difficult at times but I felt I had the support of the community childminding coordinator, health visitor and social worker when required.

“Occasionally I see Amy and her mum and it is pleasing to see how Amy has progressed. I still have a good relationship with mum who always gives me an update on how they are getting along. I think the most rewarding aspect of my role as a community childminder is the knowledge that I have been able to have a positive influence on a child’s early formative years.”



Comments on the childminder from various parents:

"The service is not only a gift in my eyes but an educational, social, healthy and safe place for my child."

"I don't think I would have got through the last eight months without your help and support."

"We are truly grateful and will never forget all your support, help and kindness. We don't know what we would have done without you."

"Words cannot express how grateful and thankful we are. We thank you deeply for everything you have done for us. You made a hard situation more manageable and the care and attention you gave both the boys has been second to none. They have grown up with many extra interests thanks to you."

"Thank you for everything you're doing for us, giving me time to catch up on things and bring myself back together. You really are amazing."

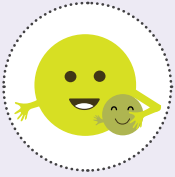
"You have been a godsend to us during the unexpected onset of my illness."

"The outdoor activities were always wide and varied with a number of learning experiences within them, from visits to the library to the woodland walks/nature trails, the outdoor activities were safe, highly enjoyable and extremely entertaining."

"My child was given a full day in a safe environment which was filled with developmentally appropriate and enjoyable activities with children of her own age and a caring, qualified and exceptional practitioner."

From this practice example, childminders could consider:

- What can I do to help different children settle into my service during their first visits?
- How do I build and maintain rapport and communication with parents?
- How do I make different children feel safe and secure in my care?



The 'Safe' wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: "Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community."

For 'Safe', the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 1.2 My human rights are protected and promoted and I experience no discrimination.
- 2.25 I am helped to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour and decisions.
- 3.10 As a child or young person I feel valued, loved and secure.
- 3.20 I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- 3.21 I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm.
- 3.25 I am helped to feel safe and secure in my local community.
- 5.17 My environment is secure and safe.





7.2 Healthy

Glasgow Community Childminding: Development through a one-to-one environment

The Scottish Childminding Association operates a Community Childminding Service in Glasgow. Mary, aged two, was referred to the service by her Health Visitor at a local Early Years Joint Support Team Meeting. The children's names in this case study have been changed to protect their identities.

Jacqueline Spence, Community Childminding Development Officer, Scottish Childminding Association:

"Mary's family moved to Glasgow from another country some time ago. Mary's father was serving a prison sentence and mum was struggling to cope on her own with their two children. Mary's older sibling has a severe form of autism and attended a school for Additional Learning Needs. Concerns were also raised by the Health Visitor and mum on whether Mary was also on the autistic spectrum. The family was very isolated with no family support or friends in the area.

"After discussions it was agreed a one-to-one place with a Community Childminder would be most beneficial to Mary's needs. Mary was also attending the local mainstream nursery run by Glasgow City Council but due to the level of supervision required this was only possible for one hour per day, three days per week.

"After two months with the Community Childminder it was becoming apparent that Mary was showing signs of improvement and was beginning to engage with the Community Childminder in one-to-one activities for short periods of time. The Community Childminder worked alongside mum and both adopted the same strategies to deal with Mary's behavioural challenges.

"Within three months Mary was ready to engage with other children on a short-term basis and the Community Childminder gradually introduced Mary to the local toddler group and was eventually able to take Mary on outings to local attractions.

"Mum's stress levels were greatly reduced and she reported that Mary was now reacting to eye contact and simple activities. This was a huge improvement



to Mary's previous behaviour which was now thought to be possible learned behaviour from older brother Sam although further investigations would be carried out.

"A multi-agency review meeting between Health, Social Work, Education, SCMA and mum was held. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Community Childminding and nursery placement and allow discussions as to the best way forward for Mary and her family. Mum's views were sought throughout the meeting. It was agreed that Mary's needs were not being met within the nursery environment and Mary's needs would be better met solely within the Community Childminding placement. It was agreed to withdraw the nursery place and provide one-to-one concentrated work given by the Community Childminder.

"It was agreed the nursery place for Mary could be looked at further down the line. Mary is currently still with the Community Childminder two full days per week and it is hoped that further developmental milestones will be met."

Mum: "I felt so alone, having the childminder's support made life seem easier."

Health Visitor: "At the first review meeting I was lost for words... Mary was repeating words and engaging for short periods with the childminder in a one-to-one activity."

Nursery Head: "This service provided the nurturing, one-to-one environment Mary required. The structure of the nursery setting was not suitable for Mary's developmental needs."

Community Childminder: "It took time to build a bond with Mary. We took small steps at Mary's pace. Mum and I worked together to adopt consistent strategies so as not to confuse Mary."

From this practice example, childminders could consider:

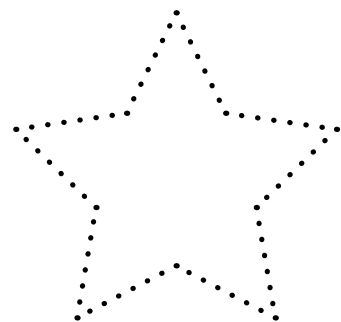
- To what extent does my service promote the general health of the children I look after and how could I improve this?
- How do I recognise the specific additional health needs of children in my care?
- How do I work alongside parents to meet these needs?
- How do I work with other professionals to meet these needs?



The 'Healthy' wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: "Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices."

For 'Healthy', the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 1.25 I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.
- 1.28 I am supported to make informed lifestyle choices affecting my health and wellbeing, and I am helped to use relevant screening and healthcare services.
- 1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.
- 3.4 I am confident that the right people are fully informed about my past, including my health and care experience, and any impact this has on me.
- 3.21 I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm.
- 4.2 The organisations that support and care for me help tackle health and social inequalities.





7.3 Achieving

Yvonne Barr: Delivering the pre-school curriculum

Yvonne Barr, Childminder (South Lanarkshire), was inspected on 15 January 2016 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support and management and leadership and 'very good' for environment. Inspectors found that she had knowledge of Building the Ambition, Setting the Table and was able to demonstrate how this knowledge had changed her practice. Inspectors noted: "She is committed to ensuring that she is providing the best possible care and support for minded children. She is well aware of the impact of her role on positive outcomes for children."

Parents told inspectors that at the beginning of each month Yvonne provides a detailed newsletter with information on the teaching topic for that month, outlining learning aims and highlighting how this links within the Curriculum for Excellence.

Yvonne Barr:

"Children's interests are used to help me plan learning topics. For example, one little girl was very keen on Fireman Sam so we did a topic on firefighters. We discussed what we already know about firefighters and then identified the learning.

"The identified learning was that children will be able to:

- Understand the role of the firefighter and their equipment
- Become aware of the risks and dangers of fire
- Visit a fire station
- Understand that 999 is the number to phone in the case of a fire
- Know what to do if your clothes catch fire – stop, drop, roll

"The children had great fun on our visit to the fire station. They also enjoyed role play and dressing up as firefighters with hoses. They listened to a story, Frances Firefly, and became aware of the importance of not playing with matches or fire. We practiced calling the emergency services on an interactive phone. They learned what to do if their clothes catch fire and understand that fire is dangerous.

“At the end of our topic we printed photographs, laminated them and made up a fire safety book. We also made a story book with photographs for the little girl who initiated the learning topic. She enjoys sitting and telling her own story to other children and adults.

“As well as relating to the early level outcome, ‘I can show ways of getting help in unsafe situations and emergencies’, this little girl’s interest provided the opportunity for learning across the Curriculum for Excellence. By engaging in all of these activities, the children’s experiences contributed to the following principles:

- Challenge and enjoyment – Active in their learning
- Progression – Build upon earlier knowledge
- Depth – Drawing different strands of learning together
- Breadth – Suitably weighted range of experiences
- Coherence – Opportunities for extended activities which draw on different strands of learning
- Personalisation and choice – Respond to individual needs exercising responsible personal choice
- Relevance – Understand the purpose of their activities, seeing the value of what they are learning and its relevance to their lives present and future.

“Practical life skills developed:

- Children can show ways to get help in an emergency situation
- They are aware of the risks and dangers of fire
- They know what to do if their clothes catch fire – stop, drop, roll.

“Children are confident when faced with new challenges:

- Call the interactive telephone, listen and answer questions
- Happy to try out the equipment at the fire station as well as talk to and ask questions to the fire fighters on our visit.

“Children can interact well together - building self-esteem:

- They worked together to complete fire engine puzzles
- Dressed up as fire fighters in role play
- Created Our Fire Safety Topic book.”



Kirsten Wallace, Ellie's mum, says: "Ellie really enjoyed the fire topic as fire stations/fire engines are a particular interest of hers. She was very excited to go to the fire station and has talked repeatedly about it since she came back. She particularly enjoyed trying on the clothes and the fireman's pole. The trip was perfectly suited to her interests. She also loved the photo book that was made after the visit and she has used it to help her tell other relatives about the visit."

Karen Stangoe, Lewis and Emily's mum, says: "Both of my children thoroughly enjoyed their trip to the fire station. My son, who's two years old, loved being able to sit in the fire engine just like Fireman Sam, while my daughter, who is four years old, really enjoyed the 'hands on' experience of trying out some of the equipment especially the fire hose. It was a great experience for each of my children engaging them at their own age and stage."

Ellie (3):

*"I like Yvonne's because it is fun.
"I like to play outside, do arts and
crafts and dress up.
Yvonne is fun."*

Kirsten Wallace, Ellie's mum:

"We are so pleased with Ellie's progress since she started with Yvonne. She has always been very happy. She enjoys interacting with children of different ages and has benefited from the family atmosphere. She has made good progress and Yvonne has chosen topics and outings that interest her such as going to the fire station. She was so excited to get her book bag and has loved her homework."

"She is very active during her day and gets plenty of time playing outside. She enjoys going to the park and playing in the garden."

"She plays well with the other children and enjoys playing with the older children when they get back from school."

Sandra Gardner, mother of Hamish (8) and Archie (5):

"Both my children attended Yvonne's for their ante-preschool and preschool years. Yvonne very much followed the children's interests which meant they were always engaged, motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Because it was all play-based, the children enjoyed themselves thoroughly."

"Yvonne was always very keen to hear parents' views and would regularly ask for feedback and suggestions, as well as providing monthly newsletters and regular parents nights, on top of the daily chat at drop off/pick up. Yvonne provided lots of activities for the children in their pre-school year to ensure they had all the skills necessary for starting school. She also completed transition documents outlining their progress and skills.

"Both my children made a very smooth transition from Yvonne's to P1. Their P1 teachers commented on how well they both had settled into school, their ability to listen in class and follow instructions, their ability to get along with their peers and their enthusiasm for learning.

"I feel very lucky to have had Yvonne as my childcare provider, both boys had a very happy and positive experience which stood them in very good stead for primary school."

Elizabeth Barnes, Caitlin's mother:

"As a new mother, I was very worried about handing my six-month-old child over to a stranger with all sorts of emotions and concerns, such as if she was a bad childminder, what effect would that have on my child, and if she was good, would my daughter like her more than me! To give myself some security, I had a mix of care – three days with Yvonne and two days at a nursery.

"Caitlin absolutely flourished under Yvonne's care, and not so much in the nursery, so after a period of time I moved her full time with Yvonne. I have always found Yvonne to be willing and able to accommodate our changing requirements, such as later evening days to accommodate work patterns. She has always demonstrated infinite patience, always looks to plan a broad range of activities for the children, and has been able to keep structure and discipline in the most positive way. She was pro-active in helping us with different stages. For example she suggested Caitlin was ready for toilet training and helped me considerably to manage that.

"When it came to the time when Caitlin was entitled to early learning and childcare funding, I felt there would be no one better than Yvonne to do this and that Caitlin would benefit more from the environment Yvonne created than in a mainstream nursery, so I asked Yvonne if she would investigate whether she could provide this for us. She was very willing to do that and indeed worked hard to become accredited within a timescale which worked for us. It was the best thing we could have done and Caitlin developed really well during that time. Yvonne also advised us on books we could buy to reinforce her learning, such as early years, maths, language and spelling.

"Caitlin loved her time with Yvonne and I firmly believe she has significantly contributed to making her the bright, confident and respectful teenager she now is. Although we no longer need childcare, Caitlin visits Yvonne on occasions during school holidays as she has a deep respect and affection for her and I don't think this will ever change.

“When Caitlin decided to get involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme, she decided she would love to offer some help to Yvonne as part of the volunteering element of the programme. Yvonne agreed and Caitlin now visits once per week to help with end of the day games and organising the children ready for their parents to pick them up. She also intends to offer her services for a full day during school holidays where possible, and did so during the half-term break. Caitlin is really enjoying it and always comes back very animated with stories about the kids and what they were doing.

“Childcare is such a critical part of the development of a child and it can make a huge difference to how they develop. Yvonne offers dedication, patience, kindness and flexibility which we have found invaluable.”

Community Childminding supporting achievement

The childminder (name not used to maintain confidentiality) is also a Community Childminder working for Argyll and Bute Council. This childminder was inspected in 2015 with grades of ‘very good’ for the quality of care and support and management and leadership and ‘good’ for environment. Inspectors found that she took the time to get to know children and their families well, through a series of visits before they started using the service and that she was building each child’s folder into their personal plan using the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators, with photographs of the day and their achievements and developmental progress recorded.

The childminder:

“I received the referral from the early years worker/community childminding coordinator for a girl who I will refer to as Sophie. She was aged two years and one month and started with me a week later. She was the youngest of three children living with mum, who was a single parent receiving benefits and not working. Mum had just left a bad relationship and was now living in a rented home with all three children on her own.

“The reasons for referral were for Sophie to interact with other children her own age and develop her social skills. She spent a lot of time with mum in her pram during trips to school and nursery for her older siblings so did not have much physical play or stimulating experiences during the day. Money was tight within the household so access to healthy nutritious foods was very slim and something the health visitor wanted me to help support mum and Sophie with.

"The first meeting was attended by mum, the family health visitor, Sophie and I. All the information received in the referral was correct and very helpful during the meeting where we filled in the contract and information forms for the child.

"I have had Sophie for nearly five months now and the placement has gone very well. We work to the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child. Mum and I have slowly built up a nice friendship. She was very reluctant at first to accept any help as she felt like it was like 'letting the social work in' but after myself and the health visitor reassured her that my work is not through the social work she felt a lot better and accepted the service one day per week.

"I feel totally supported in my role as a community childminder with this placement. I feel mum, myself, the health visitor and the early years worker have a good relationship circle and things are handled in a sensitive manner. Mum feels able to trust me with Sophie's care and I feel I can talk to her freely, but also raise any concerns I might have without damaging our relationship.

"I feel my role with this family has been very valuable as I have supported mum and she benefits from the time away from her child while I have her. I feel that Sophie has flourished in my care and I am more than meeting the reasons for referral with her. I have developed her social skills and during her time with me we attend a local playgroup so not only is Sophie getting a lot of time and attention from me she is also benefiting from being with other adults and children allowing her to progress from me to nursery when the time is right. She is of course also getting physical play and development during our afternoon sessions too.

"I feel valued providing the service, both professionally and personally, and think this is recognised by the family and other professionals."

Aberdeen City Council: Community childminding to deliver funded hours to children in need of additional support

Lorraine Duncan, Childminding Development Officer, SCMA:

“The ME2 programme offers families the use of a childminder instead of a family centre for early learning and childcare (ELC) provision. The programme offers a variety of possibilities when it comes to hours and days, including up to 16 hours a week as part of funded ELC. Through the programme, childminders can offer flexibility and a ‘home from home’ service that fits in with the child and their family, which some families prefer due to the low ratio of children that are looked after at one time. Childminders can give children a range of activities and take them out to groups. Childminders also collect valuable information on the child and their family by observations, wellbeing indicators, checklists, questionnaires, All About Me, and transition passports.”

Aberdeen City Council Nurtured Outcome Group has worked in partnership with SCMA for nearly 20 years. The Nurtured Outcome Group has funded the SCMA Development Officer post throughout this time and more recently the group now supports the Community Childminding Service.

A parent who participated in the programme said: “I was told my child was eligible from my health visitor. She explained that I could use my funded hours at a range of settings. I chose a childminder. I was happy with this as I felt my child received one-to-one care with home-like activities. As a result of going to the childminder my child’s behaviour has improved. It is also someone who I trust to get advice from as she’s looked after lots of children. I could choose my days and have longer sessions with fewer days which I found suited my child. These longer periods of time helped my child socialise.”

Wellbeing indicators are used by the ME2 childminders, with a folder for each child including photographs and comments for each wellbeing indicator. For example, comments on ‘Achieving’ include:

- “I can turn the pages of the book and look at the pictures myself and say words.”
- “Increases children’s confidence in a larger group with other children and adults. Childminders spend time with the children and encourage them to be creative at their age and stage of development.”

Community childminder

The childminder (name not used to maintain confidentiality) was inspected in 2017 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support and 'very good' for environment and management and leadership. Inspectors found that she was passionate about following the GIRFEC principles to ensure she is providing the best quality of care. Inspectors noted that children used the GIRFEC wellbeing indicator wheel to describe how safe and achieving they felt they were.

The childminder:

"An SCMA Childminding Development Officer contacted me by phone to ask if I had a space for an eligible two-year-old and gave me some background. The girl, who I will call Emily, lived with mum and had little contact with dad, suffering separation anxiety when away from mum – making herself sick, screaming, kicking and biting other children. It was not even possible for her to be left with her grandparents. Mum, who I will call Olivia, felt she would be unable to cope with nursery provision so it did not take much persuasion when she was offered a childminding setting. She also felt it would benefit them both if two days with longer hours at a childminder could be arranged rather than five days of short hours, so she could use the time for appointments. I was able to accommodate this so the local coordinator passed on my details and said the mum would contact me.

"Olivia phoned and a visit was arranged for later in the week. She said that she would like to bring a friend with her and I said she would be most welcome. The first visit went well. Emily explored the toy boxes and played with the toys, keeping close to mum and mum's friend, Ava, whom the child also trusted and gave affection. We had a good chat about Emily's likes/dislikes, behaviour, medical issues, favourite toys and Ava was as involved as mum in this chat.

"I provided Olivia with all my introductory paperwork, including policies and procedures. I told her to have a think about placement and if happy to go ahead to phone me to arrange another visit where Emily could spend some time alone with me. Olivia and Ava both expressed there and then that they would like to accept the place but as is my policy I asked them to go and discuss then get back to me to ensure they were making the right decision for Emily.

"Olivia phoned the next day to accept the place for Emily and to arrange a settling-in visit. Ava brought Emily for her first visit (two hours) as I suggested it might be easier to say bye to Ava than to mum for the first time away. Emily coped well with her visit so we arranged a longer visit a few days later. Emily settled in well and although she showed upset when mum left, she quickly absorbed herself playing with a range of toys and was sociable with the other children attending my setting.

"Olivia and Ava both expressed on many occasions how pleased they were with Emily's placement and how well Emily was progressing. They noticed a difference in her speech, behaviour, ability to count, name colours, recognise letters and numbers, how well she was socialising with other children and that she was trying new foods and eating better.

"Since the placement ended I have managed to continue with Emily for two hours a week to give continuity while she went through her nursery transition and mum would like this to continue as long as I have the space."

Comments from health visitors:

Maureen Gray, Health Visitor, Elmbank Practice: "The Community Childminding service is an invaluable resource for families who may be considered more vulnerable, for a variety of reasons. The resource is an excellent addition to community services and supports health visiting services offered at this time. It is a good example of multidisciplinary resources and interactive care at work."

Jackie Allen, Health Visitor, Links Practice Aberdeen: "The Community Childminding service, as well as the childminders who offer the ME2 service, has been an invaluable service to the families for whom I have referred. It has enabled the children to have routines, care opportunities, socialisation and stimulating learning which enhances their development. At the same time, it has enabled the parents, many of whom may be experiencing difficult times or circumstances, to have support for parenting, respite and time to address their own needs, such as health issues. This in turn benefits the children as their parents are better equipped to parent when they are supported."

"The childminding service has been able to assist all of the families I have referred. This great service has eased my workload and provided me with a trusted, quality service that I can refer my clients to, with the knowledge of the benefits it provides to the families. The Childminding Coordinator has given excellent support and assistance whenever I have required and is a valuable colleague within the local community. She is always on hand with advice and has worked well to promote the ME2 service, which many of my clients now attend. This enhances the health and social services for the families within the community."

Gillian Grant, Health Visitor, Cove Bay Health Centre: "The service is invaluable here for all sorts of reasons. It has provided respite and support for parents for example when they are feeling low/have post natal depression or when they are feeling isolated, with no family around to help out. For the children, it offers the opportunity for play and socialisation with other children and adults. Often it's the only service we have access to which can help."

From these practice examples, childminders could consider:

- How do I know what are the emotional, psychological, social, physical and learning needs of children in my care for them to develop and flourish?
- How do I work with parents supportively to meet these developmental needs?
- How do I recognise and celebrate children achieving any developmental and learning milestones?
- How do I help children feel confident in their abilities?
- What other achievements are relevant for the children I look after?



The 'Achieving' wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: "Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community."

For 'Achieving', the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 1.6 I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential.
- 1.12 I am fully involved in assessing my emotional, psychological, social and physical needs at an early stage, regularly and when my needs change.
- 1.25 I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.
- 1.27 I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.
- 1.30 As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling.
- 1.31 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.



HAPPY



7.4 Nurtured

Aberdeen City Council: Community childminding to deliver funded hours to vulnerable children (continued)

This childminder in Aberdeen (name not used to maintain confidentiality), was inspected in 2017 with grades of 'good' for the quality of care and support, environment and management and leadership. Inspectors observed good interaction between the childminder and child. The childminder knew the child very well and was attentive to their needs. This helped to form attachments between child and carer. Inspectors noted that she made use of the local community with the children such as visiting local parks regularly, going to the community café for lunch, attending toddler groups, kindergym, messy play and meeting up with other childminders in the area. Inspectors noted that this helped the children to feel included within their community.

The childminder:

"I got my first ME2 child last January, a two-year-old boy. I think ME2 is a great scheme as it helps kids interact with other children. I've loved having him this last few months, he's come on leaps and bounds from the boy I first got in January. At first he was extremely shy and very clingy towards his grandma but now he enjoys playing with the kids, meeting new kids at toddlers and at kinder gym. I think ME2 is a great scheme for families in need of extra help."

Child's grandmother:

"I heard about the service from my health visitor and found it very easy to apply for. I did not realise I could use a childminder till she mentioned it to me. I am very happy with my childminder and was placed with her

very quickly. Benefits for my grandchild include socialising with others, outings, sharing in small groups. It's a very flexible and friendly home from home service. It's very local and not too far away. As a grandparent it has given me some time to get on with other commitments."

This childminder in Aberdeen (name not used to maintain confidentiality), was inspected in 2013 with grades of 'very good' for the quality of care and support and environment and 'good' for staffing. Inspectors noted that she sought to provide a range of activities and to make children feel welcome in her home. Her settling in period was flexible and based on the child and parent needs to ensure that children feel safe and secure in their new environment.

The childminder:

"I have been a Community Childminder for almost four years now and a ME2 childcare provider since the pilot started almost a year ago. I love doing both, giving something back and providing the community childcare gives me a sense of helping others in a time of need, be that the children or the parents, often both.

"I enjoy the ME2 in a different way from other childminding, as the children come to my setting for longer and get more time to settle and bond. We become a small family and this goes for the children's parents as well. Having the children over a longer period of time allows us to work together and build trusting relationships that help the child.

"All the children in my setting get to do the same kind of activities, and the Community Childminding Service, ME2 and working parents can be assured that their children are all getting the same experience. We have a busy week with play dates, messy play, music classes, toddler groups and soft play, along with trips to the park, beach, library and other local amenities. Most of all we have fun and learn together.

"When the child who I will call Tom started with me he visited with his mum and dad for two hours. When they both left he was very unsettled and I offered as many settling in sessions as required.

"He enjoyed playing with Peppa Pig toys, and loved going through the toy box, also counting up to 10 with me, which seemed to settle him. Encouraging him with his counting built on this while he was settling in.

"I also worked with Tom's dad to help settle him in by going along to soft play, and explaining to the child that his dad had to leave, rather than disappearing when he was not looking. I explained this as it would have been harder next time.

"He settled within a few sessions, enjoying counting and going up and down the stairs. He was very chatty. I sang songs with him – he didn't know the words but started getting the hang of it and joining in and was keen to learn. He enjoys singing, loves counting in the songs and can clearly count to 11.

"Tom prefers messy play rather than going to soft play. He loves going to the beach to collect shells for his mummy. He also made his dad a lovely hand-printed picture. He loves messy play and plays well with other children, as well as helping to take toys out to play with. On one occasion, he was pouring sand from the spade he had into a small sand castle and he helped a little girl by pouring sand into her cup too. He continued this for a while and then he moved on to Playdoh. He stood and watched other children until one moved away and then he stepped in to play.

"He loves playgroup and really enjoys having plenty of room to run around. He is also good at helping tidy up the toys when he is at playgroup. He also plays well at the park, enjoying climbing up on the frames."

Tom (30 months):

1. What do you like doing at the childminder's house?

"Love going to making music with her!"

Tom's father:

"He has developed so much from being with the childminder. His social skills and overall behaviour have improved massively and he interacts with everyone much better. The childminder and the service have been a great help to us and have helped us come together as a family and work as a unit. She is always there with a welcome smile and listening ear. He loves her."

Therese MacDonald: Using the Montessori approach to learning and encouraging independence

Therese MacDonald, Childminder (Skye), was inspected on 24 August 2016 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support, environment and management and leadership. Inspectors noted that she spoke respectfully to children and they observed that children's emotional and physical needs were well met. Inspectors found "very good interaction between the childminder and the children in the woods... The childminder was warm and welcoming and the atmosphere was relaxed."

Therese MacDonald:

"I recognise the benefits of using the Montessori approach to learning and have been working that way for many years without realising what it was. Implementing this way of learning is much easier than first imagined because Montessori works well for all ages of children in the home environment and is completely child-led. I allow children to enjoy a chosen activity and will only intervene when the child requests help.

"It is easier to tune into a child's interests when managing smaller ratios, and to further implement activities tailored to their needs. Activities such as baking encompass so many of the wellbeing indicators without really thinking about it, for example: being included; achieving a result; responsibility in sharing and taking turns; safety when using electrical items or sharp knives; nurturing and helping children; healthy eating etc.

"When talking to children, I get down to their level and allow them to choose from a range of resources also stored at a level which they can investigate and reach. I allow many sensory experiences as children learn through touching and exploring with their hands. For example, I have found that children are more likely to enjoy food that they, themselves have prepared. One child was



reluctant to eat fruit in their packed lunch, but I found that if children are given the opportunity to cut up their own fruit, it was more likely to be enjoyed. It can be empowering for a child to be taught how to use a sharp knife with guidance.

"I provide small glasses and jugs from which to pour their own drink, this allows children to understand volume, thereby introducing mathematics at an early stage, without children realising. Lots of baking experiences in my home allow for an introduction to maths and science such as weighing and counting. Activities such as this allow the child to feel responsible, independent and enjoy a great sense of achievement, while learning how to use tools safely. I find that children love to be involved in ordinary every day chores, such as washing and drying their own dishes or helping to prepare dinner. All these things are important self-development tools for future life.

"The children are exposed to many sensory experiences and collect materials from the outdoors to make artwork. Walks along the riverside are excellent for collecting river stones and broken crockery for mosaics. Children collect flowers and learn the names of the plant, the colour, smell them and assemble them into bouquets for their parents. Throwing sticks, stones and leaves into the river is an excellent 'sink and float' activity. One little boy made his own umbrella from a stick and large leaf he found. I believe nature is a great environment for learning especially with changes in seasons. The weather is no deterrent and children can have as much fun in the rain. Plants are also chosen for their sensory experience and children like to smell the mint, lavender and rosemary in the herb pot, or smell the scented geraniums and feel the textures of the plants.

"The outdoors provides children with a chance to develop their own perception of risk and challenge gross motor skills, as well as having opportunities to find treasure every day, whether that is a new flower, catkins or an interesting shaped stone. There is no need to buy expensive resources for the childminding setting. Take the humble box of wooden blocks for example, it can provide endless opportunities for creativity, but also encompass learning about colour, numbers, shape and height. The outdoors also provides an excellent learning environment with an abundance of natural materials and a chance to use the five senses – touch, smell, hearing, taste, and sight.

"I am sympathetic to the individual needs of children and encourage independence. As with a Montessori setting, older children in the setting can encourage and help younger children to get ready for going out. One child was reluctant to get their own jacket and shoes on, but with gentle persuasion and influence from the other children, he has now succeeded and takes pride in his achievement. The older children like to 'read' to each other. They feel a sense of responsibility in helping others.

"The approach to Montessori and attachment theory was helpful with a baby, Elsa, who was very anxious being away from mum. The child had separation anxiety that lasted for several months. The mother felt that in a larger, busy setting the child would have struggled and she may have been forced

to give up work. However, reflecting on the busy morning routine with drop offs and the school run allowed me to identify what could be done to help. Elsa was attached to me, but felt overwhelmed when other parents or family members came into the house. I held her until I saw signs that she was reassured enough and confident to explore on her own. I was able to liken it to a situation with my own daughter and was able to reassure mum that things would get better. The child is now a happy and confident little girl who is relaxed when family members enter the home, and is happy to explore my home.

“Children take great pride in and are keen to show their learning journals and chat about the photographs, especially one day when they went to the forest. The children found a hatched heron egg on the ground and admired the colour. On looking upwards towards the tall trees the children saw a heron and its young. The children admired large fern leaves and I encouraged the children to use them like wings. The children flapped their wings through the forest copying the noise the heron makes.”

Katie Martin, mother of Elsa (20 months):

“Elsa is a sensitive wee soul and very much a mummy’s girl. She would often get upset when I left her in the morning. Therese used a variety of strategies to help her settle – she would ensure there were toys and activities out to distract Elsa from my departure and would offer her comfort with lots of cuddles and reassurance. We were always careful to make sure Elsa was aware I was leaving to ensure she would learn that I would go but I would be back later. Therese was keen to encourage her independence within the setting of her house – allowing her the freedom to move round the house and allowing her to experience someone leaving a room but then coming back again.

“We noticed that as Elsa’s movement improved so did her confidence at being left because, if she wanted to, she could follow you. Therese encouraged the development of her walking giving her the opportunity to go on walks outside the house as well as the space to move freely in the house. Over the past few months we have seen Elsa’s confidence blossom – she now waves me off in the morning and is a very happy wee thing enjoying her days with Therese very much.”

Megan MacKenzie, mother of Alexander (3):

“We are extremely pleased with our child’s continued progress and development. He often comes home singing songs and chatting about his day. More recently, we have noticed huge strides in his independence with tasks such as taking clothes, jackets and shoes on and off. We attribute much of this to Therese’s approach to childcare.”

From these practice examples, childminders could consider:

- How can I bond with and develop strong relationships with the children I look after?
- How can I help children trust me?
- Can I contribute to children developing attachment with their parents or main carer?
- Can I improve how I give assurance and comfort to children and help them overcome any anxieties?
- How can I help children to express their feelings?

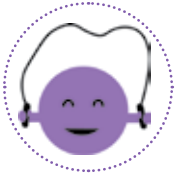


The ‘Nurtured’ wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: “Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting.”

For ‘Nurtured’, the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 1.29 I am supported to be emotionally resilient, have a strong sense of my own identity and wellbeing, and address any experiences of trauma or neglect.
- 2.8 I am supported to communicate in a way that is right for me, at my own pace, by people who are sensitive to me and my needs.
- 3.1 I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people’s attention.
- 3.5 As a child or young person, I am helped to develop a positive view of myself and to form and sustain trusting and secure relationships.
- 3.8 I can build a trusting relationship with the person supporting and caring for me in a way that we both feel comfortable with.
- 3.9 I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me.
- 3.10 As a child or young person, I feel valued, loved and secure.
- 3.16 People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me.
- 3.18 I am supported and cared for sensitively by people who anticipate issues and are aware of and plan for any known vulnerability or frailty.
- 5.6 If I experience care and support in a group, I experience a homely environment and can use a comfortable area with soft furnishings to relax.





7.5 Active

Zoe Thwaites: Active learning on a beach

Zoe Thwaites, Childminder (The Black Isle), was inspected on 14 November 2016 with grades of 'very good' for the quality of care and support and environment, and 'good' for management and leadership. Inspectors found that she recognised the benefits of children being active in the wider community and the benefits to them playing outdoors. Inspectors said: "More time was spent outwith her home than in it with minded children. She was particularly interested in providing children with outdoor experiences. She used the natural environment to teach children about being safe, healthy and active, supporting them to achieve their potential through a range of activities. They learned to explore and respect their environment while enjoying it at the same time."

Zoe Thwaites:

"The Moray Firth beach at Avoch on the Black Isle is the playground in all weathers for the children who attend my childminding service. The children love the space, freedom and exploration it provides.

"One day when we were out playing one of the girls started collecting sticks. I asked if she would like help and the other children joined in. In the past they've made a pretend campfire where they sat round with shells dangling on the end of sticks – pretending to toast marshmallows on the campfire. But these sticks were not for a bonfire. This wee girl was quite clear these sticks were dinosaur bones. She chose where the 'bones' had to go and the other children followed her direction, all very excited at this dinosaur skeleton they were helping to construct. What a sense of achievement they all got when



they saw the final skeleton lying on the shore. I allowed the inquisitive nature of one child to provoke the curiosity of the others and they were occupied with this activity for hours.

"The children are encouraged to continue with the activities, where possible, at home. Isobel, who is 20 months old, goes along to Kinder Gym with me while Martin, who is two and a half, takes part. Back home Isobel collected sticks and laid them out as a hurdle jumping track.

"To further facilitate and complement child-led play, I am thinking of an obstacle course being developed on the beach as some children like to watch the others play then go to the activity after everyone else has left. This would be something that they do in their own time and at their own pace.

"Isobel loves travelling with me to Inverness by bus and spends hours in the library choosing books to share with the other children.

"Eryn is new and has been gathering sticks to build her own fairy garden and I am supporting her imagination and curiosity to do so. I ensure that these sticks are kept safe for Eryn to continue her imaginative play when she next returns as she is only with me for part of the week.

"Martin likes to build roads in the sand; Isobel will sometimes join in but both love looking for bugs under the stones and elsewhere. To expand this activity I have bought a bug catcher with magnifying glass. However the bugs have been too fast to be caught so far! The kids have all recently been delighted in finding crabs instead and we have had a number of seals bobbing around recently to our amusement. This has tied in with a visit to our local library by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation society to learn more about these creatures.

"All the children love making chalk marks on the sea wall which can last there for weeks, depending on the weather.



“The older ones often instigate new outdoor activities, with the younger ones following suit. They have a range of outdoor activities including playing ball games, pretend fishing, flying kites, watching swans, collecting and decorating shells and stones, writing in the sand, growing plants in individual pots, playing with bubbles and water play.

“The children have great fun and wonderful learning opportunities with the sand, rocks and water throughout the year. It is rewarding to see them become more independent and confident in their surroundings as a result.”

Emily Drayson, mother of Isobel (20 months):

“When I drop my daughter off at Zoe’s I know that she will have an action-packed day full of outdoor adventures. Even before she could walk, Isobel spent many happy hours on the beach playing with the sand, shells, leaves and water. Now she is more mobile she can join in with the older children: collecting and sorting pebbles, splashing in rock pools, and pretend fishing with a net. Whatever the weather, Zoe is full of ideas. One January morning I received a photo of Isobel wrapped up warm making snow paintings on the sea wall! Such activities have helped Isobel gain in confidence and independence, and at weekends she now plays contentedly in our garden with whatever she can find.”

“I can no longer get Isobel to walk home in the evenings (or when we park the car at the front) because she keeps trying to play on the beach!”

Lynda Cochrane, member of the local community:

“Zoe, can I just say what an amazing job you are doing with the youngsters in your daily care? You are so creative and imaginative with them... this is where tomorrow’s scientists and artists begin! Good on you Zoe.”

From this practice example, childminders could consider:

- How can I improve children’s play experiences to promote physical activity?
- How can I increase the range of stimulating play activities children experience to develop their curiosity, creativity and imagination?
- Can I make more use of outdoor play and children exploring natural environments?
- How can I help children have more control of their play and develop their own activities?

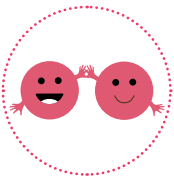


The 'Active' wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: "Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community."

For 'Active', the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 1.25 I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.
- 1.30 As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling.
- 1.31 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.
- 1.32 As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment.
- 2.27 As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.
- 5.11 I can independently access the parts of the premises I use and the environment has been designed to promote this.
- 5.20 I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes.





7.6 Respected

Polly Wolly Doodle Childcare: Respecting the needs of children and the local community through funded Early Learning and Childcare

Paula Preston, Childminder (Scottish Borders), was inspected as Polly Wolly Doodle Childcare on 7 March 2017 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support, environment, staffing and management and leadership. The inspection report states: "The inspection found respectful relationships with families promoted information sharing and positive working relationships. Children were respectfully listened to with a high level of involvement in making daily decisions and planning activities. For example, the children are able to request spontaneous walks and specific art activities. This contributed to them feeling motivated, valued and included with a sense of ownership of their time spent in the service."

Paula Preston:

"I have taken part in the supported childminding scheme in the Scottish Borders for the past four years. The scheme is a partnership between Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Childminding Association and offers funded childminding placements for children aimed at supporting family health and wellbeing.

Typical referrals come in to support families experiencing a range of issues including illness or bereavement, postnatal depression, anxiety, isolation, relationship difficulties, or to help with the arrival of a new baby. The scheme also seeks to support play and learning as well as socialisation, and is offered as an early, short-term intervention to prevent situations from becoming more long-lasting.

"Although it is only a small part of what I do, I have supported many families through community childminding, most often referred by health visitors. Referred families are treated the same as other families and I show respect for all my families by spending time getting to know them, asking about the children's likes and dislikes as well as needs, and identifying the things which will make a difference to each parent and child. For example, we offer support due to stress in the home and the subsequent impact on this for the family's wellbeing. Often this care gives families time to recuperate and reflect and subsequently improves the ability for a parent to meet their child's needs.

“Some children who are referred can show developmental delay, have social and behavioural issues, problems with speech and have no interaction with other children, which in turn is very worrying for the parents. So my team and I do whatever we can to help the child, as well as providing a break for mum to recharge her batteries. Children are given plenty of opportunity for play and socialisation with other children. There is lots of singing, dancing, rhyming games as well as educational games. Placements last for 24 weeks and by the end of the placement both parent and child are in a far better place and ready to carry on without support.

“I looked after a child who came from a chaotic home, with very little belongings and a struggling parent. Respecting the child’s feelings of self-worth, belonging and value, we visited the charity shop opposite us and allowed him to choose some games and puzzles that interested him. The child felt valued and respected and as a result changes in him became apparent. Mum said that he enjoyed coming to see us and she really valued the time he had with us as he was in an environment where he was cared for, supported and respected. Mum found great peace knowing that her child was given the things that she couldn’t give, even if only for a few hours a week. During this time mum could relax at home and find her feet. She developed a routine for herself and felt that she became a more confident parent to her child.

“In one case, I gave a child an opportunity to choose their own personal bedding for sleep time, as sleep was an issue at home. The child looked forward to sleep time and really enjoyed having their own personal relaxing space. We have seven beds at Polly Wolly Doodle and we feel that rest and relaxation is important to a child. Because of rest and sleep, mum found that the child’s behaviour improved at home and as a result the mother/child relationship improved. Mum could find time to start enjoying her children and enjoying her life better, and because of this dramatic home improvement, mum started applying for jobs and having the confidence to attend interviews. She now works full time and the children are happy and healthy in school.

“In addition to this, we had another child who did not like sleeping in the dark, so we created a ‘light room’ and moved around our whole setting to provide a space where they felt safe and could sleep with ease. Again, this child was able to choose bedsheets to make the space their own. One child’s



home life was a little over-stimulating. Respecting the child's needs and wishes, we redecorated all areas of our setting using light, calm colours, with a very natural feel. We added a lot softer seating to invite relaxation time. Not only did this benefit that one child but all our children, as it's important to encourage rest and relaxation.

"One mum noticed a huge difference in her child's attitude due to him being able to rest. When his behaviour improved at home so did their relationship. Mum could enjoy relaxation time with her son, reading stories and just sitting together, something that was never possible before."

"My team and I are always available for a chat at the beginning and the end of a session, to find out how things are going for the family and to pass on information. We also use daily diaries to give updates for younger children.

"Referrers are grateful to have something to offer families who they believe are at risk of becoming more serious cases. At the end of placements, referrers are asked to fill in feedback forms. One said recently: 'It is clear to those who work with him and his own family that the boy has thrived during his time in Paula's care. His skills of socialisation and speech have vastly improved and it has allowed him



to develop his confidence. In regard to the benefits for mum, supported childminding has allowed her the time and space to gain control back of her life after a period of significant stress and upset.'

"In another case, siblings who lived in a remote area had very little engagement with other children and very rarely got to play outside. Mum felt she wasn't in a place to help her children socialise and very rarely went outside herself. We ensured these children had regular access to community resources and take part in trips to local parks, libraries, the lake and woodland walks. We also took these children on visits to farms to enable them to see farm life as one of the girls was a huge fan of farm animals.

"We have recently purchased a six-seater push-along bus. This enables us to take the children further afield, as they love getting outdoors with their friends. It has become very popular in the community, Shopkeepers come out to wave at us as we go by, and it engages a lot of conversation with the elderly too

"This sort of local engagement encourages respect for the community and develops a sense of belonging among the children, something I cultivate through a number of other community activities.

"Every Friday a member of staff takes a group of children to the park for Football Friday. They play games with the children and incorporate fun exercises. The local football team have gotten to know our children well, and are always very friendly towards us. The children in our care love their connection to football. We have pitch-side advertising – the children have a huge sense of excitement when they see it and it makes them feel a part of something.

"The minded children are often taken out into the community – we have trips to local businesses which encourage children to interact with the community and to also enjoy it. Our latest trip to the local bank ended with each child receiving a piggy bank. We recently attended the local Volunteer Hall for a community lunch. This lunch takes place on the first Wednesday of every month. The children enjoyed soup and a sandwich and everyone who attended loved seeing the children and their big red bus. The community lunch helps to ensure the hall remains open, as it is a community asset, and the older people there really enjoy interacting with the young children.

"The children get involved in the annual Christmas Gift Box appeal and Cash for Kids. The children and parents like to get involved and it's a good way to teach them to give to the less fortunate.

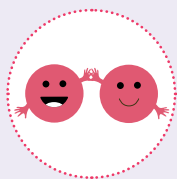
"We host regular coffee mornings, inviting families along to join in. This has been popular and is getting so big now that the last time we had one we had to put tables and chairs in the garden. We bake our own scones and decorate our playroom like a café. We charge £2 entry and all the funds go towards local charities and new toys. The children get a lot out of fundraising and it's even better when they can see the fruits of their labour.

“The children also take part in gaining ECO School awards, gaining Bronze and Silver. They enjoy learning about their environment and how to take care of it.

“I can offer 600 hours early learning and childcare to eligible two-year-olds and this has meant that in some cases families have been able to extend their time with me by up to a year, helping them to prepare their child for attending nursery at age three. Taking the children to the nursery setting to pick up and drop off other childminded children helps to familiarise younger children with the setting, and being away from their own families in a home-based environment helps them to prepare for the transition to nursery.”

From this practice example, childminders could consider:

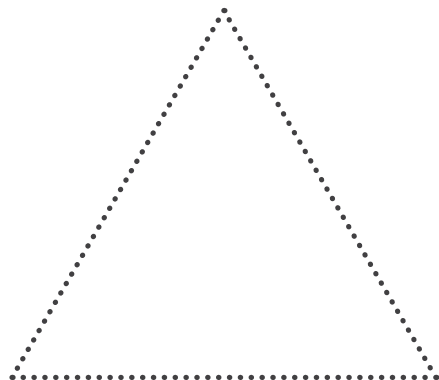
- How do I help children develop self-respect and respect for others?
- Can I help children in my care feel more valued and develop a greater sense of belonging?
- How can I give children more choice and enhance their ability to make decisions?
- Can I involve children more involved in agreeing rules for our behaviour?

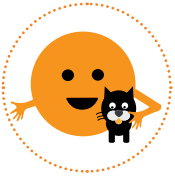


The ‘Respected’ wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as:
“Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.”

For ‘Respected’, the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 1.1 I am accepted and valued whatever my needs, ability, gender, age, faith, mental health status, race, background or sexual orientation.
- 1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.
- 2.11 My views will always be sought and my choices respected, including when I have reduced capacity to fully make my own decisions.
- 2.12 If I am unable to make my own decisions at any time, the views of those who know my wishes, such as my carer, independent advocate, formal or informal representative, are sought and taken into account.
- 2.13 If a decision is taken against my wishes, I am supported to understand why.
- 2.22 I can maintain and develop my interests, activities and what matters to me in the way that I like.
- 3.3 I have agreed clear expectations with people about how we behave towards each other, and these are respected.





7.7 Responsible

Westside Minder: Developing independence through shared activities

Maeve M. Hindson, Childminder (Isle of Lewis), was inspected as Westside Minder on 6 February 2017 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support and environment and 'very good' for management and leadership. Inspectors found that she strongly encouraged independence and provided opportunities for choice. She explained how older children are encouraged to access and prepare snacks, meals and drinks as they would at home, and are expected to care for and tidy the equipment used as they would at home. She explained to inspectors: "Although I accompany children when walking to and from school I encourage them to make the decision as to whether the road is safe to cross. They are taught how to check and why we check in this particular way, and it is gratifying to witness them teaching this to the younger children."

Maeve M. Hindson:

"I live in a rural village on the Isle of Lewis and provide childcare for various children in the local area, including three sisters: Ceit (three), Chloe (seven) and Caragh (nine). The girls live very close by and I look after them four afternoons a week after school, and also one evening. This enables their mother to attend college on a full-time basis, and take part in a practical evening class.

"I encourage the children in my care to take responsibility for aspects of our daily routines, where possible, in order to promote and develop their independence. At snack time, for example, the younger children will clear rubbish into the bin, while the older children will prepare food. They enjoy making choices about what they eat, and when we discuss the snacks they'd like to have the following week, there is always space for a natural discussion about good nutrition.

"Once a week, the three sisters stay for supper. This has quickly become their favourite visit of the week as they are able to prepare our meal. We plan these meals one month at a time, taking into account special dates such as Burns Night, time constraints and nutritional balance. For example, we check: does this meal give us enough energy? Can we add something to make it even better?"

“The home from home environment that I can provide as a childminder enables the children to take part in shared family activities they may experience in their own homes. The children, including Ryan (eight), handle raw ingredients, learn how their favourite meals are put together and practise techniques such as chopping and mashing. The cooking skills developed are carried into their own homes. The older two girls are now confident enough to prepare simple, healthy meals for the rest of the family.

“There are so many natural opportunities to pass on knowledge when cooking together as choice after choice presents itself. Should we grill or fry? Do we need to wash or remove the skin? We use vegetables from the garden where possible, so the girls now know how to recognise an onion in the ground.

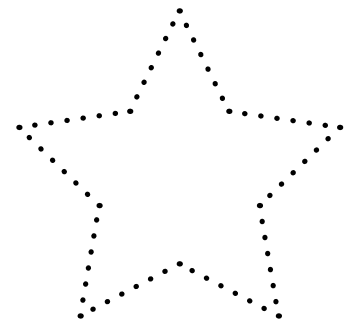
“Use of our vegetable plot has helped the girls to develop an interest in the garden. Initially they asked to take responsibility for the watering, but this soon turned into talk of a flowerbed of their own. This has become a long-term project that children of all ages have had a hand in. Toddlers in my care during the day helped to dig the borders, I took the three sisters to a local polytunnel to choose and buy flowers on a budget, and my after school mindees did all the planting over a couple of days. The sense of ownership the children have over this part of the garden is evident. When we get home and the first thing they do is pick up watering cans and look for weeds.

“Some after-school children spotted rubbish in the ditches as we walked home. The discussion around this led to me calling the local authority Waste Aware facility when we got home, to organise the provision of litter picks. We completed two litter collections in the village that same month, and were joined by two members of the community who saw what we were doing and wanted to get involved.

“The flexibility that comes with childminding allows me to be responsive to the children’s interests and ideas. This type of childcare lends itself so well to a ‘can do’ mentality.



“The continued use of outdoor spaces also helps to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, and we are able to engage with and make the most out of our unique local environment. Healthy lifestyle choices are promoted mainly by example. We choose to walk rather than use the car when the weather is dry. We have a large community hall booked once a week for sporting activities and the children love the spaciousness of the hall and the freedom to run around and use toys. Although I accompany them when walking to and from school, I encourage them to make the decision as to whether the road is safe to cross. They are taught how to check and why we check in this particular way, and it is gratifying to witness them teaching this to the younger children.”





Lizzie Bizzie: Providing funded hours in partnership for three- and four-year-olds

Elizabeth Taylor, Childminder (Scottish Borders), was inspected as Lizzie Bizzie on 30 September 2016 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support, environment, and management and leadership. Inspectors considered it clear that children had excellent opportunities to be included, respected and feel comfortable in her care. They praised her use of 'worry bags' for children who were apprehensive about transition to nursery or school and noted that she spoke with compassion and sensitivity about making this a positive and exciting experience for them. Children had excellent opportunities to be included and active as the childminder listened to their ideas, shared them on a 'good ideas board' and put them into practice. Inspectors noted that children had been included in planning the outdoor garden area which offered a great variety of resources to stimulate their imagination and experience a wide range of natural materials in play. Children were involved in risk assessment in their play, both in the home and on outings.

Elizabeth Taylor:

"I like to put responsible citizenship at the heart of my childminding business and I work hard to raise the profile of childminding and the role that childminders can play in the community, as well as creating opportunities for even the youngest children to be part of the communities in which they live.

"I have been childminding for 12 years and I make the outdoors, including the local woods, a key focus of my setting. Children delight in showing new people around 'their' woods. They give visitors instructions such as 'look up to check if branches are going to fall', and 'we can go as far as that tree over there and these bushes here so Lizzie can see us',.

"Our small numbers allow for spontaneity – recently I had planned to celebrate Chinese New Year but the children said they wanted to go to the woods. Being a childminder, that wasn't a problem – off we went with our camping stove and cooked the noodles in the fresh air, had our stories and did our celebrating outside instead. The beauty is that they could all participate at their own level, from the one-year-old to the four-year-old.

"I tailor my service to the children I work with – for example responding to one child's anxiety by devising a 'worry bag' available to all children, who could put their worries into it, and helping all the

children to discuss the worries together. Some of the older children would write a worry themselves, while the younger ones might come with a worry they had told a parent or an older sibling who had then written it down for them. Worries became something that weren't hidden – the children realised we all have worries sometimes and saw that talking about them could help. I hope this is something they will take through life.

"I also use a 'good ideas board' for planning. I've tried all sorts of ways of involving children in planning, but sometimes the simplest things work the best and this is certainly true of the 'good ideas board'. It gives the children control and helps me provide activities for them that they want to engage in and enjoy – win, win!

"In the past three years I have taken part in a pilot project, delivering government-funded early learning and childcare to three- and four-year-olds. I have hugely enjoyed participating in the project. Childminders offer a flexible service and can respond to the needs of individual families and children. We offer a 'home from home' approach – nurturing the children in a warm and welcoming environment with the same individual caring for the child each day, and with our smaller numbers we are well able to integrate into the local community and all it has to offer. We can easily adapt plans – for example if a child arrives at the setting feeling tired and we have planned a walk to the woods then we can react to their needs and complete the walk another day. If a child arrives and announces it is a family member's birthday and they would like to make them a surprise cake we can all walk to the local shop, purchase ingredients and make the cake. There's such a lot of real learning available in a childminding setting and we should embrace this.

"The early learning and childcare pilot has very clearly demonstrated that childminders like myself are very well placed and able to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence framework as is currently offered in larger and more formal nursery settings. Parents deserve choice and above all children deserve to have the opportunity to access childcare that best meets their needs."



Comments from children:

"You are the best childminder Lizzie."

"You let us do such fun stuff Lizzie."

"We get to choose what we do with Lizzie."

"We do really fun stuff like raft building."

Comments from parents:

"My daughter who is now five years old started at the setting aged three and a half. This has given her an opportunity to be with Lizzie in a safe, happy environment. She is able to mix with other children and experience new adventures in the woods or at the farm, vets, bus rides etc. She receives lots of attention and has been able to build a warm and trusting relationship with her carer. Lizzie provides daily updates on the day's challenges and achievements and links this to the Curriculum for Excellence which she clearly has a good understanding of.

"My daughter did not settle in the nursery environment and was extremely distressed. This led me to change and use a childminder for the 600 hours early learning and childcare. It has brought huge benefits to my child which have included greater emotional stability; improved sleeping patterns; greater resilience around change; increased confidence; greater independence and my child being in a

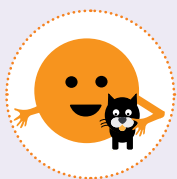


suitable environment to develop her capacities. For me, the greatest benefit is having a happy and relaxed child. My childminder offers a flexible childcare service which suits working patterns, therefore allowing me to work.

“Childminders are a valuable service and would be vital in the delivery of early learning and childcare hours, particularly following the 2020 increase. Families should have options with regards to early learning and childcare and flexibility to use these hours in a childminding environment if they feel this best meets the family and child’s needs.”

From these practice examples, childminders could consider:

- Can I encourage children to become more responsible and have greater control of their actions and how they choose to spend their time?
- How can I involve children more in the running of my childminding service?
- Can children have a greater role in helping with daily routines?
- How can I encourage children to responsible citizens and members of the local community?



The ‘Responsible’ wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: **“Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them.”**

For ‘Responsible’, the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 2.15 I am enabled to resolve conflict, agree rules and build positive relationships with other people as much as I can.
- 2.21 I take part in daily routines, such as setting up activities and mealtimes, if this is what I want.
- 2.24 I make informed choices and decisions about the risks I take in my daily life and am encouraged to take positive risks which enhance the quality of my life.
- 2.25 I am helped to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour and decisions.
- 4.7 I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership.
- 4.8 I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve.



7.8 Included

Wendy Holt: Inclusive out-of-school care in a home environment

Wendy Holt, Childminder (Clackmannanshire), was inspected on 2 November 2016 with grades of 'excellent' for the quality of care and support, environment, and management and leadership. Inspectors praised her excellent relationships with children and parents and noted that these help her involve them in a meaningful way in what she provides as they can easily have their say. Inspectors said: "She sees what is good in people and in situations and she helps children to see this too. It helps them over worries and things they are unsure about which makes them more confident and happy." Inspectors noted that she had firmly established the round-table discussion at snack time as a thoroughly inclusive and entirely safe way for each child to talk openly about the highlights of their day and to off load any unhappy or concerning experiences. "The group jointly offered solutions showing the strong sense of responsibility toward each other which the childminder had promoted the children to develop," they noted.

Wendy Holt:

"I live in a semi-rural village in central Scotland and look after Noah, a 10-year-old boy who has been diagnosed with autism. Noah has had few changes in his out-of-school care until last year when his parents had to rethink their choice of service. Originally Noah attended my service for only one day a week but having experienced the type of care I provide Noah he now attends full-time.

"Noah is a fully integrated member of my community of cared for children, there are 11 other children aged from four to 12 years attending throughout the week and Noah has a positive relationship with each of them.

"Feeling included, comfortable and relaxed in my home is paramount and I create this by greeting each child individually whenever I meet them – at the front door or at the school playground. Noah will wish me goodbye and says: 'I'll be thinking of you' when he goes into class in the morning. In the evening, Noah says 'goodbye my treasure'. There is a routine the children are familiar with when we arrive at the house after school and Noah can remind younger members: 'shoes and coats away and hand wash before snack time'.

"We all take turns at sharing our news at snack time, the best bits and worst bits, and the children peer mentor one another. This tends to be the time when Noah will share any concerns he has about the day without the intensity of a one-to-one with an adult 'fishing' for information. I can pass this on to his parents verbally but backed up with the daily diary. Having appropriate and acceptable behaviour and language expectations builds cohesion in our community which some children have thrived in for seven years.

"Noah is usually relaxed and not agitated while he is with me but if he is anxious I do my best to relieve his anxieties. For instance, one morning he had left a school book at home and was convinced his teachers would be cross and would shout at him. With Noah's permission, I wrote a letter to his teacher explaining his fears and then texted his parents to let them know what I had done and kept a copy for them and one for his file.

"On another occasion, Noah's low tolerance threshold for noise meant that after a music lesson he came out of school complaining of a headache. We have a short walk from school to the house and it helped to calm Noah and then he took his time to relax away from other children until he felt better. Noah responds very well when time is taken to listen to him, understand his anxieties and to help to provide a solution.

"Noah is very creative and enjoys drawing and arts and crafts. We have a homemade height chart on the kitchen door where we record all the children's growth throughout the year. Noah spent hours decorating the tree on the chart with sun and clouds, rainbows and butterflies, rabbits and flowers including painstakingly gluing magical glittery stars all over the rainbow. On other occasions, Noah has made robots from the junk modelling box and a wonderful top hat from paper and a beard from old net curtains.

"I am fortunate to have enough space inside and outside so that the children have the freedom to choose activities as a group or as an individual and all the children are comfortable in making requests from what snacks they would like to toys or activities they want to access. The level of inclusion I practise makes my service a genuine home away from home."



Louise Hutchison, mother of Noah (10):

"Noah's day always begins with a warm smile and a 'how are you?' from Wendy. He feels very welcome from the minute he sees her through the front door. The environment is calm and not noisy which is ideal for Noah's sensory issues.

"His routine is well-established - this is something Noah requires to get him through each day. He retains a degree of independence through hanging up his own jacket and bag, and putting his shoes in the box. He is at home in the playroom and the kitchen and feels that he can make choices as to what activities to do in either room.

"Noah is included at all times, from joining in conversations at snack time to playing with other children and conversing with Wendy.

"Noah's creativity is always encouraged. We are regularly impressed by what he has been making and doing through the art work he brings home.

"The completion of a daily diary provides us with further detail as to what he has done during his day. It helps to highlight any anxieties Noah may have, as well as presenting details of new experiences he is having. In using this information, we are able to have additional conversations with him about his day at school and/or Wendy's.

"While he is playing and interacting with other children, Noah is also learning about cultural events in the calendar such as Halloween, Christmas, Shrove Tuesday, and Easter. He enjoys arts, crafts and food relating to these times. Snacks provided are very much to Noah's tastes as he loves fresh fruit and veg.

“Wendy maintains high standards of manners which are important to us and for Noah’s improving social interactions. She sets high expectations which we do ourselves – that we share similar beliefs is good in helping Noah to remain a polite boy.

“It is clear that Noah feels very comfortable, happy and welcomed at Wendy’s house. He looks forward to the next day and is able to tell Wendy this as he leaves her every day.

“As parents, we feel supported and secure in the knowledge that Noah is happy in Wendy’s care. Wendy has offered to attend review meetings where appropriate. Her significant experience of childminding and knowledge of children’s support needs presents all of us with a much-needed layer of reassurance in terms of caring for Noah and meeting his needs.”



Fiona Brinklow: Full-time care of a baby and inclusive activity

Fiona Brinklow, Childminder (Perth), was inspected on 21 November 2013 with grades of 'very good' for the quality of care and support, environment, and staffing. Inspectors found that the social skills of the children were also encouraged by joining with other childcare providers in the area, sharing days out and fun together. As members of the local library, children enjoyed activities such as Rhyme Time, where they learned about books, reading and joining in with action songs. Children planned activities from choices given, and during the summer children were offered a number of trips to a local theatre, beaches and picnics. Inspectors found: "Children would agree on an activity and this would be planned into their week."

Fiona Brinklow:

"I have been a childminder for 13 years and live in an area of Perth which has access to many outdoor areas and landmarks. I make full use of these areas of natural beauty with my minded children, often having great days at Scone Palace Gardens, letting children get close to nature.

"On a recent trip, the two youngest ones were just 12 months old. One had just started walking, while the other had yet to venture that far. However, both were taken out of their buggy and given the opportunity to participate in outdoor play and were delighted to do so.

"It was great being able to let the babies out of the pram in a safe environment where they could experience nature for themselves. All we needed was waterproofs and all the children were able to gain something from our trip.



"The children's ages doesn't mean that I have to curtail any of the outdoor activities. I carry out a thorough risk assessment prior to any trips taking place and am keen that babies will be able to interact and experience nature as the older children do, but in their own individual way.

"Although the risk assessment helps with planning, I am still learning on the go. The pine cones are one example – on our first trip to Scone Palace, there were very few pine cones lying on the ground. However, after strong winds the path and play area was littered with cones which all the children wanted to gather and play with. This included the babies as older children ensured that by bringing cones to them they would be able to join in. This resulted in the babies having far more interaction because there was so much more to see and feel. As a result of this, the children went off to explore new areas with the older children, given boundaries to which they could run ahead and play peekaboo with the younger ones. There was always something new to do or explore which was very much child-led. In addition, the older child felt confident enough to do a 'show and tell' at nursery the next day.

"This is one of the positive and unique aspects of childminding that includes children of all ages building empathy with the younger children - like an extended family."

"Not only did the older children keep an eye on what the babies were touching but also listened to what they were asking and brought objects for them to touch, feel and play with. This enhances everyone's learning experience of the great outdoors and kindles a love of nature from a very young age.

"When we first decided to go to Scone Palace I thought it would be good for the older ones to have some freedom but then I realised how safe it would be for the little ones and how much they could get out of the trip. Having other childminders there with me gave me the confidence to do this and I am so pleased that I did. Since then I have taken the little ones out more often as I have seen how much they enjoyed our day."

Karen Williamson, mother of Darcie (15 months):

“When Fiona said she was taking my daughter Darcie to Scone Palace, I thought that would be a nice wee walk for her in the pram, but when I saw the photos I was so impressed that Darcie was actually involved in the activities, filling her bucket and poking with sticks, getting down on the ground and stuck in. It was a delight to see that she was not just watching from the pram.”

From these practice examples, childminders could consider:

- How can I help an individual child be included as part of the group of children I look after?
- How can I involve the children I look after more in the local community?
- How can I children and their parents overcome any inequality and exclusion from wider society?



The ‘Included’ wellbeing indicator is described by Scottish Government as: “Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.”

For ‘Included’, the following Health and Social Care Standards are the most relevant for childminding:

- 2.19 I am encouraged and supported to make and keep friendships, including with people my own age.
- 3.25 I am helped to feel safe and secure in my local community.
- 4.2 The organisations that support and care for me help tackle health and social inequalities.
- 5.9 I experience care and support free from isolation because the location and type of premises enable me to be an active member of the local community if this is appropriate.

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the nutcracker



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