

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC005		
Name of Service:	A Step on the Ladder		
Address of Service:	St. Catherines N.S., Bishopstown Avenue, Model Farm Road, Cork, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	T12 TF74		
Name of Registered Provider:	Karen O'Regan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	31/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM Not assessed
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork		
Inspection undertaken by:	C Stokes		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		
Authority to Inspect			
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).			
Conditions if applicable	N/A		

Description of service

A Step on the Ladder is a private sessional service which is located in a prefabricated building on the grounds of St. Catherine's National School in Bishopstown, a suburb of Cork City. The service is registered to operate from 9am to 12.30pm from Monday to Friday. The service has one care room and has the use of the adjoining outdoor play areas, at times when not in use by the school.

Staffing

The registered provider is service based and works directly with the preschool children and is assisted by the deputy person in charge. Both adults have a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re-occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice under Regulation 23 in relation to the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25. A response was received from the registered provider which mitigated the risk identified.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The registered provider was the named person in charge (PIC) of operating the service.
- (b) In addition to the person in charge (PIC), there was a deputy person in charge. The PIC or a deputy were always on the premises.
- (2) (a)(b) The staff recruitment files for 2 adults were examined as part of this inspection. When the recruitment files were reviewed two written and appropriately validated references 4 sources other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for both adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Neither of the two adults required out of jurisdiction police vetting.
- (4) A certificate of qualification in Early Childhood care and Education at QQI levels 6 & 8 on the National Qualification framework was on file for the adults.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (3) The ratio of adults to children was adequate with 2 adults working with 20 children in the sessional service, within a ratio of 1:11.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

- Adults were observed to interact and encourage/assist the children to make the snack time a social occasion, while encouraging independence.
- Children always had access to their water bottles.
- The children were all trained using the toilet and were supported appropriately by the adults to use the toilet.
- There was an area in the care room to provide for the children's need for rest and relaxation during the morning.
- The setting placed significant emphasis on outdoor play and learning to meet the needs of children in their setting, with daily outdoor play incorporated into the session on one or more occasions during the morning. Therefore, the children's need for mobility was met in this setting.
- Adults were observed to assist children in a caring and professional manner to integrate, transition and enjoy the playful opportunities on offer.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- External doors and internal doors were secured.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were inaccessible.
- The outdoor area was secured, and no hazards were observed.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing was observed prior to snack and hot water and soap was available for hand washing at the sinks.
- Paper towels were available for hand drying, and waste was disposed of appropriately in pedal operated lidded bins within the toilet area.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned down prior to snack time.
- A fridge was in place in the care room for the storage of perishable snacks.

Administration of Medication:

- No medicine was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Not applicable as the setting was a sessional service.

Fire Safety:

- No issues with fire safety were observed. The emergency exit route was clear of any obstructions and a fire point was obvious in the care room.

Outing:

- No outings were observed on the day of inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(2) (a)(b) The registered provider ensured that a fully equipped first aid box, was readily available/accessible in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) There was no adult on the premises trained in first aid available on the day of inspection. Neither of the 2 adults were trained in FAR (First Aid Response). This posed a risk to the safety of the children if First Aid was required. An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued under Regulation 23, Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child in relation to this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded to state that a FAR training course was booked for all staff and that the expiry date of the first aid training was added to the calendar with a 3-month reminder in advance of this date to prevent a recurrence of this issue.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider responded to the IAN with evidence of a booking for the 2 adults on the FAR (First Aid Response) training course in June 2024.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) There was a record of fire drills in the setting, the most recent drill was dated 30 May 2024
- (1) (b) There was a recent record of the maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, to indicate annual or more often servicing. The records dated to 17 November 2023 and 8 January 2024 respectively.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure was on display at the fire point in the playroom.