

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC053
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Name of Service:	Beehive Childcare and Montessori Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Gortnatrea, Berrings, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P12 Y271
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eileen Buckley
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	72	PM	60
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast & A McNamara
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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
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Description of service

Beehive Childcare and Montessori Pre-School was established in 2008 and operates as a privately owned full day care service. Options of sessional and part time care are also provided. While it is registered to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years, it currently caters for children from the age of four months. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, over a 38-week annual period. The afternoon sessional service from 1.30pm to 4.30pm is not currently in operation. The service operates throughout the year, excluding Christmas and public holidays, with registered daily opening hours from 7.30am to 6.00pm.

The childcare facility operates from a single storey, detached building, situated in the village of Berrings in Co. Cork. There are six care rooms in total, each with adjoining child sanitary facilities. The premises also includes two interconnecting sleep rooms, a kitchen and staff sanitary facilities. A wooden cabin beside the building is used as a combined office and staff area. The children have the use of two outdoor play areas; one at the front of the premises and one at the rear.

Staffing

There is a total of 28 adults employed at the setting. Twenty-two of these adults are involved in the direct care of the early years children. This includes the registered provider and one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. One adult works only with school age children. The five employees who do not work with children are ancillary staff and undertake roles such as administration, cooking, cleaning and general maintenance. In addition, four students were undertaking work placements at the time of inspection and all four were also employed part time; two with school age children, one as a cleaner and one as a cook.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and regulation 27 Supervision. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Pre pre-school room, the Baby room, the Toddler room and ECCE 1 and did not include ECCE 2 or the Wobbler room.

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

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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
 - (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.
- (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.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider had assigned a manager to oversee the operation of the childcare facility. Six named deputies were identified in writing.
 - (b) The person in charge was present when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the inspection process. The registered provider arrived during the morning.

- (c) The service had a management structure, which clearly outlined a named manager and deputy persons in charge.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the seven adults whose files had not been assessed previously were reviewed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) Twelve of the 14 required written and validated references were from past employers.
- (b) There were two written and validated references from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the seven staff. It was also noted that Garda vetting for an additional staff member had expired since the previous inspection and had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. However, a required Garda vetting renewal in respect of a second adult was unavailable. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Employment history records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was required for one of the adults and the relevant documentation was in place.
- (4) Four of the adults had each obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education and copies of the corresponding certificates were available. Childcare qualifications were not required in respect of the maintenance staff member, the student or the adult who worked only with school age children. Evidence of a relevant qualification was also available for an employee who had previously worked at the service as a student.
- (7)
- (a) A staff training policy was available and the person in charge advised that new staff members were provided with the service's policies and procedures upon commencing their roles. Subsequent discussion with two of the adults who had recently started working at the setting, confirmed this practice.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were assessed for compliance and were deemed to meet the necessary requirements:

- Accident and Incident policy
- Healthy Eating policy
- Staff Training policy

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate amount of adults responsible for the direct care of the children.

(2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection met the requirements of the regulations as follows:

Morning:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Pre Pre-school (2 – 3 years)	11 attending part time or full day care	2 + 1 student
Baby (7 months – 1 year)	2 attending part time or full day care	2
Toddler (1 ½ - 2 years)	8 attending part time or full day care	3
ECCE 1 (2 ½ – 3 ½ years)	21 (sessional service)	4
ECCE 2 (3 – 4 ½ years)	21 (sessional service)	3
Wobbler (11 – 16 months)	9 attending part time or full day care	3 + 1 student

Afternoon:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Pre Pre-school (2 – 3 years)	11 attending part time or full day care	2
Baby (7 months – 1 year)	3 attending part time or full day care	2
Toddler (1 ½ - 2 years)	8 attending part time or full day care	2

ECCE 1 (2 ½ – 3 ½ years)	18 attending part time or full day care	4
ECCE 2 (3 – 4 ½ years)	13 attending part time or full day care	2
Wobbler (11 months – 1 ½ years)	7 attending part time or full day care	2 + 1 student

(8)(a) At least two adults were present throughout the inspection period.

Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a)

A sample review of the staff roster indicated that on the following dates, a minimum of two adults were not consistently present throughout the hours of operation, as required:

- On 2/9/24, 4/9/24, 5/9/24, 6/9/24, 10/9/24 and 16/9/24, only one adult was present in the service from 5.45pm to 6.00pm.

During discussion with the inspectors, the person in charge also stated that on Fridays, only the registered provider was present between 5.30pm and 6.00pm, with approximately two children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written reply, the person in charge stated that there are now two adults rostered during the hours of operation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the staff roster and a copy of the policy on Accidents and Incidents, which states that *There are two qualified staff members present in the service at all times while children are in attendance, regardless of child:adult ratio requirements.*

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (j) Ten administration of medication records were sampled and were found to meet the necessary requirements. Written parental consent for staff to administer medication had also been obtained.
- (k) A total of 12 accident and incident records were sampled and deemed satisfactory.

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

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- Meals were appropriately timed so that there were no gaps longer than two hours in between; the inspector was advised that breakfast was usually from 7.30am to 9.00am, in ECCE 1, children were observed finishing their mid-morning snack at 10.30am, lunch was served in the Pre pre-school room just before midday and an afternoon snack was observed in the Toddler room shortly after 2.00pm. It was also reported that an evening snack was accommodated at 4.00pm.
- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day, should they become thirsty at any stage.
- Nappy changing was attended to at frequent intervals and as required. For the older children, the location of the sanitary facilities, which adjoined the care rooms, enabled them to access and utilise these facilities in an independent manner.

- Rest areas were incorporated into each of the playrooms, should any child wish to take some time to relax.
- The available space within the care rooms supported the children to explore their environment and to freely engage with materials. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities; both outdoor play spaces were well utilised at the time of inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- During mealtimes, a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere was evident, with plenty of time afforded to children. For example, in the Baby room, the adults spoke to the children in kind, gentle tones as they attended to spoon feeding and bottle feeding. In the Pre pre-school room, songs which encouraged children to take their time eating were played and staff were noted to sit with the children as they ate.
- Children were supported to resolve minor conflicts before such disagreements escalated, as was observed during outdoor play time, when one of the adults intervened and discussed the issue with the children.
- Staff in the Baby room outlined the various methods of communication used to exchange information with parents or guardians. Examples included informal discussion at arrival and collection times, phone calls and a digital application, which was used to record children's activities of daily living, such as food intake, sleep and nappy changing. Details of medication administered and accidents and incidents were also communicated via the application, following a recent transition from paper-based records.
- It was reported that staff in each room held monthly meetings and management carried out staff appraisals approximately once per term. Minutes from the most recent appraisals were presented for review.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The service provided meals and snacks for the children who availed of part time and full day care. The person in charge advised that the children who attended the ECCE sessional service brought their own snacks, but were also offered additional snacks by the service.
- There was a four-week menu plan in place at the setting. The meals listed were varied, suitable and nutritious and were prepared in the onsite kitchen, by designated cooks.
- During discussion, the cook outlined that meals were adapted according to the age and developmental stage of the children. For example, meals for the younger children were liquidised, as per staff requests and fruit was chopped into small, bite size pieces. This was subsequently observed in practice on the day of inspection.
- The lunch meal consisted of chicken curry with rice and in the afternoon, the children were offered homemade banana bread and a selection of chopped fruit. Water was available as a drink.
- Staff were aware that some of the children had food intolerances, as was noted during discussion. In the Toddler room, said information was displayed in writing and it was observed that a labelled serving plate was used for one of the children, so that staff could easily recognise the meal intended for the child.
- The inspectors were advised that if a child expressed hunger outside of the routine mealtimes, they would be provided with a snack.

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:

- Entry to the building via the two entrance/exit doors was controlled by an intercom system.
- Staff handbags were stored out of the children's reach, on high-level hooks.
- Cables and flexes were inaccessible to children.
- A soft-landing mat was provided underneath the low-level climbing frame and slide in the Pre pre-school room.
- High-level shelving was used to store cleaning agents.
- Fruit for the children's snack break was observed to be chopped by kitchen staff, before being taken to the care rooms and in the Pre pre-school room, a staff member was noted to chop up chicken pieces, before the lunch meal was served to the children.

Infection Control:

- Children's wash hand basins were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot pedal operated bins. The children were observed to wash their hands after having their nappies changed and before mealtimes.
- Single use aprons and gloves were available and worn during nappy changing routines and the adult who was observed undertaking nappy changing, washed her hands after the nappy changing procedure.
- Individually labelled storage was provided for the children's toiletries.
- A labelled soother board was in use in the Pre pre-school room, to store the children's soothers.
- All cot mattresses were either waterproof, or had been fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, which helped to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- The practice of administering medication was not observed by the inspectors. However, details regarding the medication which had been administered to a child earlier in the day, were recorded in full and met the requirements.
- It was noted that said child's medication was in-date, labelled and was safely stored in a location that was inaccessible to children.

Safe Sleep:

- The air temperatures of the sleep rooms were noted to be within the required range of 18°C to 22°C for children aged over 12 months. A temperature of 21°C was recorded in the main sleep room and the inner sleep room was recorded at 20.9°C.
- Staff members maintained electronic sleep records in relation to children’s breathing, colour and position. The adults were also noted to remain in the sleep rooms with the children and were observed to physically check the children as they slept.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were free from obstruction.

Outing:

- An outing from the service did not take place.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The Garda vetting disclosure available for one of the adults was not dated within the previous three years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’. It was acknowledged that, at the time of inspection, updated vetting had been applied for and was awaited. This was also found at the previous inspection on 12 February 2024. The CAPA response at the time outlined that, as a preventive measure, managers would check the staff folders at the end of August each year and note any staff that required vetting renewal. However, this was insufficient as the vetting had expired in March.
2. The risk of unauthorised access to the outdoor play environment at the front of the building was not prevented. The gated entry from the public car park had two bolt locks at varying heights on the interior side, with an additional chain around the top bolt. However, the lower bolt had been secured open with a cable tie and as there was a gap between the gate frame and the hedging, the chain around the upper latch could be accessed and opened through reaching around the gate frame. This issue was also found at the previous inspection. It was noted that the chain around the upper latch had been installed as an additional security measure since the previous inspection, however, it was still possible to open the chain and gain entry, while the children played outdoors.
3. Two unsecured drawers in the Pre pre-school room contained items which posed a risk of injury to a child. There were plastic aprons in the lower drawer and disposable gloves and a roll of plastic in the top drawer, which posed a risk of suffocation to a child. A pair of scissors were also accessible in the top

drawer. It was acknowledged that a restrictive opening device was installed on the lower drawer once this was brought to the attention of a staff member and that the items were removed from the other drawer.

Infection Control:

4. During discussion, staff confirmed that perishable snacks belonging to the children who attended the ECCE care rooms were not refrigerated before the mid-morning snack, as required, which increased the risk of food spoilage.
5. Hygienic storage of sleep equipment and linen was not ensured in the Pre pre-school room, which increased the risk of cross infection. Thirteen stackable beds were openly stored by one of the walls in the care room and were accessible to children. Fitted sheets were already attached to nine of the beds, which further increased the risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The written reply stated that vetting is now in place for the staff member. As a preventive measure, checking the dates of staff vetting is now listed on the managers checklist and will be completed every two months.
2. The lower bolt is now in operation again and as this cannot be accessed by the general public from the car park, only staff will be able to admit parents or visitors, when the children are playing in this outdoor area. A quote for a keypad operated gate lock is also in process.
3. A child safety lock has been fitted to the drawer. As a preventive measure, ensuring the safe storage of hazardous items has been added to the managers hazard checklist.

Infection Control:

4. There is now a new refrigerator in the hallway, for storing the children's perishable snacks. Reference to the storage of snacks in the refrigerator has also been added to the Healthy Eating policy.
5. The reply stated that a new storage cupboard has been ordered to store the floor beds, along with canvas bags for each individual sheet. As a preventive measure, ensuring that beds are stored in the designated storage cupboard and that all sheets are removed and stored in individualised bags, has been added to the Infection Control policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of the required Garda vetting and a copy of the manager's hazard checklist.

2. Photographic evidence.
3. Photographic evidence and a copy of the manager's hazard checklist.

Infection Control:

4. A photograph of the fridge and a copy of the Healthy Eating policy, which states that *Perishable foods brought from home, will be labelled, and stored in the designated refrigerator at time of arrival until snack time commences*
5. A copy of the order confirmation for the storage unit.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the person in charge have addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 23.

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

- (1) FAR certification was available for 14 of the adults who worked at the service and review of the staff roster indicated that at least one of these adults was on duty at the service during the hours of operation.
- (2)
- (a) The service had five first aid boxes and overall, sufficient first aid supplies were maintained.
 - (b) The first aid kits were available at all times, should they be required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

- During observed mealtime routines in the Pre pre-school and Toddler rooms, it was noted that staff members sat alongside and supervised the children as they ate and drank. Children in the Baby room were also supervised while being spoon fed or bottle fed by the adults responsible for their care.
- Adults in the Pre pre-school room ensured that children were appropriately supervised during handwashing and nappy changing routines.
- Staff were observed to remain in the sleep rooms with children as they slept. Children in the Pre pre-school and ECCE 1 rooms who were facilitated to sleep on stackable beds, were also supervised while sleeping.
- Staff were noted to communicate with one another in relation to the movement of children. For example, an adult who was based in the outdoor area, was noted to advise the staff member who was based in the care room, when one of the children was going indoors to use the toilet.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Compliance Information

(d) A recent incident that occurred at the childcare facility was duly notified to the Agency within the required three working days. A copy of said Notification of Incident was also available at the service.