

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC066		
Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings		
Address of Service:	Caheragh, Drimoleague, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P47 FN27		
Name of Registered Provider:	Celeste Shorten		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	28/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM 12
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23X440		
Inspection undertaken by:	M.O' Reilly		
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

Bright Beginnings is an established community based early years' service that first opened in 2009. It is registered to accommodate children aged from 0 to 6 years. Daily opening hours are from 8am to 6:30pm each day Monday to Friday.

The service is situated in a purpose built, single storey detached property, nestled behind the rural village church in Caheragh, Drimoleague, Co Cork. The setting provides two care rooms, toilet and nappy changing facilities, a sleep room, kitchen and staff room and a staff office. The children have access to multiple outdoor play spaces. There is a sufficient staff parking and set down parking for the children to arrive and depart safely from the service with their families.

Staffing

There were thirteen staff employed to work directly with the early years children including the childcare manager/person in charge who relieved staff for lunch breaks in the service. The registered provider is not service based. The adults who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or hold a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)

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.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) There is a named person in charge and named deputies to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived at the premise on the day of the unannounced inspection and was available throughout the inspection process.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service with a childcare manager and two named deputies to deputise when the manager was not in the service

(2)

Fourteen staff files were reviewed. This included the registered provider and staff employed in the service.

(a) There were twenty validated references on file from past employers in respect of the adults.

(b) There were eight validated references from sources other than past employers in respect of the adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the fourteen adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Four police vetting records were available on file for the four adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more, while over the age of eighteen years.

(4)

The adults who worked directly with the children hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education or hold a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)

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.

Compliance Information

(1)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in each room on day of the inspection.

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in each playroom. It was observed that the the person in charge relieved staff for lunch in the Creche Room at time of inspection.

Creche Room

There were ten children present in the morning and seven children in the afternoon. One child was aged under twelve months, one child was aged between one and two years, seven children were aged between two and three years and one child was aged over three years with 3 adults in attendance.

Playschool Room

There were twenty children in attendance in the morning and fifteen in the afternoon. The children were aged from two years ten months to six years with two adults in attendance in the morning. Three adults were in attendance from 12:30 to 15:00 and then two adults were present in the playschool room.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

A sample of 20 of the children's registration forms. were reviewed and found to contain the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

- The children appeared to enjoy the nutritious food provided by their parents and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace. Staff members were readily available to provide assistance, as well as providing individual feeding bibs for the younger children.
- Shortly after eating lunch, the children in the Creche room were facilitated to sleep as needed, during a scheduled rest period. Children who did not wish to sleep were accommodated to participate in quieter activities and the atmosphere was relaxed for this quiet period.
- Staff were observed attentive to the personal care needs of the children for example staff were observed to assist children to clean their noses.
- Child height hooks and storage shelving was available in the playschool to encourage independent dressing and organisation of their personal belongings.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child as observed during caring duties, facilitating play and one-to-one engagement.
- The staff advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents, and staff record the details of their child's day while in the service for example meals/snacks, activities and sleep in the creche and the record is given to the parents of the younger children at pick up time. Key observations on the children were included in each child's journal in the playschool room. Phone calls, a messaging application and informal face to face discussion at arrival and collection times, were also incorporated.
- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.
- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve minor conflicts.
- The theme for the week was the farm in association with the playschool outing to a farm which was taking place in the coming weeks. This included the farm environment; the farmer, farm safety and the song Old McDonald had a farm. One of the of the tabletop activities observed at time of inspection for example was, each child was given a picture of the farm which included animals and equipment associated with the farm. The staff were discussing farm safety with the children on day of inspection.

Physical and Material Environment

- Both rooms in operation were child friendly, bright, and spacious and laid out with special interest areas with materials largely accessible to the children.
- The Creche room had adequate space and soft areas for children to roll and crawl and walk. The creche had a cordoned area for younger children so that they could explore their environment in a safe way and avail of the age-appropriate equipment such as, pull along toys, handheld toys, sound making materials and construction.
- The Playschool room had interest areas that included, a wide range of tabletop activities and games to encourage companionable interaction, there were cars and trucks, a fine motor skills area, a home corner suitably furnished with dolls, buggies, dress up and small utensils to prompt imagination and pretend play.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available in each room.
- Rest areas were available to the children in both the creche and playschool to allow the children to opt out of play activities and relax if they so wished.
- Walls of the care rooms were decorated with birthday charts, family photographs and posters.
- Both care rooms had access to secured outdoor play areas which had safety matted areas, lawned areas and a hard course for the use of ride on toys.
- There was a wide range of ride on and push toys, playhouses, picnic benches, a mud kitchen, balance apparatus, see saws and slides to encourage the children to master gross motor skill play.

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 parents/guardians of the children that attended full day care all had a hot meal at lunch time which was reheated on site. The food was served to the children by the adults in the service. The food for the mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack was nutritious, with age-appropriate portion sizes for the age of the children
- The children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery at snack and mealtimes.
- Fridges were available for the storage of perishable items located in the staff kitchen.

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:

- Upon the inspectors' arrival at the service, the main entrance gate to the outdoor play area and entrance door was found to have been adequately secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- First aid boxes were appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Restrictive opening devices were in place on the low-level cupboards in both playrooms. enough to prevent cross infection.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The outdoor area was noted to be fully enclosed and secured.

Infection Control:

- There was liquid soap and paper towels in the hand washing facilities across the service.
- The tables in the creche and playschool room were sanitised prior to lunch and snack mealtimes.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before the mid-morning snack, lunch and the mid-afternoon snack and after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play in both rooms.
- Within the nappy changing areas, there was neat and tidy individually labelled storage for the children's toiletries.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Non-contact bins were available for the storage of used nappies.
- The colourful play mats in the creche and playschool rooms were clean.
- Soothers were suitably contained in individual storage containers and labelled with the child's name when not in use and cleaned in a steam sterilizer when required.

Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were recorded in writing for each sleeping child by the adults monitoring the sleeping children in the Creche. The records reflected physical checks in relation to the colour, breathing and position of children, as they slept.

- The children aged under 2 years rest needs were facilitated in one designated sleep room for the children in the Creche room. There were adequate numbers of standard cots with safety mattresses for children under two that required a sleep with individual accompanying bed linen.
- Each of the safety mattresses was covered with a waterproof mattress cover.
- The children over two rest needs were met during a planned sleeping period when floor beds were set up in one area in the Creche room.
- There were a sufficient number of suitable floor beds available with designated suitable bed linen for each child over 2 years who wanted a sleep while attending the service. There was an adequate distance between each floor bed. There was no child that required a sleep in the playschool room on day of inspection.
- The air temperature reading of the sleep room and the Creche room where the children were observed sleeping was within the normal range of 18°C in the sleep room and 19.6°C in the Creche. Accepted air temperature range is between 16°C and 20°C for rooms where children are sleeping.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. The door handles were in poor repair in the cupboard under the sink in the nappy changing room located beside the Creche. There were steel type bars protruding from the cupboard doors where door handles used to be attached, that had the potential risk of causing injury to a child.

Infection Control:

3. While regular supervised hand washing was observed at time of inspection, throughout the service, water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled but the warm water was not spontaneous and was not sufficiently warm enough when hand washing to prevent the potential risk of cross infection. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets and nappy changing areas were between 10 °C to 15 °C at 10:00 hours, 12:30 and 14:00 hours on day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

4. One standard cot located in the sleep room was observed up against a covered radiator, that had the potential to be used as a foothold, a potential safety risk to assist a child in climbing out of the cot. Cots should be located away from radiators.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A copy of the renewed processed Garda vetting record for one adult was forwarded to the early years inspector. Garda vetting checks has been added to the managers annual governance checks.
2. In the nappy changing area located beside the creche room, the steel type bars/screws protruding from the cupboard doors at child height have been removed. Safety checks of equipment has been added to the daily hazard identification service list.

Infection Control:

3. The switch controlling the thermostatically controlled hot water had been turned off in error on day of inspection. A notice has been placed over the switch to avoid this happening again. Checking the temperature of the thermostatically controlled water in wash hand basins has been added to daily tasks for staff.

Safe Sleep:

4. All staff have been informed to ensure a cot is not placed against the covered radiator in the sleep room and a poster has been placed in the sleep room to ensure all staff are aware and reminded of same at sleep times.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the newly processed Garda vetting record for one adult was forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.
2. Photographic evidence of the cupboard doors with the screws removed in the nappy changing area was forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence of the notice beside the switch controlling the thermostatically controlled hot water in the service was forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.

Safe Sleep:

4. Photographic evidence of the standard cot away from the radiator and of the poster beside the radiator in the sleep room reminding staff, to keep the standard cot at least 50cms away from the radiator was forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23, General Safety, Infection Control and Safe Sleep of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) There were three staff in total working in the service that had a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR). There was one staff member present in the morning and two staff present in the afternoon on day of inspection with a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service.

(b) The first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place in May 2024
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in March 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for 37 children until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was full day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (b) From visual inspection the premises appeared safe and secure. The entrance gate and entrance door were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit of children from the service.
- (c) The two care rooms were provided with a combination of natural light, through windows and artificial lighting. Adequate lighting was also in place in the sanitary facilities as supplied through artificial lighting. Light fittings were noted to have protective covers installed. There were openable windows in the two care rooms, toilet and nappy changing facilities allowed for a supply of fresh air.
- (d) The service was well maintained and clean on the day of inspection.
- (e) A new nappy changing unit in the Creche room had been purchased since the last inspection. There were an adequate number of adult and children's toilets and nappy changing facilities in the service

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. One of the timber fences in the outdoor play area that divides the two outdoor play spaces for the Creche and Playschool rooms was in poor repair and needed to be replaced. The service was aware of the damaged fence prior to inspection and plans replace the damaged fence.
 2. The two wall surfaces around the nappy changing mat area located beside the Creche were damaged and not provided with a smooth durable easily cleanable surface.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
1. The fence in poor repair has been taken down and the service is awaiting a new fence to be installed. This fence was separating the two designated play areas for the creche and playschool room.

This fence was not part of the boundary securing the outdoor play area. Daily check of the outdoors including fences has been added to the service daily hazards check list. The fence will be replaced in due course and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

2. An easily cleanable surface has been placed on the wall behind the nappy changing unit and will be checked on a regular basis to ensure it is in a proper state of repair.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of the outdoor play area with the fence in poor repair removed was forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.
2. Photographic evidence of the smooth walls behind the nappy changing area was forwarded to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 29(d)1.2. of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.