

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC070
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Childcare Centre
-------------------------	--------------------------------

Address of Service:	Brigown, Mitchelstown, Co Cork
----------------------------	--------------------------------

Eircode:	P67 V678
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Devaney
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	17/02/2025
----------------------------	------------

Date 2 of Inspection:	18/02/2025
------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	53
Day 2	AM	76	PM	50

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House Henry Street Limerick V94 XT5F
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
----------------------------------	-----------

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 Sparks Childcare Centre is a privately owned early years service in operation since 2004. The service was purpose built and is located on the outskirts of the town of Mitchelstown in Co Cork. The service offers a sessional, part time and full day care service to children aged 1 to 6 years. The service also offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service operates from 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. The service has seven care rooms, sanitary facilities, a kitchen, and a staff and reception area. There is a large, secure and well-developed outdoor area to the side and rear of the premises. The service also operates a school age service from a detached residence adjacent to the preschool facility. The service also has a Green Schools flag and the service promotes an environmentally friendly ethos.

Staffing

The service employs 28 staff, including one cook and a service administrator. The registered provider is service based and is able to provide relief cover in the care rooms if required.

On the days of inspection, 24 staff were present in the service including the registered provider, a chef and 1 administrative staff member. A student on work placement was also present.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, persons 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) The service had two designated persons in charge and a named person who was able to deputise if needed.

(b) The designated persons in charge and the named person were on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service and all staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities. The registered provider had appointed two staff members as supervisors within the service to support the management structure and the day to day running of the care rooms. This was observed during the inspection and staff were clear on lines of authority and accountability.

(2) Twenty-eight staff were identified as working in the service and all 28 files were reviewed.

(a) Thirty-nine of the 56 references were from a past employer and were validated.

(b) Seventeen of the 56 references were from a source other than the past employer and were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 28 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timelines as 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) Police vetting disclosures were available for six staff members who had lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Twenty six of the 28 staff members worked directly with the children and held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

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 and procedures were reviewed and contained all necessary information.

- Handwashing policy.
- Nappy changing policy.
- Administration of medication 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) There was adequate staff to care for the children in attendance in the service during the inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were observed to meet the minimum requirements in the following care rooms over the duration of the inspection:

Day 1 of inspection

Morning:

Room name	Age range of children	Number of children present	Number of staff present
Bugs and Bunnies	1 to 2 years	9	2
Little Stars	1 ½ to 2 ½ years	5	1
Little Acorns	2 to 3 years	4	1
Butterflies and Caterpillars	2 to 3 years	10	2
Shooting Stars	3 to 4 years	18	4
Flying Saucers	4 to 5 years	10	1
Astronauts	4 to 5 years	20	4

Evening:

Room name	Age range of children	Number of children present	Number of staff present
Bugs and Bunnies	1 to 2 years	9	2
Little Stars	1 ½ to 2 ½ years	3	1
Little Acorns	2 to 3 years	4	1
Butterflies and Caterpillars	2 to 3 years	10	2
Shooting Stars	3 to 4 years	0	0
Flying Saucers	4 to 5 years	0	0
Astronauts	4 to 5 years	0	0
Rockets 1	3 to 5 years	16	3

Day 2 of inspection

Morning:

Room name	Age range of children	Number of children present	Number of adults present
Bugs and Bunnies	1 to 2 years	9	2
Little Stars	1 ½ to 2 ½ years	5	2
Little Acorns	2 to 3 years	4	1
Butterflies and Caterpillars	2 to 3 years	8	2
Shooting Stars	3 to 4 years	16	3
Flying Saucers	4 to 5 years	9	2
Astronauts	4 to 5 years	19	3

Evening:

Room name	Age range of children	Number of children present	Number of staff present
Bugs and Bunnies	1 to 2 years	9	2
Little Stars	1 ½ to 2 ½ years	1	1
Little Acorns	2 to 3 years	8	2
Butterflies and Caterpillars	2 to 3 years	8	2
Rockets 1	3 to 5 years	16	2
Rockets 2	3 to 5 years	8	1

(8) (a) The staff roster was reviewed and indicated that two staff were on the premises at all times while the service was in operation.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

1. The inspector was informed by the persons in charge that the children from Shooting Stars, Flying Saucers and Astronauts care rooms merge in the afternoon and are cared for in care rooms named Rockets 1 and 2. All children had attended a morning ECCE session in the service.

At 3.20pm, on day one of inspection, there were 11 children aged between 3 and 5 years of age and 1 staff member in the Rockets 2 care room. As all children had attended the morning ECCE session, the minimum adults required for this age group was 1 adult for every 8 children. Therefore, the minimum adult to child ratio was not adhered to and this posed a risk to the children. It is acknowledged, when this was brought to the attention of the staff by the inspector, the registered provider entered the room to ensure the minimum adult to children ratio was being maintained

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in their response that the adult to child ratio is being adhered to in the Rockets 2 care room. The adult to child ratio in the Rockets 2 care room is one adult to eight children. Management and staff are now aware of adult to child ratios in the afternoon after the morning ECCE sessions.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of a staff roster was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documented evidence submitted was reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

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 sample of 24 children's records were accessed and reviewed.

- (a) All records assessed contained the names and dates of birth for the children.
- (d) All records assessed had a record of the names and contact numbers of parents and guardians if required.
- (e) All records assessed had a record of those authorised to collect each child.
- (h) All records assessed had a record of immunisations, if any, received by each child.
- (i) All records assessed had a record of written parental consent for the service to provide emergency medical treatment if required in the event of a medical emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) Four of the 24 records assessed did not contain the date on which each child first attended the service.
- (c) Four of the 24 records assessed did not have the capacity to record the date on which each child ceased attending the service.
- (f) Two of the 24 records assessed did not contain a record of any illness, disability, or allergy each child may have.
- (g) Four of the 24 records assessed did not contain a record of a registered medical practitioner for each child.

Not having children's records complete may hinder the care and safety of children in the service if the information is needed for care provision.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has reviewed the registration forms for the children in the service and completed the forms with the required information as outlined from (a) to (i).

- (b) Start dates of when the children first attended the service has been completed on the registration forms.
- (c) The capacity to record the date on which each child ceased attending the service has been completed.

(f) The registration forms have been given to the parents and guardians to complete the record of any illness, disability, or allergy each child may have and to mark as appropriate or not applicable.

(g) The registered general practitioner information has been completed in the forms where required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the amended registration form was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documented evidence submitted was reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1) The following records were assessed:

(i) Details of the staff roster was available for review for the week commencing 17 February 2025 and clearly stated the start, finish and break times of each staff member.

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

- Children were observed freely moving around the care rooms and participating in different activities of choice.
- Children were observed washing their hands before mealtimes and after outdoor play.

- The service promoted healthy eating, food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. Children in the Little Stars, Little Acorns and the Butterflies and Caterpillar rooms were given the opportunities to feed themselves with the support of the staff if needed.
- Children’s individual water bottles were available in all the care rooms.
- All children had several opportunities to play in the outdoor area which children were observed to enjoy. The outdoor areas were easily accessible from all the care rooms.
- Individual care plans were available for children who required them and were observed to be implemented in line with the child’s specific needs. The plans detailed the current developmental stage of the child and how the staff would ensure the child’s learning and development was supported through the adaption of equipment and activities. An inclusive environment was observed throughout all the care rooms and the staff were aware of its importance.
- The staff supported the children in developmentally appropriate ways. For example, in Bugs and Bunnies room, children were supported by the staff with learning how to walk, learning to self-feed and learning how to play with each other.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and when required. Staff were observed chatting and being respectful to each child.

Supporting relationships

- The staff were observed sitting with the children during mealtimes and made it a relaxed environment for children to sit and enjoy their food.
- Staff in the Butterflies and Caterpillars and Little Acorns rooms were observed speaking to the children at their level and were observed building robots with large plastic building blocks in the outdoor area.
- Children in the Astronaut and Shooting Stars rooms were supported with putting on their coats when it was home time. The staff encouraged self-help skills to be developed.
- Children were observed playing ‘Bingo’ in the Flying Saucers room and the staff encouraged and acknowledged the children’s efforts during the game.
- An electronic app was available for communication with the parents and guardians. It was observed staff also communicated informally with the parents and guardians at drop off and collection times during the inspection.

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 breakfast, morning snack, dinner and supper to all the children in the service. Parents and guardians provided morning snacks to the children in the ECCE sessional care rooms. A weekly menu was available for review which contained nutritious and varied food and drinks.
- At 10.25am, children were observed eating strawberries, bananas, toast and milk. The main meals for the duration of the inspection included chicken in breadcrumbs, roast chicken, gravy, carrots, broccoli and mash potato which was served to the children at 12.30pm each day.
- Supper was served at 3.30pm and children were observed eating pasta, tomato sauce and cheese.
- Water and milk were made available to all the children during mealtimes and also throughout the day.

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:

- The main entrance to the service was secured with an electromagnetic lock. The outdoor area and external entrances were also secured for the duration of the inspection. This prevented any child from exiting the service unsupervised and prevented any unauthorised access.
- All internal doors to unsafe areas were appropriately secured during the inspection.
- Staircases had suitable handrails, were adequately lit and the floor covering was observed to be in good condition on inspection.
- All cables were observed to be in good condition on inspection.
- All toys and equipment observed were in good condition on the day of inspection.
- Medicines such as adrenaline autoinjectors were observed to be stored in their original container, clearly labelled and out of reach to children.

Infection control:

- Warm water, liquid soap, hand towels and dryers were available to the children and staff. Water temperatures were recorded between 21.1°C and 32.7°C.
- The appropriate bins were available throughout the care rooms, nappy changing and sanitary areas.

Administration of medication:

- A staff member was observed administering medication to a child in the Rockets 1 care room. It was observed a second member of staff witnessed the administering of the medication. This was also logged on the electronic application used for communicating with parents and guardians and the retention of records. This was in line with the services administration of medication policy.

Safe sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping on the appropriate sleep facilities in relation to each child's age which was in line with the Safe Sleep Guidance document for children under and over the age of 2 years.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be free from obstruction on inspection.

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 with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting. It is acknowledged that an application for renewal of Garda vetting in respect of the one staff member was made on day two of the inspection.
2. A container to store recycled batteries was easily assessable to children in the hallway to the Astronauts room. This posed a safety risk to children. It is acknowledged, the person in charge removed this when requested by the inspector.
3. Cleaning products were stored on top of a child height sink which was easily accessible to children. This posed a safety risk to the children. It is acknowledged, the person in charge removed this when requested by the inspector.

Infection control:

1. In the Bugs and Bunnies room, it was observed a staff member used the same face cloth to clean the children's faces. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children.
2. It was observed during nappy changing, staff did not wear gloves on both hands, aprons were not being worn, and a staff member was observed not washing their hands after touching the lid of the foot pedal operated bin. Children's hands were not washed after nappy changing. This posed a risk of cross contamination to both children and staff. This was not in line with the services nappy changing policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. A Garda vetting disclosure has been obtained in respect of the one staff member. The service stated that under no circumstances will any staff member work in the service without up-to-date Garda vetting being completed.
2. The container to store recycled batteries is now stored out of reach to children.
3. All cleaning products are now stored out of reach to children. All staff are aware to ensure that cleaning products are to be kept out of reach to children.

Infection control:

1. Individual and labelled face cloths are now available to each child in the Bugs and Bunnies room and stored in a zipped plastic bag. Face cloths will not be shared among children. All staff have reviewed the services infection control policy.
2. The nappy changing policy was reviewed and brought to the attention of all staff. Nappy changing refresher training was given to all staff within the service by the registered provider. All management was made aware to keep monitoring the training of staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Documented evidence of a Garda vetting disclosure was submitted to the inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of the location of the container was submitted to the inspectorate.
3. Photographic evidence of the location of the cleaning supplies was submitted to the inspectorate.

Infection control:

1. Photographic evidence of individual and labelled face cloths and documented evidence of the services infection control policy was submitted to the inspectorate.
2. Documented evidence of the staff confirming they had received training on the nappy changing policy was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documented evidence submitted was reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the serviced was adequately insured. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2024 and expired on 27 March 2025.