

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC154
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Name of Service:	First Steps Creche
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Address of Service:	4 Marrick, Halycon Drive, Silversprings, Cork
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Eircode:	T23 RY89
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rosaleen Cotter
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Service type:	Full Day Care
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Date of Inspection:	23/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	M O'Reilly & D. Prendergast
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

First Steps Creche is a privately owned full day care service. It is registered to accommodate 24 children aged 1 to 6 years and for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The Inspectorate were informed that currently, the service caters for children from 1 to 4 years all attending full day care service with no child in attendance receiving the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The current opening hours are from 8am to 6pm each day Monday to Friday.

The service is located on the ground floor of a converted, detached, two storey dwelling house located in a mature residential estate in a suburban area of Silversprings, Cork. Since the last inspection internal renovations have taken place in the service, reducing the number of playrooms from three playrooms to two playrooms. A Wobbler and Toddler room and a Pre-school room. The registered provider informed the Inspectorate that renovations to the service are not yet completed. There is an entrance hall, administration office cum staff room, a sleeping cot storeroom, adult and children's toilet and nappy changing facilities and a sluice room. The service has a secure, partially covered outdoor play area located beside the premise.

Staffing

There were four adults working directly with the early years children in the service including the registered provider. 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8, 9, 10, 11 ,15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30 and 31 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 21. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 National Early Years Feedback and Concerns Department.

At feedback meeting on day of inspection the registered provider agreed to a referral to a Quality Development Program, Better Start.

A referral to the Cork City Fire Department was initiated following the inspection, to review the existing location of emergency fire exit doors following recent internal renovations to the service.

A corrective and preventative record (CAPA) was sent with the inspection outcome report to the registered provider on the 31st May 2024. CAPA 2 was sent on the 17th June 2024.

No CAPA response was received from the registered provider outlining how the service had addressed the non-compliances identified in this inspection report dated the 23/05/24. The lack of response from the registered provider has unnecessarily delayed the publication of this report.

A regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) was held on the 16/07/24. In attendance were, the registered provider, inspection and registration manager and early years inspector. A CAPA response was only received from the registered provider following the RCM.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1). (3)

The registered provider had not informed the Agency in writing that the service was operating outside of the service current registration status. On inspection, it was found.

That the named person in charge was no longer working in the service

This issue was identified as non-compliant in previous inspections following which the registered provider gave assurances that she would inform the Early Years Department prior to any change in the current registration status taking place, however, this did not prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance again on this inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(3) The registered provider completed the required record and forward to the registration office stating that the registered provider is now the named person in charge of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the correspondence from the registration office approving of the change in registration status was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's response and evidence submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of this regulation.

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge of operating the early years service.
- (b) The registered provider was available throughout the inspection process.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults attached to the early years setting were reviewed.
- (a) Six written validated references from past employers were in place.
- (b) There were two written references available from sources other than previous employers
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. 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) Two police vetting records were available on file for the two adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) Copies of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications were available in respect of the three adults who were employed to work directly with the children. A Letter of Qualification Recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) was on file in respect of one of the staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- There was no clear management structure in place in the service when the registered provider was not present as there was no alternative person appointed, person in charge in the absence of the registered provider as required.
- (a) The registered provider had not appointed a person working in the service to deputise when she was not present in the service.
- (b) On review of the staff time in time out record and in discussion with the registered provider, it was noted that the registered provider was not present at all times when the service was in operation.
- (c) There is no clear management structure in place in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service when the registered provider was not working in the service.

- (2)
- All vetting should be completed before a person is appointed, assigned or allowed access to, or contact with, a child attending the service. The following records were not obtained prior to the adults commencing work in the service.
- (b) A record of validation of one reference was not on file for one adult.
- (3) It was noted that the references held in respect of three of the adults (six in total) had not been validated until after these adults had commenced their roles working directly with the children.

This issue was identified as non-compliant in previous inspections following which the registered provider gave assurances that all vetting records would be completed prior to a person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to, or contact with, a child attending the service, however, this did not prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider, following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024 the following was stated:

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider stated there is now a named deputy in the service when the person in charge is not present in the service.
- (b) The registered provider is now the person in charge and stated that she works full time in the service.
- (c) There is now a clear management structure in place in the service when the person in charge is not present in the service, the named deputy is the person in charge. When the person in charge and the named deputy are not present there is a second named deputy in the service.

- (2)
- (b) A copy of the accompanying validation of reference for one adult was forwarded to the Inspectorate.

(3)

The registered provider stated that going forward all the required vetting records will be obtained prior to an adult commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)(c)

A copy of the record that is located in the entrance hall naming the person in charge and the named deputies in the service.

(b) A copy of the staff roster for the last three weeks indicated that the registered provider/person in charge works full time in the service during the hours of operation.

(2)(b)

A copy of the required validation of reference was received and deemed satisfactory.

(3)

The statement from the registered provider was accepted as evidence

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's response and evidence submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

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 and were deemed to meet the requirements:

- Complaints policy
- Policy on Infection Control
- Fire Safety policy.
- Policy on Accidents and Incidents

Non-Compliance Information

The policy on Behaviour Management required updating. It did not state the following:

- That if child abuse or neglect is suspected, it is managed in line with the service's child safeguarding statement and associated procedures for the protection and welfare of children.
- How support is offered to staff on how to support children's behaviour and emotional needs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was received:

- A copy of the updated Behaviour Management policy was received.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the updated Behaviour Management policy was received and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's response and evidence submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of this regulation.

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

(2) Adequate adult to child ratios were observed in the Wobbler/Toddler room during the morning and in the Preschool room during the afternoon. In the morning, five children, aged one to two years attended the Wobbler/Toddler room and were cared for by one adult. In the afternoon, one child, aged two to three years and seven children aged three to four years attended the Preschool room and were cared for by two adults.

(8)

(a) There were at least two adults available on the premises throughout the duration of the inspection, and at all times, in accordance with the staff sign in sign out sheet for the last two weeks, during the hours of operation when children were in attendance.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was not met in the Preschool room from the Inspectors arrival to the service until 13:30pm on day of inspection. At 09:50 hours, there were fourteen children in attendance, with two adults present, where three adults were required. Three of the children in attendance were aged between one

and two years, four children were aged between two and three years and seven children were aged between three and four years. All of these children were attending full day care.

At 12:26 hours the four younger children were moved to the Wobbler/Toddler room where they had lunch followed by sleep time. There were than ten children present in the Preschool room. There were three children aged two to three years and seven children aged three to four years with one adult in attendance, where two adults were required.

The minimum ratio of adults to children was not met in the Wobbler/Toddler room during the afternoon. At 12.26pm, there were eight children in attendance, with one adult present, where two adults were required. Seven of the children were aged one to two years and one child was aged over two years. All of these children were attending full day care.

Not maintaining the minimum ratio of adults to children throughout the running of the service poses a number of risks including safety risks to the children while in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated:

The registered provider stated on day of inspection that some of the younger children from the Wobbler/Toddler room were located in the Preschool room because there was one child settling in and teething and needed attention. The registered provider stated she made that decision on the morning of the inspection but would not do this again. The younger children would be catered for in the Wobbler/Toddler room only and the older children in the Preschool room. The registered provider explained at the regulatory compliance that *she has not increased her staff, as the numbers of children for the summer have gone down, as some of the children have moved away or it was holiday time and some children had left the service.* The registered provider stated the adult child ratio was not an issue for the last few weeks and that she was planning on the staff member that is currently working part time to work full time in the service from September 24.

Supporting documentation submitted

The staff roster and the children's sign in and sign out sheets were submitted for the last three weeks.

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's response submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation. This will be reviewed again on the next inspection.

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

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (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

- (1)
- (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis was recorded and maintained in the service.
- (i) A weekly staff, sign in and sign out record was maintained in the service. The sign in and out record indicated the time that some staff went on breaks each day.
- (k)
- An accident and incident duplicate book was available for the recording of any incident or accident that had occurred in the service. A number of accident and incident records were reviewed and were completed and signed by staff and the relevant parent or guardian. The templates were closely examined, and parental signature indicated that the information had been duly relayed.
- It was noted there was additional information recorded on one of the accident and incidents records that the registered provider stated was recorded a few days post the incident. The registered provider stated that the parent noted an injury post the incident and reported it two to three days post the incident to the staff in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) The details on the staff sign in, sign out record was considered inadequate, for the following reasons.
1. One adult working in the service was not recording the sign in, the sign out time or the lunch time breaks taken daily even though she was included in the daily adult: child ratio in the service.
 2. The record did not indicate the adult: child ratio daily in each room of the service.
 3. The name of the adult who relieved the staff in each room while on their break was also not recorded.

4. Only a two-week hard copy sign in sign out staff record was available in the service on day of inspection.
All staff sign in sign out records should be available and maintained on file in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(i) In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated:

1. The names of all adults working in the service are now recorded on the staff roster.
2. On the staff roster it indicates the adult: child ratio in each room of the service.
3. The name of the adult who relieved each staff member while on their break.
4. The staff roster is now maintained in the service and staff sign in and out sheets will be available and maintained on file in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the staff roster for the last three weeks was forwarded to the inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's evidence and response submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Basic needs:

- At mealtimes, the younger children were provided with bibs and were encouraged to self-feed, with suitable crockery and cutlery available. Staff supported the children to clean their faces after they had eaten.
- In the Wobbler/Toddler room and the Preschool room, the children's reusable water bottles were stored on a worktop in the care room, should they require additional fluids during the day.
- Nappy changing was observed to be managed sensitively by staff members, who chatted kindly to the children.
- In the Preschool room, the children appeared to enjoy the food provided by their parents and guardians and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace. Staff members were readily available to provide assistance at this time.
- Staff were observed attentive to the personal care needs of the children in the Preschool room for example, staff were observed to assist children to clean their noses.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff member in the Wobbler/Toddler room was observed to use a tablet device to record the children's activities of daily living, such as nappy changing and sleep and advised that this information was visible to the children's parents. Other methods of communication with parents were reported to include phone calls and informal face to face discussion, at arrival and collection time.
- The Preschool room staff advised that the service operated in partnership with parents. The registered provider stated the online application where staff record the details of their child's day while in the service for example meals/snacks, activities and sleep was currently not in operation in this room. Most of the communication with parents/guardians, the registered provider stated, was at drop off and collection time but the service intends to get the online digital application in operation in the preschool room as soon as possible.

- 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.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic needs:

While a staff member was carrying out nappy changing, it was stated that a supply of nappies had not been provided for one of the children, who attended the Wobbler/Toddler room. On further discussion, it was established that spare nappies were not available at the service and that if the child required nappy changing, a phone call to the child's parents would be required in order to obtain the nappies. It was acknowledged that the child only attended the service for a two-hour period on the day of inspection, however, this did not meet the needs of the child, should they have required nappy changing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated: A supply of extra nappies is now available while the service is in operation. There is a rota system in place where the parents supply the required nappies for their child.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's response submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

In the Wobbler/Toddler room, four of the children’s chairs were too low to be used with the table they were positioned at. It was observed that when the children were seated at the table on said chairs, their shoulders were parallel with the tabletop. This did not allow for the children to sit comfortably during mealtimes or when engaging in tabletop activities.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated:

A lower child size table has been provided for these four chairs. The registered provider stated at the regulatory compliance meeting that these chairs are currently not being used as the children are older in the Wobbler/Toddler room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the lower child size table with the four chairs was forwarded to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered providers evidence and response submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation. This will be reviewed on the next 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 parents/guardians provided all the food and drink for the children including the main hot meal which was reheated on site. The food was served to the children by the adults in the service.
- Fridges were available for the storage of perishable items in both playrooms.

Non-Compliance Information

It was observed that two of the ten children attending full day care service in the Preschool room were not provided with a hot meal at lunch time. One child was observed to have chicken in a white bread sandwich and the second child had a wholemeal ham sandwich at lunch time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated:

The registered provider stated that she spoke to the parents of the two children and a hot nutritious meal is now provided for both children at lunch time.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Following the regulatory compliance meeting on 16/07/2024, the registered provider's response submitted was assessed. The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

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 door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- Blind cords were secured with suitable safety clips.
- In the Wobbler/Toddler room and Preschool Room, restrictive opening devices were installed on low-level cupboards and appliances, such as a fridge and a dishwasher.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets and nappy changing areas were between 30 C to 31 C on day of inspection.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The outdoor area was noted to be fully enclosed and secure

Infection Control:

- The children's hands were observed to be washed after having their nappies changed.
- Within the nappy changing area, the children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams were stored in individually labelled baskets.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack, lunch and mid-afternoon food snack and after using the toilet and after outdoor play in the Preschool room.
- It was noted that the table surfaces were sanitised by staff prior to all snack and mealtimes in the Preschool room.
- Cleaning records were in place in the Preschool room.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed during the inspection.
- The medication maintained for three of the children was stored in a high-level cupboard, appropriately labelled and was in-date.

Safe Sleep:

- While the Wobbler/Toddler room was in use to accommodate a scheduled rest period, the air temperature was recorded at 18.6°C, which was within the required range of 18°C to 22°C for safe sleep practice, for children aged over 12 months.
- Sleep checks were observed to be undertaken by a staff member and were logged on a digital application. The children's breathing, colour and position were monitored, as they slept.

Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not conducted.

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. In the children's toilet area beside the Preschool room the joining in the floor cover located in the centre of the children's toilet was lifting and has the potential risk of causing a trip hazard in its present state.

Infection Control:

The following observed practices increased the risk of cross infection:

3. In the Wobbler/Toddler room, the children were not observed to wash their hands before eating the mid-morning snack or before the main lunch meal. This was at variance with the policy on Infection Control, which stated that *Children must wash their hands before eating*.
4. Disposable aprons were not worn by staff members during observed nappy changing procedures.

This issue was identified as non-compliant in previous inspections following which the registered provider gave assurances that she would follow best practise guidelines on nappy changing, however, this did not prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance.

5. Two of the cot mattresses in use were not waterproof or fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, as required to reduce the spread of infection.
6. There were no disposable paper towels for children to independently access at child height in the children's toilet facilities beside the preschool room.
7. There was no toilet paper in one of the two children's toilets beside the preschool room.

This issue was identified as non-compliant in previous inspections following which the registered provider gave assurances that she would advise staff to check twice daily that there was sufficient toilet paper for both children's toilets beside the preschool room, however, this did not prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance.

8. A distance of 50cm was not ensured between five of the cots, while said cots were in use. It was noted that the cots were separated by partitions, which were placed directly in between the cots. This did not allow for adequate space to reduce the risk of cross infection.
9. During the mid-morning snack in the Wobbler/Toddler room, some of the children were noted to eat their fruit directly from table or tray surfaces, as crockery was not provided. During the mid-afternoon snack in the Preschool room, one of the children was noted to eat their food directly from the table as crockery was not provided.

Administration of Medication:

10. During discussion with staff, it emerged that that staff were unaware that one of the children had been prescribed emergency medication, or that said medication was stored on the premises. Furthermore, the adults had not been provided with training to administer the medication. This posed a risk that the child may not be provided with the emergency medication in a timely manner, should the need arise.

Safe Sleep:

11. One of the children, who was aged under two years, was observed to sleep on a sleep mat, during a scheduled rest period in the Wobbler/Toddler room. On further discussion, it was stated that the child had been using said sleep mat for approximately two weeks. The use of sleep mats is unsuitable for children under the age of two years, as they are not sufficiently conducive to sleep for children in this age range.

Fire Safety:

The following may delay a prompt exit in the event of a fire.

12.
 - In the Wobbler/Toddler room, one of the two fire exit doors that were identified by signage, was obstructed by shelf storage.
 - In a storeroom that was originally a sleep room, the fire exit door that was identified by signage, was obstructed by cots that were stored in this room when not in use.

- In a staff /administration room that was originally a kitchen, the fire exit door that was identified by signage, was obstructed by a folded clothes horse, a broken window blind, a single timber shelf, a shopping bag of broken debris from the recent renovations that had taken place in the service.

Following the above fire safety findings at time of inspection, a referral letter was sent to the Cork City Fire Department.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following corrective action was stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was renewed for the one adult that did not have the Garda vetting renewed within the last three years.
2. In the children's toilet area beside the Preschool room, the floor cover that was lifting was sealed temporarily with tape. At the regulatory compliance meeting the registered provider stated that this flooring is due to be replaced and will be provided with a new floor covering when the construction work is completed. The projected timeframe of when the construction work will be completed is 11/8/24.

Infection Control:

To reduce the risk of cross infection the registered provider stated the following.

3. Supervised hand washing occurs before and after all meals and food snacks in the Wobbler/Toddler room, but the children have to be lifted by staff as the sink is too high for them. A lower sink in the Wobbler/Toddler room is being investigated. The practise will be reviewed on the next inspection.
4. Disposable aprons are worn by all staff when nappy changing. The practise will be reviewed on the next inspection.
5. The registered provider stated she is currently seeking a supplier that has the correct size waterproof mattress protectors for the safety mattresses. Ongoing and will be reviewed on the next inspection.
6. A wall mounted dispenser for the storage of disposable paper towels has been installed at child height for the children's toilet facility beside the preschool room.
7. Toilet paper is present in the children's toilet facility beside the preschool room. The registered provider stated a reminder to staff to do regular daily checks of the toilet facilities that included checking, there is an adequate supply of toilet paper in place.

8. Cots are positioned 50cm apart, and partitions are not used for this purpose going forward at sleep time in the Wobbler/Toddler Room.
9. All snacks and meals for the children are served in age-appropriate plates and bowls at all times going forward.

Administration of Medication:

10. New measures are now in place in the service for the storage and individual identification of emergency medication. All staff have now been trained in the administration of the prescribed emergency medication for one child. This child no longer attends the service.

Safe Sleep:

11. The registered provider has stated that all children will continue to use standard sleeping cots going forward until the age of two. As this child has since left the service, should this need arise again, we will source a suitable alternative.

Fire Safety:

12. In the written response the registered provider has stated that all the emergency fire exit doors in the service are now unobstructed, that is in the Wobbler/Toddler room, in the sleep equipment storeroom and in the administration room. A fire officer from the Cork City Fire Department assessed the service on the 25/07/24, following a referral to the Fire Department post the fire safety concerns found on the early years inspection dated the 23/05/24. At time of recording the registered providers written response to the inspection report, the registered provider stated she was awaiting written correspondence from the Fire Department on works to take place in the building as recommended by the Fire Department. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of the processed Garda vetting record was submitted to the early years inspector and deemed satisfactory.
2. Photographic evidence of the tape sealing the floor joining that was lifting was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.

Infection Control:

3. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

4. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
5. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
6. Photographic evidence of the wall mounted dispenser for single use disposable paper towels for children to use independently to dry their hands was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.
7. A copy of the children's bathroom daily cleaning and supply check list was forwarded to the Inspectorate that included, staff checking there was an adequate supply of toilet paper in place. Times recorded on check list were midday, 3pm and 6pm.
8. Photographic evidence of cots positioned 50cm apart in the Wobbler/Toddler room at sleep time was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.
9. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Administration of Medication:

10. A copy of a record dated and signed by all staff stating that they had been trained in the administration of the prescribed emergency medication for one child was forwarded to the Inspectorate.

Safe Sleep:

11. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Fire Safety:

12. Photographic evidence of the unobstructed emergency fire exit doors in the Wobbler/Toddler room, in the sleep equipment storeroom and in the administration, room was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory. Following a referral to the Cork City Fire Department, the Inspectorate received correspondence from the registered provider on the 25/07/24 stating that the Fire Officer was visiting the service that day.

Summary Comment

The responses and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been accepted as working towards regulatory compliance with the regulation. This will be reviewed at the next 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

(1) Evidence was available to demonstrate that two of the adults held current First Aid Responder (FAR) certification.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a high-level cupboard and was observed to be adequately stocked.

(b) The first aid supplies were consistently accessible, should they be required.

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 firefighting 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 on the 12/04/24.
- (b) The service had maintained a record detailing the number and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment in the service. The firefighting equipment had been last serviced in 31/08/2023. and smoke alarm systems were checked and was last serviced on the 07/08/2023.
- (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 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

While the required adult child ratio in the Preschool room was not maintained until 1:30pm and not maintained in the afternoon in the Wobbler /Toddler room on day of inspection. It was observed that the children were under the supervision of qualified adults or adults that had a letter of qualification recognition whilst children participated in both indoor and outdoor activities. Throughout the inspection, it was observed that the children were visible to the adults while they were in their respective care room or playing in the outdoor play area.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (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

(c)
The two playrooms and entrance hall area were provided with a combination of natural light, through windows and artificial lighting. Light fittings were noted to have protective covers installed. The openable windows in the two playrooms allowed for a supply of fresh air. The recorded air temperatures in the playrooms on day of inspection ranged from between 18 °C to 20°C on day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
1. A malodour was noted in the staff room/administration room in the morning time and the odour when checked was noted to be not as offensive in the afternoon on day of inspection.
- (d)
2. There was evidence of damp on the ceiling in the Wobbler/Toddler room and small holes were also visible. One area in the ceiling in the Preschool room had been recently plastered. The registered provider

stated the area was plastered recently to cover the holes that were made from ceiling lights that were moved to another area in the ceiling. This left an unfinished surface area on ceiling.

3. Chipped and peeling paint was visible on the windowsills in both care rooms.
4. The window blinds in the Wobbler/Toddler room were dirty and discoloured and required cleaning.
5. A new wall had been built between the Preschool and Wobbler/Toddler room since the last inspection. The wall surface was unfinished at either side and not provided with a smooth durable easily cleanable surface.
6. The washable laminate surface on the wall beside the nappy changing mat had fallen off and the wall the children had access to when their nappy was being changed was not provided with a smooth durable easily cleanable surface.
7. There were visible holes in the floor of the preschool room where a wall had been removed and around where pipes were protruding from the floor.
8. There were exposed pipes in the preschool room. The registered provider informed the Inspectorate that the pipes were from two separate wash hand basins that were removed in the preschool room as part of the renovation of the room. The registered provider had placed two storage units around and over the pipes to prevent the children having direct access to the pipes. The registered provider stated the pipes will be removed completely in due course.

(e)

9. Over twelve children required nappy changing on day of inspection. The ratio is one nappy changing unit to every 11 children that require nappy changing. A second nappy changing unit is required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following action was stated:

(c)

1. The registered provider stated that this has been investigated by the landlord, and staff working in the service. They have been unable to identify where the bad smell is coming from in the administration room. The malodour is in no other room in the service and the children have no access to this room. They will continue to investigate the source of the malodour when the construction work is completed.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

(d)

Non-compliances No 2, No 3, No 5, No 7 and No 8

The registered provider stated that they are in the middle of constructions works, the order of work can only be done once the building work is completed. The registered provider stated a projected timeframe of the 11/08/24 is when the construction is to be completed. The painting will then be completed.

- 4 The window blinds in the Wobbler/Toddler room have now been cleaned.
- 6 The washable laminate surface is now in place on the wall beside the nappy changing mat and the wall the children have access to when their nappy is being changed. The washable laminate provides a smooth durable easily cleanable wall surface.

(e)

- 9 In the written response the registered provider stated that a second nappy changing unit will be installed in the service and is part of the building work. The registered provider stated a projected timeframe of the 11/08/24 is when the construction is to be completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c)

- 1 What the registered provider stated at the regulatory compliance meeting and her written response is accepted as evidence.

(d) Non-compliances No 2, No 3, No 5, No 7 and No 8

The construction work was subject to a discussion at the regulatory compliance meeting dated the 16/07/24. The registered provider stated a projected timeframe of 11/08/24 for all construction works to be completed. This was clarified by a copy of an invoice from the builder stating that all construction works will be done at weekends only and completed by the 11/08/24.

- 4 Photographic evidence of the cleaned window blinds in the Wobbler/Toddler room was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.
- 6 Photographic evidence of the laminate wall surface around the nappy changing area was forwarded to the Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.

(e)

- 9 A copy of an invoice from the builder with the nappy changing area included was forwarded to the Inspectorate, stating that all construction works will be completed by the 11/08/24.

Summary Comment

The responses and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been accepted as working towards regulatory compliance with this regulation. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

Following the recent renovations the two playrooms in operation were measured.

(2) The Wobbler/Toddler room was measured at 30.01m². The room has adequate space to accommodate a maximum of 10 children aged between 1 and 2 years 6 months at any time.

There was adequate space for the number of children in attendance, the age group and the type of service the children were attending on day of inspection.

There was adequate space in the Preschool room in the afternoon session on day of inspection. There was one child between two and three years and seven children between three and four years. There was adequate space for the number of children in attendance, the age group and type of service the children were attending in the afternoon session in the Preschool room on day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) The Preschool room was measured at 31.27m².

There were 3 children aged between 1 and 2 years (2.8 square meters per child)

There were 4 children aged between 2 and 3 years (2.35 square meters per child)

There were 7 children aged between 3 and 4 years. (2.3 square meters per child)

Equal to 33.9 square meters. Considering the number of children in attendance, the age groups and the type of service the children were attending. The Preschool room did not have enough space to accommodate the fourteen children in attendance during the morning of the day of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the registered provider following the regulatory compliance meeting (RCM) the following was stated:

When the construction work is completed, the registered provider stated that an additional space of 1.5 meter will be added to the Preschool room. She stated, the plan is, that the Preschool room will provide sufficient space to accommodate 8 children between 3 and 6 years and 6 children between 2 and 3 years.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been accepted as working towards regulatory compliance with this regulation. Following the completion of the construction work to the Preschool room, the space and layout of the room will be reviewed and measured again on the next inspection.

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 the following incident 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 sample of accident and incident records completed in the accident and incident book dated from the 01/01/24 were reviewed. There was no accident or incident recorded during this timeline, that resulted in a serious accident or injury that required immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner or that required to be reviewed in a hospital setting. Therefore, there was no accident or incident that the service was required to notify the Early Years Department in writing within 3 working days of such incident.