

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC157		
Name of Service:	First Steps Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Community Complex, Currabinny Road, Carrigaline, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P43 TK70		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Cleary		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	14/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440		
Inspection undertaken by:	V. McCarthy		
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
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Description of service

First Steps Pre-School is a privately operated service that operates out of 3 care rooms, namely the Caterpillar, the Butterfly and the Ladybird rooms, which are positioned on the first floor of the 2-storey community building that is situated in Carrigaline community park. A sessional service is provided that also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) at the premises. The service caters for children aged between 2 and 6 years of age and is registered to operate between the hours of 9.10 to 12.10. The service does not have its own designated outdoor area but does have access to outdoor space in the community park.

Staffing

There are 10 adults attached to the service including the registered provider who is not service based. On the day of the inspection there were 8 adults on the premises working directly with the children and each of the adults had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Methodology

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

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

The findings on inspection are based on:

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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ 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*

(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 a named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required.
- (b) Both the person in charge and the deputy were on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) There were 9 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 10 adults.
- (b) There were 11 references and required validations from sources other than past employers.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for review in respect of each of the 10 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years in respect of 9 of these adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available on file in respect of 3 adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was available on file in respect of each of the 10 adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) Police vetting was not available on file for review during the inspection in respect of a fourth adult that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (d) The registered provider informed the inspectorate that the outstanding police clearance had been applied for.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)

(d) Correspondence from the registered provider was submitted to the inspectorate on 15 May 2024 demonstrating that the outstanding police clearance was applied for on 14 May 2024.

Summary Comment

The documentation submitted by the registered provider was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements. The inspector will assess the awaited police clearance on site during the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

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

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(3) On the morning of the inspection there were 8 adults working directly with 35 children. The ratio of staff to children exceeded the requirement of 1:11.

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 staircase in the community complex that was used to gain entry to the service was fitted with a handrail and the stairway steps were edged with rubber type grips to reduce the risk of slips and falls.
- The main entrance door at the top of the stairwell that led into the service was secured by a lock that prevented unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The 2 doors that led into the storeroom were maintained secure to prevent entry by an unsupervised child.
- The presses throughout the 3 care rooms were fitted with locks and were maintained secure.
- The radiator in each care room was provided with a protective cover.
- The strip light bulbs in each care room were fitted with protective covers.
- The windows in the care rooms were each fitted with a window restrictor and were positioned at a height that was not accessible to the children.
- The wall plug sockets were each provided with a safety cover.
- The cleaning agents in the 3 care rooms and toilet areas were stored on high shelves out of children's reach.
- The adult's coats and personal belongings were kept out of children's reach in the secured storeroom.
- The first aid box was stored in a high press in the Caterpillar room out of children's reach.
- The fire extinguishers along the corridors were wall mounted securely off the floor.
- The leads and flexes that were attached to the wall mounted televisions in the Caterpillar and Ladybird rooms were kept out of children's reach.
- The wash hand basins in the 4 toilet cubicles were provided with thermostatically controlled warm water.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, in respect of 1 of the 10 adults, that requires services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider informed the inspectorate that the renewal of Garda vetting in respect of 1 adult has been applied for.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Correspondence from the registered provider was forwarded to the inspectorate on 15 May 2024 demonstrating that an application to renew Garda vetting in respect of 1 of adult was submitted on 14 May 2024. A photocopy of the obtained processed Garda vetting dated 21 May 2024 was submitted to the inspectorate for review on the same date.

Summary Comment

The documentation submitted by the registered provider was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.

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)
The service provided evidence that 2 adults had up to date training in first aid response (FAR) and that 1 of these adults was always on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)
(a) There was a first aid box available at the premises which was kept fully equipped. The first aid box was stored in a high press positioned in the Caterpillar room that was out of children's reach.

(b) The equipped first aid box was always available on the premises.

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) There were records of monthly fire drills carried out at the service available on file. The records demonstrated that a fire drill was last carried out by the service on 22 April 2024.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced during June 2023 and that the wired smoke alarm was last serviced on 15 January 2024.
- (4)
- A 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 on walls outside each of the 3 care rooms.

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

The required adult child ratio in each care room was exceeded during the inspection and the children were always under the supervision of qualified adults. The children were visible to the adults while they were in their respective care room participating in their work, play and rest activities. It was noted that as the toilet cubicles were not positioned beside the care rooms but instead at 1 end of the corridor, the children were always escorted by an adult to the toilets cubicles when they required to use the toilet.