

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC312
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Name of Service:	Respond Early Years Service - Oakfield Close
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Address of Service:	Oakfield Close, Summerhill, Mallow, Cork.
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Eircode:	P51 AP63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Rourke
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Service type:	Part-time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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

Respond Early Years Service - Oakfield Close, is a community-based children's centre offering both part-time and sessional services. It is registered to accommodate children from 2 to 6 years of age and currently children attending are aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years of age. Opening times are from 9.00 am until 1.00 pm with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme facilitated between the hours of 9.00 am until 12.00 noon, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. A school age service is available from 1.30 pm until 6.30 pm.

Respond Early Years Service - Oakfield Close, is a dormer style building located in a residential estate on the outskirts of Mallow town in North Cork. The service consists of a reception area on the ground floor off which there are adult and children's sanitary facilities including a nappy changing cubicle. There are two entry doors to the main care room off which there are two children's toilets, a separate kitchen and a separate room known as the Quiet room. The upstairs, which is accessed from the reception area, has a school age care room and an office. The outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service and is accessible from the main care room. Car parking is available at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are nine staff members employed in the service. In addition, there are two Community Employment (C.E) participants including one childcare and one maintenance worker. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 and 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 manager, deputy, 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.*

(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 registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge, who was the manager, and a named person available to deputise.
 - (b) The staff roster indicated that both the manager and the named person were on the premises while the early years children were present.
- (2) All nine staff and the two C.E. participants recruitment files were reviewed.
- (a) (b) There were twelve validated references from previous employers and ten validated references from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all eleven adults.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for two of the three adults who had lived outside the State as an adult for a period of six consecutive months or longer.
- (4) Eight of the eleven adults working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Education and Care at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. The other three adults did not require qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

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

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working with the children at all times.
- (2) There were twelve children in attendance with three adults until 12.00 noon, six children stayed on for lunch until 1.00 pm.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
 - (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
 - (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor was available in the staff recruitment files held in the service and in their head office.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services was available on the Tusla Registration Certificated visible in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(i) While the staff roster was available in the reception area it did not reflect the circumstances of the service on the day of inspection. The roster did not indicate that staff members were on annual leave or out sick.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(i) The staff rosters have been adjusted to reflect daily absence. Manager will ensure that daily absence is recorded on all staff rosters.

Supporting documentation submitted

(i) A copy of the staff roster recording staff absence was submitted reflecting the changes made to the roster.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 16 (i).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- The food observed being served on the day was healthy and nutritious. Children were observed eating toast and cereal served between 9.00 and 9.30 am provided by the service.
- Children had access to drinking water from their own personal water bottles and from a jug and cups left out on a table in the care room. They had access to appropriate cutlery, crockery and individual laminated place mats with a photograph of each child were also noted on the tables.
- Children's lunch, provided by the parents/guardians for children attending the sessional service, was served at 11.45 and was noted to consist of a variety of fruit, yogurt and filled sandwiches.
- The service provided a hot lunch for children staying on after 12.00 noon and this was served at 12.30 pm and consisted of toasted ham sandwiches and beans.

- Nappies were changed as and when required and older children were observed accessing the toilet independently, adults were nearby to remind children to wash their hands after toileting.
- Children were supervised and supported to access the changing unit independently by means of wooden stairs which could be put away when not in use.
- Aprons were available in the water area for water play. Spare clothes were available if required.
- Staff were observed to be sensitive and caring in their interactions with the children. One child who was having difficulty separating from their parent was distracted by a staff member got down to the child's level and engaged the child in a conversation regarding the colour of the paint they had on their hands.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S NEEDS:

- During mealtimes, activities and circle time staff sat with the children and engaged in social conversation, the atmosphere was observed to be happy and relaxed. Staff interacted positively with the children listening to their conversations using strategies to extend the children's thinking and learning including explanations and open-ended questions.
- Activities were child led with children availing of the opportunity to exercise choice in relation to activities. Examples included one child moving away from the group and using a jug to pour water into a bottle to water apples. The staff member then extended the activity and learning opportunities by providing more equipment including water, vessels and a pipette to enhance the child's learning opportunities.
- Children were encouraged and supported to find positive solutions and to problem solve when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. An example of this was a group of children, sitting with a staff member at the playdough table, one child had the playdough, and another child had the cutters, each child wanted what the other child had without sharing their materials. The staff member encouraged the children to come to a resolution about sharing the playdough and cutters with the other children asking and asked the children for suggestions about how the situation could be resolved.
- A key person approach is in operation and staff stated that they are responsible for carrying out observations of their key children which are then shared with the parents/guardians. Examples of these were furnished to the inspector and included children experiencing new tastes including tasting coconuts.
- In conversation staff stated that communication with parents happens at drop off and collection and this was observed on the day of collection, on a messaging application and by phone where there is an exchange of information and messages are passed on.

- Staff meetings with management were stated as taking place monthly and include topics such as planning, issues, child collections and holidays.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The main care room was laid out in clearly defined areas providing opportunities for the children to enhance their learning needs across all developmental areas. Examples included children painting the Irish flag when the inspector arrived. In conversation a staff member stated that this was in relation to Ireland being in the rugby world cup along with other nations.
- The walls were decorated with multicultural pictures depicting different nationalities reflecting the children in the care room, emotions cartoon pictures including happy and angry, local community photographs of landmarks in the area and classroom rules encouraging the children to observe, wait and listen. A visual timeline of the children's routine was also available on one of the walls, supporting children to predict what happens next.
- Children had open access to the secure outdoor play area, which provided an alternative environment. Children were observed practicing their gross motor skills such as riding, running, climbing and crawling. There were two toy boxes with additional equipment including building blocks and construction promoting cognitive development and imaginary play was facilitated with two wooden teepees and a mud kitchen.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- All internal and external doors were electronically operated preventing the entry of unauthorised adults and children leaving the service unsupervised. The main entrance was operated with a buzzer and a keypad.
- Visibility strips were attached to low-level windows to prevent children from banging into them.
- Heavy equipment and furniture were secured preventing them from tipping or falling.
- Flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children.

- All indoor waste was stored in pedal operated bins, outdoor waste was located in bins which were inaccessible behind a high wooden fence.
- The kettle was stored in the kitchen which was inaccessible to the children.
- The kitchen door was locked and could only be opened with a fob.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with both concrete walls and metal fencing.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with dispensing soap, automatic paper roll, and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- Children were observed washing their hands before and after food.
- Perishable foods supplied by the parents/guardians were stored in a fridge in the care room and the food supplied by the service was observed to be stored in a fridge in the kitchen, preventing spoilage.
- Staff were observed disinfecting tables before and after food and sweeping the floors maintaining a safe environment.
- Children's belongings were stored off the floor area on personal hooks.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was stored in its original container and placed out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- The rest area was located in the Quiet room and consisted of two large vinyl mats, a stackable bed and wooden chairs. Books were available for reading.

Fire Safety:

- All fire/exit doors were unobstructed.
- The fire assembly point was visible on the inside wall of the front garden of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) The hot water in the children and adult sinks was recorded at over 43°C, posing a safety risk.
- (2) There was an accessible electrical drill in a cupboard under the wash hand basin in the toilet in the reception area, posing a safety risk to the children.
- (3) There were three rusty trikes and three rusty peeling basketball rings posing a safety risk from the sharp pieces of rusting paint.
- (4) There was a broken water funnel on the sparse water wall, posing a safety risk from the sharp edges.

Infection Control:

- (5) A Staff member observed changing a child's nappy did not wear an apron, posing a risk of cross contamination. This was in contradiction to the Nappy Changing Policy which stated that an apron should be worn.
- (6) The air vents in the children's toilets were dusty, preventing the circulation of fresh air.
- (7) There was a tear at the bottom of one of the changing mats in the children's nappy changing area, posing a risk of cross infection as it could not be cleaned effectively.
- (8) The pedal on the large pedal operated bin in the toilet cubicle of the nappy changing area was broken, posing a risk of cross contamination as the lid could only open when lifted by hand.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

General Safety:

- (1) The hot water was adjusted on the day of inspection by maintenance staff. It is now checked twice daily and recorded to ensure that it is no more than 43°C.
- (2) The drill was removed, and the staff member was informed of the importance of returning equipment to a safe place, out of reach of the children.
- (3) The rusty toys and equipment were removed from the outdoor play area. Outdoor equipment will be checked for damage and removed where necessary.
- (4) The broken funnel has been replaced. Measures have been put in place to make removing broken equipment easier for staff and daily checks are now in place.

Infection Control:

- (5) Staff have been reminded of the Nappy Changing Policy at a recent staff meeting.
- (6) The dust was removed from the air vents. Management will ensure that the air vents are kept free from dust.
- (7) The torn mat was replaced with a new one. Staff have been asked to be vigilant when inspecting the mat after nappy changing.
- (8) The broken bin was replaced with a new one. Staff have been asked to check the bin for any defects on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentations and photographic evidence were received in the office of the inspectorate from the registered provider:

General Safety:

- (1) A copy of the log reflecting the water temperatures of the water in the children's wash hand basins within the recommended limit.
- (2) A photograph of the empty cupboard where the drill was previously accessible to the children.
- (3) A photograph of the removed rusty equipment.
- (4) A photograph of the new funnel in place.

Infection Control:

- (5) A copy of the minutes of the staff meeting containing the points for discussion, one of which was the Nappy Changing Policy, which was held on the 9 October 2023.
- (6) A photograph of the clean air vents.
- (7) A photograph of the new changing mat.
- (8) A photograph of the new bin.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*
 - (a) *is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*
 - (b) *is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Compliance Information

- 1) Certificates were available to demonstrate that six adults had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed, three of whom available at all times while the pre-school children were present in the service. In addition, three adults had paediatric first training.
- (2) (a) (b) The first aid bags, which were adequately stocked were stored on a high shelf in the quiet room, inaccessible to the children. Both first aid bags were available throughout the inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 written record was kept of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 28 September 2023.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment maintenance certificate was dated 28 March 2023 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 5 September 2023.
- (2)
- (c) The fire drills, firefighting and smoke alarm records and certificates were open to inspection by the inspector.
- (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were visible on the wall beside the fire door leading to the outdoor play space.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was insured. The policy stated that the service is insured for 22 children on a part-time basis. The expiry date of the policy was recorded as the 29 February 2024.