

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC313
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Name of Service:	Oasis Playroom
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Address of Service:	Ashbourne House Hotel, Accommodation Centre, Glounthaune, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T45 NP90
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jo Kelley
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	2	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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

Oasis Playroom was established in 2007. It is a play based, sessional service, that is registered to cater for children from the age of 18 months, who reside in the adjacent direct provision centre. The facility is open each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10.00am to 12.45pm and from 2.00pm to 5.30pm on the same days, a combination of school age and early years children are accommodated.

Located on the grounds of Ashbourne House Hotel in Glounthaune, Co. Cork, the service operates from two adjoining rooms within the main building. The premises includes a kitchenette, an office and sanitary facilities. Since the previous inspection, the setting has been refurbished to include new flooring, new kitchen units, new fencing surrounding the outdoor play space and a new storage shed.

Staffing

At present, there are five adults attached to the early years service, three of whom are involved in the direct care of the children who attend. The registered provider and the project co-ordinator are not service based. A major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or a Letter of Eligibility to Practice are held by the adults who are employed to work directly with the children.

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 the 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, project coordinator, 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) A named person in charge of operating the service had been appointed, along with a deputy person in charge. Written information to this effect was displayed in the care room.
- (b) Upon the inspector's arrival, both the person in charge and the deputy person in charge were working at the early years service and remained present throughout the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in respect of all five of the adults attached to the service were reviewed.
- (a) Of the 10 required written and validated references, 5 had been obtained from past employers.
- (b) A further five written and validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that four of the adults had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of eighteen years and the required police vetting was maintained.
- (4) Evidence of attainment of a level 6 award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, was available for one of the adults. A Letter of Eligibility to Practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) was on file for a second adult. A qualification was not required for the third adult, who was a Community Employment (CE) participant. The project co-ordinator also held a recognised award.

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) During the period of inspection, an adequate number of adults were observed to work directly with the children.
- (3) The adult child ratios were exceeded. There were two adults and one CE participant working with two early years children.

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;*

Compliance Information

- (h) A roll book was maintained to document the children's daily attendance at the service.

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:

- A mid-morning snack was accommodated at 11.30am. This was noted to be a calm, unhurried practice and children were given the option to continue with other activities instead, if preferred. For example, one of the children chose to begin painting and was facilitated to pursue this interest.
- The children could easily access their own reusable water bottles as needed, throughout the morning.
- A designated cosy area was available in the interconnecting room, which encouraged the children to relax and opt out of scheduled activities, as necessary.
- A box of tissues was stored within the children's reach. This supported children to attend to their own respiratory hygiene.
- Protective aprons were provided for messy play activities.
- Adjoining sanitary facilities could be easily accessed by the children and the adults offered helpful reminders to the children in relation to handwashing. The inspector was advised that nappy changing was undertaken by the children's parents, who lived on the grounds of the service and were contacted as necessary.
- There was sufficient space within the care room and interconnecting room for the children to move freely and engage in a range of play activities. Outdoor play was not observed at the time of inspection, due to unfavourable weather conditions.

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.

Compliance Information

- The tables and chairs provided within the care room were suited to the age and stage of development of the children in attendance and were in plentiful supply.
- The range of available play resources were stored on low-set, open shelving, at floor level, or in pull out drawer units, which enabled children to independently select items of interest. Among the available materials were connectable shapes, train sets, building blocks, books, musical instruments, animal figures and a farm set, a large furnished dolls house, hand held vehicles, a car garage, dress up clothes and accessories, art and craft materials and a play kitchen, with an adjacent supply of play food and utensils.
- The outdoor play environment was directly accessible from the main care room. It comprised a concrete surface and was enclosed by high-level fencing, with gated access. The space was equipped with two wooden mud kitchens and covered sand trays. Additional materials such as seesaws and a variety of ride on toys, were stored in the recently purchased shed, within the play area.

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

- Food for the children’s snack break was supplied by the service, with an emphasis on healthy eating. At the time of inspection, the snack consisted of buttered toast, oranges and cheese, with water to drink. It was also noted that second helpings were offered.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children had specific dietary requirements or food allergies.

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 designated outdoor play environment was enclosed by high-level fencing and a secured gate, which minimised the likelihood of a child exiting, while unsupervised. The main entrance door was secure from the exterior, which reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the care room.
- Safe storage of cleaning agents was ensured.
- The available heaters were wall mounted, out of the children's reach.
- There were no cables or flexes accessible to the children.
- Fire extinguishers were securely tethered.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities were in place; warm running water liquid soap and paper towels were available. The children were noted to wash their hands on arrival at the service and before leaving.
- Crockery was provided for the children during the snack break.
- The care room and sanitary facilities appeared clean and well maintained.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children on the day of inspection. Further to this, the inspector was advised that none of the children were in receipt of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were noted to sleep at the time of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns noted.

Outings:

- Not applicable. The person in charge stated that outings from the setting were not conducted.

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) Two of the adults held up to date First Aid Response (FAR) certification.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was stored in a location that was easily accessible to adults, while out of reach of children.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were available throughout the hours of operation.

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 written record was maintained in relation to the fire drills which had been undertaken. It was noted that the most recent of said fire drills took place on 11 January 2024.
 - (b) A list of the number and type of firefighting equipment was in place. The available servicing records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment was checked by a fire safety company on 18 July 2023 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on 28 November 2023.
- (4) The steps to be followed in the event of a fire were prominently displayed on the wall in the main care room and also on the wall of the interconnecting room.