

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC323
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Pathways Childcare Ltd.
-------------------------	-------------------------

Address of Service:	The Mall, Maryborough Woods, Douglas, Co. Cork
----------------------------	------------------------------------------------

Eircode:	T12 YH6R
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Martin
-------------------------------------	--------------

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

Date of Inspection:	13/02/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM	36
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher 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

Description of service

Pathways Childcare Ltd. service operates as a full day care service. It was purposely adapted as a childcare service and is situated on the ground floor of a building complex in a residential area in Douglas. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm and provides care to early years children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. There are 5 care rooms in operation namely the Baby, Tumble Tots, Starburst, Busy Bees and the Rainbow rooms. There is a designated sleep room adjacent to the Baby room and 2 designated sleep rooms adjacent to the Tumble Tots room. There is an enclosed outdoor play area provided to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

There are 18 adults in total attached to the service. The registered provider is not service based. On the day of inspection there were 16 adults on the premises including the person in charge, the deputy, an adult assigned solely to kitchen duties, an adult on site from a training college and 11 adults that were working directly with the children.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Childcare 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.

(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) The person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

- (a) There were 28 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 18 adults attached to the service.
- (b) There were 8 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 18 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 each adult.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of 6 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 was available on file in respect of 17 of the adults. It was noted that the registered provider was not service based, and the service employed an adult that did not work with the children and whose duties were solely kitchen based. The 18th adult who was always supervised when with the children, was attached to a training college and did not yet have a childcare qualification.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

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

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

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

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

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 11 adults working directly with 51 early years children. The person in charge and deputy were office based and available to work with the children as required when some adults took their breaks.

(8)(a) There were always at least 2 adults on the premises during the hours of operation. The roster demonstrated that there were 6 qualified adults on the premises at 8am and that there would be 6 adults on the premises at 6pm when the service closed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance door leading into the building was secured by a magnetic lock that prevented unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child. The button that one pressed to exit the building was fitted high on a wall out of children's reach.
- The outdoor play area was secured by high walls and secured gates.
- The 2 highchairs in the Baby room were provided with safety harnesses that were in good condition.
- Visibility strips were fitted on most of the glass panelled doors throughout the building.
- The light bulbs throughout the premises were each fitted with a protective cover.
- The blind cords throughout the premises were safely secured by wall brackets.
- The cleaning agents in each of the 5 care rooms were stored on high shelves out of children's reach.
- The wash hand basins throughout the premises were provided with thermostatically controlled warm water. The water temperature was recorded between 19.8°C and 37.3°C during the inspection.
- Wipes, nappies, and barrier creams were stored in presses that had been provided with safety locks.

Infection Control:

- Detailed completed cleaning templates were available for review by the inspector.
- The furniture, shelving, floors, toys, play materials, play equipment, books and dress up clothes were all maintained clean. An adult informed the inspector that the dress up clothes were laundered on the premises weekly.

- The children’s personal belongings were stored on individually labelled hooks or shelving in their respective care room. There were also individually labelled baskets in the Baby room for the storage of each child’ bib and beaker.
- Crockery was used by the children during their snack and dinner meal breaks.
- The 3 changing mats used by the Baby, Tumble Tots and Starburst rooms were maintained in clean and good condition.
- It was noted that the children’s hands were washed after nappy changes/toilet use, outdoor play and before eating.
- The adults adhered to the services’ Nappy changing policy and washed their hands and wore disposable aprons and gloves for each nappy change.
- Wipes, nappies, and barrier creams were individually labelled and were not for communal use.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were cleaning agents stored at child height in each of the 2 toilet areas used by the adults. These 2 unsecured toilets were positioned along the main corridor and were potentially accessible to an unsupervised child that could access the cleaning agents which posed as a hazardous or poisoning risk.
2. The rear door in the Rainbow room had a low levelled glass panel that was not fitted with visibility strips that posed as a potential injury risk to children.
3. There were 2 children’s toilet potties positioned outside 1 of the doors leading to a toilet cubicle situated off the Starburst room that posed as a trip hazard.

Infection Control:

4. There were 2 large rolls of paper towels in the nappy changing room off the Tumble Tots room and rolls of toilet paper stored on top of pedal operated bins in both the toilet area off the Rainbow room and 1 of the adult’s toilets that were communally handled by the adults and children for hand drying. The storing of toilet rolls on top of bins and the sharing of the toilet/paper rolls for hand drying was not good practice and posed a risk of cross contamination.
5. The mechanical ceiling vents that were positioned in the toilet area off the Rainbow room and 1 of the adult toilets were not maintained in clean condition and posed as an infection hazard. It was noted that they were not included on the cleaning schedule templates.
6. There were areas of grubbiness, black marks, worn paintwork and flaky paint on the walls at child height along the main corridor of the premises. Due to the paintwork being flaky and worn away the walls were

not easily cleaned and posed as a potential infection hazard or a danger to any child using the corridor that may ingest some of the loose paint flakes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The cleaning agents in each of the 2 toilet areas used by the adults are now stored high, out of children's reach.
2. The rear door in the Rainbow room has visibility strips applied to the low levelled glass panel and the adults will ensure they are replaced if they become displaced.
3. The children's toilet potties are now stored on a storage rack and no longer pose as a trip hazard.

Infection Control:

4. The rolls of paper towels in the nappy changing room and toilet areas are no longer stored on top of lidded bins and the adults have been advised re good hygienic practice.
5. The mechanical ceiling vents have been cleaned and have been included on the daily cleaning schedule.
6. The response submitted to the inspectorate stated that the registered provider has obtained 2 painting quotations to carry out paintwork at the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A photograph of the cleaning agents stored high, out of children's reach was submitted to the inspectorate on 29 February 2024.
2. A photograph of visibility strips applied to the low levelled glass panel of the door was submitted for review on 29 February 2024.
3. A photograph of the toilet potties stored off the floor on a storage rack was submitted to the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

4. A photograph of the paper towels in the paper dispensers was submitted on 01 March 2024.
5. A photograph of clean mechanical ceiling vents was submitted on 01 March 2024.
6. Copies of the paint quotations regarding the premises dated 22 February 2024 and 28 February 2024 respectively were submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documentation and photographs submitted by the person in charge were reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.

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. A fire drill was last carried out by the service on 22 January 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 July 2023 and the wired smoke alarm was last serviced on 08 January 2024.
- (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 on the notice board in the main hallway and in each of the 5 care rooms.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required and
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(d)
The 5 care rooms were set up attractively for children's use and were comfortable, clean and bright environments.

(e)
There were 9 toilet cubicles and 4 nappy changing units for children's use on the premises. Each of the 9 toilets and 4 changing units was accompanied by a wash hand basin for children's use. There were 3 toilets and 3 wash hand basins for adult's use on the premises. There was a supply of liquid soap beside each wash hand basin for hygienic handwashing. The hot water was thermostatically controlled and during the inspection the water temperature was recorded between 19.8°C and 37.3°C. Pedal operated bins fitted with lids were provided throughout the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)

1. The wall mounted dispenser in the children's toilet cubicle, adjacent to the rear door leading to the outdoor play area, was empty and therefore there was no paper towel supply available for children's hygienic hand drying in this area.
2. The wall mounted electric dispensers in the children's toilet areas off the Busy Bees, Starburst and Rainbow rooms were not functioning correctly and therefore in these areas hygienic hand drying was not properly facilitated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e)

1. The wall mounted dispenser was replenished with disposable paper towels for hygienic hand drying.
2. The person in charge submitted in her written response dated 29 February 2024 that the mal functioning electric paper dispensers were repaired since the inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

(e)

1. 2. A photograph of the replenished wall mounted paper dispensers was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documentation and photographs submitted by the person in charge were reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.