

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC384
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Name of Service:	S O F Childcare
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Address of Service:	Newtwopothouse, Mallow, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 TP22
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Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhan O'Flynn
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	09/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

SOF Childcare is a full day care service based in Newtownpothouse, North Cork just off the main N20 Cork-Limerick Road. The premises operates from a two-storey house that has been converted into a two roomed childcare premises with the upstairs being used exclusively by staff. The two care rooms, the Swan and Ducklings room, both cater for pre-school children and for school aged children.

The service offers full day care, part-time and sessional services for 48 weeks of the year with scheduled closures for two weeks at Christmas and two weeks during the summer holidays. The service facilitates the ECCE programme for 38 weeks of the year.

The service operates between the hours of 07.30-18.00 hours, Monday–Friday with the sessional service running from 09.00 -12.00 daily. The service caters for children aged from 2 ½ to 12 years with a registered School-Aged Care service.

There are sanitary facilities adjacent to both rooms and a section of the Swan room (used on the day of inspection for school aged childcare) converts to a sleep area in the afternoon. Other facilities on the premises include a kitchen, storage areas, toilets for the adults and a staff room upstairs.

The children have access to a secured outdoor play area that consists of a large concrete surface and an area that has been covered with artificial grass. There is a large, covered space (the outdoor classroom) also available to the children outside.

Staffing

There are 10 staff employed in the service, this included the registered provider and staff on leave.

Staff working directly with children in the service held a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care & Education at level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

Additional Comments

An immediate action notice was issued to the service as there was inadequate staff available to the children with up to date first aid (FAR) training. The roster was amended and all staff in the service received FAR training. The risks have been mitigated against in the service.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 registered provider was the named person in charge and there was a named deputy person in charge.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the staff were vetted prior to starting in the service. Ten staff worked in the service and all ten staff files were assessed.

(a) For the ten staff employed, twenty references were required and 17 references were available from past employers.

(b) Three of the 20 references required was available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting was on file for all ten staff, all ten Garda Vetting declarations were dated within the last three years.

(4) Eight of the staff working in the service held a relevant qualification at level 5- level 8 on the national qualifications framework. A further staff member held a letter of equivalence to a level seven qualification from the minister and a further staff member held a letter of equivalence to level 5 for the summer months only.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b) During the operation of the service on the day of inspection due to holiday leave the service did not have a named deputy person in charge on duty at all times. The deputy person in charge was rostered to work from 9.00-18.00, no person had been named to act as deputy between the opening time of the service and 9am. Not having a named person in charge of the service at all times may hinder appropriate action being taken in the event of leadership being required.
- (2) (d) Police vetting was required for two staff members who had lived in a country outside of Ireland for greater than six months. One vetting was available however had not been translated. The second police vetting was not on file. Not appropriately vetting staff prior to them starting in the service may allow unsuitable staff work with children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) The roster has been updated to reflect a named deputy person in charge at all times for the service. Staff have been made aware of the managers for the service and the notice is now on display in one of the care rooms.
- (2) (d) Both police vetting declarations have been completed and are translated. The file checklist has been updated to ensure the manager assess the need for police vetting for all staff prior to commencement.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) (b) The updated notice for all staff indicating the deputy person in charge at all times has been received.
- (2) (d) Copies of both police vetting declarations have been received. A copy of the updated file checklist has been received.

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive action form and the evidence of the corrective actions taken the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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 registered provider ensured that there were adequate staff working with the pre-school children at all times to meet the needs of the children in attendance.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained. There were five adults working directly with 15 pre-school children, an additional staff member was caring for the seven school aged children.
- (8) The roster as displayed in the service indicated that there were two staff in the service when children were present.

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) The attendance of each child was recorded on the services care application.
- (i) A staff roster was available to the inspector and the roster was accurate to the staffing recorded on the day of inspection. Historic staff records were also available for assessment.
- (j) Two episodes of medication administration were assessed and in both incidents the records were up to date and complete. The records had a parent's signature requesting the medication and also the parent and staff signatures when the medication had been administered.
- (k) Seven accidents and incidents had been recorded, each record had parent and staff signatures indicating parents were aware of the accident/incident and could follow up as appropriate.

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:

- Children had access to their drinks of water throughout the day and children were observed to take their water outside when playing outside.
- Cutlery and crockery were provided as appropriate for snack and dinner time. Staff were on hand to support the children's eating and drinking. No child attending the service needed to be fed.
- A child when eating dinner stated they were hungry and additional food was available and given to them.
- The children in the service that required nappy changing had this done at routine times and when required. Any child who required assistance with hand washing was supported with same.
- The children's personal cleanliness was cared for and the children were noted to have their noses cleaned as needed.
- Two children attending the service on the day of the inspection were facilitated with sleep after their dinner as was the routine and the children appeared happy with this. The children were facilitated in a quiet room on floor mats and a staff member remained with them at all times.
- Children were allowed to choose their activities inclusive of art activities, tabletop activities and story time.
- The children's mobility was not hindered at any time and the children could move about freely.

Supporting Relationships Around Children

- The same adults work with the children daily and all of the staff were known to the children who sought out their assistance when needed.
- The adults demonstrated sensitivity to the children and were relaxed when speaking with the children.
- The staff were observed to comfort a child who was unwell and sat with them while waiting for a parent to arrive.
- The staff sat with the children at their level for all activities and sat on the floor to assist with floor activities, the children appeared to enjoy this and played with the staff.

- The staff team appeared to work well together.
- Staff operated in partnership with parents as demonstrated with the conversation at drop off and collection.
- For the children attending the full day care service communication with the parents/guardians was also via the service care application system.

Physical And Material Environment:

- The indoor environment consisted of two care rooms. Both rooms had child height tables and chairs. There were open shelving units that were accessible to the children and at their height. The children could access tabletop activities such as blocks and bricks, shape sorters, arts and crafts equipment and jigsaws.
- In each room the children had access to the quieter rest area with a library of books nearby.
- The service demonstrated a language rich environment with stories being told, books being read, a little concert with the children using a microphone and good interactions being noted with the children. The children were supported with their language development and were spoken to on a one-to-one basis.
- The materials and equipment were easily accessible to the children and the artwork previously completed by the children was on drying racks waiting for it to be read to be sent home.
- The outdoor environment was extensive and consisted of three areas. The outdoor classroom area was covered and protected on two sides from the elements which was required on the day of inspection due to rain and wind. This classroom was set up with sand tables, large blocks and bricks and blackboards. The children were happy to be outside. There were two other areas, a large concrete area where ride on toys and ball games were played and an artificial grass area where there was climbing equipment and large playhouses. The latter two areas were not used on the day of inspection due to the inclement weather.

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 service promoted healthy eating.

The food observed in the snacks brought in from home in the lunchboxes containing a variety of fruit, sandwiches, yogurts and cheese.

Dinner on the day of inspection was pasta with a tomato sauce and ham and the children could choose if they wanted grated cheese on their pasta. Milk was offered along with water for dinner.

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 internal and external doors were secured as required. This prevented any child gaining access to the carpark and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children.
- The emergency fire exit doors were clearly identified and were unobstructed.
- The opening for the windows was secure and the windows that were low opened on a tilt and turn mechanism ensuring the children could not climb out.
- The glass doors had a panel though the centre which indicated its presence to the children attending.
- The electrical cables observed were in good condition and out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and free from pinch and crush points.
- Heavy equipment and furniture were secured to the walls to prevent them falling should a child climb on same.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach on high shelves.
- There was warm water accessible throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was cleaned daily and weekly.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after nappy changing, before meal and snack time and after outdoor and messy play. The children were assisted with hand washing by the staff when required and reminded where necessary.
- Staff were observed while changing nappies and aprons and gloves were used, the adult and child's hands were washed after and the nappy was appropriately disposed of.
- There was hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels available at all children and adult toilets, at all nappy changing stations and at the sinks in the care rooms.
- The nappy changing area was clean and well maintained. The changing mat assessed was intact and no tears on the covers was observed. A supply of disposable aprons and gloves were available at the nappy changing station. Nappies were disposed of in pedal operated non-contact bins and no odour was evident in the nappy changing room. Children had named individual shelves for the storage of their nappies and toiletries.
- There were pedal operated bins available throughout the service.
- All coats and bags were stored off the ground in individual shelving minimising contact and cross infection.
- Staff were observed to clean the tables after mealtimes with a suitable disinfectant.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were carried out on the children who slept after dinner. These checks were recorded on the services care application and historical checks could be assessed on inspection. The checks included position, colour, breathing and the sleep room temperature.

Fire Safety:

- The fire doors were unobstructed.
- Firefighting equipment was suitably fixed to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Six children were not signed in on their arrival and should a fire or other emergency occur these children may not be accounted for. The person in charge rectified this immediately once identified.

Infection Control:

- The white shelving unit near the kitchen door was missing some protective strips and this allowed for porous wood to be exposed, posing a risk of cross infection as it was not easily cleaned.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The children were signed in immediately and the staff were issued in writing a reminder regarding signing in children on arrival to the service.

Infection Control:

- The sealant strip has been replaced on the shelving unit and the staff were requested to assess the classrooms daily and inform management should repairs be required.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A photograph of the message issued to staff regarding signing in of children was received.

Infection Control:

- A photograph of the shelving unit with the edges sealed has been received.

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions and the evidence received the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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

- (a) The first aid box was safely stored on a high shelf and was appropriately stocked with in-date sterile dressings.
(b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in First Aid Responder was immediately available to the children at all times. The roster indicated that for a period of time in the morning and again in the evening no staff member was available to the children with in-date first aid training. An immediate action notice was issued to the service on 09/07/2024 to mitigate the risk and ensure a staff member with first aid training was on duty at all times. A response was received from the registered provider on 09/07/2024 indicating that all staff would be FAR trained within the week and a copy of the roster indicating the FAR cover for the service until additional staff were trained was received.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) All staff in the service have been FAR first aid trained. The registered provider has put a training list on the notice board to identify when training will expire for all staff to be aware of same.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) A photograph of the training list has been received. The assurances received from the registered provider regarding the FAR training is accepted as they await the issue of the FAR certs from the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council, (PHECC).

Summary Comment

An immediate action notice was issued to the service on 09/07/2024 to mitigate the risk and ensure a staff member with first aid training was on duty at all times. A response was received from the registered provider on 09/07/2024 indicating that all staff would be FAR trained within the week and a copy of the roster indicating the FAR cover for the service until additional staff were trained.

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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.
- (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) The fire drills that took place in the service were all recorded and the last fire drill took place on the 19.06.2024 with evidence that drills take place monthly observed.
- (b) The firefighting equipment (Fire extinguishers) were last serviced in January 2024. The smoke detection system was last serviced on 26.09.2023.
- (4) The procedure to follow in the event of a fire was displayed near the exit door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured as a full day care service. The expiry date of the insurance was 27.03.2025.