

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE108		
Name of Service:	Nurture Childcare and Early Learning Centre		
Address of Service:	Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 CC89		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Gallagher		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection (Day 1):	23/01/2024		
Date of Inspection (Day 2):	24/01/2024		
No of pre-school children (Day 1):	AM	45	PM 45
No of pre-school children (Day 2):	AM	43	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	A.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

Not applicable

Description of service

Nurture Childcare and Early Learning Centre is a privately-operated, purpose-built facility, located in Government buildings, on the outskirts of Ennis, County Clare. The service operates on a full day and part-time basis, Monday to Friday from 08:00-18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. The service accommodates children ranging in age from three months-six years. There are four care rooms, these are called the Baby room (age range: ten months to eighteen months), the Wobbler room (age range: nineteen months to two years), Junior Montessori room (age range: two to three years), Senior Montessori room (age range: three to four years). Three designated outdoor areas are located to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

On the 23rd of January 2024 nine adults worked directly with the children, an auxiliary member of staff prepared, cooked and served food onsite and a staff member was engaged in a work placement activation programme. On the 24th of January 2024 nine adults worked directly with the children, an auxiliary member of staff prepared, cooked and served food onsite and a staff member was engaged in a work placement activation programme. The registered provider is supernumerary and was not present during inspection. The adults working directly with the children hold Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications. The recruitment files demonstrated the staff members engagement in continuous professional development.

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. 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 days 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)

On both days of inspection, a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

During the inspection both a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available on the premises at all times.

Fifteen files were available for the adults employed by the service. These files were reviewed by the inspector, and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

Twenty-two written references with evidence of verification were available from past employers.

(b)

Eight validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of all the adults working in the service.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of four adults who lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)
All the adults working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 6 to 8 or an equivalent on the National Framework of 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.

(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)
On both days of the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children who attended on a part-time and full day care basis.

(2)
An adequate number of adults supervised the children at all times during the inspection. On the 23rd of January 2024 nine adults cared for forty-five children in the morning and ten adults cared for forty-five children in the afternoon. On the 24th of January 2024 ten adults supervised the forty-three children in attendance.

(8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available on the premises at all times

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

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff treated the children in kind and respectful manner. The inspector observed the staff conversing with the children at their level, listening attentively during interactions and responding promptly to their cues for assistance. The staff used positive behavioural strategies during situations that arose and offered continuous praise and encouragement. The staff held and comforted the babies and rotated to support the children in individual and one to one play and learning activities.

The infants were continuously praised for rolling, crawling, taking steps. Speech sound development was promoted by staff through conversations, rhymes and songs. The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, during mealtimes and participation in tasks. The children's individual sleep needs were responded to appropriately. The infant's nappies were changed on a regular basis and the staff carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age level of development. Open ended play-based activities predominated for the duration of inspection. The children freely moved and chose their activities in the spacious indoor and outdoor environment and the staff responded appropriately to their cues for assistance.

Prior to mealtime tables were decorated with a tablecloth and a plant and each child was provided with wipeable placemats with their individual photograph and crockery. The adults sat together with the children during meal-time and conversed amicably. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed, unhurried, and sociable occasions. Appropriate crockery and utensils were provided during snack and mealtime.

Healthy and nutritious food and beverages were provided on both days of inspection. A four-week menu plan was displayed at the entrance to the service. Water was freely accessible to the children throughout the day.

Physical and Material Environment:

The four care rooms were individually designed, colourful, bright and spacious and provided a space for the children to freely move and explore. The layout of the rooms was carefully considered to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and activities. Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with. A range of challenging and developmentally appropriate play materials, equipment and activities were available in each room to support gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, language expressive arts and design development. The walls of the rooms displayed numerical, alphabetical and literacy aids, a family area, children's birthday displays and the children's creations. The children chose their individual activities and had the freedom to move around the rooms and freely access their chosen toys and play materials and equipment.

The children attending each room were afforded an opportunity to access the outdoor environment. The large outdoor was located to the rear and side of the building. The sectioned areas had a range of surfaces, these areas were enclosed by high fencing, concrete walls and lockable gates. The play resources were predominately wooden and included picnic tables, balance beams, tyres at and playhouses.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

An informal communication approach was observed during interactions between staff and the children's parents. Parents conversed with staff during the children's arrival and departure from the service. The children's daily activities and observations were shared with parents on the service's electronic application device. The staff worked in a cohesive manner to deliver the programme of care and learning in each room. The members of staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's individual preferences, capabilities, and personal interests. The children were consulted in advance of the changes in the programme of care and learning. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's preferences, capabilities, and personal interests.

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:

- Upon the inspector’s arrival the entrance to the service was appropriately secured with a keypad and a bell operated system. A camera surveillance system was in operation for staff to monitor people’s entry to the service. The internal and external entry and exit points prevented children exiting or unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall, fencing and gates.
- The children were supervised at all times during the inspection and their arrival and departure to the service was recorded on the service’s electronic recording system.
- The materials and equipment throughout the service were maintained in good condition.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children. Cupboards were secured with child safety devices to prevent the children accessing the contents within.
- The highchairs were maintained in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- Coloured paintings were placed on the window glass panels for visibility.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined, pedal operated bins.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- The nappy changing procedures were completed in an adequate manner in accordance with the service’s infection control procedure.
- An appropriate method was available to sterilise the infant’s soothers. The soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The children’s bedlinen and personal care items were labelled and stored individually.

Administration of Medication:

- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service’s policy.
- Adequate documentation was recorded for prescription and non-prescription medications that had been given to children.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room accommodated eight standard cots for the babies to sleep. Low level beds and mattresses were available for children to sleep in the care rooms. Relaxing areas with soft furnishings were provided in each care room.
- The sleep room and care room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius during inspection. A thermopen was available in the sleep room to measure and monitor the room temperature.
- Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service’s safe sleep policy. The children’s sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes on the service’s electronic application device. These observations included children’s colour, position, and breathing.

Fire Safety:

- Staff maintained records of up-to-date fire safety training.
- The fire exit doors and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exit routes, and fire assembly points were readily identified with clear signage.
- The service held records of completed monthly fire drills to prepare the service to effectively respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- An outing was not undertaken during the inspection. A service policy was available to inform practice.

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 adults had a record of up to date First Aid Response training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in accessible positions throughout the service.

(b)

First aid boxes were available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last fire drill took place on the 3rd of January 2024.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on the 23rd of June 2023 and the 6th of December 2023.

(4)

A fire action notice was available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for fifty children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.