

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN058		
Name of Service:	Sunny Hollow (Ballymachugh Childcare Group)		
Address of Service:	Omard, Kilnaleck, Co. Cavan		
Eircode:	A82 YT50		
Name of Registered Provider:	Norine Mulligan		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	10/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	73	PM 43
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co Meath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham & D Murray		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		

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
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Description of service

Sunnyhollow (Ballymachugh Childcare Group) is a community operated Early Years Service. The service provides full day, part- time, sessional and school aged childcare and education for children from 0 to 6 years. The service operates from 8.00am-6.00pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 88 children per day. There are five care rooms namely the Giggling Grasshoppers (Baby Room), Busy Bees Room (Small Toddler Room), Busy Bugs Room (Big Toddler Room), Caterpillar Room (Preschool Room) and Butterfly Room (Preschool Room). The service also has 3 cot rooms, kitchen, sanitary facilities, and an office. An outdoor area is also available on the premises

Staffing

The registered provider employs 25 staff members which includes a manager, supervisor, 16 childcare staff, one administration staff, three staff who work solely with school aged children, two relief staff and a cook. Two students attending a childcare college were also present.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26 & 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, supervisor, 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Twenty-five (25) staff members are employed in the service. Two students were also present. These files were reviewed.

(a)& (b) Two validated references were available for the 25 staff members and two students in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures was available for all staff members. Twenty-six garda vetting disclosures were within the 3 year timeframe. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for one staff member. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for the three staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A) A staff member was employed under the access and inclusion model.

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) There were an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.

The rooms were as follows:

Giggling Grasshoppers room: Three staff cared for 8 children ranging in age from 7 months to 1 year 6 months. All children were attending on full day care.

Busy Bees room: Three staff cared for 13 children ranging in age from 1 year and 6 months to 3 years. A student was also present. Seven children were attending on full day care.

Busy Bugs room: Four staff (one staff member providing AIM support) cared for 15 preschool children ranging in age from 2 years 6 months to 3 years 6 months. Twelve children were attending on full day care.

Caterpillar room: Two staff cared for 20 preschool children ranging in age from 3 years to 5 years. Sixteen children attended on full day care.

Butterfly room: Two staff cared for 17 preschool children ranging in age from 3 years to 6 years. A relief staff member was available to this room and a student was present. Eleven children were attending on full day care.

(8) (a) The designated person in charge ensured that 2 adults were present 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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- Nappy changing occurred regularly and in a timely manner and staff members were observed engaging in warm one to one interaction with the children when they were changing their nappies. The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues that they needed to use the toilet providing assistance when necessary.

- Individual child-led sleep routines were facilitated in the Giggling Grasshoppers Room and all children who required sleep or showed signs of tiredness were promptly facilitated to sleep during the inspection. The older pre-school children who still availed of a day-time nap were facilitated to sleep on stackable beds set up on the floor of the care room.
- The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Regular hand washing was observed by the children. There were child friendly visual aids to support the children with effective hand washing in the service.
- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Staff supported children’s learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. The themes of the month were “All about me as an individual” along with “Outdoor life” with the children’s art work displayed to reflect these themes.

Supporting Relationships around the Children:

- Staff sat with the children assisting them to complete activities and were overheard praising children for all their efforts.
- A key worker system was in operation in the service which promoted the development of positive and secure relationships.
- Children’s behaviour was managed in an age-appropriate and positive manner with distraction, re-direction and problem-solving techniques used to good effect to prevent any minor problems from escalating.
- Children in the Giggling Grasshoppers had communication books between staff and parents to include the child’s day and an additional information if required.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Three cot rooms were available, one with 7 cots used by children attending the Giggling Grasshoppers room (Baby room) and a second with 4 cots used by children attending the Busy Bees room. There was also a cot room off the Busy Bugs room which had 3 cots and was used by children from both Busy Bees and children under 2 years from the Busy Bugs room. The Busy Bees room and Busy Bug room also used stackable beds for the children over 2 years of age. Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats, and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) There were a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to the rear of the premises. The space was divided into 2 areas using fencing. The surface areas consisted of soft absorbent matting which was an all-weather surface.

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 rooms were designated according to the age group of the children using them: Giggling Grasshoppers, Busy Bees room, Busy Bugs room, and Caterpillars room.

- All the care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.
- The outdoor areas had equipment appropriate to the age range of the children using the space. Equipment included sand/water trays, playhouses, slides, ride on scooters, cars and tractors, mud kitchens with play equipment, small wooden benches for outdoor activities, tyres with balancing boards and pieces of natural wood.

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 had a healthy eating policy with a weekly menu available. The food was prepared and cooked freshly on the premises daily by a designated cook. The food provided by the service was nutritious, varied, appropriate for the age of the children and adequate for the length of time the children were in attendance in the service. Extra helpings were provided to the children on request. Morning snack provided on the day at 10.00am-10.30am was toasted brioche. Dinner was served from 12 midday in the Giggling Grasshoppers room and Busy Bees room and consisted of ham dinner with carrots parsnips and potatoes. Dinner was served from 12.30pm in the Busy Bugs room, Caterpillar room and Butterfly room was ham and pasta with a homemade sauce. Evening tea was

served from 15.15pm and consisted of semolina and fruit for the younger children and sandwiches of ham and cheese for the older children. Water was available throughout the day in identifiable individual cups in the care rooms.

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:

- Safe storage was available for the cleaning agents and equipment used in the service.
- The person in charge ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children, adults, and visitors to the service.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured.

Infection Control:

- Playrooms, the sleep room, communal areas, and sanitary areas were adequately ventilated by mechanical ventilation and by natural forms of opening doors and windows.
- There was liquid soap at the wash hand basins to facilitate hygienic hand washing for children and adults.
- Paper towels were provided in the dispensers in all the sanitary areas used by the children and adults to facilitate hygienic hand drying.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective Action:

Follow up with staff after submitting their re-garda vetting in a timely manner to ensure that they do not let the link expire before filling out their re-garda vetting thus ensuring the disclosure is available and within the 3-year timeframe.

Preventive Action:

Follow up with staff to ensure they fill out the form/link sent to them for re-garda vetting in a timely manner thus ensuring that the disclosure will be sent to us, available for inspection and will be within the 3-year timeframe.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Garda vetting submitted for the staff member.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non compliance in relation to Regulation 23.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis.

(3)(a) All persons are approved by an employee prior to entry to the pre-school.

(b) Visitors are announced and approved by an authorised staff member on arrival, the visitors' details are entered into the visitors' book.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill was 28/03/2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in December 2023. The mains powered smoke alarms were serviced on the 28/03/2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.

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 adequately insured for 136 children at any one time. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was from 01/03/2024 to the 28/02/2025.