

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN060
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Name of Service:	The Children's House
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Address of Service:	48 Ashbrooke Manor, Moynehall, Cavan, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H12 K718
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Name of Registered Provider:	Antoinette Gibbons
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	26/07/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	C Tunney and AM Cunningham
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

The Children's House is a privately operated Early Years' Service, located in Cavan Town, in operation since 2006. The childcare service provides full day care, part-time day care and a sessional service to children aged from 0 to 6 years and operates from 08.00hrs to 18.00hrs Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is facilitated from a two-storey adapted dwelling. There are four care rooms in operation, Baby /Wobbler Room, Pre-Montessori Room and Montessori Room 1 & 2. Additional facilities include a kitchen, sanitary facilities (nappy changing areas), sleep room and outdoor play area with adequate parking available to the front of the pre-school.

Staffing

There are 22 staff employed in the service including the registered provider, a cook, and an administrative staff member, of which 2 staff members are on extended leave.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations (Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 15 Records of pre-school Child, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school service, Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire safety measures,

Regulation 28 Insurance and Regulation 29 Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. The three pre-school rooms in operation on the day of inspection were inspected.

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 Information

An immediate action notice in relation to Garda vetting was furnished to the registered provider on the day of inspection. The inspectorate received a response from the registered provider stating an application was made for Garda Vetting in respect of a staff member. On the 08/08/23 the registered provider submitted a copy of the outstanding Garda Vetting.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge and had identified a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present on arrival of the inspectors.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place evidenced by the relevant records made available to the inspectors and from speaking to staff members in relation to the service.

- (2) Files in relation to the twenty-two staff members employed in the service were examined.
- (a) Twenty-five written past employer reference were available and validated.
- (b) In the absence of past employer references, 17 references from a source other than an employer were available.
- (c) Garda Vetting was available in respect of 21 staff members.
- (d) Police Vetting was available in respect of two staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) Of the 20 staff members who provide direct care to pre-school children, 19 staff members held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualification Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) References in respect of a staff member were not available for inspection.
- (c) Garda Vetting was not available in respect of one staff member.
- (d) Police Vetting was not available in respect of an additional staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to all staff members being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) One staff member did not have evidence of a childcare qualification available for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

2. Garda vetting, Police vetting, and references obtained for all staff including administration staff in advance.
3. All procedures are now completed.
4. Student letter of qualifications will be verified by the DCEDIY

Preventive Action

2. Vetting procedures will include all staff regardless of whether they are working directly with the children
3. Procedures to be completed in advance of a staff member being employed.

Supporting documentation submitted

All relevant documentation was submitted to the inspectorate for examination.

Summary Comment

An immediate action notice in relation to Garda vetting was furnished to the registered provider on the day of inspection. The inspectorate received a response from the registered provider stating an application was made for Garda Vetting in respect of a staff member. A copy of the garda Vetting was furnished to the inspectorate. Additionally, a copy of outstanding references, Police Vetting and staff qualifications was also submitted and accepted. Regulation 9 has been addressed.

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 was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced.
- The following adult to child ratios were observed as follows:
- **The Baby/Wobbler Room:** Two adult's cared for 8 pre-school children, (aged between 8 months to 2 years 1 month) of which the 8 children were attending for full day care. Additionally, a relief member of staff was present.
 - **Pre Montessori-Room:** Two adult's cared for 11 pre-school children, (aged between 2 years to 3 years) of which the 11 were attending for full day care.
 - **Montessori 1:** Two staff members cared for 15 pre-school children (aged between 3-6 years) all children were attending for full /part-time day care.

Additionally, in Montessori 2, two staff members cared for 10 school aged children attending for full /part-time day care.

(8) Two staff members are present, at all times in the service as required by Regulation 11 (8) as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider ensured a record in writing was available in respect of each child containing particulars as specified in Regulation 15 (1)(a) to (j).

(3)(c) The children’s records were available and open for inspection by an authorised person. Fourteen children’s records were inspected.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available as specified by Regulation 16 (a) to (k) in relation to the service. These records were available in folders such as a folder containing the service policies & procedures, a folder containing required information in relation to fire maintenance records and information in relation to staff details was displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of staff and parents/guardians.

(3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were provided.

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 Care

- The children's basic care needs were met on the day of inspection. Healthy eating was promoted throughout the service. Nutritional hot meals and snacks were prepared by the service and delivered to the rooms at mealtimes each day. A menu plan was displayed to inform parents of the food choices offered. Children who did not take in a snack in the Montessori rooms were also offered a snack by the service of apple pieces, crispbread and water. Shepard's pie was served for dinner on the day of the inspection which the children enjoyed. Highchairs & low tables were used by the children in the Baby/Wobbler room and elsewhere children sat at low level tables and chairs when eating.
- Sanitary accommodation was located in or next to each room in the service and a sink was also available in each room to facilitate hand washing.
- The children's personal care was attended to. Hand hygiene was carried out at recommended times, prior to mealtimes and following personal care. The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing and personal care.
- Nappy changing occurred in a timely manner and a staff member was observed engaging in warm one to one interaction with the children when changing their nappies. The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues that they needed to use the toilet and were observed gently reminding children at times and providing assistance when necessary.
- Individual child-led sleep routines were facilitated in the Baby/Wobbler Room.

Supporting Children's Relationships

- Positive engagement between the staff members and children were noted. The staff members used age-appropriate soft tones, used the child's individual name, and were actively involved in the children's play where appropriate. The younger children were held and comforted when upset and age appropriate tones were used. Transitions were clearly announced and signaled by staff. Children were given time to complete activities at their own pace. Staff in Montessori Room 1 sat with the children while completing activities and positive encouragement from staff to the children was overheard such as *'well done building', 'that's a lovely picture', 'great work'*.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs

In the Pre-Montessori Room, a white wooden box containing support equipment for the play kitchen was inaccessible to the children as the box was heavy. It was difficult for a child to remove play material independently.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the box removed and replaced with two small boxes.

Preventive Action

All boxes to be easily accessed by the children.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Appropriate action was taken to ensure all play material is accessible to the children attending the pre-school. Regulation 19 has been addressed.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Adequate facilities were available for the children to play indoors. The Baby/Wobbler room was a large bright room, the children were able to move unhindered by furniture or fixtures. The Pre-Montessori Room with an adjoining small room facilitated the children to play in designated interest areas and to avail of quiet time in the smaller room. The Montessori rooms also contained suitable and adequate facilities to facilitate the children's play.

A large all surfaced outdoor area was available, divided into two separate spaces with age-appropriate play materials in both sections.

(b) Adequate sleep and rest facilities were available for all children in the service. Children had access to a separate sleep room to facilitate undisturbed rest, in a quiet area away from general play spaces. Eight standard cots and low beds were available. Cots and mattresses were maintained in a satisfactory condition. Each child had access to their own bed linen. In each room a rest area was available for the children to enjoy quiet time or look at books.

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 entrance door leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Daily risk management checklists for the indoor and outdoor area were available.
- The kitchen was not accessible to the children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following messy play.
- Soothers were labelled and stored in personalised containers when not in use. The registered provider stated that soothers were washed in warm soapy water and sterilized appropriately.
- A container was available to place mouthed toys after use by the young children. The registered provider stated they are washed in warm soapy water and sanitized as required.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition except as outlined below.

Administration of Medication:

- The medication administration forms maintained for children who had received medication in the service were accurately completed, demonstrating safe practice. The forms included signed parental consent.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep observations were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting each child's position, colour and breathing pattern.
- Cots and mattresses were in good state of repair. A system was in place to manage sheets and blankets, all sheets noted on cots/low beds were clean.
- Adequate space was left between the cots in both sleep rooms and also between the sleep mats positioned in the Sleep Room.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The small cloth covered chair and the yellow cloth covered chair in the Pre-Montessori room were heavily stained and not clean which posed an infection control risk

Safe Sleep:

2. Children placed to sleep on low beds were not continuously monitored as the staff member did not remain in the room. Instead, the staff member observed the children sleeping from looking in a window which is in variance to safe sleep practice.
3. A staff member carried out sleep observations in a darkened room without been able to visually access the colour and breathing status of the child. Lighting in the two sleep areas was not maintained at a level where staff could conduct direct visual checks of each sleeping child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Chairs removed and replaced. The service will use furniture that will not stain.

Safe Sleep

2. Staff will stay in the sleep room.
3. Blind is lifted to make the room brighter.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Appropriate corrective and preventative actions have been put in place in relation to each non-compliance to ensure the safety of children attending the pre-school. Regulation 23 has been addressed.

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

A record was maintained which documented details of children's daily attendance in the service which was maintained in all care rooms. A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their attendance.

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

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible position in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. One staff member held a valid FAR certificate but was not present on the day of inspection and other FAR certificates available had expired in May 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

First aid FARR training is scheduled for the 7th & 21st Oct and 8th Nov as this is the only time, we could get 8 staff together (smallest group taken)

Preventive Action

Training will be scheduled before all certs are out of date.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. The registered provider has provided assurance that training in FAR for all staff will have taken place by November 8th 2023. Three staff members hold valid FAR training. Regulation 25 has been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly with the most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 12/07/2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were certified as having been serviced on 27/03/2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in 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 pre-school service is adequately insured for 72 children, expiry date on the insurance certificate was dated 27/03/2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

(e) In Montessori 1, the two toilets within the sanitary accommodation do not have individual doors in place to promote privacy for children using the facilities. This non-compliance was noted at the last inspection on 30/03/2022. Following the inspection, the registered provider stated in her response that “a plan has been put in place to extend the sanitary area to put doors on the cubicles”, however this plan has not been carried out.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

Toilets will be rearranged to make space for individual cubical doors. Work to be carried out over the October midterm.

Preventive Action

Ensure all toilet areas are child friendly

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Work in relation to inserting doors on individual cubicles was completed on 28th October 23. Regulation 29 has been addressed.