

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW006
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Name of Service:	Ballon Rathoe Community Childcare Facility LTD
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Address of Service:	Ballon Childcare Facility, Ballon, Carlow.
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Eircode:	R93 A9DO
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michael O'Toole
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM	62
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan
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
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Description of service

Ballon Rathoe Community Childcare Facility is a full day care service located in the village of Ballon, in county Carlow. The service is a community-based service governed by a board of management. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional early years services for children aged 0 to 6 years of age. A school- aged service is also provided. The service operates Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00 hours. The purpose-built childcare facility consists of the following early years rooms.

In the main building at ground floor level, there were three early years room, each with adjacent nappy changing facilities. There were two sleep rooms situated on the ground floor. There was a kitchen and dining room for the sole use of the children. There was a prefabricated early years room to the side of the main building also with designated nappy changing and toilet facilities.

On the first floor of the building there were three early years room and one school aged room. There was sufficient sanitary accommodation to meet the needs of the number of children attending. There was a various outdoor play areas in the service.

Staffing

There were 15 staff on the premises on the day of inspection who were working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. There were two staff who were employed to work in the kitchen to provide meals for the children. There was one person present on the day of inspection who was employed under a community employment scheme who was available to assist the staff who were working directly with the children.

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, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28 and 30.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 30. As a result, the scope of the inspection included time in five of the early years room.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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
- (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)(b)

The childcare manager was the designated person in charge on the day and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. There was a second named staff available to deputise as required.

From a discussion with the manager, it was established that there were four new members of staff employed in the service, since the last inspection on 13 July 2022. The files for the new staff members were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

There were two written and validated references available on file for four new staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available on file in the service for all of the new staff members.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were not required as none of the new staff members had worked or lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Certificates of qualifications for all the new staff members working directly with the early years children were available on file.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service.

(3)(4)

During the morning there were 69 early years children being directly cared for by 15 staff. During the afternoon there were 62 early years children being directly cared for by 11 staff, ensuring there were adequate staff available to work with the children and to maintain staff/child ratios at all times. The childcare manager was on the premises daily and supernumerary to the staff. There were also 12 school aged children in the care of 2 staff on the premises.

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 19 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.

(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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children had access to seven main early rooms which were suitable to the ages and stages of development of the children using them. Both indoor and outdoor areas were supplied with furniture, toys, equipment and materials suitable to the ages of the children, their interests and abilities.

(b)

The service had two dedicated sleep rooms, one located off the wobbler room, for use by the baby and wobbler room children. The second sleep room was located within the toddler room. The sleep rooms were equipped with standard cots with fitted mattresses, stackable beds for over two years of age in the toddler sleep room, an electronic temperature monitor and a cooling fan. Clean bed linen was available for each child, with weekly laundry done within the service.

(3)(a)

The children had access to a variety of outdoor play areas that were suitable to the different ages of the children using them. There was a large, enclosed courtyard to the front of the building, where children from the playschool rooms enjoyed their teddy bears picnic. To the rear of the premises, children had an additional four outdoor areas, each with sufficient toys, materials and equipment for the number of children attending. There was an all-weather surface and Astroturf areas. Children had ride on toys, climbing frames, sand and water, football area and climbing frames. Children from a number of rooms were observed enjoying outdoor play twice during the day.

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 early years rooms throughout the service were equipped with both child sized and adult furniture to support activities such as chairs for staff to feed babies, tabletop activities, dining and story time. Cosy/ rest areas were available in all the rooms for the children to rest and relax away for the other activities.

In the baby room soft matting was available for floor play and to support crawling and rolling development. All of the toys and materials were stored on low tables, on open shelves or in imaginative play furniture such as the kitchen, where they were easy to access by the children. The type and layout of the toys, equipment and materials supported the child led play and learning. Staff said that they changed around the room layouts and brought resources out of storage according to the current and emerging interests of the children.

Staff regularly reviewed the equipment and materials, removing any items that needed repair, were to be discarded or needed to be deep cleaned. This was carried out as part of the services weekly risk assessments by staff within their individual rooms.

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 provided children with the main hot meal, and this was freshly prepared onsite by the chef, in line with the service’s healthy eating policy. The weekly menu was available and displayed on the wall inside the front door of the premises. The chef and staff were aware if any children who required special diets and were vigilant with regard to allergies.

On the day of inspection, the dinner was fish, mashed potatoes, with carrots and peas, and gravy served separately so that the children could choose how much they wanted. Alternative meals were provided to children who didn’t eat the planned dinner. Dinner was served to the children in the dining room with the exception of the baby and wobbler rooms who ate in the early years rooms. The children sat at the tables or in highchairs according to their preferences. Serving bowls, plates and cutlery were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. The children had a choice of milk or water to drink with their meal.

The parents supplied the morning and afternoon snack. There was a large variety of snacks including, crackers, fruit, yogurt and sandwiches. Formula bottles were prepared and stored in the fridges in the early years rooms in line with HSE Safe Food guidelines.

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:

Access to the service was appropriately secured with an electronic keypad system at the entrance ensuring restricted access to unauthorised persons. Cleaning products were stored away and inaccessible to children. The outdoor play areas were fully enclosed. Staff carried out daily risk assessments of their rooms, including the outdoor areas, steps and stairs and this was accurately recorded and signed. A monthly safety audit was carried out by staff in each of their rooms. Any defects or repairs were documented and reported to the manager.

Infection Control:

Children were observed being supervised with washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play and after toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. Nappy changing procedures were carried out in line with the services policy. Staff were observed to wear aprons and gloves for each individual nappy change, washing their hands and wipe down the mat between each nappy change. Children were helped with washing their hands after their nappy was changed.

Administration of Medication:

There was an administration of medication policy. The staff discussed with the inspector the procedure to follow when a child required administration of medication. Medications were supplied by parents and stored securely in a designated area inaccessible to children. Each of the early years room had an administration of medication book. Individualised care plans were in place for children who required them.

Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Staff who spoke to the inspector demonstrated that they understood the importance of adhering to safe sleep guidelines. There was documentary evidence in the service that the sleeping babies colour, position and breathing were observed to be physically checked and recorded every 10 minutes as per safe sleep guidelines.

Children under two years in the baby and wobbler rooms were facilitated to sleep in the designated sleep rooms attached to the early years rooms downstairs. The staff were observed by the inspector to observe and record the sleeping children's colour, breathing and position every 10 minutes.

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)

There were staff trained in first aid available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the premises and was available for use.

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)

Monthly fire drills were carried out within the service. Records reviewed on inspection confirmed that the last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 17 May 2023.

(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment was serviced. The last maintenance carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place in November 2022.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate that adequate insurance was in place.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

(4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,

the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

Room:	Size:	Age groups:	Number of children present:	Max number of children that can be accommodated:
Baby Room	39.6 sq. meters	0-1 years	9	9 children FDC
Wobbler Room	42 sq. meters	1-2 years	11	15 children FDC
Toddler Room	3.78 sq. meters	2-3years	13	15 FDC
Playschool Room 1(prefab)	34.4 sq. meters	3 -5 years	14	19 children sessional 14 FDC
Playschool Room 2	29.1 sq. meters	3-5 years	8	11 sessional 10 FDC
Pre-school Room 1	43 sq. meters	3-5 years	14	22 Sessional 16 FDC
Pre-school Room 2	37.63 sq. meters	3- 5years	closed	18 sessional 14 FDC
Total:			69	109