

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW022
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Name of Service:	In Safe Hands Creche and Montessori School
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Address of Service:	57 Milford Park, Ballinabranna, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 A397
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Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Bryne
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	17
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Athy Road, Carlow
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Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

In Safe Hands Creche and Montessori is a purpose-built childcare service located in the rural scenic village of Ballinabranna in county Carlow. The service offers full day, part-time and sessional childcare services for children aged 0 to 6 years. The service operates from 07:30 to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday, January to December. The building currently has five classrooms in operation and has two designated outdoor play areas, which are located at the back of the building and can be directly accessed from the classrooms.

Staffing

There were 20 staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider, a business manager and two designated kitchen staff. All staff members employed to work directly with the children, held a qualification at Level 5 to Level 8 on the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations:

- Regulation 10 – Policies, Procedures etc of a Pre-School Service,
- Regulation 15-Record of Pre-School Child,
- Regulation 21- Equipment and Materials,
- Regulation 23- Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the four classrooms in operation for the care of Pre-school children on the day of inspection.

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, business manager, 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) The inspector observed that there was a designated person in charge in the service. A named deputy designated person in charge was also available to deputise as required.

(b) The deputy designated person in charge was onsite in the premises throughout the inspection. The designated person in charge and business manager also were present from 10:30 hours.

(c) A clear management structure was observed in practice and was also clearly documented, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each staff member employed in the service.

(2) Staff files for 20 staff members were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were on file for all of the 20 staff members employed in the service. 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. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available on file, for each of four staff members, who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six months.

(3) On review of files the inspector was assured that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been completed prior to staff members commencing employment in the service.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file for each staff member working directly with the children, demonstrating that staff held at least the minimum Level 5 ranging to Level 8 qualifications in early childhood care and education on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Framework. One staff member held Level 9 qualifications in early learning education.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The service's policies and procedures as required by Schedule 5 were available in the service and open for inspection.

On review of the documents, the inspector was assured that the written policies were specific to the service and had been effectively communicated to the staff as part of their induction prior to commencement of employment in the service. Records demonstrated that staff read and signed that they were aware of and understood the service's policies and procedures.

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) Throughout the inspection, the inspector observed that an adequate number of staff members were directly caring for and supervising the children in attendance.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children as required by schedule 6 was maintained as follows in each of the classrooms.

In the “Daisy Room” there were 5 children aged 6 months to 1 year directly cared for by 2 staff members for a full day care service.

In the evening, there was 1 child directly supervised by 1 staff member.

In the “Poppy Room” there were 6 children aged 1 to 2 years being cared for and supervised by 2 staff members throughout the day.

In the “Bluebell Room”, 9 children aged 2 to 3 years of age were cared for and supervised by 2 staff members and in the afternoon, there were 4 children directly supervised by 1 staff member.

In the “Sunflower Room”, in the morning there were 12 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years directly supervised and cared for by 2 staff members and in the evening 6 children from this group remained in the service directly supervised by 1 staff member.

(8) The designated person in charge ensured that there were always at least two staff members on the premises. The inspector observed that the staff roster and past staff rosters available reflected this

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

On observation of all four classrooms in operation in the service, the inspector observed that adequate age-appropriate furniture and play materials were available to the children in attendance in the service. Identifiable areas of interest were created in each classroom. For example, imaginary play was encouraged with well-resourced kitchen/home areas, with dress up clothes, dolls, dolls equipment, open-ended materials and play equipment. Low-level appropriately sized tables and chairs provided children with opportunities to sit or stand and develop their gross motor and fine motor skills with enough resources of building blocks, connective and manipulative materials and writing skills materials. Opportunities for messy and sensory play were provided and children were observed having access to sensory materials such as pasta, lentils or playdough provided on play trays, in thematic scenarios such as a farm theme or underwater world themes.

Children had access to art and creative materials, with examples of their creations drying or displayed in each classroom.

Soft rest areas were provided in classrooms to create an environment where children could choose to opt out of activities or relax with some of the appropriately selected reading materials provided.

The inspector observed that play equipment and materials were clean and appropriately maintained. Staff demonstrated that cleaning schedules included procedures for regularly maintaining the equipment in each of the classrooms.

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 main entrance to the service was secured with a keypad and call bell system. A reception area was located just inside the entrance, so staff had a clear view of who was visiting the service. Staff were required to answer the call bell system to permit persons entry to the service, therefore, children could not exit the service unsupervised and visitors to the service could only enter the premises once authorised by the staff.

The play area at the back of the building was secured by a high cemented block wall, and child height fencing to the side of the building. Gates were secured with locks.

Staff informed and demonstrated to the inspector that a daily risk assessment was carried out prior to children using the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

The staff and children in the service were observed to wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing, using tissues for runny noses, after messy play and in preparation for meal or snack time, in line with the service's infection control policy. Children's toilet and nappy changing needs were supported as required by the staff, in line with the toileting and nappy changing policies contained in the service's infection control policy. The inspector observed that good cleaning procedures were effectively adhered to in the service, with cleaning schedules followed and recorded.

Administration of Medication:

On review of a sample of ten administration of medication records, staff were observed to carry out and record administration of medication procedures in line with the service's policy.

Safe Sleep:

A designated sleep room was provided adjacent to the baby room – "The Daisy Room" which contained a total of three standard cots for children aged 0-1 years. An adequate supply of foldable cots, floor beds and stackable beds were also available in the service for children aged 1 -2 years to avail of if they wished to sleep during the day.

Suitable bed linen was observed, consisting of fitted bed sheets and cellular blankets. Staff were observed to implement the service's safe sleep policy in their practice, when putting children down to sleep, carrying out physical checks on each sleeping child's colour, breathing and sleep position every 10 minutes, and recording same.

Outing:

An adequate outings policy was available in the service for any trips or walks taken outside the service facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for two staff members; however, these two vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. One of the two cots on the left-hand side of the entrance door to the designated sleep room was observed to be positioned partially adjacent to the entrance door. This was observed by the inspector to pose a potential risk of finger entrapment, for a child if they stood up in the cot.

Infection Control.

Two of the three cots available in the adjacent designated sleep room provided for the five infants aged 7 to 10 months in attendance in the Baby/ "Daisy" Room, were not spaced at 50 centimetres (cm) apart as recommended by infection control best practices.

Two cots were observed and measured by the inspector to be at 10 cm apart. The sleep room measured 5.28 square metres and did not adequately provide enough floor space to provide 4 standard cots required for the 5 infants in attendance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider submitted the following corrective and preventive actions. We failed to see the expiry date on the staff members Garda Vetting had expired until it was pointed out by the inspector and we applied for it to be renewed immediately upon the staff member's return from extended leave.

We now follow a system on excel which shows all staff member Garda vetting, outlining the dates of issue and dates of expiry for each person.

This system will ensure we avoid this happening in the future as we aspire to provide a fully compliant service to safeguard children.

2.For the General Safety non-compliance for a potential risk of finger entrapment, we observed what the Tusla inspector noted on the day of the inspection, and we moved the cot immediately.

Infection Control:

We consulted with the new recommended safe sleep guidelines and have noted the space requirements for the cots room, this only allows for two cots in the sleep room therefore one of our cots is no longer in use and other two cots are not near the door frame and pose no risk to the child/children.

With only two cots now present within the Daisy Room sleep room they are now at 50cm apart as recommended by infection control best practices. The third cot is now folded out within an area in the room to be used where needed to facilitate rest adhering to best practice on safe sleep and infection control.

Three additional folding cots have been purchased and are used within the multi-purpose room to facilitate safe sleep adhering to best practice on safe sleep and infection control.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence that Garda Vetting had been applied for, to ensure that all staff's Garda Vetting in the service is dated within the previous three years.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of reorganised cots and purchase receipt for new cots.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) On review of the staff files, the staff roster and in discussion with the manager, the inspector observed that there were four staff members with current First Aid Responder (FAR) training employed in the service. The inspector observed that three of the staff members with FAR training were onsite, throughout the inspection, in accordance with the daily staff roster. The staff roster demonstrated that there was always at least one staff member with FAR training on duty.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was always available to the children and staff in the service and was easily accessible, located in a designated, labelled, first aid cupboard in the kitchen.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*
- (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 of monthly fire drills carried out in the service was maintained by the registered provider. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 1 July 2024.
- (b) Records of the annual maintenance checks of the service's firefighting equipment and fire alarm system were documented. The last maintenance check for the firefighting equipment was recorded as having taken place in

September 2023 and the last maintenance check for the fire alarm system was recorded as having taken place on the 20 May 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on a noticeboard in the entrance hall of the service and a fire assembly point was clear identified, at the back of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate displaying adequate insurance for a full day childcare service for up to 77 preschool children was available for inspection and displayed on the noticeboard in the entrance hall of the service.