

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CW035 | | |
| Name of Service: | Rathoe Community HUB | | |
| Address of Service: | Rathoe, Rathoe, Carlow | | |
| Eircode: | R93 DW90 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Elizabeth Flynn | | |
| Service type: | Full Day | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 01/03/2023 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 26 | PM 9 |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford. | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | E Mc Garry | | |
| Title: | Early Years Inspector | | |
| Authority to Inspect | | | |
| The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013). | | | |
| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable | | |

Description of service

Rathoe Community Hub is a non-profit community early years service located in the village of Rathoe in north county Carlow. The service provides full day care, part-time, and sessional services to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. A school aged service is also provided for the local primary school which is situated directly across the road. The service operates from a purpose-built premises. The service consists of two early years rooms, a hallway, toilets and two large outdoor play areas for the exclusive use of the children attending the service.

Staffing

There were five staff on the premises on the day of inspection including the manager who also works 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.

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:

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment
- Regulation 10 Policies and procedures

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 19 Health, welfare, and development of child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child

Regulation 25 First aid

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 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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early

Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(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) (b)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there was one new staff member employed since the last inspection on 15 June 2022.

(a)

There was one written and validated reference available on file from a past employer.

(b)

There was one written and validated reference available on file from a reputable source.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for the new staff member.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as the new staff member had not worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

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.

(6A)

There were no staff members employed under the Access and Inclusion Model.

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

There were written policies, procedures, and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies were reviewed on this inspection and were found to be complete and specific to the setting.

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

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children at all times for the duration of the inspection.

At 11.05am there were 26 children aged 3 to 6 years of age in the care of 4 staff.

At 1.15pm there were 9 children aged 3 to 6 years of age in the care of 3 staff.

The manager remained in the service for the duration of the inspection and was available to assist in the early years rooms as required. There were also two students in the service on the day of inspection who were available to assist the staff who were working directly with the children.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

(1)(a)

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection. Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, children were observed putting on their own coats, wellies and hats in the room designated for dressing the children for the outdoor area. There was a list of tasks for the children to do in the service. For example, putting out the drinks and getting the lunches out of the fridge.

During activities, staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development. Staff were observed playing with the children in the outdoor area. Children were encouraged to enjoy the range of imaginative play opportunities in the outdoor area. For example, there was a large shallow puddle for the children to enjoy splashing in. Staff were observed facilitating a show and tell session with the children. Children brought in the toys they liked to play with. They stood up in front of their friends to tell them all about their favourite toys. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this exercise helped develop their confidence.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate jigsaws games, small tractors, diggers and dinosaurs. There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area which was purposefully structured to develop children's curiosity and desire for sensorial play. Each early years room had a sheltered area next to the doors leading to the areas.

These sheltered areas allowed children to go outside if it was raining. There was an outdoor kitchen, picnic tables, a large jungle gym with ladders and a slide and other equipment to support imaginative play was also available in this area.

Staff who spoke to the inspector said the service prioritised outdoor play for the enjoyment of the children attending. The inspector observed the outdoor chalet where the children changed into their outdoor gear. This area had a small wall mounted heater, hooks with the children's photographs to store their gear, a washing machine, a dryer, a clothes line, a toilet and boxes of dry clothes if required by the children if they got wet. The inspector noted this area was well planned and laid out for the comfort of the children attending the service. There was a mixture of ground covering to facilitate all the ages and stages of the children attending the service. There was a concrete area for the children who wanted to play on the ride on toys, and large areas of natural grass for the children to run around and play on.

1(b)

The registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Children were observed washing their hands before snacks and after messy play. Children were served nutritious snacks which were stored in the fridges in the service. Snacks observed included sandwiches, fruit, and rice cakes.

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

The registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

- Access to the service was gained through the front gate of the service. There was an intercom system which was linked to the early years rooms. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service.
- The fire doors were not obstructed.

Infection control:

- Cleaning templates were available in the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years room and toilet areas.
- There were fridges available in the service to store the food which was provided by the parents.
- All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins.
- All bins in the early years room and toilet facilities were pedal operated.

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 was a person trained in first aid immediately 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 position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years service.