

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL122		
Name of Service:	Ready Steady Grow Childcare Centre		
Address of Service:	Glenview Business Park, Donegal Road, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F93 N7FF		
Name of Registered Provider:	Paula O'Doherty		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	09/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM 19
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94		
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn and L Costello		
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

Description of service

Ready Steady Grow is a privately owned and operated preschool service providing full day, part time and sessional care to children aged 0-6 years. The service operates between the hours of 8.00am and 5.30pm each weekday with a sessional preschool from 9.00am-12.00pm and is opened all year round.

The service operates two care rooms from the ground floor unit of a double story building within a business park and a third room from an adjacent building. Both units have been purposely adapted for the provision of an early year's service.

Staffing

There were nine staff members employed to work in the service at the time of inspection. This includes the registered provider who is on site and works directly with the children on a daily basis. Six other staff members work with children and the remaining two staff members work in the kitchen and on administrative duties. In addition to this, there were two students working in the service as part of their educational placement, neither of these students were present on the day of inspection.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23 and 28.

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 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*

(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.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) (b) The registered provider was the named person in charge and there was a deputy appointed in the event of their absence. Both these staff members were on the premises throughout the inspection and a review of the staff roster demonstrated that at least one was scheduled to be on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2) At the time of inspection, the registered provider confirmed that there were nine named staff members who worked in the service. Six of these staff members had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection. With reference to the above listed elements of Regulation 9, recruitment records in respect of the six newly recruited staff members and two students on educational placement in the service were reviewed and the following information was available:
- (2)(a) (b) Two written and validated references from a past employer, or in cases where the person had no past employers, an alternative source, was on file for two staff members and one past employer reference for one staff member.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for review in respect of each of the eight staff members.
- (d) International police vetting from the relevant state was on file for one staff member.

(4) Documentary evidence was provided to indicate that three staff members had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or equivalent. This requirement was non-applicable for four staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

The following vetting documents were either unavailable or were deemed insufficient to meet regulatory requirements:

(2) (a) (b)

- Consideration of references from past employers was not available to view for one staff member and a second reference was required for another staff member.
- The written references on file for three staff members were from sources other than those listed on their past employment record.
- A record of validation was not available in respect of one written reference on file for one staff member.

(d) International police vetting was not available for two staff members whose employment records indicated that they had lived outside of the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) A letter confirming that the person had completed their training course was on file for one staff member and not their final award certificate as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b) References have been sought and verified. The service has now appointed an administrator to oversee this work and ensure all required documentation is in place.

(d) Police vetting is now on file for one staff member and the second staff member will not be returning to the service until all documentation is on file. The administrator will now be responsible for checking all paperwork for staff members and students and management will then sign off on these requirements.

(4) Confirmation that the employee had obtained the minimum qualification was sought from DCEDIY and is now on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated references, certificates and correspondence were submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the service has been reviewed and is accepted as meeting the requirements of the regulation.

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) On the inspectors arrival to the service, 22 children were being cared for by 4 staff members in 2 care rooms.

- In the baby room, one adult was caring for five children aged 1-2years.
- In the toddler (back) room, 3 adults were caring for 17 children aged 2-5 years.

When assessed in the afternoon, the following adult child ratios were observed.

- In the baby room, one adult was caring for five children aged 1-2 years.
- In the toddler (back) room, 2 adults were caring for 14 children aged 2-5 years.

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

Compliance Information

The preschool room was not in operation on the day of inspection therefore the following information relates solely to the baby and toddler rooms.

The service prepared meals and snacks on site for children on a daily basis. The cook followed a menu plan that was varied and nutritiously adequate. On the day of inspection, the planned main meal was spaghetti bolognaise with onions peppers and carrots. The inspectors were informed that milk is served with the main meal and water served as required throughout the day. The schedule for the day included breakfast if required, mid-morning snack, hot meal for dinner and an afternoon snack.

There was a designated sleep room adjacent to the baby room where children aged under two years were placed to sleep for a scheduled period of rest in the afternoon. The older children were also observed to be placed to sleep at a scheduled time on low level sleep beds in the care room. Closed window blinds provided a dim light to create a restful atmosphere in the room. Soft seating was provided in both the toddler and baby rooms for children to rest or relax throughout the day as required.

Children who were toilet trained were encouraged and supported to use the toilet independently as required. Staff promoted and encouraged independence by prompting children on the process, including dressing and handwashing. Younger children's nappies were changed on a scheduled basis and more frequently if required. Children were observed hand washing at various intervals throughout the day, including after toileting, prior to mealtimes and after messy play. Aprons were available for messy play.

The two care rooms were equipped with a variety of interest areas that were appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children attending. The toddler room was laid out in interest areas that facilitated

sensory play, promoted children cognitive development and encouraged imaginative play through a construction area, building blocks, art and crafts, sand and water tables, connectors/puzzles/shape sorters and dress up.

The resources were readily accessible to children on low level shelving giving children the opportunity to self-direct play, choosing what station to go to. Where a station was busy, staff encourage children to find an alternative activity and to return to the station when there was space. The practice encouraged turn taking among children and enhanced their social and emotional development by being mindful of others.

The outside area adjacent to the toddler room was equipped with bikes and trikes, low level climbing bridge and tyres, tree blocks all to develop coordination, flexibility and agility at the children's developmental stage. Children in the toddler room had access to the outdoor area on the morning of inspection.

The baby room was equipped with age and developmentally appropriate play materials including a kitchen area, tent, plastic balls, peg boards, shape sorters, building blocks, sensory toys, soft toys and doll/baby care items. A wall mounted mirror in the room provided for the development of children's visual senses and low-level equipment provided a stable base for children's developing gross motor skills. There was an adult sized armchair in the room to facilitate feeding and comforting children.

Staff members were observed to be positive and engaging in their interactions with the children. Staff placed themselves physically at the children's level when engaging with them. This was evident in both care rooms where staff were observed sitting on the floor at story time with the children in the toddler room and in the baby room as the babies explored various interest areas. Staff demonstrated familiarity with children and were heard engaging in meaningful conversations relevant to the individual child for example discussing recent family occasions and parents' workplace.

A digital application was used in the service as a mode of recording and communicating with parents. This application provided parents with information on eating, sleeping and toileting patterns of the children throughout the day. Staff informed inspectors that the application is also used to share photos of activities children have engaged in while attending the service. Staff also informed the inspectors that a curriculum plan was compiled on a monthly basis which included activities centred around a planned theme, usually based on the season and upcoming holidays or celebrations.

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 doors into the building were secured to prevent unauthorised entry by a person or the unsupervised exiting of a pre-school child.
- The outdoor area was adequately secured with boundary fencing and gates to prevent a child accessing unsafe areas.
- All toys and equipment appeared in good condition and there was no evidence of hazards.
- Highchairs were fitted with a five-point safety harness.
- There was adequate storage for cleaning agents and hazardous items in a location safely out of the reach of children. Drawers and cupboards containing hazardous objects were secured and the kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- There was evidence of routine daily checks being carried out by staff to ensure that the water temperature at wash hand basins did not exceed the maximum recommended temperature of 43°C for safe handwashing.
- Blind cords were adequately secured throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available in each of the children's sanitary accommodation to support good hand washing practices. Children were observed washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating.
- Individual soothers were available to children in the baby room and were stored in labelled containers. Childrens belongings were stored individually and a change of clothes was available for each child should they become spoiled.
- The pre-school rooms and adjoining sanitary facilities presented in a clean condition. Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary accommodation were available.

- All children attending the service had individual bed linen that was stored in labelled containers. Staff informed inspectors of the cleaning schedule in place for laundering linen.
- Waste was appropriately disposed of in foot pedal operated bins within the care rooms and children's toilet area.
- Ventilation in each of the rooms was provided by openable windows which were observed to be open or ajar for periods of the day.

Administration of Medication:

- Records of medication administered in the service were available for review which detailed the child's name, the name of the medication given to the child, the dosage, the time administered and two staff signatures. Staff were conversant when asked by the inspector of the procedure for the administration of medication as detailed in the policy of the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had one designated sleep room adjacent to the baby room. The sleep room contained six standard cots and stackable floor beds were used by older children in the toddler room. Documented sleep checks at no more than 10-minute intervals were reviewed and observed to be maintained. Each of these checks detailed the colour, breathing pattern and position of the child.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exit routes were clear from obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. The air temperature in the sleep room was not maintained within the appropriate range of 16-20°C. The temperature of the room was recorded by the inspector at 12.35pm reading 21.6°C. This is a recurring non-compliance from the previous inspection.

Infection Control:

2. There was insufficient spacing between the stackable beds in the toddler room when children were placed to sleep. Beds are required to be spaced at least 50cm apart for infection control purposes and it was found that beds were placed side by side, millimetres apart.
3. Feeding bottles containing powdered infant formula were not managed appropriately in the service in accordance with national guidance. Staff in the room stated that for some children, sterile water was brought from home each day and stored at room temperature. It was then mixed with pre-measured

quantities of powdered formula prior to feeding. These practices did not ensure the removal of harmful bacteria which can be present in reconstituted powdered infant formula.

Administration of Medication:

4. Completed records of medication administered to children did not include a parent signature or similar to confirm that parents were aware of the medication, time and dose administered to their child. The lack of a parent signature poses a risk that a parent may unintentionally administer additional doses of medication outside of the maximum safe limits.
5. There were two bottles of temperature reducing medication individually labelled that had passed their expiry dates. Expired medication poses a risk of injury if administered to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

1. Two portable air conditioning units have been purchased. We have requested with the landlord that an air condition unit be put in the sleep room.

Infection Control:

2. We implemented a 50cms stick to each room to ensure the correct distance is maintained. We have included in our induction folder for new staff the correct distance and the stick as an exact measurement tool.
3. A notice was sent to all parents with the change in procedure. Induction packs for parents now have instructions on safe bottle making highlighted and it is also included staff induction.

Administration of Medication:

4. All old medicine sheets destroyed only new sheets now exist.
5. We have added instructions on the fridge cleaning sheet to check all medicine bottles weekly and staff have been trained on medicine safety.

Supporting documentation submitted

A number of document images and purchase receipts were submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the service has been reviewed and is deemed to adequately meet the requirements of the regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available to view which demonstrated that the service was insured to provide a full day care service for up to 48 children with an expiry date of 27 March 2024.