

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DR101

Name of Service: Coco's Creche & Montessori

Address of Service: Lanford, Sydney Terrace, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Eircode: A94 WR02

Name of Registered Provider: Lorraine Foy

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 02/09/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	32
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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

Coco's Creche & Montessori is located in an urban, residential area of Blackrock, south county Dublin. The service provides full day care and education to children aged 0 to 6 years and opens from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. The premises consists of a single storey, purposely adapted building with three child-care rooms, a sleep room and two outdoor areas.

Staffing

There are currently ten adults employed to work in the service including the person in charge. One adult is employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). All ten adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 may also focus on other areas as required.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9(1) (a-c), (2) (a-d) (3), (4) –Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11(1), (2) – Staffing Levels

Regulation 19(1)(b) –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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained present for the duration of the inspection. A review of the staff roster showed that a designated person is on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service which was confirmed with staff members and the person in charge during discussions with the inspector. A record of staff roles was on display in the hallway of the service.

(2) Following discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that five adults commenced working in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 8 January 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of the five adults as detailed below. In addition, Garda vetting for three staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(2)

- (a) Seven written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Three written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for eight adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Four of the new employees required international police vetting, the required documentation was available for three of the adults.

(4) Documentation was available to show that four adults who work directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d) Police vetting was not available in relation to one adult who previously lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to one of the adults commencing employment in the service as detailed below.

- Documentary evidence available indicated that one adult did not have the second reference validated before they commenced employment.

(4) During the inspection the person in charge reported that five adults had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 8 January 2024. A review of documentation and observation of practice evidenced that one adult employed to work directly with the children did not hold the minimum qualification as per regulatory requirement.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(d) An application for police vetting has been submitted for the adult and the registered provider has carried out an individual risk assessment. A checklist has been introduced to ensure all required documentation is available before new staff commence employment.

(3) The second reference for the adult has been validated, the person in charge now carries out monthly audits of all files to ensure all documentation is up to date and complete.

(4) The adults contract of employment has been amended to reflect their status as a student on placement. The individual is supernumerary and does not form part of the adult child ratios. The adult is under direct supervision of qualified staff and is present in the service to observe practice and gain experience as part of their placement. Their responsibilities are outlined in their job description in accordance with their student role. The manager will ensure that the job responsibilities of future students complies with regulatory requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (d)

Receipt for International Police Vetting application

Risk assessment

Record of file check list

(3)

Evidence of validation of reference

(4)

Evidence of enrolment in a recognised Early Childhood Care and Education course

Updated contract

Job description

Staff rosters reflecting the adult is supernumerary

Copy of placement hours

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 (3) and (4). The effectiveness of the actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

Evidence of an application for International Police Vetting was reviewed; however, a copy of the completed International Police vetting has not been submitted for the staff member to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were 10 adults available to 32 children in the morning and 10 adults available to 32 children in the afternoon.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the children's ages and type of service delivered.

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-

(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

Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed during the inspection. Mealtimes were observed to be calm and unhurried and staff were observed to positively interact with children during this time. Staff reported that the service provides breakfast and a hot meal and the parents provide the morning and afternoon snacks. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff provided support when required. Alternatives were offered to children who refused to eat their meal and additional portions of food were available for children requesting more. Drinking water was available to children and staff were observed to encourage children to drink water with their meals and during outdoor play. Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be regular and timely. Staff were observed to playfully interact with children during this time ensuring a pleasant experience for the children. Younger children were placed to sleep in accordance with their individual needs while older children slept at a designated time after lunch. Staff reported that the service provides opportunities for children to sleep outside the designated time if required. The rooms where children slept were calm and conducive to sleep and staff remained present with children providing comfort and reassurance. An area with child sized sofas and a rug was available for older children to rest if needed.

Staff addressed children by their name and interacted in a warm, responsive and sensitive manner. Staff appeared to be familiar with all children attending the service and were observed taking time to engage with children in other care rooms during outdoor play. Staff reported that they use this time to build relationships with children which supports smooth transitions from one care room to the next. During moments of minor conflict staff were observed to intervene and support children to find constructive solutions.

Children's independence was encouraged and supported throughout the day for example packing away lunch boxes, tidying up following play, handwashing and using the toilet independently. Staff created a flow through the daily routine by keeping a relaxed pace helping children to predict and cope with the change from one activity to the next. Children were given the freedom to make choices and were observed to move freely around the care room following their own interests and engaging in positive interactions with their peers. Identity and belonging

was promoted in all care rooms, with children’s family photos on display, images of children engaging in activities and images of children on their coat hooks supporting them to recognise their belongings. All children were provided with the opportunity to engage in outdoor play during the inspection.

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 doors into the service were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Blind cords were secured and made safe.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Toys and play equipment used by the children were observed to be safe for the age group, maintained and in good condition.

Infection Control:

- Care rooms were visibly clean and well maintained. Cleaning schedules were displayed in each room outlining cleaning tasks.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- Staff supported children to wash their hands following nappy changing, toileting, before lunch and following outdoor play.
- Individual storage was provided for children’s bedding.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had an administration of medication policy and staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to take to ensure medication is given safely if needed, including obtaining written parental consent.
- Documented administration of medication records were available for review.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes.
- A sleep log was maintained detailing the room temperature, breathing pattern, colour and position of the child.

- The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature range.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be unobstructed, clearly identified and easily opened from the inside during the inspection.
- Staff demonstrated awareness of the procedures followed to safely evacuate children from the service should the need arise.
- Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in prominent positions in the care rooms and sanitary areas.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The waste disposal bins in the two sanitary areas did not support effective waste management. Both bins required hand contact to dispose of waste.
2. A vinyl sofa in the Montessori room was observed to be torn, exposing the underlying fabric. This created a surface that cannot be effectively cleaned or sanitised.
3. Nappy changing practices observed in the baby room posed a risk of cross contamination and were at variance with the service's nappy changing policy as detailed below:
 - Gloves were not worn for one nappy change
 - A staff member was observed cleaning the soiled changing mat after washing their hands following three nappy changes.

Safe Sleep:

4. The sleep facilities provided for one child attending the Toddler room did not meet current safe sleep guidelines. During the inspection it was observed that a child under the age of two was sleeping on a sleep mat on the floor in the Toddler room. Staff reported that the child had transitioned from a cot to the sleep mat while attending the baby room. In addition, there was no risk assessment completed prior to the transition. The inspector acknowledges that a transition to floor bed form had been completed and signed by the parents.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Both bins were replaced with pedal operated bins, going forward all bins will have pedals to ensure hand contact is not required.
2. A new vinyl sofa was purchased and the torn sofa was removed. All soft furnishings will be inspected for damage weekly as part of the room safety checklist.
3. Management carried out nappy changing training following the inspection to remind staff of the correct procedure. A monthly spot check has been implemented to monitor nappy changing practices and staff will receive regular refresher training.

Safe Sleep:

4. A safe sleep risk assessment was completed in partnership with parents of the child under two years of age who was using a floor bed. Going forward all children under the age of two will sleep in cots. The service will adhere to safe sleep guidelines for children under the age of two.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Receipt for pedal bins
 Photographs of pedal bins
 Receipt for new sofa
 Photograph of sofa
 Room equipment checklist
 Room risk assessment
 Nappy changing policy
 Photograph of procedure displayed in the nappy changing room
 Signed staff training log

Safe Sleep:

Copy of risk assessment
 Copy of the child's transition from cot to floor bed plan

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the 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) There was evidence to show that two adults hold certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

Review of the staff roster confirmed that a person trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) is on the premises during the opening hours of the service.

(2) (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in the service.

(b) The first aid box was observed to be available to the adults caring for children attending the service.