

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR104
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Beechwood Childcare
-------------------------	---------------------

Address of Service:	305 Beechwood Court, Stillorgan Road, Stillorgan, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	A94 FH60
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine Foy, Loraine Cahill, Lynn Ruddle
-------------------------------------	---

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Dates of Inspection:	08/05/2023 and 09/05/2023
-----------------------------	---------------------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	53	PM	53
Day 2	AM	53	PM	53

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 2 nd Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and O. Quill
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

Beechwood Childcare is registered to provide full-day-care to children aged 0-6 years. The service is currently offering a service to children aged 1-6 years between 8am and 6pm. The service operates from the ground floor of a purpose-built facility. The facility is in an apartment complex in a residential area of Stillorgan, County Dublin. There are five child-care rooms and children are allocated to the rooms according to their age and stage of development: Montessori room, Pre-Montessori room, Toddler room and Wobbler room. The Wobbler room is divided into two areas named Junior Pre-Wobbler and Senior Pre-Wobbler. Separate sleep rooms are available to children attending the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. An outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 18 staff employed to work in the service including the person in charge. All staff are employed to work directly with the children. The person in charge reports to an operations manager who in turn reports to the registered providers.

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 areas 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 the following regulations. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 19(1)(b) Health welfare and development of child

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 23 Safety

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 owners, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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.

(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 named person in charge and a person who could deputise in their absence.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived and remained on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(2) The inspection focused on the recruitment records of adults who had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection dated 25 July 2022. The person in charge reported that ten staff including the operations manager had commenced working in the service since then.

(a) & (b) A minimum of two references with a record of verification was available for seven adults. References from another source were available for two of these adults who had only one previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults.

(d) International police vetting was available for staff who had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(3) It was evident that the procedures outlined under regulation 9(2)(d) had been carried out prior to the employment of all adults for whom it was required.

(4) Eighteen staff were employed to work directly with the children. Records were available evidencing 12 staff held the required qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) It was not evident that references had been appropriately considered for three adults who had been employed since the previous inspection. The person in charge reported that four documents written in the Spanish language were references for the adults. There were no records available in English and the documents could not be interpreted.

(3) It was not evident that the procedures outlined under regulation 9(2)(a) & (b) had been carried out prior to the employment of three staff.

It was not evident that the procedures outlined under regulation 9(2)(c) had been carried out prior to the employment of one adult contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

The date recorded on the Garda vetting disclosure for this adult was 10 November 2022. Through review of documentation and discussion with staff it was evident that the staff member commenced working in the service on 7 November 2022.

This non-compliance with regulatory requirement was observed on previous inspections dated 30 May 2022 and 25 July 2022. The actions subsequently submitted by the registered providers had not been effective in preventing the recurrence.

(4) Eighteen staff were employed to work directly with children. There were no records to evidence that six of the adults held the required qualification. The person in charge confirmed that the adults in question did not have the required qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) & (b) References have been validated again for two staff members, this time following a Reference Check Questionnaire. One of the three staff members in question is no longer employed. Staff files will be reviewed monthly to ensure that the necessary documents are held as required. A staff file checklist is used for this purpose.

(3) New management commenced employment in service in January 2023. The service acknowledges the non-compliance as for November and commits to adhere to preventative actions in future recruitment processes to make sure no staff member is allowed on premises prior to the garda vetting disclosure. Successful candidates will only be reached once the garda vetting disclosure has been received. Start dates to be agreed after receiving the disclosure.

(4) The service acknowledges the non-compliance. One of these staff members does not work in the service anymore and a second one is due to finish employment on 9th of June. The four remaining staff members are enrolled in the appropriate childcare courses and are currently finishing their late stages. These staff members are considered support workers as the ratio is kept within rooms with qualified members. Notwithstanding this, the services only want to have qualified staff members on premises hence management has started a recruitment process for new team members. The service will not employ any unqualified staff member. Only qualified candidates will be considered when recruiting new educators.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a) & (b) Copies of outstanding reference checks in English.

(3) Copy of staff file checklist including Garda vetting.

- (4)
- Receipt for enrolment in QQI Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 training dated August 2022 for two staff members.
 - Signed agreements between service and two staff members - service to fund Level 5 and 6 Early Childhood Care and Education dated July 2022.
 - Email to potential new employee requesting evidence of qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education prior to interview - dated 30 May 2023.

Summary Comment

(2)(a) & (b) The actions submitted by the registered provider have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

(3) The inspectorate acknowledges that new management have been employed since January 2023. However, due to previous repeat non-compliance the inspectorate is not assured at this time that the non-compliance will not recur. The regulatory requirement will be reviewed on next inspection for all new employees.

(4) The regulatory requirement 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) There was an adequate number of adults available to the children.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained. Sixteen adults were allocated to work with 53 children on the first day of inspection including the person in charge. An adult arrived from the owner's other service at 12pm bringing the total number of adults to seventeen. The operations manager and one of the registered providers arrived during the first day of inspection and aided with auxiliary duties. Eighteen staff were allocated to work with 53 children on the second day of inspection.

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

The inspectors observed children moving freely, exploring their environment, playing, and engaging with each other and the adults. They spent time outdoors and were dressed appropriate to the weather. The children used the toilet when they needed. Children wearing nappies had these changed routinely and as needed in between. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm individual engagement with the children.

Food was provided at regular intervals. The service provided the meals and the children brought snacks from home. Drinking stations were available within the rooms and all children were offered drinks of water when eating. The adults provided the children with help when needed whilst supporting their independence.

Younger children were provided with bibs to protect their clothing from spills. Children were assisted to clean their faces and wash their hands at appropriate times.

Children attending the Senior Pre-Wobbler, Toddler and Pre-Montessori rooms were facilitated to sleep in the afternoon after their meal. The rooms where they slept were calm and conducive to sleep. The children's outer clothing and shoes were removed, and they were provided with appropriate bedding. Younger children who had soothers were offered these when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided the children with comfort and reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. Areas were available within the children's rooms where they could rest comfortably outside of this time or take a break from activities.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed them by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. The staff provided the children with comfort when they became upset - holding them and talking to them in soft tones. Individual daily diaries were maintained electronically and shared in real time with parents to aid communication. A child who developed a low temperature in the Junior Pre-Wobbler room was provided with appropriate care including being offered water to drink, an opportunity to rest and staff phoning the child's parents to communicate.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The inspector observed that some of the children attending the Junior Pre-Wobbler room did not have their needs met in a timely manner. The inspector observed staff attempting to distract children who were crying and displaying signs of tiredness or hunger for prolonged periods. They were observed checking for signs of illness including taking the children's temperatures before eventually providing them with the opportunity to eat or sleep.
2. Two children attending the Junior Pre-Wobbler room did not have their clothes changed when they became wet to provide comfort. This included a child who had wet the seat and leg of their trousers outdoors and a child who had spilled water on the chest and arms of their vest.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Staff have been retrained on the importance of recognizing individual cues and picking up on each child's needs. The team will be reminded about the importance of checking basic steps before moving on to checking temperatures. Management will focus on individual cues when training and inducting new staff. This means basic indicators of a young child potentially being upset as tiredness, hunger or nappy changing is needed.
2. Clothes must be changed when visibly dirty or wet to provide each child with necessary comfort and respect. No child to be left in soiled or wet clothes. Staff have been retrained in the area of identity and self-belonging. Please see evidence of attended training attached. Management will ensure training is reiterated in this area on a continuous basis. All staff members will attend quarterly training and sign attendance sheets added to their file.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. & 2. Internal record signed by staff stating training was provided on areas relating to care practices that were non-compliant on inspection – dated 30 May 2023.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance findings. Care practices will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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-

(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.

Compliance Information

The service had two designated sleep rooms with cots for children attending the Wobbler and Toddler rooms to sleep. Low beds were provided for older children. All children were provided with appropriate bedding. Inspectors observed the rooms were calm and conducive to sleep. Areas were available within the children's rooms for them to rest or take a break from activities outside of the sleep times.

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:

- Emergency doors were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- Cables and leads were secured out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

- The premises and equipment were observed to be well maintained and in a clean condition.
- Children's hands were washed at required times including before eating, after outdoor play and after using the toilet.
- Children's nappies were changed in accordance with infection control procedures.
- Soothers were stored appropriately in individually labelled containers.
- A system was in place to remove toys which had been mouthed from circulation until cleaned.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored in their original packaging, safely out of reach of children.
- Staff kept records of medications given to children in the service. The records had been signed by parents/guardians indicating the information had been shared.

Safe Sleep:

- Children slept in standard cots or on low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Staff demonstrated an awareness of safe-sleep guidelines. Children were monitored when sleeping and staff recorded these checks at ten-minute intervals.
- Cot mattresses and linens were suitable and fitted appropriately.
- Room temperatures were maintained between 16-20°C when children were sleeping to reduce the risk of overheating.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One of the entrance doors to the Pre-Wobbler room was unsecured on the first day of inspection, posing a risk of unauthorised access from the street outside.

Administration of Medication:

2. Written parent/guardian consent was not available for medicine given to a child on the first day of inspection. It is acknowledged that the medicine had been provided to the staff by the parent that morning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. All staff have been briefed and retrained on the importance of having entrance doors always secured. Rooms in which doors are used for parents' collections and droppings will be locked every time a child comes in or leaves premises. Continuous spot check throughout the day to ensure that the doors are always kept locked.
2. All staff have been briefed and retrained on the importance of written consent required by parents or guardians needed for staff to administer medicine to any child in the centre. Management and educators will make sure this is provided prior to any type of medicine given to children. Management will ensure training is reiterated on this topic on a continuous basis. All staff members will attend quarterly training and sign attendance sheets added to their file. All new staff members joining the team will be trained on this topic during their induction.

Supporting documentation submitted

Internal record signed by staff, stating training was provided on securing external doors and obtaining written consent prior to giving medicine to a child – dated 30 May 2023.

Summary Comment

1. The inspectorate acknowledges the actions submitted in relation to the securing the external entrance. However, due to previous repeat non-compliance the inspectorate is not assured at this time that the non-compliance will not recur. This will be reviewed on next inspection.
2. The actions submitted have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.