

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS064
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Name of Service:	Young Explorers' Preschool and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Dominic's Community Centre, 60 Avonbeg Gardens, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 KW58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Whelan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	26/04/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	40	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien
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

Young Explorers Preschool and Afterschool is a community based non-profit service registered to provide sessional care for children from 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 09:00 to 12:30, Monday to Friday. The service is purpose built and is located within Dominic's Community Centre in Tallaght, South Dublin. There are three preschool rooms. Rooms 1 and 2 operate as one preschool session and Room 3 operates as the second preschool session. The service has a large central courtyard for outdoor play which leads into another large outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs fourteen staff members including five permanent staff, three Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support staff and six staff who are on a community employment scheme. There were thirteen staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection including the manager. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection and does not work directly 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 - Management and Recruitment, 11 – Staffing Levels, 19 – Health, welfare and development of child, 25 – First Aid and 26 – Fire safety measures and 30 Minimum space requirements. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9(2) - Management and Recruitment.

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.

Additional Information

The registered provider submitted a Change in Circumstance (CIC) form on 11 April 2023 proposing to increase the number of children registered to attend the service from 42 to 44. This inspection included a review of regulation 30 – Minimum space requirements.

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*

(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*

(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.

Compliance Information

1)

(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that two adults commenced working in the service on a community employment scheme since the last inspection on 27 September 2021. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b) One validated, written reference was available from a past employer and one validated, written reference was available from a source other than a past employer for one adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the two adults.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all adults were suitable to work in an early years service prior to their commencement as outlined below:

- There were no references on file for one adult.
- One adult commenced working in the service on 01 December 2022 and two references for this adult were validated on 09 January and 20 January 2023 respectively.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) There are references on file for all adults since the end of April. Our recruitment procedure has been highlighted and those with responsibility for implementation of the procedure have been informed. Supervisors are now aware that no new staff can start employment without references without exception.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance. This action will be assessed on the next inspection

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were forty children attending the service being supervised by thirteen adults on the 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-

(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

(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 service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children bring in their lunch from home.

The service operates a rolling lunch time. Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were observed taking their own lunches and drinks from the fridge when hungry and sitting at tables with their peers in each care room. Children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers during their meal and staff supported children who needed assistance with their lunch.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed encouraging children to clean their own noses. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including using the toilet independently and cleaning up after their lunches and play.

Individual inclusion plans were available and implemented in the service in line with the children's needs. Records were available evidencing the individual needs of children who required more 1:1 care and the inspector observed 1:1 care being given to these children on the day of inspection.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's positive behaviour management policy. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Staff described how they communicate with parents regarding their child's day at arrival and collection times.

The routine in the service was child led and children were provided with the opportunity to take the lead and choose their own activities throughout the session. Children were facilitated in selecting the play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. Children were observed staying outdoors for long periods of time and were observed moving freely from outdoor to indoor play.

Care rooms were arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included mark making stations and arts and crafts materials, small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, rest areas with books and home corners. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. The materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

The outdoor play area was comprised of two connecting areas, a central courtyard with paving and shock absorbent surfacing and a grass area to the rear of the building. The outdoor area was accessed directly from the care rooms and was well resourced with a range of developmentally appropriate play equipment. Free flow access to the outdoor area was available and all children accessed the outdoor play area on the day of inspection. Children were observed to be engaged in their play in the outdoor area with adults supporting them as needed. Children were observed engaging in energetic and imaginative play in the outdoor areas.

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 inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hand sanitisers and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Cables and cords were secured out of reach of children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Children's lunches were stored in the fridge in line with the service's healthy eating policy.
- The service appeared clean and well maintained in line with the service's infection control policy.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had an allergy policy in place. Practices in line with this policy were observed on the day of inspection. There were documented care plans available for two children attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff were aware of the treatment plan and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The Inspector observed some practices which posed a risk of transmission of infection within the service:

1. Children's hands were not consistently washed following outdoor play or before eating, contrary to the service's policy on infection control.
2. A number of bins throughout the service were not pedal operated as evidenced below:
 - An open bin was in use in Room 3 and was observed with waste inside.
 - The bins in the sanitary accommodation adjacent to Room 3 were not pedal operated.
 - Two swing lid bins were in use in Rooms 1 and 2.
 - The pedal function on one of the bins in the outdoor area was not working.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. All staff have been reminded of the necessity for children to wash their hands consistently following outdoor play and before eating. Circle time activity with children has taken place to highlight how easily germs spread and why handwashing is important. Room Leaders will highlight every day it's importance.
2. All unsuitable bins have been replaced with pedal variety. Staff will report if there are any broken bins in the service. Only pedal bins will be used in the service. Regular checks will be carried out to make sure there is no damage to the bins.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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) A person trained in first aid for children was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(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 written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 20 April 2023.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. There was a record to show that firefighting equipment had been serviced in March 2023 and that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on 08 February 2023.

(4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

(6) Subject to paragraph (7), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are no more than 22 children in a room in the service at any time.

Compliance Information

(1)(3)(6) Adequate clear floor space was available for the work, play and movement of 44 children proposing to attend the service as demonstrated below:

Clear floor space measurements				
Room Name	Proposed number of children and type of service	Age of children proposed	Minimum space required square metres	Space available square metres
Room 1 and 2	22 sessional	2-6 years	39.99	65.53
Room 3	22 sessional	2-6 years	39.99	65.63